

**County of Milwaukee**  
Interoffice Communication

DATE: February 14, 2018

TO: Sup. Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Sup. Supreme Moore Omukunde, Chair, Health and Human Needs Committee

FROM: Holly Davis, Milwaukee County Department on Aging

RE: Informational report on programming at the five county-owned senior centers

I respectfully request that the attached informational report be scheduled for consideration by the Committee on Health and Human Needs at its March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

At the December 14, 2017 meeting of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, the County Board approved File 17-763 which authorized our Department to enter into a purchase-of-service contract with Interfaith Older Adult Programs Inc. to coordinate programming at five county-owned senior centers (Clinton Rose Senior Center, Wilson Park Senior Center, Kelly Senior Center, Washington Park Senior Center, and McGovern Senior Center). The contract that was approved was for \$1,122,867 for the period of January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

The 2018 Adopted Budget indicated that the senior center service contract is funded through June 1, 2018, after which time the contract would be month-to-month through December 31, 2018. The 2018 Adopted Budget provided funding based on the annualized contract amount of \$1,122,867. Of the \$1,122,867 provided for this contract, funding from June 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 (\$655,006) is in an allocated contingency account within the Appropriation for Contingencies.

Due to the reduction in funding for senior center programming, Interfaith (UNISON) has made several staffing and operational changes. Effective December 6, 2017, Interfaith (UNISON) made the decision to eliminate the following 8 positions: 1 Senior Center Manager, 2 Senior Center Program Coordinators, 1 Senior Center Custodian (part-time), 1 Senior Meal Coordinator, and 3 Dining Site Supervisors. In addition, senior center staff at Washington Park, Clinton Rose, and McGovern senior centers have assumed responsibility for the operation of the dining sites at these locations. Interfaith's Wellness Coordinator is also assisting with the dining site operations at these three sites. Other staffing changes made by Interfaith (UNISON) include moving the offices of the organization's Director of

Senior Centers and Assistant Director of Senior Centers to Wilson Park Senior Center, and moving one of the senior center managers to a different location. There is also one manager overseeing both Wilson Park and Kelly senior centers.

Since the beginning of this year we have been closely monitoring the impact of the senior center contract funding reduction through the following activities:

- Our senior center contract monitor has routinely visited all of the centers and talked to customers and volunteers to assess any impact on programming on seniors. In addition, our contract monitor has spoken to all of the senior center managers to get their perspective on any programming changes to date.
- Our Human Service Outreach Worker is routinely available one day per week at each center and assists members with questions, shares resources, and communicates issues or concerns to MCDA management and staff.
- We met with Interfaith (UNISON) management staff and Commission on Aging member/County Supervisor Steve Taylor on January 29th to discuss staffing and operational changes to date, and to discuss any impact on programming for seniors

While all of these changes have only been in effect for a couple of months, what we have learned to date from these interactions is that Interfaith is managing this transition with minimal impact on seniors. Senior centers continue to remain open five days per week (from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm) and meal operations continue as normal. All ongoing activities offered at each center have remained the same. At our meeting with Interfaith (UNISON) staff on January 29<sup>th</sup>, we were told that they have put senior day trips on hold, and that the organization is assessing the feasibility of continuing those trips. Washington Park Senior Center staff reports that they will be unable to execute their annual fundraiser this year due to a lack of staff time. Otherwise, the senior center managers report no other complaints or concerns to our staff. Our senior center contract monitor will continue to visit the centers to collect feedback, and she will be attending senior center Advisory Council meetings in the future to collect additional input from seniors and staff.

It is also important to note that the number of “specialized” programs and classes offered at each senior center has not changed. For example, classes and programs such as Woodshop, piano lessons, hand weights, open computer lab, StockBox, Silver Steppers, sewing class, bingo, Tai Chai, and rubber stamping class (among many) continue as normal.

We have heard some concern about the impact of the budget cuts on wellness programming at the centers. In the past, Interfaith (UNISON) employed a full-time Wellness Coordinator; at present, this individual splits his time between coordinating wellness activities and nutrition site programming. Communication with Interfaith’s Wellness Coordinator indicates that he is currently at the 5 centers once per week with multiple orientation times throughout the day where participants can attend. Since transitioning to

this new position, he indicates that there have been two instances where orientations have been impacted – and both situations were easily corrected. Otherwise, personal training, the Start Right Program, health talks, circuit training, and other wellness activities continue as normal, and the Coordinator is hopeful that more wellness opportunities will be added in the future.

Finally, below is a summary of the yearly unduplicated client count from all five senior centers:

2014 Total Participants: 7,437

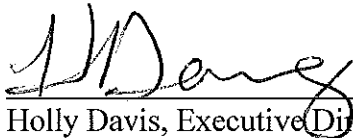
2015 Total Participants: 7,250

2016 Total Participants: 7,022

2017 Total Participants: 6,437

Moving forward, we will closely tracking these client participation numbers, as well as any programming or operational changes, and we will report those to you as soon as we get them.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 289-6876.



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Holly Davis, Executive Director

Milwaukee County Department on Aging

cc: County Executive Chris Abele  
County Supervisor Steve Taylor  
County Supervisor Marina Dimitrejevic  
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