



Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2025 January Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 1/28/2025

Location: Zoom

	Members Present	Appointment		Members Present	Appointment
	Jean Kindem	At-Large East		Vacant	Association of Counties
	Gavin Carmichael	AAADSW WA Advisory Council	✓	Susan Conniry	O3A Advisory Council
	Rep. Kelly Chambers (Dianna Hawkins, Leg. Aide)	WA House of Representatives	✓	Dennis Wheeler	Snohomish County AAA
✓	Suone Cotner	At-Large West		Vacant	Kitsap AAA Advisory Council
✓	Georgiann Dustin	NWRC Advisory Council		Vacant	Yakama Golden Eagle Advisory Council
	Deb Murphy	Central AAA		Guests Present	
✓	Eileen McKenzie Sullivan (acting)	Lewis Mason Thurston AAA Advisory Council	✓	Cathy Knight	W4A
✓	Ron Vivion	At-Large West	✓	Walt Bowen	Senior Lobby
	Vacant (Michael Adusah sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Mary-Anne Grafton	WA Assoc. of Senior Centers
✓	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Melanie McGuire	ALTSA
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	Cameron Akita	ALTSA
✓	Stephanie Carpenter	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Martha Raske	ALTCEW AC Member
	Rep. Tarra Simmons	WA House of Representatives			
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board			



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Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<p>Welcome/Introductions Review/Approve Minutes and Agenda</p>	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe called the meeting to order at 9:00am and welcomed attendees. Council Members and guests introduced themselves to the group.</p> <p>Council Members passed a motion to approve the draft agenda and November minutes.</p>
<p>Senior Centers, Excellence in Action Updates</p>	<p>Bruce Dougherty provided an update to the Council on two Tacoma Senior Centers first discussed during November's meeting.</p> <p>Closures: despite the efforts of many, both the Beacon and Lighthouse Senior Centers will be closing. Beacon was approved for an additional 30 days of operation and is currently wrapping up its services.</p> <p>Pierce County distributed a survey to participants of these Senior Centers, and moving forward, the Parks Department will take over building operations. Bruce reported he will continue to monitor their progress.</p> <p>Georgiann Dustin asked how the centers were managed in Tacoma. Bruce noted that there are several partnerships and contracts that support these sites, with the City of Tacoma having jurisdiction over these two facing closure. Meal programming would be the biggest loss. There are many Senior Centers in county areas, as well.</p> <p><i>Excellence in Action</i> Dennis updated the Council on presenting the two Excellence in Action Awards, first at the Mt. Si Senior Center. There were roughly 45 attendees, including Senior Center Board Members at the Mt. Si event. Dennis presented the second award at a Pierce County annual appreciation lunch in December.</p> <p>Dennis also shared that SCOA was included in an Age and Dementia Friendly advisory group, which will hold 4 meetings over 18 months. He agreed to participate as a SCOA representative and plans to report out on this activity as they develop an action plan.</p>



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Partner Updates

Cathy Knight, W4A State Director

Cathy shared that she would also be on the Age and Dementia Friendly advisory group, which will be important to the work of a Multi-Sector and State Plan on Aging moving forward. Bob Scarfo may also be joining this work moving forward.

Legislative Session: a difficult session started in January with coming budget cuts. Maintenance will be prioritized with little expectation for new state funding. The Senior Nutrition funding is seen as maintenance. W4A has a [1-pager available](#) for outreach and messaging. The Governor put a substantial amount of the ask in his budget and W4A will be requesting the full amount.

Dementia Resource Catalyst project: concerned about funding for this project. This work began in the Southeast AAA, then was funded for Northwest Regional Council and Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington. Olympic AAA (O3A) received one-time funding and was able to hire amazing staff to support this work. Legislative action requires a bill sponsor for this to move; the ask is for \$750K to sustain the pilot.

Cathy noted that federal level decisions have been shocking, one instance being funding for non-profits. While AAAs are not technically non-profits, it is a very difficult time and W4A will likely hear from the national association for ongoing information.

Walt Bowen, Senior Lobby President

Walt shared that it was the 16th day of the 105-day session. With a new governor, attorney general, insurance commissioner, and lands commissioner, new policy staff and secretaries continue to be appointed.

Age-Wave Coalition: held an in-person breakfast meeting. Rep. Tharinger spoke as the lead legislator with a goal to recruit other members to sign up for the JLEC. One vacancy to fill will be Senator Randall's position from the 32nd District.

Lobby Day: scheduled for February 20th, primarily virtual event. New officials are being sworn in, and hearings are in progress.



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	<p>Housing: several bills are under consideration, with rent stabilization being a significant issue for seniors.</p> <p>Social Security: a federal issue to keep an eye on; Washington accounts for roughly \$24B in Social Security payments.</p> <p>Centers for Medicare/Medicaid: there will be new staff appointed for Region X. Formal appointments have not been confirmed yet, and with the previous Trump administration, Walt noted that it took several months to appoint a regional lead. Walt expressed the quality leadership from ACL's Louise Ryan over the past few years.</p> <p>Suone Cotner inquired about legislative vacancies for SCOA. Walt noted the many changes over the past few months and will reach out to legislative leadership to remind them. Suone would also reach out. Susan Conniry mentioned Senator Mike Chapman as a potential member, who represents the 24th District and agreed to work with the O3A advisory council. Dennis Wheeler suggested Sen. Chapman as a potential sponsor to the nutrition ask.</p>
Dementia Action Collaborative Update	<p>Georgiann Dustin expressed gratitude for Lynne Korte and her work for the DAC. The next DAC meeting will be May 21st at 5pm – there is an opportunity to attend by emailing DACpublic@dshs.wa.gov.</p> <p>Georgiann noted that she sits on the DAC's Public Awareness Committee, chaired by Cathy Knight. They aim to provide timely information to those impacted by dementia, especially those with diagnoses or their family members.</p> <p>Work is continuing between DAC and the Dementia and Age Friendly coalition.</p> <p>Funding – requests are being developed by DAC, which Georgiann would share out to the Council. Cathy Knight reiterated the need for this funding to have a legislative sponsor.</p>



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<p>Legislative, Outreach, and Advocacy (LOA) Committee</p>	<p>Suone Cotner, Co-Chair of the LOA Committee discussed the group's planned outreach. This included continuing to contact the Governor's Office, identifying a designated policy staff member, and inviting the Governor to a SCOA meeting.</p> <p>Legislative outreach: initial contact via a letter sent on behalf of SCOA to current legislators. Messaging also encouraged the Governor to collaborate with WA's congressional delegation regarding federal cuts.</p> <p>Webpage: more work to be done building out resources on SCOA's webpage. The member repository page currently breaks resources out by topic area.</p>
<p>Open Discussion, Future Topics</p>	<p>Michele Blythe shared that she continued to work on having Senator Muzzall speak to the Council. There is an open call for ideas on other speakers, not limited to legislators.</p> <p>Suone suggested that Sen. Chapman speak. Dennis Wheeler noted that legislators often share personal stories that impact aging issues and mentioned Rep. Davis from the 32nd District as an idea. Rep. Ryu also spoke to her care for her mother at a local senior center in Edmonds.</p> <p>Martha Raske introduced herself to the Council, including her work at ALTCEW and with Eastern WA University. She expressed her great interest in SCOA's work with legislative partners and the opportunity to open dialogue. Michele thanked Martha for her involvement with the Council.</p> <p>Bruce Dougherty reviewed the action planned for after the legislative session. This included reaching out to legislators, identifying key state officials to speak to their respective programs, and continue developing advisory letters.</p> <p>Cathy Knight expressed the need to continue outreach to address Medicaid concerns. Sen. Newhouse has positive ideas for Medicaid, and both SEIU and the Southeast WA AAA have been in touch with him. Another topic to explore for future meetings is the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging.</p> <p>Ron reviewed the need for continued outreach for SCOA vacancies.</p>



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	<p>Susan Conniry updated the Council on her attendance at a local Republican Conference. She discussed the importance of aging issues and noted the importance of this annual event as an opportunity to connect.</p> <p>Suone spoke to her questions regarding Medicaid acceptance at Assisted Living Facilities, sharing that most for-profits do not accept Medicaid.</p> <p>Bob Scarfo inquired about the long-term plans for Senior Centers after the Age-Wave. He expressed that it may be useful to look at literature to provide resources on long-term planning.</p>		
New Business/Public Comment	Meeting adjourned at 10:42am.		
ACTION ITEMS	Assignee	Due Date	

DRAFT