

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 27, 2024

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

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

Subject: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to submit the 2025-2027 Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting authorization to submit the 2025-2027 Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

POLICY

The federal Older Americans Act (per 45 CFR 1321.65) requires Area Agencies on Aging to develop, implement, and monitor multi-year Area Aging Plans, as directed by the State Office on Aging.

Older Americans Act	45 CFR 1321.65
Wisconsin State Statutes	Wis. Stat. 42.80(2m)
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances	Chapter 53.09(1)

BACKGROUND

The Older Americans Act (OAA) states the role of an Area Agency on Aging is to “be the lead on all aging issues on behalf of all older individuals and family caregivers” and to develop a comprehensive system of community-based services that “assist older individuals and family caregivers in leading independent, meaningful, healthy, and dignified lives in their own homes and communities.” For decades, the Milwaukee County Aging Unit has affirmed the dignity and value of older adults in our county through advocacy, leadership, and service. It is our intent that this 2025-2027 Aging Area Plan not only meets, but surpasses the principles laid out in the Older Americans Act.

Additionally, the OAA asks us to identify aging populations in greatest social need and greatest economic need. As identified in the plan, we find that the population in greatest social and economic need in our community is people of color living at or below the

Federal Poverty Line. We have been successful in matching those residents with our programs and services but know there are even more individuals that meet that definition that we have not yet served.

To achieve these principles of the Older Americans Act, the Milwaukee County Area Agency on Aging must develop, implement, and monitor a multi-year Area Aging Plan (45 CFR 1321.65). The State requires these plans to occur in three-year increments. Throughout 2024, the Commission on Aging, led by its Advisory Council and Aging Unit staff, embarked on a process to develop a new Area Aging Plan for service years 2025 through 2027. The attached document constitutes a unified Area Agency on Aging Plan to provide programs and services for those in greatest economic need and greatest social need in Milwaukee County.

As outlined in the Area Aging Plan document, intentional and comprehensive input from older adults was solicited in developing this Area Plan, including four public hearings, eight focus groups, and three listening sessions and a survey that resulted in more than seven hundred responses, which were collected in a variety of methods to target a sample representative of Milwaukee County's older adults.

The Commission on Aging's Advisory Council and full Commission on Aging approved the 2025-2027 Area Plan at separate meetings held on December 2, 2024 and December 13, 2024, respectively. Pending Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approval, the 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan will be sent to the Office on Aging within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for its final approval.

Once the state has approved of the plan, we will implement the goals within and routinely track and report back on progress to the Advisory Council and Commission on Aging on a quarterly basis, as we did with the 2021-2024 Area Aging Plan.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

For decades, the Aging Unit (formerly the Department on Aging) has been affirming the dignity and value of older adults in our county through advocacy, leadership, and service. To comport with Milwaukee County's strategic vision, as well as DHHS's strategic initiative that focuses on providing easily accessible, timely, integrated, high quality, and person-centered services across its many service lines, the Commission on Aging used the 2021-2024 Area Plan process to adopt a newly expansive vision. The vision statement reads as follows: "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." This vision statement guided the development of the 2025-2027 Aging Area Plan.

Under this vision, the Commission on Aging set forth broad goals focusing on improving the health and well-being of older adult residents in Milwaukee County in the areas of

advocacy, caregiver support, socialization, senior centers, transportation, nutrition, evidence-based wellness and heart health, and local area goals. The attached Area Aging Plan document outlines these goals and the metrics used to measure our progress towards achieving these goals.

The Commission on Aging, Advisory Council, other committees and councils, and Aging Unit staff worked hard to align Area Plan goals with the Commission and County's mission and vision, which also inform the Commission's service provider decisions. Future service provider contracting decisions will be guided by the Area Plan goals. The Commission on Aging and staff will continue to apply a racial equity lens to all future contract decisions. Over the last several years, as a result of intentional focus and outreach efforts, Aging Unit staff and our contracted service providers have increased the number of older adult clients who are people of color. The contracted service provider network is also more aligned with these service demographics. The 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan goals provide an impetus for DHHS and its partners to continue making strides not only in terms of diversifying its client base but also improvements to diversifying provider's staff and oversight boards.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, to submit the 2025-2027 Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

FISCAL EFFECT

A fiscal note form is attached. There are no direct costs associated with adoption of the item.

TERMS

The 2025-2027 Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan is in effect from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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PREPARED BY:

Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Policy Manager, Aging Unit, DHHS

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Fiscal Note

2025-2027 Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan

cc: 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, Office of the County
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office