



City of Des Moines

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW CITY PROGRAM ASSISTS SENIORS, VETERANS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES DURING PANDEMIC

City of Des Moines Mayor Matt Pina and City Manager Michael Matthias are pleased to announce a new City program to help local restaurants and our senior and veteran populations during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Building on the successful take-out lunch program the City has provided for our seniors at the Activity Center throughout the Pandemic, which serves roughly 80 lunches a day (Monday – Thursday), the City is initiating the Emergency Assistance to Seniors and Vets (EATS) program. **The EATS program will provide additional meals for Seniors and Military Veterans in need while also infusing \$10,000 a month into our local economy.** The City, using resources from the King County Seniors and Vets Levy, will purchase \$2,500 in vouchers from a different local restaurant each week and provide the vouchers to our seniors. The City will also be working with the LiUNA (Laborers International Union of North America Local 242, located in Des Moines) to provide vouchers to our Veterans.

The program is anticipated to start the week of May 4 and will initially run for 3 months. A limited number of vouchers will be available at the Senior Activity Center (Monday – Thursday) and the City will provide vouchers to Veterans through LiUNA 242. The City is collaborating with local restaurants to establish the most efficient means of utilizing the vouchers.

In addition, the Meals on Wheels program, a partnership between the City and Sound Generations, with the hard work and assistance of dedicated volunteers, has nearly doubled the number of frozen meals delivered to qualifying seniors to around 400 per month.

The City of Des Moines staff and City Council continue to seek ways to assist our community and prepare for economic recovery, at the same time maintaining the financial viability of the City, as resources become more and more constrained.

The Pandemic is wreaking havoc with the global, national and local economies. There has been huge unemployment and business closures as a result of public health requirements designed to stop the spread of the virus. Everyone is challenged by this economic contraction.

The role of the City of Des Moines in the first phase of response was to support our first responders (fire, police and emergency medical) and activate the Emergency Operations Center to enhance coordination, communication and collaboration between first responders, our partner agencies, King County Emergency Operations Center, public health and state officials.

This emergency event is unique because we do not yet know the depth of the impacts or the solution to end the pandemic while retaining a healthy economy. This will be our next challenge. Emergency management begins with addressing the acute nature of the Pandemic and taking action to control the spread of the virus.

The next step is recovery, where efforts are made to return to normalcy. One very tricky part about the Pandemic is that these are uncharted waters, we do not know what the new “normalcy” will be. Nonetheless, we must prepare.

The Mayor and City Manager felt it was critical to find ways to infuse capital into our local economy, support our hard working restaurants and expand the provision of meals for our Seniors and Vets. We appreciate the flexibility of King County in the use of the Senior and Vets levy funds.

For more Information Contact Management Analyst, Rochelle Sems at 206-870-6514 or rsems@desmoineswa.gov

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