

## News Release

### County Board unanimously approves \$8.5 million for Oakland Together Senior Initiatives through resolution sponsored by Commissioner Nelson

**September 2, 2022, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – On September 1, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution to dedicate more than \$8.5 million to countywide senior initiatives. The resolution provides funding for Oakland County senior center updates, educational pieces for older adults, grants to non-profits that provide senior-centered services, elder abuse prevention and a three-year countywide household chore pilot program. The initiatives are results of the award-winning Blueprint for Successful Aging, which was published in December 2021, and they were recommended by the Oakland County Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee.

“Funding these initiatives is the result of a thorough process of collaboration by commissioners, county administration, residents and many community stakeholders,” said Commissioner **Kristen Nelson** (D-Waterford Twp.), who chairs the Oakland County Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee. “Older adults are a valued asset when it comes to maintaining our quality of life, and we must continue to strive to make Oakland County a retirement destination of choice and a community that supports seniors to age in place.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted older adults and has highlighted existing challenges they regularly face. Throughout the pandemic, seniors have had limited access to care for all health conditions, as well as considerable social and economic hardships. Because isolation increased older adults’ reliance on caregivers, experts say it is reasonable to expect that elder abuse cases have increased throughout the pandemic. In addition, many seniors remain largely unattached from online life— 25 percent of adults ages 65 and older do not use the internet at all, according to Pew Research Center.

The Board appropriated up to \$5,555,000, which will be allocated as follows:

- up to \$5,000,000 to offer funding opportunities for Oakland County senior centers for capital, technology, infrastructure, equipment improvements and/or professional development

- up to \$500,000 to fund a series of educational/COVID-19 communication pieces for Oakland County seniors
- up to \$50,000 to offer funding opportunities to non-profit organizations that provide senior-centered services in Oakland County and are interested in leveraging evidence-based volunteer management practices
- up to \$5,000 to reinstate the Oakland County Elderly Abuse Prevention Coalition

The Board also approved an assignment of up to \$3 million for the development of a three-year Oakland County Chore Pilot Program.

“Our seniors need our support, and we have the ability to bring them solutions,” said Commissioner **Eileen T. Kowall** (R-White Lake Twp.), Oakland County Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee minority vicechair. “These initiatives will help build upon the programming that’s already available so that our older adults can continue to thrive.”

The Oakland County Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee will serve as an oversight body for all Oakland County senior initiatives and will approve senior center applications and mini-grant applications, the design of communication pieces and develop the chore pilot program.

“We must be reaching seniors with the programming they need in a way that they’ll actually be able to take advantage of it,” said Commissioner **Gary McGillivray** (D-Madison Heights), who is a member of the Oakland County Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee. “With these new initiatives, and continuation of current projects, Oakland County is serving its aging population with solutions that make sense.”

The programming suggested by the Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee was a result of the Blueprint for Successful Aging, which was developed in partnership with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA 1-B). Following a series of townhalls and a survey that used multiple types of engagement strategies, the committee used community feedback to gain a better understanding of areas in which seniors need more support, plus potential strategies for addressing them. With a comprehensive and data-driven set of ten recommendations, the blueprint is helping guide communities as they aim to address service gaps, unmet needs and opportunities.

“The Blueprint for Successful Aging has been instrumental in bringing this resolution forward and funding key services to enhance the quality of life of older adults in Oakland County,” Dr. Michael Karson, CEO & president of the AAA 1-B, said. “We appreciated the opportunity to partner with the Healthy Aging Ad Hoc Committee to develop this strategic blueprint for an aging-friendly county.”

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