



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 13, 2017

DATE: May 24, 2017

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Amber Howell, Director, Social Services
ahowell@washoecounty.us 775.337.4488

THROUGH: Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager

SUBJECT: Approve Senior Ambassador Volunteers who have successfully completed the established training process to drive County vehicles to support senior services programming. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

Washoe county Code Chapter 5.389 provides for the use of County vehicles. Section 2 states, "Unless otherwise authorized by the Board of County Commissioners, only county officers or employees are authorized to drive county-owned vehicles."

County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, secure and healthy communities

PREVIOUS ACTION

None

BACKGROUND

In 2015 the Department was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to develop and implement a Senior Ambassador Volunteer Program to support the senior nutrition program in rural Washoe County. In order to become a Senior Volunteer Ambassador an individual must successfully complete a comprehensive training program that includes a comprehensive background check, a review of Department of Motor Vehicles issued driving record, Elder Abuse Training, Defensive Driver and other training modules required by the funding agency. Currently there are 18 Senior Ambassador Volunteers in the program with new volunteers completing training and being added each month. Senior Ambassador Volunteers currently deliver 1,000 meals per month to seniors in the unincorporated areas of Washoe Count under the CDBG grant. The CDBG grant will end in June of 2017 and provides an opportunity for the Senior Ambassador Volunteers to expand support to all Senior Services programs.

AGENDA ITEM # 5.1.2.

Approving the request for trained Senior Ambassador Volunteers to operate Washoe County vehicles will expand volunteer opportunities throughout Washoe County and significantly enhance all senior programming. For example, a volunteer able to drive a "Hot-Shot" delivery vehicle to deliver meals to Senior Center sites and/or Meals on Wheels clients, would extend timeframe for safe food delivery and allow the volunteer additional time to spend to socialize with home bound seniors. Studies have shown that regular socialization reduces the senior's risk factor of social isolation. The ability for volunteers to drive County vehicles would also offer the opportunity for growth in the senior nutrition program as department looks at creating more Senior Center sites in the County.

Currently volunteers are required to utilize their own vehicles, while being reimbursed for mileage, for meal delivery a requirement that limits the number of volunteers. Allowing volunteers to operate a County vehicle would increase the recruitment of qualified volunteers. It could also help alleviate any delays or cancellations on inclement weather days as not all volunteers are comfortable driving on bad weather days. Daily routes could be combined and delivered if the ability of using a Hot-Shot vehicle were afforded to the volunteers.

In addition, Commissioner Herman secured a van through a generous donation from Robert and Peter Lissner to be used in the North Valleys/Cold Springs area. The Department would like to utilize a Senior Ambassador Volunteer driver to operate the van in an effort to engage seniors in more activities. Currently, County staff is not available to perform this duty. The Department would like to use a Senior Ambassador Volunteer to operate the donated van to transport seniors to activities or their local senior center. This program enhancement would have substantial benefits to the seniors who live outside of the RTC transportation area and would use this service to improve socialization as many seniors are unable to travel to activities that they may want to due to limited funds or other barriers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department has budgeted for ongoing maintenance and fuel costs in it FY18 budget in cost center 250110.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve Senior Ambassador Volunteers who have successfully completed the established training process to drive County vehicles to support senior services programming. .

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve Senior Ambassador Volunteers who have successfully completed the established training process to drive County vehicles to support senior services programming."