

# Memorandum



**Date:** December 23, 2021

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava".

**Subject:** Report Regarding the Continuation of the Emergency Senior Meal Program –  
Directive 201298

The following report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-746-20, sponsored by Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, and adopted at the July 21, 2020, Board of County Commissioners (Board) meeting, which directed the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to: 1) continue the Emergency Senior Meal Program for eligible individuals until certain county meal programs sites that are currently closed due Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) reopen; 2) establish eligibility criteria for the Emergency Senior Meal Program; 3) apply for, and expend state and federal funding for the program; and 4) provide a report.

As part of my operation to catch up on the backlog items, we are bringing you reports that were pending from the previous administration.

On March 16, 2020, Emergency Order 01-20 was signed to immediately close all congregate meal sites and community centers in Miami-Dade County in an effort to protect vulnerable residents from the COVID-19 virus. The Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) worked in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Internal Services Department (ISD) to launch the County’s Emergency Meal Service (CEMS) program to provide prepared meals to address food insecurity during the pandemic among vulnerable elderly residents. The program was expanded to serve elderly residents, 60 years of age and older, to ensure that their nutritional health was not impacted during the unprecedented long period of uncertainty.

In June 2020, the previous administration announced the emergency meal initiative would end in early August 2020, ending new enrollment into the program in June 2020. At the program’s highest peak in May 2020, more than 82,000 elderly residents were enrolled. Due to the surge in positive cases following the announcement, the program continued to serve residents that were actively enrolled post-August 2020. Throughout the program’s lifespan, CAHSD transitioned eligible residents to programs funded by Medicaid, the Department of Elder Affairs, and other local providers. Additionally, family members were stepping in to support their loved ones, and many enrolled residents discontinued the service as vaccinations became widely available and the need for assistance significantly decreased.

On June 30, 2021, the CEMS program ended in consultation with the Board. During 15 months of operations, the program delivered more than 25 million meals to elderly residents via six food vendors. The County spent \$227 million to provide services covered by CARES Act and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursable funds. To date, the County has received more than \$96 million in FEMA reimbursement for this endeavor.

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Per Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sonia Grice, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department, at (786) 469-4616.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney  
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney  
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff  
Sonia Grice, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department  
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs  
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Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator, Office of Agenda Coordination