

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 23, 2021

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Informational Report on Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Activities and Plans for 2022

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

To provide the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors with an informational report on Milwaukee County Commission on Aging activities and priorities for 2022

POLICY

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	53.01
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BACKGROUND

Per the request of Supervisors Felesia Martin and Shawn Rolland, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning Committee, this report provides an overview of key projects, plans, and activities for the Commission on Aging in 2022.

Per Section 53.01 of the Milwaukee County Ordinances, the Commission on Aging is the lead county agency responsible for developing, administering, and/or implementing a comprehensive, coordinated human service system for community-based services for people 60 and older. County Ordinance also requires that the Commission on Aging is responsible for assessing the major issues and needs of older adults, reviewing the planning and service efforts of organizations within the aging network, and acting as the separate administrative planning and service agency for all grant applications under the Older Americans Act of 1965. All Commission on Aging members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.

The Commission on Aging (COA) has created a number of committees that meet regularly and oversee much of the aging services work. These committees include the following standing committees and one select (ad hoc) committee:

Executive Committee – composed of the COA officers; primary responsibility is setting COA meeting agendas

Advisory Council – responsible for the development and oversight of the Area Plan; also researches key aging issues for the Commission on Aging

Advocacy Committee – responsible for advocating on a local, state, and federal level on policy issues that impact older adults

Service Delivery Committee – responsible for making contract recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors and regularly reviewing the performance of the Aging Unit's contracted vendors

Wellness Committee – responsible for promoting health and wellness resources and programs for older adults in an attempt to improve the overall health of older adults

Nutrition Council – responsible for promoting senior meal programs and assisting with the oversight of those programs

Select Committee on Senior Centers – responsible for assessing current and future programming options for older adults at the five county-owned senior centers and access to senior center programming in the county.

One of the Commission on Aging's most important responsibilities is the development and oversight of an Area Aging Plan that is essentially a strategic roadmap for aging programs and services. In 2021, the Commission on Aging and its Advisory Council completed a new Area Aging Plan aligned with the County's strategic vision. The Plan includes a long-term Aging Network Vision: The Aging Network will improve the health and well-being for all older adult residents of Milwaukee County by acknowledging and overcoming structural racism, promoting health equity, improving communication and collaboration, and addressing all dimensions of wellness.

Based upon extensive community feedback, the new Plan provides goals for program improvement or expansion from January 2022 through December 2024 in the areas of: Advocacy, Social Support, Senior Centers, Nutrition, Wellness, Caregiver Support, Long Term Support, Transportation, and Home Repair and Maintenance. The Commission on Aging approved this new plan at its November 19 meeting. DHHS will submit the 2022-24 Area Aging Plan to the County Board for review and approval in the January/February 2022 cycle, and then DHHS will submit the Plan to the State Department of Health Services (DHS) for final review and approval. Oversight of the new Area Aging Plan will be regularly discussed at the COA Advisory Council meetings in 2022. The Area Aging Plan goals as adopted by the COA are attached to this report (see Attachment 1).

Another significant issue currently being discussed by the COA is the future of programming and infrastructure at the five county-owned senior centers. At its November

19th meeting, as a result of significant work by the Select Committee on Senior Centers (SCSC), the COA reviewed and approved two documents that lay out a path forward for programming and services at the five county-owned senior centers. Given the precarious status of County tax levy funding, which currently supports all social programming at the five centers, as well as significant deferred maintenance and infrastructure issues within each center, the timing of the SCSC reports is valuable as the County begins to plan for future programming to support a growing older adult population. The reports prepared by the SCSC are attached to this report – Attachment 2 – The Milwaukee Idea and Attachment 3 – A Path Forward.

Another key issue for the COA is how to expend a significant infusion of ARPA funds over the next three years. The American Recovery Act provides DHHS and its Aging Unit with over \$4 million in additional Older Americans Act (OAA) funding to support aging services. All of this funding, which is in addition to the Aging Unit's regularly appropriated OAA funding, must be expended by December 2024. DHHS expects to receive a contract from Wisconsin Department of Health Services within the next few weeks that is specific to the first ARPA/OAA allocation of approximately \$2 million. It will be a significant challenge for the Commission on Aging and Aging Unit staff to plan and coordinate the expenditure of this large infusion of new non-renewable funding within the expenditure time frame. Additional or reallocated County funding maybe necessary to support local match requirements for new ARPA/Older Americans Act funding, as well as any expansion in long term care, transportation, and senior centers envisioned in the Area Plan goals.

The Commission on Aging and its Advocacy Committee will also be working on several public policy issues in the coming months. At the state level, older adult advocates will continue advocating to allow Milwaukee County approval to impose an additional local sales tax, expand funding for Aging and Disability Resources Centers and Elder Benefit Specialists, apply a more equitable formula for state funding across aging programs, and maintain voting rights and protections that impact older adults and people with disabilities. At the federal-level, older adult advocates seek to increase Older Americans Act funding and public transit funding to meet local needs.

Another key issue for the COA in 2022 and beyond is the recruitment of new members, including recruitment of additional members for its standing committees. A new County Board member will be needed after April 2022 as Sup. Jason Haas has announced he will not be running for re-election. Many of the COA's standing committees have lost members in recent years. The COA is committed to retaining diversity in its committee membership, recruiting leaders aligned with the County's vision, and securing representation for advocacy from all of the County's legislative districts. Promotion of these volunteer opportunities within the community-at-large will be needed to fill COA and standing committee slots in 2022 and beyond.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The Commission on Aging largely represents the diversity of older adults throughout

Milwaukee County. As the diversity of Milwaukee County's older adult population changes in 2022 and beyond, the diversity of the Commission on Aging (both on the COA as well as its standing committees) will also need to change and generally reflect the County's demographics.

Since the passage of the County's strategic plan, the COA, its standing committees, and staff have used the County's strategic plan to guide its discussions and decision-making, particularly in the area of contracted services, development of the 2022-2024 Area Aging Plan, and development of "future state" programming at the county-owned senior centers. The older adults who receive services through Older Americans Act programs generally reflect the diversity of older adult demographics within Milwaukee County. In addition, the Boards and staff of contracted vendors continue to diversify as well.

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and has no fiscal impact.

TERMS

As there are no contracts associated with this report, there are no contract terms to report.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, DHHS
David Muhammad, Deputy Director, DHHS
Clare O'Brien, Budget and Policy Director, DHHS
Matt Fortman, Fiscal Administrator, DHHS
Jon Janowski, Director, DHHS Division on Aging
Bettie Rodgers, Chair, Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Amber Miller, Vice-Chair, Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Jan Wilberg, Chair, Commission on Aging Advisory Council
Gloria Pitchford Nicholas, Chair, Commission on Aging Select Committee on Senior Centers

PREPARED BY:

Jon Janowski, Director, DHHS Division on Aging

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- (1) 2022-24 Area Aging Plan Goals
- (2) The Milwaukee Idea
- (3) A Path Forward

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, & Strategic Planning Committee
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, County Clerk
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office