



COMMISSION ON SENIORS BUDGET RECOMMENDATION
20220309-04Cv
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS FOR OLDER ADULTS
Strategic Direction: Health and Environment

Date: March 9, 2022

Subject: FY23 Budget Recommendation

Motioned By: Bordie

Seconded By: Angel

Recommendation

Support expansion of scope and funding for Community Health Workers for Older Adults to serve additional program participants outside of Foundation Community permanent supportive housing properties.

Description of Recommendation to Council

In 2018 Council approved a request from the Commission on Seniors to fund Community Health Workers focused on older adults. Foundation Communities Inc. was awarded funding from Austin Public Health in 2019 to implement aging-in-place with navigation and care management services provided by a Community Health Worker with training and expertise in serving older adults (age 55+). City of Austin-Seniors 55+ (COA-SNR 55+) project services focused on increased access to preventive services, medical appointments, and other supports to address physical health, mental health, and dental health needs.

To date services have been provided to residents of Foundation Community permanent supportive housing properties. This recommendation supports expansion of services to participants residing outside of Foundation Community properties to enhance capacity for a broader scope and reach to individuals residing in single family homes or other multi-family settings.

Commission on Seniors understand this \$125,000 of initial funding will remain in the APH budget. This recommendation adjusts the approach to include a broader reach within existing funding levels. The Commission supports additional funding to enable the program to serve more older adults

Background and Rationale:

In 2018 Council approved a request from the Commission on Seniors to fund Community Health Workers focused on older adults. Foundation Communities Inc. was awarded funding from Austin Public Health in 2019 to implement aging-in-place with navigation and care management

services provided by a Community Health Worker with training and expertise in serving older adults (age 55+).

A short period of initial program implementation occurred prior to the pandemic with a focus on the approved grant deliverables but when the pandemic hit, Foundation Communities made a necessary pivot to develop a new process for services delivery. This flexibility supports the value of an approach which uses a Community Health Worker model focused on not just health care supports but all social determinants of health, transportation, health literacy, nutrition supports, etc.

An external evaluation conducted in 2021 included both qualitative and quantitative assessment of project services and participant outcomes. Both residents and staff reported ease of enrollment and access to medical supplies and devices. Access to dental care was rated as a highly valued service. Participants also cite the importance of a strong case manager in supporting successful navigation to care, especially during the pandemic. Added value also reported by residents and volunteers was an increased opportunity to connect with others and reduce social isolation. The project served 261 participants and at the time of evaluation 85% had maintained public benefits accessed through the program case management services and supports. 20,286 case management sessions were provided, far above the initial goal of 4,000 indicating the importance of the navigation assistance provided by this project.

These positive outcomes support Commission on Seniors recommendation for continued funding and expansion of this model. In addition, several speakers at the Budget Townhalls cited the need for continuation and expansion of Community Health Workers.

Vote

For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Angel, Bauman, Bordie, De Maria Nicola, Garcia-Pittman, Kareithi, Lopez-Guerrero, Lugo, Spain, Temperley, Van Sickle

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Cagle

Attest:


Janee Briesemeister, Chair