

TO: LCOG Board Executive Committee

FROM: Sandy Karsten, Senior Meals & Meals on Wheels Program Manager

SUBJECT: Revise Suggested Donation Policy for Senior Meals & Meals on Wheels

BACKGROUND:

The Senior Meals Dining Rooms and Meals on Wheels are partially funded under the Federal Older Americans Act and eligibility guidelines are a part of the Federal Law. In addition, the Older Americans Act requires that eligible persons served be offered the opportunity to make a private, voluntary contribution toward the cost of the meal. No eligible participant will be denied a meal because they cannot or will not contribute toward the cost of the service. Programs may not charge a fee but may suggest a donation level.

The Current Suggested Donation Policy was approved by the LCOG Board and is as follows:

- The suggested donation will be set each July for each program.
- For the Dining Rooms, the donation level is set at the same as the previous year or 50% of the actual cost of a meal rounded up to the nearest nickel, whichever is largest. FY 10-11 dining room donations are suggested to be \$3.85 per meal.
- For the Meals on Wheels Programs (both S&DS and Red Cross), the suggested donation is set at the same as the previous year, 50% of the Red Cross unit rate (meal), or 50% of the S&DS unit rate (meal), whichever is larger and rounded up to the nearest nickel. For FY 11 the suggested donation is \$3.95 per meal.

Results of a telephone survey about the suggested and actual average donations of other Senior Meals Programs in Oregon show that the suggested donation in Lane County is the highest in Oregon and the actual average donations received in Lane County are the lowest in Oregon.

A review of actual average donation levels shows that actual average donations have declined over the years even as the suggested donation increased. There is much evidence that the relatively high suggested donation creates a sense of “sticker shock” which actually prevents participation in both programs. After discussion with staff, the Senior Meals Advisory Committee and the Procurement and Monitoring Committee and the Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC), a change in the Suggested Donation Policy is recommended.

SSAC RECOMMENDATION:

The Goals of the Senior Meals and Meals on Wheels Suggested Donation Policy are:

- Encourage participation of seniors who could benefit from the meals and avoid “sticker shock”
- Encourage donations for meals and avoid “sticker shock”
- Set the same suggested donation for both Dining Rooms and Meals on Wheels and avoid confusion.
- Set the Suggested Donation at \$.25 increments which are easy to manage in a donation box
- Avoid annual changes and reduce confusion.

The Senior Services Advisory Council recommends to the LCOG Board that the Suggested Donation Policy for Senior Meals and Meals on Wheels be revised as follows:

The Suggested Donation will be established for three year periods, beginning with FY 12. For FY 12, the Suggested Donation will be set at \$3.00 per meal. The Suggested Donation will increase by \$.25 at the beginning of each successive three year period. See chart below:

	Suggested Donation Scale			
Fiscal Years	FY 12-14	FY 15-17	FY 18-20	FY 19-21
Suggested Donation	\$3.00	\$3.25	\$3.50	\$3.75