



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**DATE:** March 15, 2022

**03**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**AUTHORIZE COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION FOR NUTRITION SERVICES  
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services (AIS) provides a variety of programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities. AIS serves as the region's federally designated Area Agency on Aging, which provides specific services, including senior nutrition services, funded by the Older Americans Act. The State of California requires the County to submit a four-year Area Plan to the California Department of Aging to receive Older Americans Act funds. Senior nutrition services support the goals and objectives established in AIS' 2020-2024 Area Plan which was approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) on July 7, 2020 (7).

AIS contracts with local service providers throughout San Diego County to provide free and nutritionally-sound meals. These home-delivered, congregate, and take-home meals are critical to ensure access to healthy, nutritious food, to improve senior food security, and to reduce risk of chronic diseases and isolation. The fourteen existing contracts for nutrition services were awarded through a competitive solicitation authorized by the Board on October 10, 2017 (5) and are scheduled to end on June 30, 2023. Existing contracts serve approximately 1.2 million meals to 6,000 individuals throughout San Diego County annually. In order to continue these critical services, today's action requests the Board to authorize competitive solicitations for senior nutrition services.

This item supports the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that are most vulnerable, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by ensuring access to nutritionally-sound meals, promoting health, and well-being in older adults and people with disabilities, and encouraging self-sufficiency. Additionally, today's action supports the Board's strategic initiatives, by upholding practices that align with community priorities and improve transparency and trust while maintaining good fiscal management of County resources.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. In accordance with Section 401, Article XXIII of the County Administrative Code, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to issue a competitive solicitation for senior nutrition services, and upon successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award contracts for a term of one initial year with up to three option years; and to amend the contracts to reflect changes in program, funding or service requirements, subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

According to the Administration of Community Living, Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs increase health and reduce the risk of disease, malnutrition, nutrient deficiencies, and food insecurity. Utilization of these programs has led to participants eating healthier, living more independently, and having a reduced sense of isolation. The Aging & Independence Services (AIS) Senior Nutrition Program is funded by the Older Americans Act which requires resources be prioritized to individuals sixty years of age and older with an emphasis on those with greatest economic and social need. This is defined as an individual having a physical or mental disability, language barriers, and cultural or social isolation caused by, among other things, racial and ethnic status, sexual orientation, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status, gender identity, or gender expression. Through an extensive planning process, analysis of the need for services and historical data of service demand are performed to ensure the program is supporting the region's most vulnerable communities to address food insecurity, improve nutrition, and reduce social isolation. Public hearings during the development of AIS' four-year Area Plan allow residents the opportunity to comment and provide recommendations to further the department's mission of developing and coordinating community-based systems of services for all older adults in San Diego County. In addition, the recommendation to authorize the release of a competitive solicitation will allow the County of San Diego to consider proposals from a variety of firms equitably, including small businesses and minority, women and veteran-owned businesses, and provide opportunity to contractors with an adequate portfolio to provide nutrition services.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2021-23 Operational Plan for the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of \$8,493,000 starting in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The funding sources are the Title III and Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) of the Older Americans Act. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

The Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council reviewed this item at their regular meeting on February 14, 2022, and recommended approval.

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**BACKGROUND**

Through contracts with numerous organizations, the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services (AIS) provides a wide array of services for seniors, caregivers, and persons with disabilities. AIS serves as the region's federally designated Area Agency on Aging, which provides vital services funded by the Older Americans Act. These services are designed to carry out goals and objectives established in the Area Plan, which is a planning document required by the California Department of Aging to receive Older Americans Act funds. The Area Plan for the period of 2020-2024 was presented and approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) on July 7, 2020 (7).

The nutrition service system, known locally as the AIS Senior Nutrition Program, provides free and nutritionally-sound meals, nutrition education, and referrals to nutrition-related supportive services throughout San Diego County to individuals sixty years old and older, the spouse of an older adult, or a disabled person who lives at home with an older adult. Meals are provided in two settings: congregate (group setting) at senior dining centers and home-delivered meals taken to the senior's home. Congregate nutrition sites are open and accessible to the public, with transportation services provided to and from senior dining centers using passenger vans. The COVID-19 pandemic created additional hardships for seniors who are more vulnerable to and at-risk of the COVID-19 virus. Seniors were more likely to stay home in order to prevent exposure to the virus and, as a result, meals were offered to-go or via curbside delivery to minimize in-person contact.

The AIS Senior Nutrition Program serves approximately 1.2 million meals to 6,000 San Diego County residents annually through a network of fourteen contracted partners. The fourteen existing contracts for nutrition services were awarded through a competitive solicitation authorized by the Board on October 10, 2017 (5). Home-delivered, congregate, and take-home meals are critical services that the senior community depends on to ensure access to healthy and nutritious food. These services help to improve senior food security, reduce risk of chronic diseases and isolation, and allow individuals to live independently longer.

The AIS Senior Nutrition Program provides services to residents in each region of the county. Through an extensive planning process, AIS developed specific allocations to contractors based on an analysis of the need for services and historical data of service demand. This supports the Board's strategic initiatives by supporting the region's most vulnerable communities by addressing food insecurity, improving nutrition, and reducing social isolation. The existing contracts for nutrition services will end on June 30, 2023. Today's action requests the Board to authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to contract with qualified organizations to provide critical nutrition services throughout San Diego County.

The recommended action supports the continuation of critical programs for seniors and persons with disabilities, which support both the AIS Area Plan and the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision of a region that is building better health, living safely and thriving.

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**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's action to award contracts for the Senior Nutrition Program supports the County of San Diego's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan Initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Health), and Community (Quality of Life), and the *Live Well San Diego* vision by ensuring vulnerable elderly and disabled populations have ongoing and sustained access to nutritious food.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. N. Robbins-Meyer".

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER  
Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A