

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

353 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335



DATE: April 22, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

Jeffrey V. Smith, MD., JD., County Executive

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Agency Director *RM*

SUBJECT: Off Agenda Report RE: Congregate Meals Services

Under the advisement from April 21, 2020 Board of Supervisors (Board) meeting: Receive report from the Social Services Agency relating to logistics of increasing food distribution points under the Nutrition Program.

The requirements to bring a new congregate meals site online for to-go meals or a new Meals on Wheels program are detailed below. In most respects, the process for both are identical so they are addressed together. The logistics of providing food distribution sites that are not part of the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) are less complicated and may be able to be brought online more quickly and do not need to be done through SNP.

1. Food distribution points versus SNP Nutrition sites
SNP distributes food through hot lunches or home-delivered meals that meet Older Americans Act guidelines, including age restrictions on the participants and nutrition guidelines specially tailored to older adult needs. In the current pandemic, food needs cross all demographics and far exceed the historically limited scope of the SNP. SNP contracts limit the populations that can be served, so while providers may be able to expand service to other populations, those services would be through a different agreement.
2. Current SNP Providers Are Meeting Older Adult Demand in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020
Both congregate meal and Meals on Wheels providers are meeting the current demand of their clients and SNP is doing contract amendments to add meals to sites with additional demand for FY2019-20. However, FY2020-21 funding is currently unknown and may impact ability to meet demand past this date. Some sites also have capacity to serve additional meals to younger individuals, but this would have to be done through a separate contract.

3. Adding New Locations/Vendors

a. Procurement Process

The County's Chapter 5 Policy allows the option to enter into emergency agreements without needing to activate a solicitation. Therefore, a solicitation is not needed for temporary interventions to address the County emergency needs. In addition, the County Executive Officer (CEO) secured a Delegation of Authority (DOA) to execute contracts that are considered emergency COVID-19 related contracts. Emergency contracts are the most expedient method and would allow creation of new contracts with existing SNP vendors that allow them to serve younger age groups.

If the idea is to secure vendors for long term services, using the County's locations. There are two approaches to consider:

- I. Amend contracts with current vendors that previously participated in the County's solicitation if the scope is within the previous Request for Proposal (RFP) boundaries. This would require vendors to follow Older American Act guidelines and may limit the populations that can be served.
- II. Consider an open solicitation, such as an Informal Competitive Procurement (ICP) if the budget is with smaller, or an RFP if the ICP threshold is exceeded. This could serve a more flexible population.

b. Preliminary Market Research

Finding vendors with acceptable kitchens is a prerequisite to open a cook on site location, and this has historically been difficult, but may be easier in the short term with many tech companies and restaurants closed.

Alternatively, a catered location or food distribution site could be opened at more locations and may be able to operate longer term than operating out of a temporarily closed restaurant or business' cafeteria. Although catered locations also need to have a kitchen, the kitchen requirements are reduced. Food distribution sites need a hand washing station and food holding station that matches the type of food being provided (hot, refrigerated, or frozen). While Bateman, the current County Meals on Wheels subcontractor, may be limited in the number of meals it delivers, its contract allows it to cater to congregate meal locations. If a new location is secured, Bateman might have capacity to cater to that location and no contract amendment would be needed. Other vendors may also be able to cater or deliver prepackaged or frozen meals to a new location, including and not limited to MoonChef, an Asian-food caterer out of San Francisco who caters to several SNP sites.

4. Bringing a New Provider Online

There are several requirements before a new meal site, home delivered meals provider, or food distribution location can be brought online. For cook on site and catered locations the timeline can range from about 1 month to 4.5 months plus time to get a Department of Environment Health (DEH) permit and additional time needed to hire staff. This timeline is likely to take longer with the shelter in place order. Food distribution sites may be slightly shorter.

The factors are:

- a. Current DEH permit & report must be in place. If not already issued, DEH will have to issue a new permit. Currently, DEH is closed as a result of the pandemic and the timelines for issuance are not known. (None or unknown)
- b. Current Fire Permit. (None or 2 weeks)
- c. Hire staff. (None to 3 weeks)
- d. Current Food Safety certificate for at least one employee. The current timeline to get a new certificate is two months but existing staff could already have a certificate. (None or 2 months)
- e. Training. Staff and/or volunteers to oversee management and food distribution must be trained and this training usually takes one week. (1 week)
- f. Menu. Menu approval requires 1 weeks and 1 week to create a food ordering process and order food. Menu approval may be shorter if site is catered by Bateman. (2 weeks total)

5. Alternative Meal Models

An alternative to opening a new meal site might be providing county funding for to-go meals at local restaurants using a restaurant voucher meal program or by engaging them to operate and provide emergency meals. Currently, SNP is working on an agreement to partner with The Health Trust on a small pilot restaurant voucher program and restaurants should come online in early FY21. A larger scale program might be able to serve more people and more parts of the county. The benefits of this program are that permits are already in place, food could be provided in diverse areas of the County including food desserts, and local small businesses could chose to participate and generate additional revenue, it is not time limited and will not end when the shelter in place order is lifted , and it is not an Older Americans Act program so eligibility rules are less rigid.

In addition to a restaurant voucher program, the County could contract directly with restaurants to provide meals or food distribution of surplus restaurant food supply.

- c: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board