

FY 2021-22 Budget Hearings Board Inquiry Form

Board Member	
Williams	
Hart	
Hartmann	
Nelson	
Lavagnino	X

Inquiry Number: 003

Department: Social Services
 Date: 6/4/2021
 Page(s) of PowerPoint:

Request/Question:

1. In particular, what is the status of senior nutrition needs related to CommUnify terminating their contract with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) on June 30th?
2. In general, what is the status of senior nutrition needs in the County?

1. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is planning on providing ongoing meal services to the seniors that have previously been served by CommUnify on contract with AAA, and a press release stating that was issued by the AAA on May 31st. This will commence on July 01. The AAA will continue to try to find one or more providers/partners to continue this work for the long terms.
2. When the Board of Supervisors dedicated \$200,000 in December 2019 to assist entities providing home delivered meals to seniors during the pandemic, the Department of Social Services sent an RFP to 11 providers in the County that provide home delivered meals to seniors, including CommUnify, with the stated parameters the Board had approved: low income, met criteria for home delivered meals, 60 years of age or over with no one in the house under the age of 60.

Eight (8) entities responded and four (4) were funded for a total of \$148,018.40 to assist with service provision for a total of eight (8) weeks. The focus was on making sure these entities had assistance in serving the part of their client base that had been added since the pandemic began and those on the waiting lists that met the stated criteria.

This process led to the awareness by the DSS Director that home delivered meals and congregate meals (during non-COVID times) are handled by an array of providers, some serving the whole county and some serving parts of the county. They have different criteria associated with who they serve and different ways in which they secure and deliver food. Some of the programs received additional COVID-related funding as a pass through from the AAA associated with various federal relief legislation, but others did not. As a contrast – Ventura County has an AAA that is a county department, which provides for all home delivered and congregate meals for seniors in the county.

Possible Action for Understanding

Should the Board want to have a greater understanding of senior nutrition issues in the county, a local study would need to be conducted to assess: the funding streams and fundraising efforts of these providers; client participation in meal cost; the various costs of meals; the various models being used to include volunteers versus paid staff; economic levels of clients; physical limitations of clients (need for home delivered meals versus going to a congregate site) presence, or lack of; familial support in obtaining meals; and other factors.

Additionally, the State is providing funding to Ventura County to contract for a statewide assessment of senior nutrition needs that will occur this summer and results should be known by the fall.

The combination of a local assessment and the results of the statewide assessment would be informative to the Board as the Board decides what level of actual need exists for the low-income, homebound seniors in our community. It is recommended that \$70,000 be approved for the purpose of a study (which could include outreach to clients in addition to gathering information from providers) and integration of that information with the results of the statewide assessment being overseen by Ventura County.