



Cochise County Office of the County Administrator

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MEMO

Date: July 25, 2022
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Richard Karwaczka, Belvet Elsouhag, Alicia Thompson and Elda Orduno
Subject: Reduction in Force Plan for Area Agency on Aging Case Management

The following Reduction in Force Plan is provided to the Board of Supervisors in compliance with Merit Rule 6.1 (B): *Reduction in Force*.

Workforce Reduction Background and Process

- The funding source for the AAA Case Management program is the Southeastern Governments Organization (SEAGO). One of the objectives listed for the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in the SEAGO's Five-Year Strategic Plan FY21-FY25 issued in July 2020, is to Increase Operational Control and Service Delivery Efficiency. The transition of case management services from a contracted service to a service provided in-house by SEAGO staff is part of this strategic objective. It applies to the entire SEAGO region which includes the following Counties: Santa Cruz, Greenlee, Graham, and Cochise Counties. Santa Cruz County AAA Case Management services, consisting of one case manager, were transitioned to in-house in FY22.
- CHSS AAA case management vendors for the SEAGO region were first informed by the SEAGO AAA Director of the intention to transition case management in-house soon after the publication of the Strategic Plan in 2020. There was no timetable established in advance for the transition. On April 28, 2022, the Public Fiduciary was informed of the deadline to transition services by being offered an abbreviated contract term for renewal. The FY23 contract term offered is three months, from July 1, 2022, to October 31, 2022.

- The SEAGO AAA Director, Laura Villa, has expressed her intentions to invite all current CHSS AAA Case Managers to apply for the new positions at SEAGO. At the Public Fiduciary's request, a meeting was held with Laura Villa and Carrie Gibbons, SEAGO's Case Manager Coordinator, on May 9, 2022. The Public Fiduciary shared her concern regarding the challenges CHSS-AAA will face to fulfill contract responsibilities should case managers leave their employment prior to the end of the contract and the impact on services to the community. The Public Fiduciary noted that if case managers are uncertain of their employment with SEAGO or CHSS, they are likely to seek opportunities elsewhere well before the yearend Holiday Season. The Public Fiduciary has requested that SEAGO starts posting the available positions as soon as possible after July 1, 2022. This is with the purpose of allowing current CHSS-AAA case managers to apply for employment and have a decision from SEAGO well before the end of the contract. This would allow SEAGO to set start dates of employment for November 1, 2022, and allow CHSS AAA case managers, who will transition to SEAGO, to remain with CHSS through October 31, 2022. The Public Fiduciary also informed Laura Villa that case management services will be put on hold if CHSS does not have enough case managers to provide the services and that this will affect SEAGO's ability to utilize funding for other services that are provided only after client assessment and authorization by CHSS case managers. The timeline for SEAGO to hire these positions has not been established.
- Human Resources will issue 60-day notifications to CHSS-AAA employees as required by the Reduction in Force Policy. The last employment date with the County for any CHSS AAA Case Managers shall not be later than October 31, 2022.

Positions Affected

- Four full-time, non-exempt, case manager positions located in the County Regional Service Centers as follows. One of the four positions became vacant on July 5, 2022.
 - Benson – 2 positions
 - Douglas – 1 position
 - Sierra Vista – 1 position

Financial Impact

- General Fund Savings: The County will no longer be required to provide a matching cash contribution between \$48k to \$80k per year.

- Current County In-Kind Contribution: The County's in-kind contribution for FY22 is \$42,279 which includes management time by the Public Fiduciary and Deputy Public Fiduciary who are not compensated with CHSS-AAA grant funds.
- New County In-Kind Support/Contribution: After the end of the FY23 contract, SEAGO is requesting continued use of office space, office equipment and everything currently in use by CHSS-AAA case managers. The current office space alone, at an estimated market rate of \$700 per office, represents a value of \$33,600 per year. A meeting was held by County Administration with SEAGO to discuss their request. Laura Villa, SEAGO AAA Director, has expressed that the County's continued in-kind contribution with office space at a minimum is a key requirement for the case management program to successfully move in-house with SEAGO and for SEAGO to continue bringing services to Cochise County. Laura Villa estimates that funds for services brought by SEAGO to Cochise County residents are \$1.1 million.
- A separate lease agreement can be negotiated with SEAGO to formalize these in-kind terms.

Service Impact

- The Area Agency on Aging Case Management program currently serves 450 clients. Services are provided to all cities in the County except for Bisbee and Naco which are covered by SEAGO case management.
- Services are expected to continue without a negative impact to County residents, except for any temporary interruption due to staffing during the transition of services from CHSS to SEAGO.

Timeline for Implementation

- The FY23 SEAGO-CHSS AAA proposed contract term is July 1, 2022, through October 31, 2022. This contract term is intended to allow SEAGO time to post the case management positions and conduct interviews and transition the program before the end of year holidays. The timeline for posting positions, selecting case managers, and making job offers, depends solely on SEAGO.

Alternatives

- None identified.