

PRESS RELEASE

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City of Benicia Receives Prestigious Crown Communities Award

Benicia, CA (January 27, 2022) — The City of Benicia is pleased to announce that it has received the 2021 Crown Communities Award from *American City & County*. One of five government organizations in the United States receiving the prestigious award this year, the City of Benicia received recognition for its COVID-19 response.

In the early days of the pandemic, the City of Benicia responded to the impact of COVID-19 on its residents and businesses in a variety of ways. Three of the most prominent were highlighted in the award application; the COVID-19 Citizen's Assistance Program, the BOOST Business Grants Program and the Vaccines for Seniors to Teens effort to provide COVID-19 vaccines to those eligible from seniors to teens. The city's response brought together every City of Benicia department and many community organizations and volunteers.

The COVID-19 Citizen's Assistance Program offered just over \$300,000 in mortgage, rent, utilities, food and gas assistance to more than 180 Benicia households from city funds and donations. Phase 3 of the program recently launched.

The six rounds of the BOOST (Business-Open-Opportunity-Support-Thrive) Business Grants Program awarded nearly \$400,000 in funding authorized by the Benicia City Council to assist those businesses most vulnerable to continue operations and local employment through payroll, rent, utility or equipment assistance. Nearly 100 businesses received grants in addition to the more than \$42,000 in funding for the Shop Benicia Bonus eGift Card promotion.

The City of Benicia was able to host early COVID-19 vaccine clinics for the most vulnerable populations, seniors, beginning on February 2, 2021. 1,500 area residents 75 years and older received their vaccines with the help of city staff and community partners like Solano Public Health, Kaiser Permanente, Medic Ambulance, SolTrans, Benicia Unified School District, Valero Benicia Refinery, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Soroptimist International of Benicia, Carquinez Village and many volunteers. Additional clinics were held when vaccines became available to 50-year-olds and again when they became available to those as

young as 16 years old. Solano Public Health is now holding mass vaccination clinics at Solano County Fairgrounds and other locations.

“I am proud and thankful of our staff and our community who played a role in our response to COVID-19,” said city manager Erik Upson. “Our staff, and elected and appointed officials, along with community organizations and volunteers, came together to make this happen. In the midst of this devastating pandemic, we all stepped up and gave our very best to help make this community safer and stronger.”

Each year, *American City & County* gives its Crown Communities Awards to municipal and county governments that have substantially implemented innovative, impactful projects over the preceding 18 months. The projects are diverse in nearly all aspects, and they represent a wide array of local government disciplines. Competition among the nominees is typically tough each year, and this year was no different in terms of the competition between projects. Winning entries are featured on the *American City & County* website. The article on the City of Benicia award is available at <https://www.americancityandcounty.com/2022/01/27/crown-communities-award-winner-benicia-calif-s-forward-thinking-pandemic-response/>.

About American City & County:

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