

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

*Adult Day Services Network
of Alameda County
Afghan Elderly Association
Alameda Alliance for Health
Alameda County Area
Agency on Aging
Alameda County
Commission on Aging
Alameda County
Community Food Bank
Alameda County Meals on
Wheels
Alzheimer's Services of the
East Bay
Bay Area Community
Services
Berkeley Adult Day Health
Care
Center for Elders
Independence
Crisis Support Services
Eden I&R
Eden Housing Resident
Services
Family Bridges, Inc
City of Fremont Human
Services Department
Fruitvale Senior
Center/Unity Council
J-Sei
Korean Community Center
of the East Bay
Lavender Seniors
Legal Assistance for Seniors
City of Livermore Parks and
Recreation Department
Life ElderCare
Lifelong Medical Care
Oakland Commission on
Aging
Oakland Human Services
Department
On Lok Lifeways
Public Authority for IHSS
Rebuilding Together
Oakland
Senior Support Services of
the Tri Valley
SOS Meals on Wheels
Spectrum Community
Services
St. Mary's Center
Tri-City Elders Coalition
United Seniors of Oakland
and Alameda County
Vietnamese American
Community Center of
the East Bay*

June 19, 2014

Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Budget Committee
Supervisor Keith Carson, Chair
1221 Oak Street, 5th floor
Oakland, CA

Re: Request for County Budget augmentation for senior services

Dear Supervisor Carson and Budget Committee Members,

Community-based organizations (CBOs) that contract through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to provide health and supportive services to seniors in Alameda County are in crisis. Here are the facts:

- The senior population has grown by over 25% over the last ten years. As these older adults have 'aged in place', their economic insecurity and level of frailty has increased.
- The number of seniors served and their increasingly acute and complex needs have strained the aging network.
- Over the same ten years, federal Older Americans Act funding has decreased or remained flat, and Older Californians Act funding was all but eliminated.
- There is no county match to most of the programs contracted through the AAA, and no mechanism exists for making cost-of-living adjustments. Even the Measure A-funded senior injury prevention programs contracted through the AAA do not receive a COLA.
- CBOs have meanwhile experienced Inflation at a rate of 25.5% over the last ten years.
- These multiple factors have whittled away at the infrastructure of these organizations.

In spite of their exceptional work to make up the difference with fundraising and innovative strategies, CBOs have reached a tipping point. CBOs' capacity can't meet the current demand. Some of them can't pay their workers more than minimum wage. Others instituted wage cuts years ago that have yet to be restored. Waiting lists are growing. Many CBOs are on the verge of closing programs and stepping away from service contracts.

Without intervention, we are at risk of losing service capacity that will be costly to replace, including Information and Assistance in multiple languages in Districts 3 and 5; language interpretation services throughout the county; legal services in languages other than English

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throughout the county; health education and disease prevention in Districts 3 and 5, and crisis counseling in all Districts. In the coming year, CBOs will be forced to make hard decisions to close programs that are unsustainable or to further limit access to much needed services.

These services are a necessary part of the equation in helping older adults meet the challenges of aging and live successfully in the community. They complement medical care, help seniors maintain economic stability, and often provide life-line interventions that increase safety and prevent institutionalization. AAA-contracted services include senior meals, case management, adult day care, information and assistance, friendly visiting, telephone reassurance, senior center activities, senior employment services, family caregiver support, legal services and HICAP, health services, elder abuse prevention funding, and senior injury prevention. These programs are the community-based services to which APS and other county programs, hospital discharge planners and managed care plans alike refer seniors. These programs and services are essential and effective. They will serve over 57,000 people this year, a number that has been rising every year. Our county cannot afford to lose them.

These programs urgently need stabilization funding to shore up their administrative infrastructures that support their ability to provide essential contracted services. We request a one-time budget augmentation of 15%, estimated to be roughly \$750,000, in the County's FY 2014-15 Budget. The augmentation would be distributed as a percentage of the total contract amount to CBOs for each of the services contracted through the AAA, and would be used for administrative rather than additional units of service.

Our request is made with the understanding that SSA is developing a proposal to add a staff position of Planner to the AAA, a step that we fully support as we hope that it will play a key role in providing sustainable funding for the future. Alameda County is the only AAA in California that does not have a planner and one of a few that don't have a fund development arm actively engaged in securing grants and developing financing streams.

Further, we fully support the county moving forward to develop a comprehensive plan that will address its rapidly aging population and the increasing demand for senior services that are already straining the healthcare and aging services network. Seniors are part of the SPD population that almost bankrupted our local managed care plan. We need to get a handle on the needs, innovate the services network, and engage new financing strategies.

We know that the Board of Supervisors recognizes that the County has a stake in keeping our growing population of low-income seniors stable. We hope that you are able to galvanize support at this pivotal time.

On behalf of all members of the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County, sincerely,



Wendy Peterson
Director, SSC

CC: Supervisor Nate Miley
Susan Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator
Lori Cox, Social Services Agency Director