

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: April 21, 2021

To: Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee

Attn: Erika Pulst, Legislative Assistant II
Office of the City Clerk

From: Laura Trejo, General Manager
Department of Aging 
Laura Trejo (Apr 21, 2021 14:58 PDT)

Subject: **LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF AGING RESPONSE TO
PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET**

The Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 for the Los Angeles Department of Aging (LADOA) is consistent with the needs of older adults. The Department recognizes that the COVID19 crisis has created new challenges and appreciates continued funding for senior services that includes the Mini-MPCs, the homeless seniors Older Workers Employment Program, and the Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs.

We are especially grateful for the additional funding provided for congregate meals. One of the major lessons of the pandemic has been the need to address hunger and food insecurity among older adults in our City. While the need is great and grows daily, we recognize the support for those most in need.

Response to COVID19 Crisis

During the pandemic, LADOA and its community-based partners have adjusted and adapted existing programs, implemented new services, and redesigned our entire delivery infrastructure in response to the COVID19 health crisis which so disproportionately robbed older adult Angelenos of their sense of safety and claimed 8 out of 10 of the lives lost among this age group.

In the last year, the Elderly Nutrition, Senior Emergency Meals and Great Plates programs served nearly 21,000 seniors, providing 8.6 million meals, all while providing job security and helping to save more than 1,500 direct union and non-union jobs in the struggling hospitality and food service industry that included 31 local restaurants of which 70% are minority owned and helped with the cab drivers employed to deliver the meals, as well as, hundreds more indirect jobs of restaurant vendors and suppliers, providing a lifeline in addition to protecting the jobs of our network of community based not-for profits, caterers, and production kitchens. While the Elderly Nutrition Program continues, the

Senior Emergency Meals and Great Plates programs ended their service on April 15, 2021.

LADOA Operations

The Department is requesting restoration of three grants funded positions (2) Senior Management Analyst I that serve as leads to our contracts and budget divisions, and (1) Community Program Assistant III position that support our community-based outreach and education targeting underserved ethnic minority communities. The Department of Aging today, in addition to continued vacancy rates consistently exceeding 30%, is also operating at an all-time low in its staffing pattern with only 44 positions in last year's budget and now only 40 FTEs in the FY 2021-2022 propose budget. While our responsibilities expand, the population is rapidly growing, and the complex needs of older adults are becoming more evident, our administrative infrastructure has been so eroded that we are struggling to perform basic tasks.

The department is asking that for \$439,785 to provide for the Separation Incentive Program (SIP) payouts. The proposed budget calls for Older Americans Act Fund (\$327,705), Proposition A Local Transit Assistance Fund (\$45,773), and Community Development Trust Fund (\$13,300), in addition there is a gap of \$88,913 not referenced in the budget proposal. The current Older American's Act and Community Development Trust Fund cannot be used for the SIP payouts as they are in violation of our grant authorities.

While as advocates we applaud increases to services, we must also caution that staff resources are needed to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of our work.

The Needs of Aging Population

As the City prepares to reallocate police and to receive American Rescue Plan funds, I trust that the needs of older adults will not be ignored. In my March 4, 2021, memo to Council titled "Meeting the Growing Needs of Aging Population," I outlined four major areas that are in desperate need of your attention, including:

- Food Insecurity
- Digital Divide
- Fighting Ageism
- Comprehensive/No-Wrong Door

I look forward to discussing with you how to best serve older adults and their family caregivers in our City.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (213) 202-5645.