MEMORANDUM

Date: January 8, 2019

To: Jan Lesher
Chief Deputy County Administrator

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

Re: **Outside Agency Citizen Review Committee – Review a Funding Request from the Pima Council on Aging Regarding the Senior Companion Program**

I am enclosing a description of the Senior Companion Program. The Pima Council on Aging (PCOA) has described in the material their funding request relates to a required federal grant award match of $23,523 and additional funding of approximately $70,000 from outside sources in their view, to make the project successful. I would propose that since they have already raised nearly $10,000 from other sources, that the $70,000 requirement be split equally between the City of Tucson and Pima County. Therefore, I would ask the Outside Agency Citizen Review Committee for their consideration of funding this request at $30,000 annually from the Outside Agency Program. The PCOA would be willing to make a presentation of this program to the Outside Agency Committee at their convenience.

CHH/lab

Attachment

c: The Honorable Richard Elías, Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors
W. Mark Clark, President and CEO, Pima Council on Aging

PCOA
Aging well for life

Senior Companion Program Request

About PCOA

Independence. Vitality. Respect.

Since 1967, PCOA has led the way to improve the experience of aging for the communities of Pima County, Arizona. PCOA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inclusive, innovative, and integrated services that meet the changing needs of Pima County's older adults. Providing expert services, advocacy, and unbiased information for older people and their families is at the heart of our work.

PCOA helps our community age well through a network of programs and services, provided directly by our knowledgeable staff and volunteers, or offered through agreements with community partners.

In everything we do, we advocate for the rights and needs of older adults. We provide resources and information to help people make informed choices and find solutions that are right for them. And we offer education and services to help each older member of our community live an independent, vibrant life.

Over five decades, PCOA has grown to a $12 million a year organization, employing nearly 80 staff and 150 volunteers in service to our community, and serving more than 20,000 people each year. We offer an array of healthy living programs, in-home help, education, advocacy, rights and benefits assistance, and family caregiver services.

About the Senior Companion Program

Seniors Serving Seniors.

The Senior Companion Program is a unique volunteer-based program providing free supportive services that allow homebound older adults to continue living as independently as possible, out of institutionalized care, for as long as possible. Volunteers age 55 and older provide services to vulnerable older people in our community and their unpaid caregivers. Senior Companion volunteers will provide 38,000 hours of service this year through companionship, respite for caregivers, and advocacy, to support more than 250 homebound and isolated older adults.

PCOA's Senior Companion Program has selected two primary activities - support for independent living and no-cost respite care - based on on-going assessment of community need, complementary services already available through community partners, and the input and feedback of the people we serve, their caregivers, and our Senior Companion volunteers.

Volunteers provide the following services:

Companionship and Outreach - Targeting older adults who experience loneliness and depression, Senior Companions provide regular friendly visits and help with activities of daily living. Older people receive the support they need to remain living independently in their homes, as well as critical socialization that reduces isolation and improves overall mental and physical well-being.

Respite - Caregivers need time for themselves to remain healthy, take care of their own needs, and continue to care for older loved ones. Senior Companions act as respite caregivers by visiting homes on a regularly scheduled basis and helping to care for homebound older adults while their primary caregivers rest, take care of personal business, or attend caregiver support groups.

PCOA is working with local organizations that act as partner sites to serve older people in need of support. PCOA recruits, trains and supports volunteers, and assigns them to one of our partner sites in Tucson and surrounding Pima County. The program then matches each person served by these sites with a caring, trained volunteer to act as a friend and substitute caregiver and to provide one-to-one support. The program provides small hourly stipends to the low-income volunteers, increasing their independence and quality of life without reducing their Social Security benefits.

Senior Companions visit with their clients one to two times weekly, depending on the needs of each person. There are no fees for the people we serve, their families and caregivers, or our partner organizations. The Senior Companion Program is built on proven-effective practices and incorporates those into the program structure. Each Senior Companion volunteer receives intensive and on-going training, including monthly in-services, to prepare them and support them in effectively serving older adults. As a part of the national Senior Corps initiative, a cousin of both Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, the Senior Companion Program uses a national model but is highly customized at the local level to meet the needs of our community, while benefitting from a larger system of tools and support to help us be successful.

Goals & Metrics

The goal of the Senior Companion Program is to help older adults in our community live independently, out of institutionalized care, for as long as possible. The Senior Companion Program improves the lives of older adults, the families who care for them, and the volunteers who find new meaning in helping others.

The Senior Companion Program uses two survey tools to assess the impact of the program on the lives of the older adults we serve: 1. an Independent Living Survey completed annually by each older adult served, and 2. a Respite Survey completed by each family caregiver. Responses use a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree) to measure the impact

of the volunteer's service on factors such as loneliness, nutrition and access to medical care, including the degree to which services allowed each person to remain in their living situation.

Surveys will be distributed in English and Spanish to older service recipients and family caregivers. Survey data will be reviewed by the Senior Companion Program Advisory Council, a non-voting advisory board made up of experts in the senior services arena. This body evaluates areas of concern and makes recommendations for programmatic improvements. We will report the successes and challenges experienced by the Senior Companion Program to stakeholders through direct reporting at the end of a funding or project period, as well as through our Annual Report.

Request for Support

A New Start.

In 2001, the Senior Companion Program was brought to Pima County by Our Family Services, another nonprofit organization serving our community, which successfully operated the program for 17 years. In the past year, Our Family Services revised its mission, determined that the program was no longer a good fit for the organization, and closed the program as of June 30, 2018. Through a competitive application process, PCOA received a federal grant award from the Corporation for National and Community Service to continue the Senior Companion Program in Pima County beginning July 1, 2018. We are delighted to be able to keep this invaluable program in our community.

We are currently in the beginning phases of the program. We've hired a Program Coordinator and Assistant, are accepting applications for Senior Companion volunteers, and have sent invitations to apply to all the previous Our Family volunteers. We began training our first group of 9 volunteers in November. We identified six community partner stations, including the Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui nations, Jewish Family & Children's Services, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, the Southern AZ VA Healthcare System, and St. Luke's Home. PCOA's family caregiving and in-home services programs will also serve as stations.

Finally, we are seeking funding partners to help us get the program back up to speed. Our federal grant award requires a match of $23,523, and additional costs of operating the program mean that we need to raise a total of about $70,000 annually to make it successful.

PCOA believes so strongly in the Senior Companion Program that we have committed our own unrestricted funds to support the program start-up. This means less funding for other critical programs, and is not something we can continue indefinitely, but we know that it will take some time to build the support we need to cover the program's costs.

We're turning to key partners like Pima County to help us make it through this first year while we work on longer-term funding for the program, and plan to apply in future years. We are submitting a request for City of Tucson general funds in January 2019 for next fiscal year, and

are applying for foundation funds wherever we can. We have a commitment from the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona of $5,000 for this year and $2,500 from Desert Diamond Casinos and Entertainment.

With your help, we can rebuild a strong Senior Companion Program, and continue its work to reduce isolation among older adults, provide them with the help they need to live safely at home, and support family caregivers so that they can keep caring for their loved ones.