



# Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2023 September Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 9/26/2023

Location: Zoom Meeting

	Members Present	Appointment			Appointment
✓	Jean Kindem	At-Large East	✓	Art Swannack	Association of Counties
✓	Gavin Carmichael	AAAD Southwest 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		Susan Kerr	Kitsap AAA Advisory Council
✓	Georgiann Dustin	NWRC Advisory Council		Arlen Washines (Melissa Howtopat)	Yakama Golden Eagle Advisory Council
✓	Deb Murphy	Central AAA		<b>Guests Present</b>	
✓	Michele Horaney	Lewis Mason Thurston AAA Advisory Council	✓	Cathy Knight	W4A
✓	Ron Vivion	At-Large West	✓	Melanie McGuire	ALTSA
✓	Vacant (Michael Adusah sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Cameron Akita	ALTSA
✓	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Susan Engels	ALTSA
	Sen. Karen Keiser	WA State Senate	✓	Bea Rector	ALTSA
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	James Damanda	AARP
✓✓	Kathy Medford / Stephanie Carpenter	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Tim Thompson	Guest
	Vacant	WA House of Representatives	✓	Kelsey Bang-Olson	Snohomish County
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board			
✓	Karen Kiessling	At-Large East			



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Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome/Introductions</li> <li>• Review/approve September agenda</li> <li>• Review/approve June meeting minutes</li> <li>• Review of current action items</li> </ul>	<p>Chairperson Kathy Medford called the meeting to order at 9:04am.</p> <p><i>Introductions</i></p> <p>Stephanie Carpenter (appointed from the Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care Advisory Council) shared about her 30+ years in healthcare working as a Registered Nurse.</p> <p>Ron Vivion (appointed as an At-Large West member of the Council) noted his involvement in the Dementia Action Collaborative, Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Planning for Aging and Disability Issues (JLEC), military career, and work in the insurance field in addition to having previously sat on the State Council on Aging (SCOA).</p> <p>Suone Cotner (appointed as an At-Large West member of the Council) shared about her career in advocacy with recent experience helping aging relatives navigate the healthcare system, noting how pleased she was to be joining the Council.</p> <p>Council reviewed and approved September’s meeting agenda and June’s meeting minutes.</p>
<p>Follow-Up COVID-19 Seniors Survey</p>	<p>Kelsey Bang-Olson, Snohomish County’s Human Services Program Planner, provided a presentation to the Council on a COVID-19 Follow-Up Senior Survey.</p> <p>Links to the survey report provided to the Council and Snohomish County’s press release can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/~/media/2020/10/2020-10-14-Follow-up-COVID-19-Seniors-Survey-Report">Follow-up-COVID-19-Seniors-Survey-Report (snohomishcountywa.gov)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/~/media/2020/10/2020-10-14-News-Flash-Snohomish-County-WA-CivicEngage">News Flash • Snohomish County, WA • CivicEngage (snohomishcountywa.gov)</a></li> </ul> <p>Following Kelsey’s presentation, Council Members shared their appreciation for the in-depth information provided and discussed how this work was funded as well as how the survey can help to guide outreach on topics such as tax exemptions. Kelsey shared that other states such as Georgia had asked the county</p>



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	<p>for technical advice on a similar survey. The County also plans to use this information for their Area Plan on Aging to help improve services.</p>
<p>Aging Summit Update</p>	<p>Susan Engels, Office Chief of the State Unit on Aging (SUA), introduced herself to the Council and reviewed Washington's Aging Network and the role the SUA/AL TSA has in the administering services &amp; supports.</p> <p>Susan discussed current planning efforts within the SUA, including a request to involve a member of SCOA be a part of the planning process for the next Aging Summit. As many states develop Master Plans on Aging, now being called Multi-Sector Plans on Aging, Washington continues planning for Age and Dementia Friendly Designations.</p> <p>Age Friendly Designation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An AARP designation with around 11 states currently holding this designation.</li> <li>• Promotes high quality of life for older adults among 8 domains of livability.</li> <li>• DOH held preliminary stakeholder input.</li> <li>• Currently working across DOH/DSHS to explore a letter of commitment request from the Governor to work across departments for this work.</li> </ul> <p>Multi-Sector Plan on Aging (MPA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AL TSA Strategic Plan serves part of this purpose and MPA would take this to another level.</li> <li>• Washington applied and was accepted to be a part of multi-state cohort with the Center for Health Care Strategies.</li> </ul> <p>Aging Summit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2013 Aging Summit kicked off Governor Inslee's tenure and was a very fruitful.</li> <li>• WA Cares, Dementia Action Collaborative, JLEC, and AL TSA's role in the 1115 waiver developed out of the first summit.</li> <li>• Planning committee - the 2013 summit included Walt Bowen and Cathy Knight; Susan expressed that the committee would love to have a SCOA member representative to help for the next one.</li> </ul>



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	<p>Karen Kiessling suggested Bob Scarfo, whose background is in the planning and design of the built environment be a part of this planning effort. Kathy Medford also suggested Michele Horaney to be involved—Michele gladly accepted representing SCOA for this work.</p>
<p>Break</p>	
<p>Partner Updates</p>	<p><b>Cathy Knight, W4A State Director</b>          Cathy expressed her appreciation for sitting in on these meetings and shared an update on the October 18<sup>th</sup> Joint W4A/SCOA Advocacy Day. Part of the outreach included a survey, which is showing 80% of respondents choose advocacy to make a difference, and 70% have been a family caregiver. The top 3 issues noted from the survey were affordable &amp; accessible housing, caregiving, and food insecurity.</p> <p>Cathy reviewed the draft agenda for the Joint Conference, with the focus being on nutrition and caregiving.</p> <p>Council Members and Cathy discussed the importance of senior meal programs, food access programs supporting communities, and the funding/costs limitations that nutrition programs work under.</p> <p><b>Walt Bowen, Senior Lobby</b>          Walt shared that September was National Senior Center Month. The special meeting of the <a href="#">JLEC</a> would be focused on senior centers, an important community assets. September is also falls prevention month.</p> <p>Walt discussed the agenda items for the October 19<sup>th</sup> Fall Senior Lobby Conference. Walt also described how JLEC came to exist, which is a special committee formed by the legislature.</p>
<p>Member Organization Updates</p>	<p>Georgiann Dustin provided a report from the Whatcom Council on Aging. The local Meals on Wheels program was doing well and receiving support through donations. This program helps to address social isolation. The Dementia Action Collaborative will meet the following Thursday, which will be a hybrid meeting. Georgiann discussed the role of the rate setting board as well.</p> <p>Art Swannack reported that from the Colfax Council on Aging, discussion surrounds how to continue to fund the mobile food pantry service, and whether ARPA might be able to support this.</p>



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	<p>Ron Vivion discussed the JLEC and its representatives. Ron discussed the upcoming meeting, in which he would be accompanying Mary-Anne Grafton, Chair of the Washington State Association of Senior Centers to present on the importance and ongoing needs of senior centers. Ron also discussed the Dementia Action Collaborative, a group of 80-85 professionals whose work surrounds advocacy for issues relating to dementia.</p> <p>Kathy Medford discussed the challenges getting volunteers in Southeast WA, a large AAA serving several counties. Stephanie Carpenter shared an update from Columbia County, where road construction has limited access to some meal sites. There continues to be a large need for home delivered meals.</p> <p>Michele Horaney discussed the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for Senior Services for South Sound. The Lacey Senior Center serves over 1,800 members.</p> <p>Bruce Dougherty reported that the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program had a precipitous loss of volunteers since COVID. Six new volunteers are from Pierce County, and the state office continues to increase numbers. Bruce reminded Council Members to notify their communities of this need.</p> <p>Deb Murphy detailed how Hunger Relief funding supported food buckets in Central WA, a very rural AAA. Attendance at senior centers is low and transportation is a challenge. A shortage of caregivers continues to be a big issue.</p> <p>Karen Kiessling shared a local article on the closure of a 70-year-old pharmacy, due in part to the change in Kaiser Permanente's prescription policy. Karen also alerted the Council to a new postal scam, where scammers file a change of address request for unsuspecting people.</p> <p>Walt Bowen updated the Council on the potential <a href="#">regulation changes for the Older Americans Act</a>, the first since 1988.</p>
<p>Excellence in Action / Nominating Committee Report / Future Meeting Topics Discussion</p>	<p><b>Nominating Committee</b> Council reviewed the nominations for each of the Excellence in Action Awards (Dennis Mahar Individual Award and Organization Award). Council discussed the nominations and carried a motion to approve these for the October Joint Conference.</p>



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	<p><b>Future Meeting Topics</b></p> <p>Susan Conniry suggested discussing the challenges of becoming a licensed caregiver in WA, especially for rural communities where services are difficult to access.</p> <p>Bruce recommended a focus on long-term care facilities and would like to get a better idea of inspections in Washington State. Stephanie referenced the <a href="#">CMS 5-star rating webpage</a> as a resource. Suone Cotner supported Bruce's recommendation and added Assisted Living Facilities and Adult Family Homes to be included.</p> <p>Karen suggested inviting a speaker or panel on pharmacy benefits and the impacts of decisions like Kaiser Permanente's prescription drug policy change.</p> <p>Kathy recommended the topic of prescription drug costs and what drives these changes; also a discussion on Advantage plans.</p> <p>Council discussed the ways in which SCOA can use these topics to educate the public and better advise leadership.</p>
<b>Break</b>	
<b>ALTSA Update</b>	<p>Bea Rector, ALTSA's Assistant Secretary welcomed members and reviewed the organization at ALTSA. Bea began working at ALTSA in 1999 and has been Assistant Secretary for about 18 months.</p> <p>Bea discussed the advisory role of SCOA, its charge to create public awareness for older adults, and the role of providing for self-advocacy for older adults. In the advisory capacity, timing matters in terms of advocating for issues ahead of when action is already in motion. Public awareness and outreach are other big parts when discussing issues not on the Governor's list of priorities.</p> <p>Kathy Medford mentioned she would like the Governor to speak at some point. Bea shared contact information for leadership from his office that focus on Long-Term Care.</p> <p>Bea noted that the ALTSA budget requests are out. The Governor releases his budget in December. Lynette Boggs and Amber Leaders help to advise the Governor.</p>



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	<p><b>Request Legislation</b></p> <p>ALTSA has many requests. These requests are publicly released, although not guaranteed to make it to the Governor's budget.</p> <p>Increasing rates for Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) and Adult Day Centers—there were significant vendor rate increases for the biennial budget, but ALFs and Adult Day were not included. Adult Day Centers provide an important service to caregivers, particularly in cases involving a care receiver with dementia. These were extremely impacted by the pandemic and have struggled to get back with inadequate Medicaid rates.</p> <p>CMS is changing its classification system for Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) for reimbursement rates which will require a statute change.</p> <p>ALTSA will be making an ask around technology—with the workforce crisis, there is a coming need to use more assistive technologies to augment human supports.</p> <p>There will be an ask around building out an Adult Protective Services (APS) integrity program. With the high vacancy rate in APS, there needs to be enough oversight to provide continuous quality improvement initiatives.</p> <p>WA Cares – ask around building capacity through added staffing. WA Cares will launch in July 2026.</p> <p>Tribal Kinship Navigator Program – AAAs operate the Kinship Navigator program which received a bump, however Tribal partners did not receive this increase.</p> <p>Housing/rental assistance program – housing continues to be a huge issue for older adults on fixed incomes. ALTSA is asking for full funding for a rental subsidy program that supports ALTSA clients.</p>
<p>Election of Officers/ New Business /Public Comment</p>	<p>Art Swannack, member of the Nominating Committee reported the 4 individuals nominated for SCOA officer positions. Secretary – Bruce Dougherty; Vice Chairperson – Dennis Wheeler; Chairperson – Michele Blythe and Karen Kiessling.</p>



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Council approved the two unopposed positions: Bruce Dougherty, Secretary and Dennis Wheeler, Vice-Chairperson.

Following a call for any other nominations for Chairperson (there were none), each candidate was provided the floor to give a brief speech.

The final vote of the Council elected Michele Blythe for Chairperson (6 votes for, 4 votes against, 3 abstaining).

Georgiann Dustin shared her appreciation for the 6 years on the Council and her belief in its work as a voice for seniors.

Art Swannack thanked the Council for allowing him to be a part of this group over his years of service, during which time he learned a lot and was able to help neighbors and friends.

Kathy Medford shared her appreciation to learn with the Council and as an educational body, to share information out to communities.

ACTION ITEMS	Assignee	Due Date