



News Release

[Office of the Pierce County Council](#)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2020

Pierce County Council reallocates CARES Act funds to save jobs, help residents

Today the Pierce County Council reallocated \$18.5 million in CARES Act monies to provide additional assistance to veterans and residents negatively impacted by COVID-19, and to establish a new program aimed at keeping local restaurants open.

With an eye toward preserving local jobs and encouraging restaurants to fill vacant tables, the Council dedicated \$7.5 million from its federal CARES Act allocation to create a program that would offer a 30 percent discount to dine-in customers, excluding alcohol purchases. The 30 percent discount is only available to customers eating at eligible restaurants during a two-week promotional window. The promotional dates have not been set.

Licensed restaurants in operation before March 23, 2020 that continue to operate and be open to the public, and are full-service restaurants designated with a NAICS Code 722511 on their business license, are eligible.

The total amount of funding available to each restaurant cannot exceed \$90,000. During the two-week promotional period eligible restaurants can receive compensation up to 50 percent of gross sales for dine-in meals, excluding alcohol, for each day. No participating restaurants will receive less than \$5,000.

Businesses wishing to participate must enter into a written agreement with Pierce County and at a minimum must agree to:

- Operate in accordance with the state's "Safe Start" reopening plan and applicable federal, state and local public health guidance and directives;
- Participate in the full-service restaurant promotion campaign outlined in the ordinance;
- Provide all restaurant patrons with at least a 30 percent discount on dine-in meal purchases, excluding alcohol, during the two-week promotional period specified in the agreement unless modified by the local health officer; and
- Provide documentation of gross sales of dine-in meals, excluding alcohol, and the value of discounts given for each eligible day during the two-week promotional period.

Should the local health officer determine it is unsafe for restaurants to offer dine-in service due to increasing COVID-19 case transmissions, the 30 percent discount can apply to take out meals during the two-week promotional period. More information about the promotional dine-in event, including participating restaurants and dates, will be shared once the program is operational.

The ordinance establishing the new restaurant program now goes to the Pierce County Executive for signature. Once signed, the Economic Development Department will begin program implementation and

promotion in coordination with the Washington Hospitality Association and other relevant trade organizations. Restaurants interested in applying for the new program should check the Economic Development Department website piercecounitywa.gov/CARESbusiness, which will share information once the program is ready for applicants.

Through separate legislative action Tuesday, the Council also increased funding to the following CARES Act programs:

- \$5 million to the existing residential rental assistance program;
- \$4 million to the existing Commercial Rent and Mortgage Assistance Program;
- \$1 million to the existing childcare program; and
- \$1 million to the existing veteran assistance program.

The \$18.5 million for these programs comes from the contingency reserve fund the Council established when it received nearly \$158 million from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The contingency reserve account previously had \$23,162,031. With the reallocation, the remaining contingency fund balance now sits at just over \$4.6 million.

The Council also earmarked \$50,000 in CARES Act monies previously dedicated to Public Health Emergency Response for Rainier Communications Commission to hire a consultant to negotiate a new agreement to step up public health outreach to COVID-vulnerable populations.

Residents seeking rental or mortgage assistance, those looking for childcare assistance or veterans seeking help can find information online at piercecounitywa.gov/COVID19help or by calling 253-798-7171.

Business owners looking for more information about available business relief options should visit piercecounitywa.gov/6959/CARES-Relief-Programs or call 253-798-6150.

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