

GACA Report for April, 2023

AZAging Board Chair, Mary Beals Luedtka

Greetings; thank you for giving the Area Agency on Aging Directors the opportunity to be with you during these meetings and bring to you updates on the status of services provided by the AAA's across the State.

Legislative Asks

AZAging is extremely appreciative of the Arizona Legislature's commitment to supporting Area Agencies on Aging in providing funding for HCBS by appropriating \$1 million in on-going funding to address the minimum wage increases from Proposition 206. The Legislature also appropriated \$2 million in one-time funding in FY 2023 for the same purpose.

With inflation at a record high rate of 12.1% in Arizona, it is critical that we continue to invest these dollars into sustaining current levels of service throughout the state. Over the past three years, with funds provided from the Arizona State Legislature, the Area Agencies on Aging in Arizona have been able to increase the number of clients receiving home and community-based services by 32%. Fueled by population growth, increased costs of service, and nearly a decade of stagnant funding prior to FY 2022, the waiting list for these services is 1,776. Without the continuation of the \$2 million appropriated last legislative session, Area Agencies on Aging would be forced to reduce service hours or number of clients served – increasing waiting lists and need in the State.

To maintain service levels over the next year, **AZAging requests that the \$2 million appropriated in FY 2023 continue to be appropriated to Area Agencies on Aging in FY 2024 as on-going funding.**

Recruitment & Retention of DCW's

Region III has made bonuses available for all providers with DCW's.

Challenges

Region III has had challenges distributing the bonus and incentive funding from the State. Our largest provider has yet to bill for any bonus monies. Upon contacting them, they said it was too much work on the taxes around it. The other providers were excited to receive the funding and are utilizing it. We will now pool whatever has not been billed for and put it out to all on a first come first serve basis.

Region IV COVID contact tracing through the DHS generated the development of a Survey centered on questions regarding emergency food or water, housing and health etc. Results after three quarters highlight the need in La Paz County, "Application Assistance" for Utilities, Rent, and Arizona Long Term Care. The resources needed are not available through our current AAA Case Management scope and funding and we are exploring options for sustainability of this partnership and response in the community.

Misc. Updates:

Region ONE

Vaccination Funding

The Agency Received \$288,000 from USAging to provide 2,000 COVID, Flu, and Shingles vaccinations beginning April 1, 2023, through April 15, 2024. The Agency will partner with Valle Del Sol to hold community vaccine clinics and provide in-home vaccinations and transportation to vaccination sites,

outreach and education.

Elder Refugee Services

The Agency has recently seen an influx of added support for its MOSAIC® Elder Refugee Program. The Satterberg Foundation has donated \$25,000 to the MOSAIC® program to assist with Citizenship Application Fees. The State Office of Refugee Resettlement increased its overall funding to the Agency and gave funding specifically so that MOSAIC® could serve Afghani refugees. Maricopa County awarded the Agency \$128,419 to rebuild its Preliteracy program and volunteer base post COVID. Funds will be used to hire an Education Coordinator, recruit volunteers and assist with Citizenship Application Fees.

Public Hearings

The Agency held six public hearings as the final step in its Area Plan process. 90 older adults participated.

Region III has completed five (5) public hearings on the New Area Plan. The plan has been written and is complete except for the budget. As of this date we have not received the alert and the contract operating budget from the State. The plan will be presented to the Advisory Council on Aging on April 10th and to NACOG Regional Council on April 27th for approval. We will then hold a special advisory council meeting in May for the budget and then to Regional Council in June for the final approvals.

Region IV

Public Health Workforce Grant, ACL & ADHS/Wildfire, Social Determinants of Health Grant – Focus La Paz County Community Health Worker Project WACOG implemented the DAAS ACL Public Healthcare Workforce Grant in coordination with a grant from Wildfire funded through ADHS, for rural Community Action Agencies. The combined grants allowed WACOG to form a partnership with La Paz County Health Department, Community Health Worker, CHW, Program, expanding staff and or hours of WACOG Case Management and the CHW's to coordinate response to the community needs. The funding has allowed an expansion of Case Management time and effort to address assistance needs not normally available within the restraints of AAA Case Management tasks.

111 seniors have received coordination of care services in this partnership requesting some kind of information or assistance. To date the partnership has been successful in assisting 44 households with tangible services. All households received a touch point, information, options and guided referrals, with an open door to reach back out if needed.

Region V

- PGCSC Area Plan 2023 – 2027 Current activities are focused on completion of the Community Needs Assessment. So far, 600 surveys have been completed. PGCSC has schedule three public forums to take place in early April to present the survey outcomes and plan objectives to the public.
- PGCSC & APS Solar Project APS Solar Communities Program has approved a Solar Generation Covered Parking System to be installed at PGCSC's property on McCartney Road. This project is expected to be completed by early summer 2023.
- Virtual Senior Center In order to deal with the increased isolation experienced by seniors, PGCSC has decided to offer its clients a "Virtual Senior Center" experience. The concept offers online experiences to engage seniors in the type of activities that they might otherwise participate in at their local senior center. PGCSC rolled out a small pilot project that is ongoing.
- COVID-19 vaccine clinics PGCSC is considering applying for a \$100,000 grant to provide Covid vaccine

clinics and education on the need for seniors to continue to remain up to date with their vaccinations. If approved PGCSA would offer vaccination clinics in the fall of 2023.

- Memory Café The Memory Café continues to be an opportunity for social engagement for caregivers and their care recipients. During the month of February PGCSA had 13 attendees. And 20 attendees for the month of March.

- Outreach Activities Some of the outreach events have included the Senior Expo and nutritional presentation to the Gila inter-Agency Network. Through our social media and in person events we recorded 110,282 community contacts for the month. We continue to focus on providing social and recreational opportunities for our seniors/disabled and our caregivers through our Arts-n-Meals programming and the Memory Café, we recorded having 140 participants in these two programs this month.

- Matter of Balance PGCSA is mid-way through our Matter of Balance series with 25 participants, and have 11 participants in our virtual Diabetes class that started 3/14. Starting in April we will be offering our Powerful Tools for Caregivers session, in a virtual format.

Region VI

The SHIP/SMP Coordinator and Ombudsman Coordinator were invited to a one-on-one with DES-DAAS to discuss the **(SEAEAT) SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA ELDER ABUSE TASKFORCE**. DES/WEAAD has selected “SEAEAT” to be part of a collaborative breakout session on Elder Abuse Coalitions along with WACOG at the conference on June 15th.

Area Agency on Aging, Area Plan on Aging is in its final stages. Regional assessments were collected, Key Informant surveys were collected, and Public hearings took place in person and on a radio interview with Double R Media. The Area Plan will be presented to the SEAGO-Executive Board for approval and execution on May 19, 2023.