

Memorandum

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Laura Blackmon, County Manager

FROM: Gwen Harvey, Assistant County Manager

RE: Senior Congregate Meals –Transition to the Department on Aging
Proposed in FY09-10 Budget

DATE: February 24, 2009

This memorandum provides further background and an additional preview of a proposed change in service delivery contemplated for the Manager's recommended budget in FY09-10. The re-deployment of existing Federal and County funds to effect the transfer of the senior congregate meals program from Joint Community Action Agency (JOCCA) to the Department on Aging (Aging) was referenced as a priority goal of the Department and endorsed by the Aging Advisory Board in the annual report to the Master Aging Plan (MAP) presented to the BOCC at its meeting on February 17, 2009.

JOCCA is the private, non-profit organization established in 1996 to seek funds, administer programs, and provide services to low-wealth families and individuals in Orange and Chatham Counties. Their services have included the congregate nutrition program, Workforce Investment Act Programs (adult, dislocated workers, and youth), weatherization and heating appliance repairs/replacements, and community services assistance.

Since incorporation JOCCA has administered the congregate nutrition program for seniors in both counties providing hot lunches on a daily basis to low-wealth seniors. The meals are offered at no cost to registered seniors although donations are also accepted. Historically meal locations in Orange County have included Northside (Chapel Hill), Chapel Hill Senior Center (The Galleria), Efland-Cheeks, Northern, and Hillsborough. However with the opening of the Seymour Center, senior meals at Northside and the Chapel Hill Senior Center merged. The same consolidation took place with the opening of the new Northern/Central Orange Senior Center in the Meadowlands; senior meals were combined at the new facility in Hillsborough.

Just as Aging and JOCCA worked together over the past 12-18 months to prepare for the consolidation of operations at the two centers, they have also worked (Aging with the Advisory Board on Aging, a special Food Services Innovations Committee, the

Manager's Office, and Budget; and JOCCA with its Board of Directors) to develop a new approach to food services and delivery. The Food Services Innovation Committee has included senior meal participants, JOCCA, and the leadership of community non-profits and County departmental representatives. The Committee wants to update, streamline, and "green" the Orange County program. The plans is to make maximum use of the commercial kitchen at the Seymour Center, cultivate and utilize local food products, and cater to changing dietary needs and interests among the elderly. Ultimately the plan would incorporate jobs readiness and training in the culinary arts for Work First participants from Department of Social Services.

JOCCA currently receives the bulk of its annual funding to operate the senior congregate meals program through a Triangle J COG (TJCG) pass-through under the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG). JOCCA has contracted with a caterer, Bateman, in Cumberland County to prepare and deliver the meals at the Orange County sites. JOCCA has also secured annual appropriations from the County and the Towns through their outside agency application process to further underwrite senior congregate meals. In FY08-09 JOCCA received \$338,439 in HCCBG funding and \$45,000; \$18,900; and \$7,000 respectively from Orange County, Chapel Hill, and Carrboro.

Aging is finalizing a proposed budget (business plan) for assuming operation of the program starting on July 1, 2009 using funds currently appropriated from all sources to JOCCA. Aging has alerted the Towns to the proposed change and submitted applications under their outside agency application process. JOCCA will remain responsible for its dislocated worker and weatherization programs in Orange and Chatham and is continuing to seek outside agency support from the County and Towns for those purposes.

County Management and Aging remain in direct contact with Sandy Sanchez, the Executive Director of JOCCA, regarding a smooth transition should the proposal meet with BOCC approval in the budget process. Transition plans call for assimilating the permanent JOCCA staff associated with the senior congregate meals program and maintaining collaboration and consultation, staff to staff, to ensure the seniors being served continue to be well served.

If there are additional questions please contact Gwen Harvey or Jerry Passmore.