



**COMMISSION ON AGING RECOMMENDATION**  
**Recommendation Number: 20230308-7vii**  
**ALLOCATION OF NEW FUNDS FOR EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ON**  
**EMERGENCY RESOURCES**

**Strategic Direction:** Affordability and Government That Works

**Date:** March 8, 2023

**Subject:** FY2024 Budget Recommendations

**Motioned By:** Briesemeister

**Seconded By:** Angel

**Recommendation:**

The Commission on Aging recommends \$70,000 funding for a Community Health Worker to be housed at Austin Public Health, Age-Friendly to provide services and support to older adults (50+) in key demographic areas with a specific focus on increasing reach to People of Color, LGBTQIA+ persons, low-income communities and other underrepresented or vulnerable older adults.

**Rationale:**

Recent surveys of older adults in Austin including the City Services for Older Adults 2022 Audit, show that older adults lack awareness of services available in the community. In the City Audit, community support providers ranked Community Health Support and Health Services as 4.5 out of 10 and 70% disagreed that the City has sufficient programs and support for older adults. Connection to and response from older adults has also been weak in key areas of the city, with lowest responses primarily in east Austin. A Community Health Worker specifically assigned to work with older adults can help to bridge the gap between those in need and the health and wellness supports that will improve their quality of life.

In a recent pilot of Community Health Workers for older adults, Foundation Communities found that 90% of enrollees received at least 2 preventive services including COVID vaccines and 63% of individuals attended an appointment after receiving a referral. They were additionally able to help with social isolation, check in calls, and resources referrals such as dental care, home support, access to food and more. This pilot demonstrates the effectiveness of Community Health Workers in Austin, however the 2022 report indicates that there is still a great need in our community to help older adults access programs and services. A Community Health Worker is a frontline public health worker. They serve as a bridge between their community and the government, the healthcare industry and social service systems. They work in all geographic settings but are most often found in underprivileged and marginalized communities where people lack access to affordable and quality health care.

The new Community Health Worker would be housed at Austin Public Health and work in tandem with the Age-friendly staff team and coordinate with existing community health worker programs, both City, County and State that already have established contacts in communities where response has been low to provide information to the older adults in those areas, as well as provide vital feedback to APH and the Commission on Aging of the needs of those older adults.

The Community Health Worker would:

- Educate individuals on health issues and teach them strategies to improve their well-being.
- Give educational presentations at senior centers, congregations and gathering places.
- Help people learn how to find and access resources like quality care and health information, health insurance, housing or food.
- Put communities in contact with health care or social services.
- Give health screenings and referrals.
- Help people complete applications for insurance or health services.
- Facilitate communication during interactions with healthcare or social service systems.
- Interpret and translate between health care services providers and patients.
- Collecting data and reporting findings to healthcare providers.

**Date of Approval:** March 8, 2023

**Record of the vote:**

**For:** Chair Temperley, Vice-Chair Bondi, Angel, Bordie, Briesemeister, De Maria Nicola, Garcia-Pittman, Lugo, Van Sickle, Van De Putte, Varteressian.

**Against:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Bauman, Kareithi, Lopez-Guerrero



Attest:

Amy Temperley, Chair