

Van Buren County Senior Services Millage

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can use the services? Anyone age 60 and over residing in an area where the millage has passed can use our services, most services have little to no additional charge if they are a resident.

What services may become available?

Services would include:

- Information and Assistance
- Outreach, Home Visits and On-Going Monitoring (CARE WATCH Care Management)
- Assistance with insurance forms, taxes, prescription discount drug forms, Medicare/Medicaid forms and other forms
- Health programs such as fitness and exercise, diet support group, blood sugar and blood pressure screening, health education, foot care and more
- At-home services (Affordable In-Home Care), visits and reassurance calls
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Volunteer Medical Transportation Service
- Enrichment, social and educational services
- Emergency Medical Cards
- Support Groups such as Alzheimer's Support Group, Caregivers Support Group and Visually Impaired Support Group





- Computer Classes and Training
- Site for Senior Nutrition and Commodity Distribution
- And much more!

Who will provide the congregate and home delivered meals and is the food free? Senior Nutrition Services provides congregate meals at 14 sites throughout Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties. Home – delivered meals provides nutritionally sound meals delivered directly to a

qualifying senior’s home. There is no charge for meals but a fair share is encouraged and ranges, based on monthly income, from \$1.50 to \$3.00. No one is denied service for failing to make a donation.

Will Eastern Seniors have to come to South Haven to receive senior services? The goal is to have a central location (a senior center) located on the Eastern side of the County that would be convenient and accessible to seniors. A Care Watch Care Manager will be assigned to each Township. We will also provide some level of senior center programming in various “satellite locations” throughout the new expanded service areas. Transportation will be coordinated with Van Buren Public Transit for rides to and from the central and satellite locations. If seniors in any area desire to attend programs at other sites, they are encouraged and welcome to do so. Service locations currently include: the Warren Senior Center in South Haven, the Simpson Methodist Church in Bangor, Black River Commons in Bangor, Harbor View in South Haven, Columbia Township Hall and other locations as scheduled. This will expand with the new, expansion millages. But, as for coming to South Haven, seniors are certainly welcome if they would like to.

I understand the major funding for the expansion is a senior services millage, how much will this cost me? The request is for a tax of 0.25 mils. This is .25 cents per each \$1,000 of taxable valuation as equalized).

Example: Roughly speaking you pay taxes on ½ of the value of your home. If you have a home that is valued at \$100,000 your equalized value on which you pay the tax is \$50,000. The .25 mil tax would be \$12.50 per year or about \$1 Dollar per month. If you have a home valued at \$200,000 and taxed at \$100,000 it will cost you \$25 per year or around \$2 a month. More information on this and other examples is available on line at www.pawpaw.net/goseniors

How long will this millage be for? The millage will be for four years. After four years you will have the opportunity to vote to renew or not renew the millage request for another four years.



Don't I already pay this? Yes, if you live in the Cities of South Haven and Bangor and the Townships of Geneva, South Haven, Columbia, Bangor and Arlington, you already pay for this. We thank you for supporting Senior Services for the past 17 years. This is a renewal question for the areas just mentioned.

Is this a new millage? If you live in any of the following areas, this is a new millage:

- Alma Township
- Antwerp Township including the villages of Mattawan and Lawton
- Bloomingdale Village and Township
- Decatur Township and Village
- City of Gobles
- Hamilton Township
- City of Hartford and Hartford Township
- Keeler Township
- Lawrence Village and Township
- Paw Paw Township and the Village of Paw Paw
- Pine Grove Township
- Porter Township
- Waverly Township



A Tax for Senior Services? Yes, Michigan state law allows municipalities to place a ballot question before its citizens to see if they want to tax themselves to support senior services programs and activities. On the West side of Van Buren County, this has been done for many years. Around Michigan, many, many communities have passed a senior services tax to fund senior programs and activities.



Since this expansion of senior services includes the rest of the county not currently being served, why is this not a county millage?

South Haven Area Senior Services will also be seeking a renewal of its millages for the Cities of Bangor and South Haven and the Townships of Arlington, Bangor, Columbia, Geneva and

South Haven. If a county-wide millage was sought and for some reason it was not successful the first time, the current funding for the West side of the County would be lost even though those areas have repeatedly voted in favor of the tax. Community stakeholders believe that going township by township and city by city is the best approach at this time.

What happens if it does not pass in a City or Township? Anyone age 60 and over residing in areas where a millage has passed is eligible for services. Ways to provide services to non-resident seniors is to engage a membership fee or fee for service or do local fundraising to include seniors from areas that do not have a senior millage.

What agency receives the funds and provides the service to seniors?

South Haven Area Senior Services, already serving the Cities of South Haven and Bangor and the Townships of Columbia, Geneva, Bangor, Arlington and South Haven, has received the millage funds for the past 17 years. South Haven Area Senior Services will be the primary provider of all senior services in the new expanded areas, hiring staff at the local level.

Will there be a Board of Directors and how will that work? South Haven Area Senior Services currently has a Governing Board of Directors. Its membership represents the jurisdictions involved with one member from each area and at-large members as well. It is a self-nominating board but asks each Township and City to recommend a member to the governing Board. The Board members serve 3-year terms and can serve 2 consecutive terms. Each area that passes the millage will be invited to have representation to the Board of Directors.

How can I be involved? There are several ways individuals, organizations, businesses and government entities can be involved. You can support the

millage through endorsements. You can become a “Friends for Seniors”, a free mechanism that shows your support or endorsement. You can join our planning groups to help continue our journey to placing millage proposals on the ballots next spring. You can volunteer and help spread the word and/or become active in future campaign activities. You can provide financial support to help fund the future campaign needed to help pass the senior millage. And you can vote YES to the Senior Millage !

Let’s say the millage passes in many areas, how long will it take to start expansion programs? There will be a well-planned implementation process. Many volunteers, staff and community people will be involved in this process. Start-up of new programs takes some time and lots of group effort. The actual millage dollars will start being collected in late December of 2010, early January of 2011. Those 5 months after the vote will be utilized to unroll the implementation plan. We want to ensure seniors get services as soon as the funds allow.

Is there anything else I should know when I vote? Your vote is very important to our seniors. We can protect, serve and care for our seniors for just a few cents each day.

More information is on line at:
www.pawpaw.net/goseniors

