



**State Unit on Aging  
Aging Advisory Committee Meeting**

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, – 9 am-2 pm  
South Central Nebraska Area Agency on  
Aging  
625 E. 25<sup>th</sup> St., #12, Kearney, NE 68847  
virtual meeting via WebEx.

Committee members present:

Colleen Claassen, Chairperson, at large  
Kimberly Baumann, NENAAA  
Sharon Busch, Aging Partners  
Luana Duennerman, at large  
Charlotte Dorwart, Aging Office of Western NE  
Danny DeLong, Blue Rivers AAA  
Frank Herzog, Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging

Absent:

Alicia Toczek, South Central NE AAA  
Ira Nathan, at large  
Phil Lyons, West Central NE AAA

Vacancies: Midland AAA, at large

ASL interpreters:

Ben Sparks  
Roxanne Petersen

State Staff Present:

Penny Clark, Interim Administrator

Guests present:

Carla Frase, Director, Blue Rivers AAA  
Trish Bergman, Director, Eastern NE Office on Aging  
Rod Horsley, Executive Director, South Central NE AAA  
Erin Arensdorf, Executive Director, West Central NE AAA  
Connie Cooper, Northeast NE AAA  
Casey Muzic, Midland AAA  
Edd Albrecht, Chief Deputy Dawson County Sheriff's Office

State staff virtual:

Cheryl Kirby, Program Coordinator  
Erik White, Nutrition Program  
Coordinator  
Jessica Harris, Legal  
Gene Hogan, Fiscal Program Manager  
Ben Stromberg, Program Manager  
Mary Prai, Federal Aid Administrator  
Christy Wheeler, Federal Aid  
Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am. Colleen Claassen, Chair, presiding.

Roll call was conducted.

Members, guests, and speakers were welcomed and introduced themselves.

Agenda: The agenda was approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: The minutes were approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

Energize Committee – Following the SUA Advisory meeting in October 2022, committees were formed after reviewing data from Nebraska’s Senior Centers survey. The committees that were formed and the members of each committee are as follows:

**.Current-** Angie Barkmeier, Ira Nathan, Colleen Claassen

**Branding** – Frank Herzog, Alicia Toczek, Connie Cooper

**Future** – Danny DeLong, Trish Bergman, Phill Lyons

In January 2023, the Current committee began a SWOT analysis with assistance from Chris Kelly, PHD, UNO, Director of the Department of Gerontology. The study provided the committees with a clear direction for the team. Committee members Ira Nathan, Danny DeLong, and Colleen Claassen presented to the Nebraska Association of Senior Centers (NASC) in April 2023. The presentation was well received, and the committee members found joining the NASC organization beneficial. The committee members were asked to return to the annual NASC conference in September 2023 to learn more about senior centers' operations. They were able to share additional information about the NASC.

The committees have learned that *Programming and marketing* are areas where they feel they can provide assistance and support. With the marketing committee members' knowledge, they feel they can develop a plan to help the senior centers attract more people to attend. The committee members also indicated that the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) could assist the senior centers by offering training in the SHIP program, nutritional classes, healthy eating, and exercise classes that

would benefit the younger seniors. Training on how to familiarize and use cell phones could also benefit all seniors.

National Ageism Awareness Day—Colleen provided information on the American Society on Aging’s National Ageism Awareness Day, held on October 7, 2023. Ira Nathan will provide a more in-depth presentation at the April 2024 meeting. It was discussed that the committee would like to submit to the Governor’s office a proclamation for this in 2024.

Number of Meetings—Committee members discussed the number of meetings held each year. Currently, there are 2 regular meetings held each year, and the Chairperson and the administrator of the State Unit on Aging have the authority to call any special meetings. **The committee voted to have special meetings.**

Security Risk Assessment—Chief Deputy Edd Albrecht from the Dawson County Sheriff’s Office provided information on a security risk assessment for Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Centers and shared a security worksheet with the committee.

#### SUA Updates –

- Gene Hogan, Fiscal Program Manager,, provided an update on funding for FY24. The Committee would like Gene to present on the OMB at the April 2024 meeting.
- Fiscal testing reverted back to the SUA beginning FY24. The Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) is not renewing the contract for fiscal testing of sub-recipients due to a lack of staff. This work was not part of their core services; they are trimming back.
- GetSetUp – The contract used all 20,000 classes from March 2022 to March 2023. These are digital skill-building classes. About 8,500 adults took 20,000 courses in 12 months. A request for proposals is being drafted to contract for a limited number of digital literacy classes moving forward.
- Legal Risk Detector – The software pilot was successful, and a full roll-out to all AAAs began in January 2023. Individuals were identified through the tool. Caseworkers had no idea they needed legal services. A refresher training for this will be held sometime in early 2024.

- iServe—The launch of the Explore Benefits feature is underway. This tool allows Nebraskans to anonymously determine which benefits they may qualify for.
- LB 752, 2022, created an Alzheimer’s director in the Department of Health and Human Services. The SUA has hired a program specialist, Joni Delaney, to provide support for the Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council.

### Service Areas

Colleen Claassen, Chair (Lincoln) – reported on the energizing committee.

Legislative Chair: Danny DeLong (Beatrice)

The Legislature is holding interim studies at this time. Housing has become an issue for Nebraskans.

Aging Partners (AP) - Sharon Busch, Vice-Chair (Lincoln) on behalf of Randy Jones (Lincoln)

AP closed the downtown center. The Victory Park move has been completed, and an increase of 215% has occurred. The VA Service Officers share a hall in the same building. The site houses the fitness center which has seen an increase in participation. The downtown members are bussed to centers of their choice. AP is offering evidence-based classes, including Bingocize. (Video <https://youtu.be/cQ2YWH1lcuY> . This is a 10-week exercise program; participants are tested at the beginning and the end of the series. It is catching on in several centers.

AOWN - Charlotte Dorwart (Sidney) on behalf of Cheryl Brunz (Scottsbluff)

The town of Kimball now has transportation that covers all of the panhandle. Sidney Community Center has purchased another building. Local farmers have been donating to the centers. ARPA funds were used for technology upgrades and other things that have been good for the communities. The AOWN is looking at other office locations.

BRAAA - Danny DeLong (Beatrice), and Carla Frase (Beatrice)

Increases in food costs have required the suggested contribution of meals to be increased at all senior centers. ARPA funds are being used to prepare frozen meals at senior centers. They are still waiting on vans ordered with DOT CARES funding

that ended in September. They received a \$20,000 grant from a local hospital, which they will use to purchase a van equipped to transport those with disabilities. Respite care is in high need, and transit trips have increased.

ENOA - Frank Herzog (Omaha), and Trish Bergman (Omaha)

Trish – ENOA is building a van corral because the agency is experiencing a lot of catalytic converters being stolen. The agency's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is in 2024. ARPA funds were spent to purchase tablets for the senior centers. ENOA created forms that were loaded onto the tablets. Bingosize has been implemented. Home-delivered meals are staying stable. A new routing system is needed as PeerPlace does not provide what the agency needs to route home-delivered meals. There has been a large increase in the Medicaid waiver caseloads, and a new Care Manager Division Director has been hired. Trish attended a round table, and Senator Ricketts was in attendance. Senator Ricketts and Senator Fischer have both visited the ENOA office. A new office opened in Blair.

Frank – Shared that ENOA hosted a Step Out fundraiser for Seniors to increase services at the senior centers. Around 100 people attended the fundraiser.

MAAA - Casey Muzic (Hastings)

The ADRC is busy helping Nebraskans apply for benefits on ACCESS Nebraska. The agency is also meeting with fire departments to discuss falls that people experience and how both entities can assist. Casey attended the AAA leadership conference held in Omaha and a transit 4 state conference in Kansas City. The agency is working with local homeless shelters, as it is seeing a lot of seniors experiencing homelessness.

NENAAA - Kimberly Baumann (Pierce) Connie Cooper (Norfolk)

Kim – The local senior center has a new younger manager. The center still needs a cook and asks for food donations in the local newspaper. Transportation is back in Norfolk and has greatly impacted the community.

Connie – The agency has completed the independent audit. The auditor that was used has previously worked with WCNA & SCNA. The SHIP has held training for volunteers. November is National Caregiver Support Month, and the agency will be honoring caregivers and support groups at the agency. Local senators have joined care managers on some clients' home visits. These senators have received information on all the services that the agency provides to seniors in the area. The

agency is involved with Home Instead in a program entitled “Be a Santa to a Senior,” where seniors with no family can receive a Christmas gift.

SCNAAA - Rod Horsley (Kearney)

A video from the Nebraska rural transportation effort includes a cameo from Alicia.

Video: <https://youtu.be/cQ2YWH1lcuY>

Rod – The AAAs will address funding through the legislature in the next session.

The AAAs will pursue a change in Care Management funding through legislation next year. SCN received an American Heart Association \$5K grant to address high blood pressure through screening and referrals in Buffalo County at two sites. The next round of funding would be \$6,000, and the agency would like to have this in all 14 counties. The Medicaid waiver program has seen increases due to the DHHS computer system “Therap”. The NE4A has provided the issues to DHHS. Governor Pillen, Senator Fischer, and Congressman Smith visited the Comstock senior center.

WCNAAA - Erin Arensdorf (North Platte)

Erin – WCN had the SUA monitoring visit. The independent audit was completed.

A legal clinic will be held on 11/17/23 and administered by UNO law students.

There are 19 people registered for the law clinic. WCN plans to provide shelf-stable meals for days when senior centers are not open. The disaster plan for the agency is being reviewed at all staff meetings. Care management has a waiting list, as does the caregiver program, due to an increase in clients. WCN was the last AAA to implement the ADRC, which is going well. Benefits assistance has been identified as the highest need with these calls. Medicare open enrollment appointments are scheduled through November. There is an increase in Medicaid waiver cases. WCN held a fundraiser within their office this past year, and with the funds collected, a needy client was chosen for gifts to be purchased.

**Other Business:** None.

### **Next Meeting Date & Speaker Suggestions**

April 17, 2024, 9 am-2 pm, Kearney.

AARP Disrupt Aging presentation will be available.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.