



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES
**AGING & DISABILITIES
SERVICES**

COMMISSION ON AGING SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2025

The **Service Delivery** Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, **February 24^h, 2025**, via Zoom.

Members Present:

Co-Chair George Banda
Commissioner Mark Behar
Co-Chair Amber Miller
Commissioner Paula Pennebaker
Commissioner Janice Wilberg

Members Excused:

Commissioner Terrence Moore
David LaCroix

Staff Present:

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS-ADS*
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS-ADS*

Staff Present Continued...

Vonda Nyang, *DHHS-ADS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS-ADS*

Attendees from the Public

Veronica Ruffin, *ERAS Senior Network*
Liz Popowski, *Jewish Family Services*
Lo Neng Kiatoukaysy, *Hmong American Friendship*
Matthew Hayes, *Legal Action of WI*
Truth Freemyn, *Riverworks*
Shannon Downie, *SOA*
Agnes Rodriguez, *UCC*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL

Co-Chair Amber Miller officially called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and conducted a roll call. A quorum was present at the beginning of the meeting.

II. REPORTS FROM VENDORS TO THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING

1:10 p.m. Eras Senior Network (Veronica Ruffin, Program Director for Milwaukee County's Eras Senior Network

Contract: Home (Household and Outdoor Maintenance Engagement)

- 1. Is the main reason you were unable to meet your goals due to the inability to find volunteers?** Yes, that was the main obstacle preventing Eras from completing all service requests.
- 2. There are discrepancies between the initial numbers and the tallies for Performance Objective 1. Can you explain?**

Objective 1 reflects two distinct events in the data, specifically the spring and fall clean-ups for yard work. Objectives 2, 3, and 4 represent additional events that show unduplicated services for snow removal, lawn care, and minor home repairs.

3. Can you provide information on the locations where you offer services? We serve four quadrants: Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest.

4. Is there more detailed information available regarding the areas served that are not displayed here for all services offered to registered recipients under the Older Americans Act, except for legal services? Yes, we can report on specific zip code areas.

5. How many volunteers do you have? We have 867 volunteers; 60% are based in Milwaukee County, while the remaining 40% are in Waukesha County. It would be interesting to know what percentage of service delivery occurs in Milwaukee County.

Additionally, COA Chair Janice Wilberg requested that, in the future, SDC create a graphic to illustrate where Older Americans Act funding is used to support older adults on an annual basis.

1:20 p.m. ERAS Senior Network (Veronica Ruffin, Program Director for Milwaukee County's Eras Senior Network)
Contract: Volunteers Drivers

- 1. How do you screen your volunteer drivers to verify their driving qualifications and credentials? Do they need a special license to drive?** All volunteers undergo a background check, which includes a review of their driving history and any criminal records. Additionally, volunteers are required to provide proof of insurance. Eras offers an umbrella insurance policy that covers both the driver and the client in the vehicle in the event of an accident.
- 2. Is there any expected change in funding for Eras this year that could impact the programming and services you provide?** Eras has recently completed a three-year strategic plan to expand and explore additional funding sources through philanthropic efforts.

1:30 p.m. Jewish Family Services (JFS) (Liz Epopowski)
Contract: Late Life Counseling Services



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1. **Which associations are you currently involved with, and which ones are you seeking to connect with?** They are presently engaged with Senior Centers and senior housing complexes.
2. **What are you looking forward to this year, whether it's a new idea or a different approach? Is there anything upcoming this year that you would like to share?** Our focus is on expanding our outreach efforts. By the end of the year, we aim to establish connections with the Milwaukee County Senior Centers.

Commissioners have suggested that JFS consider the 19 municipalities in the area that have senior center programs or clubs, including Whitefish Bay, Fox Point, and Bayside. Many single seniors benefit from these programs. We should also explore outreach through churches and utilize various media sources to reach a wider audience.

1:40 p.m. Vital Voices (Audrey Carignan, Program Manager)

Contract: Telephone Reassurance Services

The committee inquired with Vital Voices about the challenges they faced in recruiting volunteers. The primary issue is the time commitment, as most volunteers can only contribute for a few hours per day, one day a week.

Commissioner Wilberg would like the SDC to establish a coordinated effort to tackle volunteer recruitment issues across all organizations.

Chair Miller praised Vital Voices for their service improvements.

1:50 p.m. Hmong American Friendship Association (Lo Neng Kiatoukaysy, Director)

Contract: Services to Older Refugees

Kiatoukaysy informed the SDC that XXX is no longer employed at the Hmong American Friendship Association, where they previously handled funding. General arose during the discussion.

1. **Are there any upcoming events or new developments that you would like to bring to our attention?** We are securing funding through Bader Philanthropy to expand and sustain the program.

The Director expressed gratitude to the AAA staff and the SDC committee for their efforts.

2 p.m. Legal Action of Wisconsin (Matthes Hayes)
Contract: Benefit Specialist/Legal Services

The SDC inquired about the general aspects of the program.

2:10 p.m. River works Development Corporation (Truth Freemyn)
Contract: Financial Navigation

“Why do you think River works didn’t met the goals, can you elaborate if it they were lower, different?” Ms. Freemyn thinks it’s due to the slow and steady process that takes some time to obtain their goals (Example, clients paying down debt takes time).

“How do people find out about the program?” And is there a possibility to expand the program throughout the city (Example: Train the trainer). River works would like to expand the program and are contacting churches, senior centers and community events.

2:30 p.m. Service Older Adults of Southeastern Wisconsin (Shannon Downie, SOA Senior Center Director)
Contract: Nutrition Site Supervision Services

- 1. Do you have the capacity to increase the number of participants at senior center meal sites? Currently, what is the number of filled seats, and how many vacant seats could be available?** This may vary by center. The Kelly Senior Center has experienced an influx of clients at their dining site and requires additional tables and chairs to accommodate them.
- 2. Which senior centers have the most tremendous potential for growth?** Clinton Rose has significant potential based on the size of its dining room and current attendance. Similarly, McGovern Park also has space available for development.
- 3. Why do you think clients are not taking advantage of the dining sites?** The rooms currently in use need to be transitioned to larger spaces to accommodate more diners. Additionally, SOA has discussed providing extra programming during lunch to attract more individuals to participate.

2:40 p.m. Service Older Adults of Southeastern Wisconsin (Shannon Downie, SOA Senior Center Director)
Contract: Social Programming for five County-owned Senior Centers



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SDC is concerned about the low number of participants at senior centers. SOA needs to develop a better community outreach strategy and report back with significantly increased numbers.

2:50 p.m. United Community Center (UCC) (Agnes Rodriguez, Director, Aging and Disability Programs)
Contract: Senior Center and Nutrition Programming

There were no major or concerns.

3 p.m. United Community Center (UCC)
Contract: Transportation to United Community Center

1. **What other challenges has UCC faced besides reimbursement that you would like to see resolved?** UCC needs more volunteers, as the organization relies heavily on them.

3:10 p.m. p.m. Claire Enders
Contract: Specialized Transportation

There were no significant or concerns. Ms. Enders informed SDC that Z-Trip has been excellent, providing the necessary data sets for the AAA.

3:20 p.m. Discussion and (3:50 p.m.)

Emily Petersen, the Advocacy and Policy Manager at the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), discussed the Senior Leadership Program, a training initiative designed to empower older adults to advocate for themselves on public policy issues that impact their daily lives. This engaging educational program will take place on May 2, 9, 13, and 23, 2025. Participants will explore local, state, and federal public policy priorities that specifically affect older adults.

On May 13, 2025, participants will have the opportunity to attend Aging Advocacy Day at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, where they can meet with legislators. The program will conclude with a graduation ceremony on Friday, May 23, 2025.

If you or someone you know is interested in this program, please contact Ms. Petersen at Emily.Petersen@milwaukeecountywi.gov. Flyers are available upon request.

Carrie Koss Vallejo informed the SDC that the transition from SAMS to PeerPlace has made some of the data reports she usually provides unavailable.

III. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 4:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
AAA Executive Assistant