



News Release

[Office of the Pierce County Council](#)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2020

Pierce County Council gives 100% reimbursement to Restaurant Rally restaurants, dedicates funding assistance to food banks

In response to the latest restrictions put in place by Gov. Jay Inslee to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Pierce County Council unanimously adopted legislation Tuesday to put cash directly into the hands of Pierce County restaurants and food banks that need it most.

The nearly 300 local restaurants participating in the Restaurant Rally program will now be reimbursed 100% for gross sales, excluding alcohol and third-party orders, for the two-week event period that ends Thursday, Nov. 19. Previously the reimbursement was 50%.

“Due to the Governor’s guidelines we have to shut down all indoor dining as of tonight,” Councilmember Dave Morell said Tuesday. “A number of restaurants have ordered supplies, have food on hand and have incurred expenses for in-person dining that this ordinance helps mitigate as they prepare to rollback service, or in some cases temporarily shut down.”

The reimbursement will automatically be given to all participating restaurants that submit receipts as outlined in the Restaurant Rally program. The increased reimbursement will come from the existing \$7.5 million in CARES Act funds previously dedicated to the program.

Other action taken Tuesday included creation of a new program to provide up to \$100,000 to specific Pierce County food banks to help cover COVID-related expenses. Funding for the \$1.5 million program comes from the contingency reserve account Council established upon receipt of nearly \$158 million in federal CARES Act funds.

Under the Food Bank Assistance Program, 12 food banks are identified to receive up to \$100,000 in reimbursement for COVID-related expenses. This allows these small- and medium-size nonprofits to cover expenses related to adjusting operations in response to COVID-19 restrictions and frees up existing funding sources for what matters most: Providing food and resources to Pierce County families. [View the list of 12 food banks.](#)

Food bank providers not identified as one of the 12 can still apply to receive a reimbursement of up to \$20,000 for COVID-19 attributable expenses. The County’s Finance Department is responsible for implementing the program and will reach out directly to eligible food banks for distribution of the funds.

Additional emergency legislation proposed by Councilmember Marty Campbell and tied to CARES Act funding is scheduled for consideration at a special Council meeting Thursday, Nov. 19 at 1:30 p.m. These items include:

- Modification to the existing Emergency Small Business Relief Loan Program to expand financial support to offer a one-time amount of \$10,000 to main street retail and arts and culture businesses; and
- Capping the surcharge third-party restaurant delivery services impose on restaurants in unincorporated Pierce County at 15%.

The County has until Dec. 30, 2020 to expend its federal CARES Act monies.

The emergency legislation now goes to the Pierce County Executive for signature. Following that action, the departments will implement the legislation.

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