



# Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2022 May Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 5/24/2022

Location: Zoom Meeting

	Members Present	Appointment			Appointment
✓	Jean Kindem	At-Large East	✓	Art Swannack	Association of Counties
✓	Beth Anderson	AAAD Southwest WA Advisory Council	✓	Joe Sharkey	O3A Advisory Council
(✓)	Rep. Kelly Chambers (Dianna Hawkins, Leg. Aide)	WA House of Representatives	✓	Dennis Wheeler	Snohomish County AAA
	Sharon Curley	At-Large West	✓	Karol Stevens	Kitsap AAA Advisory Council
✓	Georgiann Dustin	NWRC Advisory Council		Arlen Washines	Yakama Golden Eagle Advisory Council
✓	Deb Murphy	Central AAA		<b>Guests Present</b>	
✓	Michele Horaney	Lewis Mason Thurston AAA Advisory Council	✓	Susan Engels	ALTSA
✓	Sandra Miles	At-Large West	✓	Cathy Knight	W4A
	Vacant (Sariga Santhosh sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Walt Bowen	Senior Lobby
	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Melanie McGuire	ALTSA
	Sen. Karen Keiser	WA State Senate	✓	Cameron Akita	ALTSA
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	Mike Tornquist	ALTSA
✓	Kathy Medford	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Mark Vasconi	WA State Broadband Office
	Vacant	WA House of Representatives	✓	Louise Ryan	ACL Region 10 Administrator
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board	✓	Cathy MacCaul	AARP
✓	Karen Kiessling	At-Large East			



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Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Review/approve agenda</li> <li>• Review/approve minutes</li> <li>• Action Items</li> <li>• Consumer advocate volunteers - IDR</li> <li>• Member Organization Updates</li> </ul>	<p>Chairperson Georgiann Dustin called the meeting to order at 9:00am.</p> <p>Motion to approve April meeting minutes and May agenda approved.</p> <p>Action items reviewed.</p> <p><b>Member organization updates</b></p> <p>Georgiann shared that Karol Stevens would be stepping away from her role in SCOA noting her outstanding leadership.</p> <p>Members of the Public Relations &amp; Education Committee discussed their Older Americans Month (OAM) letters to the editor, noting that more work can be done next year to improve outreach.</p> <p>Louise Ryan, Administration for Community Living (ACL) Region 10 Administrator, thanked the Council for their work in promoting OAM. Louise noted that June 15<sup>th</sup> is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.</p> <p><b>Informal Dispute Resolution Panel</b></p> <p>Mike Tornquist, Informal Dispute Resolution (IDR) Unit Manager within the Residential Care Services Division at AL TSA discussed the need for consumer advocate volunteers for a pilot nursing home panel. Mike spoke to the role of the IDR in the process of ensuring negative regulatory actions in long-term care settings are heard and disputed through a fair process. Meetings occur monthly, and this new panel consisting of a provider, a consumer advocate, and RCS field staff is being piloted for skilled nursing facilities.</p> <p>Council members discussed certain conditions such as needing to be two years removed as a NH administrator to be eligible, that meetings would be held virtually, and that this pilot would begin in August.</p>



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ALTSA Update

**Susan Engels, Office Chief State Unit on Aging**

Susan shared that CMS had provided strong statements that they would be giving a 60-day notice ahead of the end of the public health emergency (PHE). This makes an extension very likely past July 15<sup>th</sup>, putting a potential end to the PHE in October. Subsequently, enhanced FMAP will extend through that quarter. The legislative budget has these rates diminishing each quarter which may require negotiations moving forward to maintain provider enhancements.

Kathy Medford asked how much the rates were enhanced.

Susan shared that these were around 7%, and that enhancement does not get added to admin services.

COVID is spiking in communities, and vaccinated people are being less severely impacted while mortality rates in the unvaccinated are about 10x higher.

Both in-person and virtual assessments are happening now—AAAs are determining which to use.

Home and Community Services and AAAs are excited to receive additional funding for this year. W4A's ask of \$24M would better address operating costs, and ALTSA received funding to bring caseloads down to 75:1.

Susan discussed the unwinding of PHE related flexibilities specific to Medicaid services. A full 12-months will be allowed to unwind these flexibilities, noting there may be a higher demand for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs as this process unfolds.

The ACL will be opening the OAA regulations which has not been done since 1988 (except for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program). This is different from a reauthorization which had last occurred in 2020. Opening the OAA regulations at the federal level is similar to changing to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) at the state level, whereas reauthorizing the OAA could best be compared to changing the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). An official request for information (RFI) went out for comment.



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	<p>Intrastate Funding Formula (IFF) discussion is continuing in consultation with W4A. Susan shared the typical timeline would align with the Decennial Census, but this data is not yet fully available. American Community Survey 5-year data was used to model potential updates, which will initially address a gap-year fix for more equitable distribution of OAA funding across the state. Recommendations will also be brought to SCOA before amending the IFF. A gap year fix would go into effect for January of 2023.</p>
Partner Updates	<p><b>W4A, Cathy Knight</b> Cathy discussed the importance of the IFF for W4A, and the need for more discussion to address its impacts.</p> <p>Regarding the OAA opening its regulations, W4A is weighing in with USAging for potential changes or updates, including recommending a more intentional intersection of local Area Plans and the State Plan on Aging.</p> <p>Cathy noted that AARP provides great outreach for Older Americans Month, and that W4A is working to get information out by the end of May.</p> <p>Cathy shared excitement for the legislative work ahead, noting ongoing investment is needed to continue supporting programs.</p> <p>Cathy transitioned to October's fall conference and discussed whether there was a preference from SCOA for an in-person vs. virtual event.</p> <p><b>Senior Lobby, Walt Bowen</b> Walt shared that the fall conference would be on October 19<sup>th</sup>, and SCOA has the role of presenting awards and discussing legislative priorities. Walt wanted to focus on hearing SCOA's ideas for this event.</p> <p>Council members discussed the meeting format options. Georgiann noted that SCOA had voted to reconvene in-person for September's meeting, however COVID cases continue to increase again.</p>



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	<p>Art Swannack asked whether a hybrid meeting had been considered, and Walt shared that this would have to align with W4A. Vendors prefer seeing people in-person, and safety is a priority. The hybrid option requires a lot of coordination. Art shared his recommendation for an in-person event with a hybrid option, which was similar to how the WA State Association of Counties have operated their meetings.</p> <p>Council members continued discussing several considerations for an in-person conference, and Walt informed the Council that there should be a decision by month's end.</p> <p><b>AARP, Cathy MacCaul</b> Cathy updated Council Members on upcoming events including a fraud meeting that would address recent issues and scams. A recent law passed that would prohibit robocalls during certain hours as well as providing a reporting system.</p> <p>AARP is working on voter outreach, voter registration, and is providing a townhall event on June 30<sup>th</sup>.</p>
Committee Meetings	[Breakout rooms]
Break	
State Broadband Office Update	<p><b>Mark Vasconi, Director of the State Broadband Office</b> Mark discussed the topics he would cover to include past work the State Broadband Office has done and what future plans hold, noting how important the virtual/broadband platform has been during the pandemic.</p> <p>The pandemic accentuated the need for broadband and accelerated inequity and service need. While much focus is placed on access—network availability—other aspects such as adoption (user education), affordability, and application awareness (i.e., how to use Zoom) must also be considered.</p> <p><i>Leading with Equity</i> Listening sessions through the Digital Equity Forum have allowed the Broadband Office to hear community needs. One educational program—the Digital Navigators program—funded about \$7M to</p>



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provide engagement and support, as well as acquisition of devices. In terms of aging populations, skills education was a major discussion point.

ARPA funding appropriated \$260M to broadband efforts, which were segmented in two tranches. The first happened in 2021 and funded 13 projects covering 21,000 new locations, including 67 schools/early learning facilities. The second tranche is to be awarded at the end of May.

### *Equity and affordability grants*

These grants will be coming soon and must be expended by June 30, 2023. One \$5M grant will work towards building a network in partnership with the Office of Equity. Another \$50M will focus on promoting digital equity. Other efforts will build out broadband action teams (BATs) from 10 counties to all 39. This will be an effort to marry public and private entities to maintain and update systems. Public Utility Districts will play an important role in this process, and ownership/management will span 25 years.

### *Future funding – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*

The Infrastructure Act will provide roughly \$60M in federal funds through 2026.

Three Notice of Funding Opportunities were released on May 13—these were for Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD); Digital Equity Planning; and Middle Mile.

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program will provide federal funding to expand high speed internet access. Each state must submit a letter of intent (through OFM in WA), and once approved funding may be released to focus on locations without broadband.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) would provide a \$30 per month discount to qualifying customers (in Medicaid, SNAP, School Lunch Programs).

These all would require approval of a State Plan. A rough timeline includes a July 18<sup>th</sup> deadline for the Letter of Intent submittal, development of new Broadband maps occurring in the fall (depending on FCC's release), and then Washington would have 270 days to submit the State Plan.



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	<p><i>Questions?</i></p> <p>Bruce Dougherty asked about the whether there were estimates for the extent to which people would connect/use these subsidies.</p> <p>Mark noted that there were not specific estimates although many households may be eligible to receive these benefits in Washington State.</p> <p>Kathy Medford inquired about how individuals could apply for the ACP.</p> <p>Mark noted that individuals could contact their internet service providers. Charter Communications in Eastern WA has done some outreach.</p>
Committee Updates	<p><b>Legislative Committee</b></p> <p>Art updated Council on the Committee's preparation for the 2023 legislative session in terms of what policy change should be looked at in 2023. Art also noted that funding requests are being developed at AL TSA, and Council would need to discuss which other issues to support as a group.</p> <p><b>Public Relations &amp; Education</b></p> <p>Kathy Medford noted that the Committee discussed orientation needs for newer members and ongoing training for members that would focus on subject matter updates and advocacy.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed ways in which they could educate other entities and provide other outreach.</p> <p><b>Social Isolation &amp; Engagement Committee</b></p> <p>Jean Kindem noted with great sadness that Karol Stevens, Chair of the Social Isolation &amp; Engagement Committee, would be stepping down from her SCOA role. The Committee noted they would need to regroup and decide on focus areas, with a need to add more members.</p>



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<p>Nominating &amp; Excellence in Action Committees, New business, Public Comment</p>	<p>The roles of the Nominating Committee and Excellence in Action Committee were reviewed.</p> <p>Art Swannack, Jean Kindem, and Bruce Dougherty stepped forward as volunteers for the Nominating Committee.</p> <p>Cathy Knight offered to help communicate Legislative Committee recommendations/priorities in working with AL TSA. Legislative Committee members agreed with this offer.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 11:59.</p>	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>Assignee</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Distribute follow up materials (IDR resources, EIA, presentation slides)	Cameron Akita	ASAP
Distribute Member Resource Manual	Cameron / Melanie McGuire	ASAP