

# Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

December 2002

*The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them, through programs and services funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.*



**Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger** is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

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## Draft ACoA State Plan for Services for Your Review

### A Special Edition of *Alaskan Seniors, Living Longer, Growing Stronger*

The Alaska Commission on Aging is in the process of developing a new four year state plan for services. The plan describes how the Commission will use federal and state funds for senior services throughout Alaska. This issue publishes sections of the new draft 2003-2007 Alaska Commission on Aging State Plan for Services for review and comments. The purpose of the plan, guiding principles, focal points, funding allocation changes, and goals for program areas are published to inform Alaskans how resources will be focused over the next four years.

The entire draft of the new state plan will be available mid-December and will be posted on our web site at [www.AlaskaAging.org](http://www.AlaskaAging.org). The current 2001-2003 Alaska Commission on Aging State Plan for Services is also available on our web site. You may request a hard copy of the current state plan by calling (907) 465-3250.

The following are scheduled public hearing dates to accept comments in person and/or via teleconference regarding the proposed 2003-2007 state plan for services:

**Friday, January 10, 2003 in Anchorage**

**Wednesday, January 29, 2003 in Fairbanks**

**Wednesday, February 19, 2003 in Juneau**

For information about specific times and locations, or to order a complete copy of the new draft state plan, call ACoA at (907) 465-3250 or e-mail Mary Ann Gosling at [maryann\\_gosling@admin.state.ak.us](mailto:maryann_gosling@admin.state.ak.us). You may also submit written comments at anytime by e-mail or fax (907) 465-4716 on or before February 19, 2003. The Commission will review all public comments before approving the new state plan.

The sections of the new draft 2003-2007 Alaska Commission on Aging State Plan for Services that follow are spaced loosely to allow you to make notes on the text itself if you so choose.

### Purpose of the State Plan

Alaska receives federal funds (under the Older Americans Act) to provide services to seniors. Each state that receives Older Americans Act funds is required to publish a plan describing how the state will use the money. The federal Administration on Aging (AoA) reviews and approves the plan.

In addition to describing its use of federal funds, the Alaska Commission on Aging plan describes how the Commission will use state funds for senior services and outlines direction and goals for the future. This plan will serve for the period from June 14, 2003 to June 13, 2007.

## Plan Structure

- The *guiding principles* provide a central frame of reference for the Commission in all its work.
- *Qualities that distinguish effective senior services* were defined and described by *Common Ground II* participants. The Commission will emphasize these qualities in its grantmaking, and initiatives during the Plan period.
- *Focal points* describe specific areas of focus for the Commission's programmatic work in the Plan period. They build on:
  - *Common Ground II and III* participant recommendations
  - Seniors' input during Commission public comment periods
  - Senior service providers input at program work sessions and Commission public comment periods
  - Input from other state agencies including the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
  - Other state documents: 2001-2006 Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan and Healthy Alaskans 2010 Targets and Strategies for Improved Health (Both are published by the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Division of Public Health)

The Commission has identified eight **guiding principles** that serve as a central point of reference for our work. These principles describe the ideal quality of life we expect seniors to experience, and the hallmarks of effective senior service organizations. They build on the work of Alaskan seniors who represented their communities and organizations at the *Common Ground II Conference* co-hosted by the Commission and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation in January 2000.

## Quality of Life

- Seniors will live with dignity and respect and have an opportunity to receive **services to promote and enhance their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.**
- Seniors will attain and **maintain personal and financial independence** at the highest level for as long as possible.
- Seniors will be able to **age in place**, remain safe in their own homes, chosen communities or regions of the state in the least restrictive setting possible.
- Seniors will remain connected as valued members of their families and communities with opportunities for **maximum mutual benefit and harmony between generations.**

## Services

- Services will **provide satisfaction** to seniors and caregivers, and demonstrate **positive outcomes** in the lives of seniors.
- Services to seniors will be provided in as **culturally relevant** a manner as possible.
- Services will be planned and provided in consideration, collaboration, and **coordination with other groups and organizations** in order to make maximum use of existing resources while ensuring that seniors receive the range of services they need.
- Service providers will receive adequate training and professional development to ensure **competent delivery of services** to seniors.

## Qualities that distinguish effective senior services

- ready availability at centralized locations
- user friendliness
- reliability
- effective outreach to reach Alaskan seniors who are low income, frail, rural, disabled, of minority ethnicities, lack English language skills, are affected by Alzheimer's and related disorders, and their caregivers
- accessibility
- high quality
- consumer choice
- compassion and caring
- flexibility to respond to clients' fluid circumstances
- seniors' continuing input so that services benefit from their understanding of their needs *and* interests
- the employment of qualified seniors and adults with backgrounds in gerontology, and successful work experience in the senior community.
- respect for client confidentiality

## Focal points for programmatic work

- *Assisting seniors and younger Alaskans to achieve economic well-being as they age through fostering:*
  - Financial planning for retirement
  - Viable senior employment opportunities
  - Employer interest and action to employ older Alaskans
  - Increased participation by limited income Alaskans age 55+ in the Commission's Senior Community Service Employment Program and associated employment training and placement opportunities available to older Alaskans through our statewide Job Center network.
  - Expanded consumer awareness of long-term care insurance, and the merits of enrolling in this type of coverage as a relatively young person.

- *Strengthening support to caregivers through*
  - Increased emphasis on training, education and continuing support to family, volunteer, and paid caregivers
  - Increasing flexibility and availability of respite services
  - Encouraging innovation to try out, evaluate and enhance approaches to caregiver support appropriate to Alaskans' cultural and socio-economic diversity, and the wide range in community size and resources.
  - Providing meaningful recognition for outstanding services
  
- *Striving to assure a consistently high quality of services through*
  - Development and start-up of quality assurance outreach in partnership with the Division of Senior Services. This will reach Commission grantees and Medicaid Older Alaskan long-term care waiver providers, and those Alaskan seniors using those programs.
  - Clarification and education with grantees regarding the Commission's grant standards, including criminal background checks
  - Provision of grantee education and training regarding
    - gerontology,
    - specific services provided and targeted populations to be served
    - reporting required to assure accountability for grant funding received
    - fund raising
    - effective cost-sharing strategies for allowable NTS services
  - Facilitating networking among grantees to share their best practices
  - Providing meaningful recognition for outstanding services
  
- *Expanding the availability of appropriate support services to older rural Alaskans through*
  - Increased outreach and consultation with rural elders, their caregivers, and rural and tribal social service and health care providers.
  - Making appropriate grant opportunities and technical assistance available to rural and tribal service providers.
  - Promoting the growth of consumer directed personal care agencies in under served areas
  
- *Assisting grantees and communities to prevent elder abuse and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable Alaskans through*
  - Promoting awareness of seniors rights
  - Promoting awareness and involvement with Adult Protective Services, the Office of Public Guardian, the Long Term Care Ombudsman, local law enforcement, and the Consumer Protection group in the Office of Alaska Attorney General.

- *Promoting public awareness and action to achieve constructive public policy regarding central issues affecting Alaskan seniors through*
  - Development and circulation of user-friendly information on the growth of the statewide senior community, and the opportunities and challenges associated with this trend
  - Providing timely briefings on public policy issues affecting older Alaskans to policy makers at the national and statewide level, and providing information for local residents to tap in their work with local policy makers
  - Involving local senior advisory commissions in a continuing dialogue with the Commission.
  - Continuing to host regular teleconferences during the Legislative session to provide a forum for outreach and education on legislative issues and opportunities.
  
- *Working to improve health care and health care systems for elderly Alaskans through*
  - Advocating for a prescription drug component in the Medicare program
  - Collaborating with the Mental Health Board and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Board on solutions to behavioral health issues of the elderly ( mental health and substance abuse )
  - Educating Alaskans about various models of health care insurance, including tri-care and private long-term care, and supporting strategies to increase affordability
  - Promoting better access to health care, including physician acceptance of Medicare clients, with a strong focus on rural and minority group elderly populations
  - Educating service providers on promoting wellness activities and best practices in nutrition
  - Supporting better-coordinated discharge planning from health care settings
  - Participating in efforts to build improved health care facilities
  
- *Being involved in workforce projects for development and training of direct service and healthcare professions through*
  - Partnering with the University of Alaska in developing gerontology programs
  - Promoting the consumer directed Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program
  - Supporting *Full Lives* conference that provide opportunities for direct support workers to network, understand program challenges, improve program service delivery, and professional growth development
  - Advocating for effective training, mentoring and peer support for direct service workers
  - Increasing community awareness of the value of the Long Term Care workforce
  - Continuing collaboration with the AMHTA Workforce Development Taskforce focused on the expansion of recruitment efforts, achieving living wage and benefits, and developing effective retention strategies for direct service workers

### **NUTRITION, TRANSPORTATION & SUPPORT SERVICES GOALS**

Nutrition, Transportation and Support Services (NTS) are funded through the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) under Title III, and are provided to seniors in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. These services contribute to seniors' health, safety, welfare, and ability to remain independent. NTS services often become the point of entry for seniors who

may need access to other services in the continuum of long-term care. The Alaska Commission on Aging solicits for grant proposals every three to four years, and awards grants to non-profit organizations, tribal governments, school districts, and some local governments. NTS services are available to seniors aged 60 and older.

**Goal: Improve the statewide collection of NTS client, services, and financial data for annual federal and state reports.**

**Goal: Encourage collaboration and coordination among NTS grantees.**

**Goal: Promote coordinated transportation efforts in areas where practical and provided services to seniors will be increased.**

**Goal: As stated in the Older Americans Act, expand outreach efforts to provide services to seniors who: Reside in rural areas; are low income and minority individuals with the greatest economic and social need; have severe disabilities; have limited English-speaking ability; and have Alzheimer's disease or related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction, and the caretakers of such individuals.**

**Goal: Assist NTS grantees in their efforts to generate increased client donations from those receiving NTS services.**

**Goal: Ensure all grantees have a written emergency and disaster plan.**

**Goal: Measure outcomes of NTS services.**

### **HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES GOALS**

Home and Community Based (HCB) services offer relief to families who find themselves in the role of caregiver for disabled seniors 60 and older, and persons of any age with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD). As seniors become more dependent due to chronic health conditions, frailty, or dementia, HCB services help them continue to live at home and age in place. HCB services include care coordination, adult day services, respite care, ADRD education and outreach, and family caregiver support. Funds for HCB services are distributed statewide through an RFP process and are available to all seniors regardless of Medicaid eligibility.

**Goal: Advocate and coordinate a continuum of home and community based long-term care in the least restrictive environment for seniors with disabilities.**

**Goal: Improve access to information about programs and services available to seniors, family caregivers and agency care providers.**

**Goal: Maximize the quality and accountability of ACoA's Home and Community Based services.**

**Goal: Promote the expansion of caregiver services statewide.**

**Goal: Promote workforce development in the area of home and community based services.**

### **ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY**

The beneficiaries of the Trust include Alaskans who experience mental illness, mental retardation or similar disabilities, chronic alcoholism with psychosis, or Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD). The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is the designated entity to advocate for persons with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) in relationship to the Trust. Related Disorders include diagnoses such as Pick’s Disease, Parkinson’s dementia, multi-infarct dementia and other progressive cognitive impairments. Recommendations to meet the needs of elder Trust beneficiaries address the Health, Safety, Economic Security, and Living with Dignity goals specified in the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan. The following are goals that ACoA shares with the Trust in providing senior services. Programs are initiated through grants and contracts.

**Health Goal: To protect the health, safety and quality of life of older Alaskans with special needs.**

**Safety Goal: To protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

**Safety Goal: To improve the quality of care provided to elders.**

**Economic Security Goal: To make it possible for all Alaskans to live in dignity with adequate food, shelter, and medical care.**

**Living with Dignity Housing Goal: To enable people to live in appropriate housing in the community.**

**Living with Dignity Educating Public Goal: To reduce stigma associated with mental illness, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders.**

### **SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) promotes part-time community service activities for unemployed low-income persons 55 years or older who have poor employment prospects. The intent of the program is to help this population enter, or re-enter, the workforce and to enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment. Federal eligibility rules require participants to be 55 years or over and at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty income limit for Alaska. The SCSEP program targets participants 60 years or over who are at or below 100 percent the federal poverty income limit for Alaska. Funding for the SCSEP program comes from a federal grant received by the state. As administrator of the SCSEP program, the ACoA solicits proposals

from non-profit agencies around the state to provide opportunities to enrollees of the program to learn or improve skills while providing a valuable community service.

**Goal: Assist seniors in attaining a higher quality of life by providing training and employment experiences.**

**Goal: Maximize use of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) opportunities.**

**Goal: Enhance and promote services available to seniors at One Stop Job Centers.**

**Goal: Provide guidance and technical assistance to host agencies and sub-grantees to operate the SCSEP program in an effective manner.**

### **SENIOR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES GOALS**

Through designated funding from the Alaska State Legislature, the Alaska Commission on Aging oversees grants that support two assisted living facilities for elders; one in Tanana and one in Kotzebue. The Division of Senior Services monitors and licenses both facilities. Assisted living facilities provide meals and assistance with daily activities to enable seniors to remain in or near their community of choice.

**Goal: Assist Senior Residential Services (SRS) grantees to secure CHOICE (Medicaid Waiver Program) services for eligible SRS residents.**

**Goal: Provide support and technical assistance to SRS grantees to help them maintain quality services.**

### **CHANGES IN THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS**

The Older Americans Act requires states to use a consistent and equitable method to allocate Nutrition Transportation and Support services and Family Caregiver Support funds across each region of the state. In accordance with federal requirements, the Commission uses five factors to determine how much funding each region will receive: the size of the region's population aged 60 and over, the number of minority seniors in the region, the number of low-income seniors in the region, the number of seniors in rural areas in the region, and the number of frail seniors (age 80+) in the region. In the current state plan, the Commission assigned an equal weight (20 percent) to each factor. For the 2003-2007 plan, the Commission is considering a change in weight to the following factors:

60+ population	16.6%
Minority	16.6%
Poverty (low-income)	25%
Frail population (age 80+)	25%
Rural population	16.6%

**End of Draft**