

MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Inter-Office Memorandum

DATE: December 31, 2020

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Shakita LaGrant McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by Dan Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, Aging Division

SUBJECT: **Report from the Director, Division on Aging, requesting authorization to enter into a 2021 purchase of service contract with American United Transportation, Inc. (AUT) from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a cost of \$250,000.**

Issue

The Interim Executive Director, Division on Aging, is requesting authorization to enter into a 2021 purchase of service contract with American United Transportation, Inc. at a cost of \$250,000 from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 to deliver meals from the senior congregate dining program to Milwaukee County's older adult residents who are unable to pick up meals from senior dining sites.

Background and Rationale

The recommended contract allocation will allow the Division on Aging to deliver congregate meals to older adult residents of Milwaukee County who are unable to pick up meals from senior dining sites for the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, or until such time as congregate dining resumes at the senior dining sites. These weekday meals provide nutritious food security to older adult residents.

Division staff will coordinate and monitor this program. Specific program guidelines have been included in the proposed contract. The vendor is required to provide monthly reports that assist the Division to:

- Evaluate vendor performance
- Track spending
- Analyze service indicators and demographics

Congregate Meal Delivery for Older Adults

Through AUT, the Division on Aging's congregate dining program will continue to provide nutritious weekday lunches to older adults who are registered senior diners, but who are unable to travel to a senior dining site to pick up their meal during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Since the emergency declaration, congregate dining at the senior meal sites has been suspended and replaced with "take out" services, where registered senior diners, or their proxy, can drive to the meal site and

pick their lunch in their vehicle. However, for some senior diners, driving to the meal site, or sending a proxy to pick up their meal was not possible, so the Division on Aging responded by providing meal delivery from the dining sites to these individual residents. These individuals generally would not qualify or choose to participate in the separate Meals on Wheels program. This congregate meal delivery program grew in popularity and allowed hundreds of new seniors access to weekday lunches through the congregate dining program throughout 2020. The majority of participants who receive a lunch through this congregate meal delivery service are people of color.

The Division previously contracted with Able Access Transportation to provide this service. Able Access made a business decision to discontinue this contract with Milwaukee County in 2021. The 2021 award recommendation of \$250,000 is based upon the amount of funding allocated by the DHHS Housing Division from the Community Development Block Grant and earmarked for this purpose in 2021. These CDBG funds can be used to serve residents in Milwaukee County exclusive of the cities of Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis. Additional funding sources continue to be pursued in order to continue meal delivery in all municipalities in Milwaukee County. However, the sum certain should be sufficient to continue meal deliveries to all residents requesting this service during the remaining months of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

Racial Equity Impact

As noted, participation in the congregate meal program is disproportionately weighted toward people of color. At the same time, lack of available transportation for households is a more common issue in neighborhoods of Milwaukee that are primarily populated by African Americans. For example, in the Amani neighborhood, 92% of residents are African American and over a third (37%) do not have a vehicle available to their household, compared to 14% of households across Milwaukee County.¹ For example, a third of the congregate meal deliveries are made to participants from the Clinton Rose and McGovern senior centers, who are almost entirely African-American.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services to enter into this 2021 purchase of service contract with American United Transportation Inc. per the narrative above and in the amounts specified in the accompanying resolution.

Because of the late decision of the previous vendor to discontinue services in 2021, the full Milwaukee County Commission on Aging did not meet before this vendor was identified. However, at its meeting on November 13, 2020, the Commission on Aging discussed the specialized transportation contract and authorized Division staff to move forward with efforts to secure a new vendor with the understanding that meal deliveries would be provided by a separate vendor in 2021.

¹ Amani BNCP Profile, Data You Can Use. <https://datayoucanuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Amani-BNCP-Profile.pdf>

Fiscal Effect

A total of \$250,000 is reflected in the recommended purchase of service contract. Congregate Meal Delivery services provided through the Milwaukee County Division on Aging is financed through Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds awarded to the DHHS Housing Division as part of a nationwide allocation to respond to COVID-19. In December, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved the allocation of CDBG funding through File 20-863. Additional sources of funding, if needed, can be awarded through the federal Older Americans Act (OAA), section 85.21 Specialized Transportation Funds for counties, and State Basic County Allocation funds. A fiscal note form is attached.

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant McClain, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive David Crowley
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Chair, Health & Human Needs Committee
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