



Board of County Commissioners Proposed FY2019 Decision Package

Submitted by Commissioner Charlie Justice

ISSUE:

Food insecurity is a growing issue among frail seniors in Pinellas County. Based on data collected by the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, the designated partner of the state's Department of Elder Affairs, the number of seniors on the waiting list for home delivered meals jumped from 684 to 839 from 2015 to 2016. Poor diet quality and insufficient nutrient intake is of particular concern among seniors. Of the 301,305 seniors in Pinellas County, 14.6% or 43,991 are below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line. Older, lower-income seniors who have trouble driving, food shopping or paying for food are at risk of institutionalization simply because they cannot get enough food. In Pinellas County, 31% of seniors live alone. That is 93,291 people who may not see anyone all day, every day and who may not have the help they need with buying and making food.

Funding currently exists to provide 763 seniors with a home delivered meal but the 839 seniors who have been identified as needing food on a daily basis do not have access to it due to lack of sufficient funding. The Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger (TBNEH) has identified 13 zip codes within Pinellas County utilizing their hunger map that illustrates areas of the County where access to groceries and food banks is not easily accessible for seniors. Targeted outreach occurs in these areas to enroll seniors, many of which remain on the waitlist for services.

PROPOSED INITIATIVE:

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas (AAAPP) will administer a Home Delivered Meals program to deliver meals to 200 additional seniors in Pinellas County who are on a waiting list that is based on greatest economic and social need. While 839 seniors are on the waiting list, AAAPP will use the TBNEH's hunger map to identify the 200 neediest seniors for this funding. As part of the program, seniors will also receive educational materials about nutrition. Each delivered meal will comply with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and provide a minimum of 1/3 of the dietary reference intake for the predominant statewide demographic recipient, a moderately active female, age 70 or older. Hot meals will be delivered once a day 5 days per week, usually at lunchtime, with additional frozen meals delivered on Fridays and holidays. With 200 seniors receiving a meal every day of the year, this program will distribute 73,000 meals beginning October 1, 2018 and continuing through September 30, 2018.

Eligibility will be based on wait listed individuals residing in one of the targeted zip codes who are age 60 or older, who are homebound by reason of illness, disability or isolation and their spouses if the provision of the meal allows for the senior to stay at home. In addition, individuals at nutritional risk who have physical, emotional or behavioral conditions that would preclude them from obtaining such a meal at a congregate dining site would be eligible. Particular attention will be given to low-income older individuals, low-income minority elders and individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

As the designated provider of federal and state funded services to seniors in Pinellas and Pasco Counties, AAAPP will administer this program and contract with Pinellas based agencies to deliver the meals through their coordinated meal preparation and delivery infrastructure. AAAPP is governed by Florida Sunshine Laws and follows all Public Records Laws, ensuring transparency and fiduciary responsibility of the organization. AAAPP has the internal capacity to identify the seniors who will be enrolled in this program and ensure that meals are provided in accordance with the federally funded home meal delivery program. AAAPP staff are trained to monitor contracts,

provide technical assistance to its partner agencies and report on use of funding and client outcomes.

EXPECTED IMPACTS/OUTCOMES/RESULTS:

A basic outcome will be an increase in food and nutrient intake for 200 low-income seniors in targeted areas of Pinellas County. Adequate nutrition contributes to improved diet quality, reduced food insecurity and reduces the rate of seniors who need acute or long-term medical care resulting in potential decrease in hospital admissions or readmissions.

Research studies show that participation in home delivered meals programs contributes to the independence of older adults living in the community, especially those who are food insecure or those who are making transitions from acute and chronic care settings to their home. The value provided proportionate to cost is substantial as adequate nutrition results in a decreased burden on the medical system, an increase in social connectivity, a decrease in social isolation and the increased probability that the senior will be able to stay in their home and community and delay institutionalization which costs approximately \$70,000 in Medicaid each year.

This program may be the only face-to-face social interaction some homebound seniors may have during the course of a day. A Brown University study conducted in 2015 found that communities that spent more than the average to deliver meals showed greater reductions in the proportion of nursing home residents who didn't need to be there. In the study, hundreds of seniors on the waiting list to receive home delivered meals in eight sites around the country, received personally delivered fresh meals daily or weekly bulk delivered. The study concluded that seniors living alone who received meals showed statistically significant reductions in feelings of isolation, were less worried about staying in their homes, felt safer and reported better nutrient intake.

STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGY (E.G. – 5.3 Ensure Effective and efficient delivery of county services and support):

- 5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach
- 5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources
- 4.2 Invest in communities that need the most
- 2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

DEPARTMENT(S)/AGENCIES AND FUND(S) AFFECTED (IF KNOWN):

Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. currently administers this program for all of Pinellas County in partnership with Neighborly Care Network.

IS THE INITIATIVE RECURRING? **NON-RECURRING?**

ESTIMATED COST (IF KNOWN):

Expenditures	less: New Revenues or Reduced Expenditures	Net Cost
\$559,691		
\$6.97/meal x 200 seniors x 365 days = \$508,810 + \$50,881 to administer and monitor the program for validation of services and fiscal compliance.		

ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) POSITIONS REQUIRED (IF KNOWN):

N/A

Please return to Bill Berger, Office of Management & Budget, bberger@pinellascounty.org, no later than Friday, April 20. PLEASE SEND ORIGINAL, SAVED FILE TO HELP WITH UTILIZING THIS INFORMATION IN OTHER FORMATS (ie – do not scan or save as PDF before sending).