

Advocacy Requirements of AAA Board & Committee Members

Federal

Older Americans Act

[Neal Minogue, State of Wisconsin/Bureau on Aging & Disability Resources/Older Americans Act Program Supervisor, *“The Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources must divide the state into distinct planning and services areas and in turn is required by ACL to contract for services with Area agencies on Aging. Dane County is designated by the BADR (the State Office on Aging within the State Department of Health Services) as an AAA and a County Aging Unit. In order for the State, AAAs, county, or tribe to receive federal funds it must assure AAAs adhere to the federal regulations within the Older Americans Act. All AAAs must agree to the terms of our state contracts and assurance in addition to state statutes within the Wisconsin Elders Act. Thus, one of the many roles and responsibilities the aging unit and their governing bodies, including board members, is **advocacy** for older adults if they agree to receive Older Americans Act funding. **Each requires us to all to advocate for older adults in some way to strive to meet the objectives of the Older Americans Act.”**]*

Section 101, TITLE I

The Congress hereby finds and declares that, in keeping with the traditional American concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society, the older people of our Nation are entitled to, and it is the joint and several duty and responsibility of the governments of the United States, of the several States and their political subdivisions, and of Indian tribes to **assist our older people to secure equal opportunity** to the full and free enjoyment of the following objectives:

- (1) An adequate income in retirement in accordance with the American standard of living.
- (2) The best possible physical and mental health (including access to person-centered, trauma-informed services as appropriate) which science can make available and without regard to economic status.
- (3) Obtaining and maintaining suitable housing, independently selected, designed and located with reference to special needs and available at costs which older citizens can afford.
- (4) Full restorative services for those who require institutional care, and a comprehensive array of community-based,
- (5) Opportunity for employment with no discriminatory personnel practices because of age.
- (6) Retirement in health, honor, dignity—after years of contribution to the economy.
- (7) Participating in and contributing to meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, educational and training and recreational opportunities.
- (8) Efficient community services, including access to low-cost transportation, which provide a choice in supported living arrangements and social assistance in a coordinated manner and which are readily available when needed, with emphasis on maintaining a continuum of care for vulnerable older individuals.
- (9) Immediate benefit from proven research knowledge which can sustain and improve health and happiness.
- (10) Freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives, full participation in the planning and operation of community based services and programs provided for their benefit, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

[*“Within SEC. 305 of Older Americans Act (Designations and Assurances), the state is required, prior to allocating funds, to designate Planning and Services areas also known as Area Agencies on Aging. The designation is provided as part of our application for OAA funding from the AOA/ACL. Without this designation and the agreement with AAAs, counties, and tribes to fulfill the obligations of federal funding there would be no funding from ACL. More importantly, each county and tribe must adhere to both federal and state regulations that also include many assurances that are part of the Older Americans Act. See highlighted areas below.”*—Minogue]

SEC. 305. (a) In order for a State to be eligible to participate in programs of grants to States from allotments under this title—

- (1) the State shall, in accordance with regulations of the Assistant Secretary, designate a State agency as the sole State agency to—

SEC.305 (E) divide the State into distinct planning and service areas (or in the case of a State specified in subsection (b)(5)(A) designate the entire State as a single planning and service area), in accordance with guidelines issued by the Assistant Secretary, after considering the geographical distribution of older individuals in the State, the incidence of the need for supportive services, nutrition services, multipurpose senior centers, and legal assistance, the distribution of older individuals who have greatest economic need (with particular attention to low-income older individuals, including low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas) residing in such areas, the distribution of older individuals who have greatest social need (with particular attention to low-income older individuals, including low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and areas, the distribution of older individuals who are Indians residing in such areas, the distribution of resources available to provide such services or centers, the boundaries of existing areas within the State which were drawn for the planning or administration of supportive services programs, the location of units of general purpose local government within the State, and any other relevant factors;

SEC. 306. (a) Each area agency on aging designated under section 305(a)(2)(A) shall, in order to be approved by the State agency, prepare and develop an area plan for a planning and service area for a two-, three-, or four-year period determined by the State agency, with such annual adjustments as may be necessary. Each such plan shall be based upon a uniform format for area plans within the State prepared in accordance with section 307(a)(1). Each such plan shall—

- (4) (C) contain an assurance that the area agency on aging will ensure that each activity undertaken by the agency, including planning, **advocacy**, and systems development, will include a focus on the needs of low-income minority older individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas
- (4) (D) establish an **advisory council consisting of older individuals** (including minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas) who are participants or who are eligible to participate in programs assisted under this Act, family caregivers of such individuals, representatives of older individuals, service providers, representatives of the business community, local elected officials, providers of veterans' health care (if appropriate), and the general public, to **advise continuously the area agency on aging on all matters relating to the development of the area plan**, the administration of the plan and operations conducted under the plan

Section 306 (6) provide that the area agency on aging will—

- (A) Take into account in connection with matters of general policy arising in the development and administration of the area plan, the views of recipients of services under such plan
- (B) Serve as the **advocate** and focal point for older individuals within the community by (in cooperation with agencies, organizations, and individuals participating in activities under the plan) monitoring, evaluating, and commenting upon all policies, programs, hearings, levies, and community actions which will affect older individuals

State

Wisconsin Statute § 46.82, Social Services—also known as Wisconsin Elders Act

46.82 Aging unit. (1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Aging unit" means an aging unit director and necessary personnel, directed by a county or tribal commission on aging and organized as one of the following:

46.82 (4) (a) (2) In any county that has a county executive or county administrator and that has established a single-county aging unit, the county executive or county administrator shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the county board of supervisors, the commission on aging. A member of a commission on aging appointed under this subdivision may be removed by the county executive or county administrator for cause.

46.82 (3) Aging Unit Powers and Duties

In accordance with state statutes, rules promulgated by the department and relevant provisions of 42 USC 3001 to 3057n and as directed by the county or tribal commission on aging, an aging unit:

(a) Duties. Shall do the following:

10. **Actively incorporate and promote the participation of older individuals** in the preparation of a county or tribal comprehensive plan for aging resources that identifies needs, goals, activities and county or tribal resources for older individuals.
18. **Advocate on behalf of older individuals to assist in enabling them to meet their basic needs.**

[“Please note that required structure of an Aging Unit also requires a Commission on Aging/Board on Aging. One cannot exist without the other and therefore the Aging Unit Powers and Duties extend to the members of the Commission on Aging.” –Minogue]

County

Dane County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15: Administrative Agencies (updated 4/30/20)

Section 15.18: AREA AGENCY ON AGING BOARD

(6) The board is designated as the planning, policy, and **advocacy** body of the Dane County Area Agency on Aging of Dane County.

(f) provides a public information and **advocacy** service for the senior citizens of Dane County;

AAA Board Bylaws

Article II: Purpose, Duties, and Powers, Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities:

*The AAA Board is designated as the planning, policy, and **advocacy** body of the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County. Serve as an **advocate** for older adults with local, state, and federal governmental bodies and the community-at-large.*

AAA Access Committee Description (updated 1/4/21)

4. **Advocate** for older adults, including those with disabilities, to enable them to maintain full potential, enhance quality of life, and affirm the dignity and value of older adults by supporting their choices for living in their own community.
7. **Advocate** for the Elder Abuse Program, Adult and Volunteer Guardianship Programs, Rep/Payee Program, Senior Transportation Services, and Victims of Crime Advocates Program and receive periodic reports from staff.

AAA Legislative/Advocacy Committee Description (updated 3/1/21)

5. **Advocate** with respect to positions taken by the Committee with federal, state, county, and local bodies responsible for taking action on those positions by:
 - a. Communicating by letter, email, phone calls, public hearings, meetings, and personal contacts with public officials responsible for implementing the positions.
 - b. Urging the Elderly Advocacy Network (EAN) and other groups to act on positions of the Committee.
 - c. Providing educational opportunities for candidates for public office and public officials.
 - d. Reporting to the AAA Board.
 - e. Meeting with Dane County Lobbyist and others interested in legislative **advocacy**.

AAA Nutrition/Wellness Committee Description (updated 3/1/21)

1. **Promote policies and programs** that enhance and increase the nutritional status of senior adults and prevent more costly health problems.