

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING
QUARTERLY MEETING**

May 27, 2026

Location:
Zoom Videoconference

Commissioners Present:

Paula Pawlowski, Acting Chair; Bob Pawlowski; Vivian Stiver; Cheryl Howdysshell; Art Delaune; Kathy Romain; Christine Saling; Sara Chambers, ex-officio

Commissioners Absent:

Chair Bob Sivertsen, excused; Director Anthony Newman, ex-officio, excused

Guests:

Brenda Shelden, Mat-Su Council on Aging; Jeanne Larson, SDS; Marge Stoneking, AARP; Rita Gray, DVR MASST; Kelda Barstad, AMHTA; Marianne Mills, AGEnet; Nicole Wery-Tagaban, SDS; Pamela Burton, SDS; Erik Peterson, SDS; Jim McCall, AHFC; Stephanie Wheeler, OLTCO; Rita Gray, DVR, MASST; Laura Norton-Cruz; Liz Clark, BBNA; Erin Walker-Tolles, CCS

Staff:

Martin Lange, Executive Director
Yasmin Radbod, Program Coordinator 2

Minutes Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – 9:00 a.m.

Roll was called, and a quorum was present to conduct business.

ETHICS DISCLOSURES

Acting Chair Pawlowski reminded members of the Commission to send in their ethics disclosure forms.

VIDEOCONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

Marty Lange welcomed attendees and explained videoconference etiquette.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Marty Lange introduced Kathy Romain, ACoA's newest commissioner.

ADOPTION OF THE May 27, 2026 AGENDA

Acting Chair Pawlowski noted the numeration in the agenda topics that corresponds to the packet pages. She asked Commissioners for feedback if they find it helpful.

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Marty Lange noted a potential amendment to the agenda of Stephanie Wheeler's presentation being moved into the 3:45 slot. Acting Chair Pawlowski noted another amendment to the agenda of Pamela Burton presenting for Director Anthony Newman.

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to approve the agenda as amended, **SECONDED** by Art Delaune. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES, FEBRUARY 10 – 12, 2026

Art Delaune **MOVED** to adopt the February 2026 minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Bob Pawlowski. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

CHAIR REPORT

Acting Chair Pawlowski remarked that Chair Sivertsen is absent on mayoral duties today, and she directed Commissioners to his heartfelt written report in the packet.

VICE CHAIR REPORT

Acting Chair Paula Pawlowski shared that in addition to the daily and weekly calls with Marty Lange, she attended 14 additional meetings since the last ACoA quarterly meeting, including a Zoom meeting with Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) on the results of their survey; Bylaws, Legislative, and Executive Committee meetings; and a planning meeting with Sara Chambers for the Commission's strategic planning.

She and Bob Pawlowski spent some time with Kori Mateaki at Turnagain Social Club to view the ongoing activities and converse. Kori shared a PowerPoint presentation she had done for the Anchorage Assembly on transportation and how to reduce costs while offering transportation for all those who need it. It was a brilliant presentation that is gaining some traction, and it involves one universal number to call.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Marty Lange began his presentation by thanking Commissioners for the time and effort they spend on behalf of the Commission and presented his report as follows:

Weekly Reports

- ED weekly reports offer information on the day-to-day workings of the Commission:
 - Respond to calls and public inquiries
 - Prepare and give presentations to other agencies
 - Do outreach at public events
 - Give out informational handouts
 - Put together the Annual Report and Senior Snapshot yearly
 - Currently working on the Statewide Summit on Aging.

This Meeting's Theme: Older Americans Act (OAA)

- Agenda contains presentations from senior service providers to enable Commissioners to see the big picture of what is going on in the state.
- OAA requires states to submit a State Plan for Senior Services.
 - Alaska receives about \$6M federal dollars each year.
 - Funds are distributed as grants to senior service providers.

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- ACoA works with the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

State Plan for Senior Services

- What is it?
 - The plan for how Alaska's seniors will be served for the next four years and how the federal funds will be spent.
 - The plan has goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes.
 - The plan states who will carry out the different part of the plan.
- Why?
 - To comply with federal law for the OAA.
 - To create a blueprint for coordinated services.
 - To build capacity for long-term supports and services (LTSS) for Alaska's seniors.
- When is it due?
 - The State Plan for FY '28 through FY '31 is due July 3, 2027.
 - SDS must receive the plan from ACoA by March 1, 2027 to allow for public comment and internal review.
 - When that is complete, the plan is submitted to the ACL regional office by June 3rd to get their feedback and is then submitted to the Governor for signature and submitted to ACL no later than July 23, 2027.

Current Progress

- Survey consulting/data gathering – talking with agencies.
 - Need assistance designing the survey and determining a sample group to ensure all Alaskans are represented.
- Working with SDS on project coordination and getting a project manager on board to break the plan down into individual assignments with deadlines.
- Advisory committee will be convened soon and will be comprised of different agencies and individuals who serve older Alaskans and who are willing to work on different pieces of the plan.

ACoA Bylaws Review

- Bylaws are reviewed every two to three years.
- Bylaws Committee reviewed the bylaws and offered edits.
- The bylaws were sent for legal review and suggestions were sent back to the committee to review.
- The committee incorporated the changes and finalized the draft, which is included in today's meeting packet.
- Today the Commission will be voting to approve the changes.

Open Meetings Act

Marty Lange has spent a lot of time over the last three months learning how to ensure ACoA is complying with the Open Meetings Act.

- Public business is done with open doors in public.
 - Requires state boards and committees to announce their meetings ahead of time, share what they plan to talk about, and let the public attend.
 - The law requires clear records of what was discussed and decided.

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- The Act builds trust. It protects the public's right to know, participate in, and hold their government accountable; core principles of a healthy and functioning democracy.
- Working to clarify and comply.
 - In the past, ACoA has not been 100% compliant, but they are working toward ensuring they are complying to the best of their abilities.

Marty Lange reminded Commissioners that his weekly reports contain more detail about the activities of staff, and he encouraged them to read the reports and stay up to date.

Sara Chambers thanked Marty Lange for the weekly updates. She finds it informative and helpful to stay engaged with the great work he and Yasmin Radbod are doing. She also thanked Marty for all the work that he and others have been doing on the bylaws.

ACoA PROGRAM UPDATES

Yasmin Radbod remarked that she is on her third year with ACoA, and presented to the Commission as follows:

Updates:

- Attended JBER for Military Retiree Appreciation Day
- Attended intern Angela Jackson's graduation ceremonies
- Working on the Statewide Summit on Aging
- Spoke on the Older Adult Suicide Prevention Policy Academy panel
- Currently working on the Statewide Senior Services Summary Report
- Duties:
 - External communications
 - Committee support
 - Program duties
 - Community outreach.

Improving Access and Transparency

- Revamped ACoA's website to make it more informative and accessible to the public modeled off the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education's webpage. Thank you to the Governor's Council.
- Also looking to model how the Governor's Council advertises their quarterly meetings and suggests specific topics for public testimony.

Facebook and E-Blast Highlights

- Facebook posting has evolved, and the Communications Team creates all the posts in order to streamline and organize all the Department of Health Facebook pages.
- The most successful post of this quarter was from April 20th and was an announcement from the RurAL CAP Foundation grant.
 - Over 54,000 views
 - Got 91 followers from that post
- Currently have 813 followers
- E-Blast continues to grow, and the most popular blast was April 10th and highlighted grant and funding opportunities.

Proclamation and Older Americans Month (OAM) Event

- Thank you to:
 - Alaska Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO)
 - Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission
 - Pioneer Homes
 - AARP Alaska
 - Bear Tooth (“The Father” movie)
 - Partnered with Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska

Community Reports/Presentations

- Older Persons Action Group provider breakfast
- ANTHC Elder Advisory Board
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) Conference
- Alaska Long-Term Care Ombudsman volunteers
- Older Adult Suicide Prevention Policy Academy
 - Represented Alaska at the May 7th virtual National Council on Aging’s Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium panel.

Feedback from Community Presentations

- Lack of assisted living and nursing homes near home communities (particularly on the Peninsula)
- Adult Protective Services (APS) staff caseloads
- Care coordination training and requirements
- Areas with little services
- General Relief is insufficient
- Waiver delays.

New Information Added to Senior Snapshot

- APS caseloads:
 - Average monthly caseload per investigator with 11 investigators
 - Caseloads are very high.
- Continue to gather suggestions from the community about data to include in the Snapshot. Guardianship is a huge issue, and some public guardians have well over 100 people on their caseloads. This will be an addition next year.

Vivian Stiver remarked that private guardianships are pretty much non-existent. The process was changed, which pushed private entities out of business. She suggested they look at supporting future legislation that allows for qualified private guardians.

Additional Bills from this Session

Bills the Commission had not discussed:

- HB 26: Statewide Public and Community Transit Plan – vetoed.
- HB 48: Civil Legal Services Fund – passed and effective 8/23/26.
- SB 196: Behavioral Health Crisis Fund – did not make it through the session.

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Acting Chair Pawlowski remarked that they have only two staff, and they provide an incredible amount of support to the Commission and are very much appreciated.

DIVISION OF SENIOR AND DISABILITIES SERVICES (SDS) REPORT

Pamela Burton reported to the Commission as follows:

Medicaid Waiver Renewals

Waivers are renewed every five years, and in FY'27, four of the five waivers are up for renewal: Adults Living Independently (ALI), Intellectual Developmental Disability (IDD), Adults with Physical and Developmental Disabilities (APDD), and Children with Complex Medical Conditions (CCMC). The only waiver not up for renewal is the Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW).

Renewal applications were submitted in late March, and SDS has since received questions from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which was expected. SDS has been working with CMS to answer those questions. The transition to the new assessment tool, interRAI, was the largest change in the renewals.

Assuming all goes well, SDS expects CMS to approve the waivers prior to June 30th with an effective date of July 1st. SDS will issue an e-alert to announce the approval.

interRAI Assessment Tool

- The interRAI Steering Committee has completed the crosswalk from the Consumer Assessment Tool (CAT) to the new interRAI Alaska Home Care Tool. The project goal was to ensure that anyone who is currently eligible for nursing facility level of care under the CAT will continue to be eligible for waiver services under the Alaska Home Care Tool as well as the Community First Choice (CFC) Personal Care Services (PCS) waiver. The PCS hours will remain in parity to what an individual was receiving under the CAT.
 - The Alaska Home Care tool is specific to the ALI and the CFC PCS waivers.
 - The tool will calculate State Plan PCS hours as well.
 - Everything was sent to Mon Ami on April 15th to begin configuration.
 - User acceptance training will begin in June for assessors to try out the tool in a demonstration environment and identify any changes that need to take place.
 - Planned training for assessors on the new tool is tentatively scheduled for mid September.
 - Launch date is tentatively scheduled for October 1st after regulations are updated.
 - The External Communication Workgroup is planning sessions for more information and outreach throughout the summer before the October 1 launch.
- IDD tools
 - Work on the conversion from the current ICF/IID level of care to the IDD tools has begun.
 - Two tools:
 - IDD

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- CYMH: Children, Youth, and Mental Health tools.
- This work will include developing a level of care in the new interRAI tools to ensure parity with the current level of care under the ICAP assessment tool.
- Tentative launch date for these tools is in 2027, dates to be determined.

Legislative Updates

- SB 154/HB 96 – An Act Establishing the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board. This is relating to payment for PCS and providing for an effective date. The bill would establish an advisory board and rules through which direct care workers receive 70% and eventually 80% of the overall Medicaid rate. The requirements were originally intended to satisfy the requirements from the federal Access Rule. Recently states were told that this particular federal requirement will be rescinded with an official communication expected in the next few weeks. Currently HB 96 has passed both the House and the Senate and has been transmitted to the Governor but not yet signed into law.
- SB 178/HB 376 – Expand early intervention services. As of May 17th, that passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting transmittal to the Governor.

Budget and Actuals

Nicole Wery-Tagaban directed Commissioners to the budget summary and explained the current budget standing and the FY '27 budget. The FY '27 includes a one-time \$60,000 increase in Trust MHTAAR funding for assistance with the State Plan.

Sara Chambers noted that ACoA has had some fiscal questions related to the senior summit, and she asked Nicole Wery-Tagaban and Pamela Burton to be present for the senior summit agenda item.

Sara also asked if ACoA has carryforward or if remaining unspent funds lapsed. Nicole stated that all unspent funds lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

Sara Chambers also noted that the assessment tool regulations project seems to be moving forward. She plans to keep an eye on it as a commissioner, and she asked SDS staff to please let her know if she can be a helpful voice if the project stalls. She thanked SDS for all their support for ACoA.

Acting Chair Pawlowski asked Pam Burton who was on the interRAI Steering Committee and how committees are convened. Pam said that this committee is composed of subject matter experts, SDS managers and lead supervisors/managers, the Project Management Unit, and division leadership.

PIONEER HOMES REPORT

Bob Pawlowski noted that this is his last meeting with ACoA. On June 5th, a new Pioneer Home Advisory Board chair will be elected who will then join ACoA.

Bob reflected on his time in this seat representing Pioneer Homes noting that there had been several major changes:

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- Anchorage got a complex behavior transition unit in place that allows people with complex behavior to move in, get settled and adjusted, and then move back into their neighborhood.
- Juneau got a courtyard built.
- Palmer had their roof repaired.
- Several changes in leadership over the years.
- Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS) was formed, which has been beneficial to Pioneer Homes.

Issues that remain:

- Focus on staffing, particularly for Levels III and IV because ADRD has increased over time.
- Some beds have purposefully been kept vacant because of the lack of staffing. Fairbanks has been the most effected.
 - The vacancies have allowed capital projects to move forward.

Bob Pawlowski noted that these are homes that people choose to live in, and they are a very valuable asset to the state that should not be ignored but rather supported. He thanked everyone for his time with the Commission.

Acting Chair Pawlowski shared her appreciation for Bob being on the Commission and their ability to participate together.

Vivian Stiver noted that she had a tenant recently move into the Fairbanks Pioneer Home, and she remarked that the atmosphere is more positive and calmer, and it was lovely to go in there. She has been receiving great feedback from her tenant about the care they are receiving. Bob noted that staffing has stabilized, which helps, but the new Nana Management Services contractor and the activities director have really helped to pick up the energy. Fairbanks continues to perform well above their staffing limitations.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT TRAINING

Marty Lange explained that the purpose for this training is to ensure the Commission understands the basics of the OAA.

Purpose and Mission of the OAA

- Enacted in 1965 to help older individuals maintain maximum independence
- Promotes a continuum of care for older Americans
- Serves as the major vehicle for delivery of supportive and nutrition services
- Creates a nationwide aging services network of agencies, programs, and activities.

Historical Development of the OAA

- 1965 – Original Act established Administration on Aging (AoA) and state agencies.
- 1972 – Congregate nutrition services program added.
- 1973 – Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) established. Alaska's share reduced from one percent to one-half percent.

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- 1978 – Home-delivered nutrition program and Long-Term Care Ombudsman program added.

Evolution of the OAA

- 1987 – Priority services defined (access, in-home, legal) and disease prevention program added
- 2000 – National Family Caregiver Support Program enacted
- 2006 – Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) implemented
- 2020 – Most recent reauthorization through FY 2024.

The Aging Services Network Structure

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging/Administration for Community Living (ACL)
 - 56 State Agencies on Aging
 - 618 Area Agencies on Aging
 - Nearly 20,000 service providers

OAA Funding – FY 2024

- Total OAA Funding: \$2.37 billion
- Title III (72%): \$1.7 billion
- Title V (17%): \$405 million
- Other Titles (11%): \$267 million

Title I: Declaration of Objectives

- Sets broad social policy objectives for older Americans
- Focuses on improving the lives of all older people
- Addresses income, health, housing, employment, and community services
- Establishes the philosophical foundation for the Act.

Title II: Administration on Aging (now Administration for Community Living)

- Establishes AoA within the Department of Health and Human Services
- Designates AoA as chief federal agency advocate for older adults
- Defines responsibilities of AoA and Assistant Secretary for Aging
- Requires creation of various offices and resource centers.

Title III: Grants for State and Community Programs

- Largest OAA funding component (\$1.56 billion in FY 2021)
- Creates and supports state and Area Agencies on Aging
- Funds supportive services, nutrition, caregiver support, and disease prevention
- Establishes the framework for service delivery.

Title III-B: Supportive Services

Access Services:

- Transportation
- Outreach
- Information and assistance
 - In-Home services

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- Homemaker services
- Chore services
- Personal care

Legal Assistance

- Legal advice and representation
- Benefits counseling
- Consumer protection
- Other Services
 - Adult daycare
 - Home modification
 - Health services

Title III-C: Nutrition Services

Congregate Meals Program

- Meals served in group settings (senior centers, community centers)
- Addresses nutritional needs and reduces isolation
- Provides social engagement and activities

Home-Delivered Meals Program

- Meals delivered to homebound older adults
- Often called "Meals on Wheels"
- Includes safety checks and social contact

Program Impact

- Served 2.4 million people in FY 2019
- Provided 222 million meals
- 73 million congregate meals
- 149 million home-delivered meals

Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)

- Provides additional funding to programs
- Rewards efficient meal programs
- Supplements regular nutrition funding.

Title III-D: Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Evidence-Based Programs

- Health risk assessments
- Routine health screenings
- Physical fitness programs
- Fall prevention programs

Health Management

- Chronic disease self-management
- Nutrition counseling
- Educational services
- Mental health screening and support.

Title III-E: Family Caregiver Support

Information Services

- Information about available services
- Assistance in accessing support

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- Care coordination

Counseling and Training

- Individual counseling
- Support groups
- Caregiver training

Respite Care

- Temporary relief for caregivers
- In-home or facility-based care
- Short-term or emergency respite

Supplemental Services

- Home modifications
- Assistive devices
- Emergency response systems
- Transportation assistance

Title IV: Activities for Health, Independence, and Longevity

- Research, training, and demonstration projects in aging
- Expands knowledge and understanding of the older population
- Tests innovative ideas and best practices
- Supports resource centers and technical assistance.

Title V: Senior Community Service Employment Program (MASST Program)

Program Administration

- Administered by the Department of Labor
- Second largest OAA program (\$405 million in FY 2021)
- Nationwide network of grantees and subgrantees

Eligibility and Services

- Adults age 55+ with income below 125% of poverty level
- Part-time paid work experience (20 hours/week)
- Job training and placement assistance.

Work Placements

- Community service positions in non-profit and government agencies
- Host agencies provide training and supervision
- Participants gain valuable work experience

Program Goals

- Transition to unsubsidized employment
- Supplement income for low-income older adults
- Provide valuable community services
- Enhance skills and self-confidence.

Title VI: Grants for Native Americans

Program Eligibility

- Federally recognized Indian tribes
- Alaskan Native organizations
- Native Hawaiian organizations
- Non-profit organizations serving Native populations

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Services Provided

- Supportive services (similar to Title III-B)
- Nutrition services (congregate and home-delivered meals)
- Caregiver support services

Cultural Context

- Preserves cultural identities while delivering services
- Recognizes tribal sovereignty
- Honors traditional practices and values
- Respects the unique status of Native elders

Program Impact

- Serves approximately 300 tribal organizations
- Reaches Native elders in rural and isolated areas
- Addresses unique needs of Native older adults.

Title VII: Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

- Advocates for residents of long-term care facilities
- Investigates and resolves complaints
- Protects resident rights and dignity
- Monitors care quality and living conditions
- Provides information to residents and families

Elder Abuse Prevention Program

- Prevention, detection, assessment, and treatment of elder abuse
- Public awareness and education
- Training for professionals and caregivers
- Coordination with Adult Protective Services
- Support for state legal assistance developers.

State Unit on Aging Responsibilities (SDS)

- Serve as visible advocate for older people at the state level
- Develop comprehensive statewide plan on aging
- Divide state into planning and service areas (PSAs)
- Designate Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to serve each PSA. *Alaska is a single unit on aging, and this is not applicable.*
- Coordinate programs with other state agencies
- Evaluate program effectiveness
- Allocate funds to AAAs based on intrastate funding formula.

Fund Distribution and Matching Requirements

- Title III B and C – Based on state's proportion of population 60+: 15% state match required.
- Title III E – Based on state's proportion of population 70+: 25% state match.
- Title V – Based on state's proportion of population 55+: 10% match from states and organizations.
- Title VI – Based on number of eligible individuals in service area: No matching requirement.

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- Title VII – Based on state’s population of population 60+: No matching required.

State Administration and Matching

- States may use 5% of allotments or \$750,000 for administration (whichever is greater)
- States must contribute 25% match for administration costs
- States may allow up to 10% of allotments for AAA administration (*doesn’t apply to Alaska*)
- AAAs must contribute 25% match for administration costs (*doesn’t apply to Alaska*)
- Voluntary contributions cannot be used for matching requirements

Funding Flexibility: States have discretion to transfer up to 40% of funds between supportive services and nutrition programs to meet local needs.

Priority Populations

Services available to:

- All people age 60 and older
- Priority given to those with greatest economic or social need
- Special focus on low-income minority older individuals
- Caregivers of eligible individuals

Defining priority needs:

- Greatest economic need: Income at or below federal poverty level
- Greatest social need: Isolation due to language, cultural, or geographic barriers
- Older individuals at risk: Those with physical or mental disabilities
- Vulnerable populations: Those at risk of institutional placement.

Program Impact and Reach

- 11 million older adults (15% of 60+ population) receive some OAA services
- 2.7 million (4% of 60+ population) are registered clients receiving regular services
- One-third of clients have income below federal poverty level
- 32% of clients are members of minority groups
- Services targeted to those with functional limitations and chronic conditions.

Challenges and Future Directions

- Growing older population creating increased demand for services
- Limited resources constrain program reach and depth
- Unmet needs for nutrition and supportive services
- Need for innovative service delivery models, especially in rural areas
- Importance of leveraging diverse funding sources beyond OAA
- Adapting services to changing demographics and needs
- Addressing social determinants of health.

The OAA: Foundation for Aging Services

The OAA is not intended to be the end of service provision for seniors.

- Provides essential framework for aging services delivery

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- Creates nationwide infrastructure of agencies and providers
- Targets vulnerable older adults with greatest needs
- Leverages federal, state, and local resources
- Continues to evolve to meet changing needs of older Americans.

Acknowledgements: The above information was summarized from Older Americans Act 101: The Foundation of the Aging Services Network by ADvancing States.

Marty Lange stated that he is hearing that state and federal funding are not adequate for where Alaska is going with the current senior population. The senior population is continuing to increase, and there is an outmigration of the working population. A third source of funding needs to be determined to meet the growing senior population's needs. The Senior Dividend Raffle concept needs to be reworked as it did not go through during this legislative session. Marty also suggested that wealthy Alaskans could consider willing some of their money to Alaskan senior services. Companies working in Alaska could also be encouraged to donate to a fund for Alaskan senior services.

Sara Chambers found the information super helpful. She noted that she and Acting Chair Pawlowski are working on the strategic planning schedule for next month's session, and she encouraged everyone to mull over this information to consider future implementation and advocacy opportunities.

Marty Lange explained that for this upcoming State Plan, the federal government wants to see more coordination between Title III and Title VI, and they have spelled out how they want that done.

Vivian Stiver remarked that they might want to work on a vehicle for corporate donations, because there isn't currently a way to accept those funds. They will need to find a legislative champion for that.

Bob Pawlowski remarked on the decrease in funding from 1% to 1/2%. Chair Sivertsen had drafted a letter to the congressional delegation to try to change that back to 1%. Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that the funding amount is based on population; however, the number of seniors in Alaska over age 80 is increasing tremendously. This information was provided to the federal delegation. Alaska has one of the fastest growing senior populations in the nation, and Alaska experiences geographical and cost constraints in order to provide services. She stated that it's on their list to follow up with the delegation as they haven't heard back from them.

BREAK

Marty Lange noted after the break that he was able to confirm a quorum by looking at the list of attendees on Zoom.

ALASKA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION (AHFC)

Jim McCall shared that today is an AHFC board meeting where they will be celebrating their 55th birthday. He reported to the Commission as follows:

Greater Opportunities for Affordable Living (GOAL) Awards

- Includes senior, family, and special needs housing.
- Two awardees this year:
 - Cook Inlet Housing Development Corporation
 - Senior housing development – Airport Heights Senior Housing in Anchorage. 24 units including three efficiencies, three two-bedroom units, and 18 one-bedroom units. Those will be set aside for low to moderate-income families. The total development cost is slightly over \$13.2M.
 - Knik Homes II
 - 32-unit facility, all two-bedroom units in Wasilla. This is phase II of the project that includes set-aside units for homeless. The total development cost will be around \$23M.

FY'27 Capital Budget (pending)

- Awaiting transmittal to the Governor.
- Highlights include:
 - AHFC Rural Professional Housing - \$5M
 - AHFC Affordable Housing Development Program - \$15M
 - AHFC Senior Citizens Housing Development Program - \$3M
 - AHFC Housing and Urban Development Federal HOME Grant - \$4.75M
 - AHFC Energy Program Weatherization - \$5M

Public Housing Update

- There are approximately 1,600 seniors on a wait list for owned and operated AHFC units. This number is down 15% from one year ago.
- The Housing Choice Voucher wait list is up, which is common once the wait list is closed in the Anchorage area. The wait list grows before the opening lottery where the numbers will again fall.

Older Alaskans Housing Needs Survey

AHFC is doing their state plan, and they are surveying Alaskans age 55 and older as part of their housing assessment report. The survey closes June 30th. There have already been 917 responses, and about 14% are coming from seniors earning \$30,000 or less per year. 47% have come from seniors earning between \$300,000 and \$800,000 per year.

AHFC is working with Agnew::Beck to do the housing assessment and the senior survey. They are working to ensure they receive statewide representation in survey responses.

An article will be coming out in Anchorage Daily News that will offer exposure to housing and senior topics.

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HB 226

An act increasing the loan amount that is eligible for lower interest rates on certain Alaska Housing Finance Corporation loans. Died this session and did not get a hearing in Finance.

Senior Housing Accessibility Modification Program – Notice of Funding Availability

This funding is from the Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund and another funding component representing \$5.2M of senior accessibility.

- Senior Citizen Housing Development Funds - \$700,000 award.
 - AHFC will evaluate the non-profit entities who will in turn administer the program for AHFC and get the money on the street. Awards were supposed to be finalized yesterday, and information will be posted on the AHFC website under the Senior Access Program.
- The other \$4.5M is the Housing Assistance Fund (HAF). This is funding that was left over from COVID mortgage relief.
- Any Alaskan age 55+ that has an accessibility or home improvement need and there is a COVID impact can pursue this money.
 - For urban communities, \$15,000 for Senior Citizen Housing Development Funds per applicant up to \$40,000 for HAF funding.
 - Outside urban areas it's \$30,000 for Senior Citizen Housing Development Funds and \$50,000 for HAF funding.
 - HAF funding needs to be spent by September 30th.
 - Income restricted but can be married to other funding programs.

Kathy Romain noted that Kenai has a 40-unit, market-rate (non-income-based) independent living facility owned by the City of Kenai with 120 people on the waitlist. A feasibility study for expansion is in the city's long-term capital plan, but funding is the obstacle. She asked whether AHFC has funding available for non-low-income housing. Jim McCall pointed to the GOAL program as a potential option, but emphasized that success depends on maximizing their score in the program's competitive scoring matrix, which is outlined in the program toolkit. Developers who serve a broader range of income levels, including homeless assistance, score higher than those targeting only market-rate tenants. His advice was to review that year's scoring criteria early and design the project to serve as wide an audience as possible to earn the most points to improve their chances of receiving funding.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Acting Chair Pawlowski reported on the following Executive Committee meetings:

- They met on March 25th to approve the April 8th monthly meeting. They also discussed monthly meetings versus quarterly meetings and the necessity of monthly meetings. The 12 monthly meetings require the Executive Committee to meet 12 times to approve each agenda.
- They met again April 10th to review the proposed agenda for the May 27th meeting.

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- They met again on April 29th to do a final approval of the May 27th agenda.

Bylaws Committee

Acting Chair Pawlowski reported the following for the Bylaws Committee:

- ACoA is required to review the bylaws every two years.
- After the last meeting, the bylaws were reviewed by Law. Feedback was provided, and the changes were made as recommended.
- All the new statutes are reflected in the bylaws correctly, and the information is up to date.

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to adopt the bylaws as presented, **SECONDED** by Sara Chambers. Hearing no discussion nor objection, a roll call vote was taken as follows:

- Bob Pawlowski – yes
- Paula Pawlowski – yes
- Christine Saling – yes
- Art Delaune – yes
- Vivian Stiver – yes
- Cheryl Howdyshell – yes
- Kathy Romain – yes
- Sara Chambers – yes

The motion **PASSED**.

Acting Chair Pawlowski explained that Marty Lange will make an addendum on the last date adopted, and it will become part of the Commission's public documents available on the website. The bylaws will be revisited in the next calendar year.

Legislative Committee

Vivian Stiver reported that legislation awaiting transmission to the Governor includes:

- HB 73 – Complex Care
- HB 133 – Payment of Contracts
- HB 244 – CNA training

She explained that in terms of the senior raffle bill, there was some discussion and substantial changes made to the legislation in the House committee. They wanted to give 37.5% to the Senior Benefits Program in a \$50 amount to each senior; 25% to the raffle fund; and the rest to grants. It subverted the Commission's purpose to maximize this money for grants and services. Vivian testified in the House and in committee, and no one spoke to her or asked her any questions. She asked for a Zoom meeting with one of the bill's co-sponsors, and she received a call from one of the co-chairs where they discussed the issues with the \$50 to each senior. The conversation didn't go well, and the bill died.

As they move forward, she and Marty discussed the fact that people don't like the gambling aspect, so they are looking to modify it so people can opt in to the raffle or just make a direct corporate donation. Vivian shared that she was surprised by some of the concerns she heard about the bill and was also surprised they didn't hear expected complaints.

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Marty Lange referenced the Commission's statutes and noted that AS 44.29.790(c) says: The Commission may not investigate, review, or undertake any responsibility for the Longevity Bonus Program (aka Senior Benefits Program) under AS 47.45.010 or the Alaska Pioneer's Home or Alaska Veteran's Home under AS 47.55. Vivian Stiver was unclear how that impacted her ability to talk about changes to pending legislation. Sara Chambers said that if Vivian is speaking on behalf of ACoA, she would have to adhere to ACoA's statutes. If she was presenting herself as an individual, then she could do whatever is relevant for that. Vivian noted that she always testified as a private citizen once the language of the bill was amended to include the Senior Benefits Program.

Senior Summit Committee

Yasmin Radbod announced that they have secured around \$70,000 for the summit. The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is the non-profit recipient of the \$15,000 Community Challenge Grant through AARP. This funding will be put toward an ADA accessible ramp that SILC has used throughout the state in partnership with a contractor on the Kenai Peninsula. There will be a demonstration of the ramp at the summit in October, and then there will be a free drawing for the ramp.

Other highlights include:

- The agenda is being confirmed.
- Jenny Di Grappa has been selected as the event coordinator. The sponsorship team is working on sending out sponsorship asks to business and agencies. The continuing education information was sent to UAA, and they will be covering those costs.
- Early registration should be opening late summer.
- They are still waiting to hear back from the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). They are hoping to utilize RHTP funding for travel scholarships and coordinating rural watch parties.
- The summit theme is "Rural Transformation." The summit overall will be highlighting innovative, exciting models that are working really well throughout the state.
- October 15th will be a half day, and there will be a pre-summit intensive that morning for people who want continuing education credits.
 - First day will focus on systems fragmentation, cost of care, personal needs allowance, and transportation as a barrier to aging in place.
- October 16th will be healthy aging.
 - Falls prevention, dementia risk reduction, fraud and scam awareness.
- October 17th will feature gubernatorial candidates for an educational forum on senior issues. There will be a public testimony session for the State Plan, and then they will cover policy issues coming down the pipeline.
- This summit has been merged with the Disability and Aging Summit.
- The summit will be hosted at Turnagain Social Club.
- The Summit Planning Committee is currently without a chair because Kori Mateaki resigned from the Commission, but she continues to be extremely involved in the summit.
- Thank you to all the outside partners and partners from Department of Health.

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Sara Chambers asked for more information regarding the nexus with the gubernatorial candidates. Yasmin explained that the conference is right before Elders and Youth Conference and AFN, so they tried to plan it strategically for people who are flying in. They have not yet reached out to governor candidates. They would like legislators to be there, and they would also like to have a representative from the congressional delegation, but they haven't reached out yet because the agenda hasn't been finalized. She suggested the format could be a roundtable educational discussion with candidates for governor who want to attend the summit. They could also do a speed dating type session with candidates to talk about senior issues, or they could have a panel at lunchtime with candidates to share issues and hear their responses.

Sara's thoughts were that the primaries are before the conference, which will narrow the field. She reminded Yasmin that as a government agency, ACoA needs to ensure they are inviting every candidate or currently elected official the same way and cautioned against working individual connections. They need a defensible invitation chain of custody that they can demonstrate if necessary.

Systems Ad Hoc Committee

Yasmin Radbod summarized that Christine Saling had moved at the February meeting to form this ad hoc committee to look at systems and how the Commission can be engaged in those conversations. During the last meeting, Kelda Barstad and Erik Peterson were sharing some initiatives and conversations that are happening, such as Alaska Association for Developmental Disabilities (AADD) and SDS are developing materials and improving dialog with providers, and ACoA should be included in those conversations and have a seat at the table.

In terms of next steps, when there are Trust and SDS conversations affecting seniors, ACoA should be involved.

Yasmin noted that Chair Sivertsen was very clear in the first meeting that this committee's mission is to improve senior care. They will be working on a survey for providers.

LUNCH BREAK

Marty Lange took roll call after the lunch break. A quorum was present to continue Commission business.

AARP ALASKA

Marge Stoneking shared that this was her sixth legislative session serving as the advocacy director for AARP Alaska. This year they were grateful to have advanced three of their four key priorities that help Alaskans age with dignity, security, and independence.

Alaska Work and Save

AARP has had a three-year focus on retirement readiness. SB 21, Alaska Work and Save, passed with strong bipartisan support. It was led by Sen. Bill Wielechowski and Rep. Mia Costello from Anchorage along with 15 bipartisan co-sponsors. The final vote was 48/12.

Alaska Work and Save is a portable retirement savings program designed for private sector workers who lack access to employer-sponsored plans. Today nearly half of Alaska's private sector workforce has no workplace retirement option. Without payroll deduction, only 5% of workers will contribute to a retirement account. By implementing Work and Save, the state can help thousands of Alaskans build long-term financial stability while reducing future reliance on public assistance. If enacted, it would be effective in 2027. It's an auto enrollment IRA for all employers who have five or more employees and have been in business in Alaska for at least three years. Employers who have or want to provide their own company retirement plan with or without a company match are exempt, and smaller employers under five, including sole proprietors, can opt into the program. Employees can opt out at any time.

Retirement security for public employees depends on access to a modest pension, and defined benefit plans remain the standard in public service. Without them, Alaska can't effectively compete with other states in recruiting and retaining qualified public workers at the local and the state level. AARP supports pensions because older households without one are nine times more likely to live in poverty. Public sector employees generally earn less than their private sector counterparts, in addition to the state needing it to compete for public employees' recruitment and retention. While HB 78 passed both chambers, for the first time in the 20 years since a defined benefit program was closed to new employees, it was ultimately vetoed by the Governor. Pension reform will remain a key issue in the 2026 elections and for the 35th Alaska Legislature.

Virtual Currency Kiosk Fraud Prevention

A new priority and area of work for AARP is delving further into consumer protection. AARP supported a bill on virtual currency kiosk fraud prevention. SB 249 was sponsored by Sen. Kathy Tilton with companion legislation by Rep. Alexi Moore, which ultimately passed unanimously in both chambers with 21 bipartisan co-sponsors. It addresses the rapidly growing threat of cryptocurrency kiosk fraud, which disproportionately targets older Alaskans. The legislation requires transparency in disclosing fees and exchange rates. It requires refunding fraudulent transaction fees and posting fraud warnings, providing printed receipts, and implementing transaction limits at both the daily and monthly levels.

Community Transit Planning

HB 26, the Community Transit Planning bill was to strengthen public and community transportation planning and support rural mobility by making the statute explicitly include those modes of transportation. It was vetoed by the Governor.

Civil Legal Services Fund

HB 48 expands statutory funding authority for civil legal aid. Alaska Legal Services is the aid provider, and over 40% of their clients are age 50 and over.

Mail Theft

AARP supported legislation making mail theft an offense in the second degree under Alaska law, and this bill passed as part of the omnibus crime package.

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Healthcare Licensing Compacts

HB 110, the Social Work Compact by Rep. Gray passed, and it had amended onto it another bill that encompassed four of the five healthcare licensing compacts that the state has committed to as part of the RHTP. The Occupational Therapy Compact also passed in the final days of the session.

Election Reform

AARP supported the election reform bill that has been in process for many years that would have improved voter access, particularly through absentee ballots where seniors tend to vote, and seniors make up the highest voting demographic. This bill passed and was vetoed by the Governor.

CNA Dementia Training

This increases dementia care training requirements that support family caregivers, quality care, and a stronger caregiving workforce.

Replacement Social Security Cards

SB 237 Data Sharing – streamlines applications for replacement Social Security cards. Alaska is the only state in the country that didn't have that ability for people to get a replacement Social Security card online.

Items supported in the budget:

- Non-Medicaid senior community grants for senior centers - \$500,000.
- Adult day services - \$1.25M.
- Statewide Independent Living Council received a \$400,000 increase to preserve more than \$1.4M in federal independent living funds.

Marge Stoneking referenced the Medicaid provider rate study released early in the session, and there were two additions in the legislature related to senior care and some other rates that were included as increased provider rates for direct support professionals and personal care attendants.

MATURE ALASKANS SEEKING SKILLS TRAINING (MASST)

Rita Gray directed Commissioners to the quick-reference guide on MASST included in the Commission's packet. She reported that the MASST program will remain under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development but will be transferring from Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to Employment and Training through the Job Center.

Rita announced that the program is about to be reduced \$100,000 for next year, so the state will get about \$1.798M in federal and state funds. This will equate to serving 20 less people. The current budget funding allows them to help 166 people at \$7.25, the federal minimum wage, but the State of Alaska is currently paying \$15 per hour for MASST participants while they are in training at community services. Participants are allowed to be served up to four years in their lifetime. The program is currently serving 80 people, and they have room to serve 20 more if they work 20 hours a week for 52

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weeks, but most seniors do not work 20 hours a week. Those on Social Security Disability Insurance can only work 18 hours a week without jeopardizing their medical coverage. They could get into Ticket to Work, but more and more seniors are not interested in full-time employment or Ticket to Work. They would rather just stay below the money to keep their medical coverage.

Last year, Alaska was fifth in the nation for performance with people they are serving that have three or more barriers to employment. More than 50% of their participants are on the verge of homelessness, 90% of them are on public assistance, and about 25% of them have disabilities that get worse every day instead of better. What the program brings to people is a way to break isolation, showcase talents, give back to communities, and avoid homelessness.

The MASST program is 61 years old this year and works in conjunction with all the other OAA titles but also works with Department of Labor's Job Centers. It is available in every Alaskan community. They are in need of host sites. The income cap is \$24,500 or less to qualify for the program.

Vivian Stiver asked if there was a time limit for how long someone can be in the program and if there is a training period that limits them. Rita Gray stated that all of the training is done within non-profit host sites, and the person can be in the program for 48 months in their lifetime. The priority age group is 75 years and older.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was heard, and a full transcript was prepared. (See Page 38)

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT AND THE MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY

Kelda Barstad presented to the Commission as follows:

About the Trust

- Established in 1994 as a public corporation of the state within the Department of Revenue.
- Governed by a Board of Trustees; which employs a CEO and staff.
- Administers the Mental Health Trust, a perpetual trust.
- Works to improve lives of current and future Trust beneficiaries through ensuring an integrated, comprehensive mental health program in Alaska; approves a budget allocating Trust funds each fiscal year.
- Protects and enhances the value of Trust lands while generating revenues from them over time. The Trust Land Office is a special unit within DNR that is contracted to manage Trust lands and natural resources.
- Entirely self-funded.

Trust Beneficiaries

Trust beneficiaries include Alaskans who experience:

- Mental illnesses
- Intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

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- Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
- Traumatic brain injuries
- Substance use disorders.

The Trust Strategic Plan, 2025

Trust Priorities:

The Trust's four priorities describe where the Trust directs its investments to strengthen Alaska's system of care. Each priority helps align the Trust's grant making and partnerships to improve the lives of beneficiaries and the systems they rely on.

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Crisis Response
- Treatment and Recovery
- Ongoing Support and Wellbeing

Trust Core Commitments

The Trust's Core Commitments define how the Trust fulfills its mission:

1. Make data-informed investments
2. Foster transformative partnerships
3. Steward natural resources for impact.

Trust Mission

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Trust Land Office work together to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries by strengthening Alaska's system of care, prudently managing Trust assets, and driving lasting, positive change across the state.

Trust Vision

A future where every Alaskan supported by the Trust has care, connection, and the opportunity to thrive.

Older Americans Act (OAA)

- The OAA was enacted in 1965 and serves as the primary federal statute for delivering social and nutrition services to older adults.
- It establishes a framework for a nationwide network of services aimed at improving the well-being of older individuals, particularly those with the greatest economic and social needs.
- This work aligns with the Trust priorities of prevention and ongoing support and wellbeing

Senior Trust Beneficiaries

- Mental illness: 1 in 5 or 12.5% (SAMHSA), 20% (NIMH), up to 25% (NCOA)
- Traumatic brain injuries: 1 in 8 or 13% (UCSF)
- Alzheimer's disease and related dementia: Alzheimer's disease: 1 in 9 or 11% (Alz. Assoc.)
- Substance use disorders: 1 in 11 or 10% (SAMHSA), alcohol misuse numbers are much higher in Alaska at 7 – 9% (AKDOH)
- Intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are not reliably tracked for the senior population.

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These reflect national prevalence estimates for seniors, unless noted otherwise. Additional work is needed to obtain prevalence in Alaska.

Health-Related Social Needs

Many services are an intersection of the priorities of the Mental Health Trust and the OAA:

- Adult day services
- ADRD prevention, screening, education and support
- Family caregiver support, counseling, and respite
- Brain injury, mental health and substance use disorder prevention, screening, and health promotion programs
- Person-centered care coordination
- Trauma-informed care and services
- Employment and benefit coordination.

Serving Senior Beneficiaries

- Social isolation is a common problem for Trust beneficiaries.
- Planning for inclusion of Trust beneficiaries in services can be challenging.
- Targeted prevention, education, treatment and recovery services increase completion and success rates for seniors.
- Will this work occur in aging services or other sectors – IDD, behavioral health, health care, independent living?

Looking Ahead

- Ongoing grant making
- Trust Strategic Plan operationalization
- FY'28 Trust budget development
- Trust Improving Lives Conference, September 17 – 18, 2026

Vivian Stiver asked who a person should reach out to when they come across someone who might need some behavioral support where behaviors may jeopardize housing. Kelda Barstad said there are more and more crisis teams available across the state that can respond on site. If a person is in a crisis, the mobile crisis team can be contacted to respond to where the person is at, help to mitigate the crisis, and connect them to longer term services as available. There is typically a peer involved, and people may respond better to a peer. The crisis system has proven effective for repeated crisis circumstances that can jeopardize housing and long-term stability.

Yasmin Radbod asked if there was a survey available for Trust budget planning and when it closes. Kelda remarked that there is a stakeholder survey out, and it is available on the Trust's webpage and was published in the ACoA newsletter. The survey closes on the 29th.

OTHER/GOOD OF THE ORDER

Sara Chambers had extenuating circumstances that briefly required her attention, and she noted that if she leaves the meeting, they will lose quorum. She asked for a quorum count or a ten-minute break if they lose quorum without her. Marty Lange checked and noted six members without Sara present. Sara noted that not everyone

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has their cameras on and may not be actively participating. Marty did a verbal roll call and confirmed a quorum of six.

SDS/ACoA RELATIONSHIP FOR THE STATE PLAN

Erik Petersen presented to the Commission as follows:

Who is SDS?

Mission: To promote health, well-being, and safety for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and vulnerable adults by facilitating access to quality services and supports that foster independence, personal choice, and dignity.

Two Ways Services are Provided:

Medicaid Services:

- State Plan
- Waivers
- Institutional placements.

Grant Services:

- General Fund:
 - ADRC and DDRC
 - Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury (TABI)
 - Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
 - Deaf Navigator
 - Adult Day Services
 - Behavioral Risk Management
 - ADRD
 - Senior In-Home
- Mental Health Trust
- Federal Grants:
 - Nearly half of SDS community-based grant dollars
 - Nutrition, Transportation, and Support
 - Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
 - Caregiver Support Program.

The Older Americans Act

- Federal law that dictates how Title III formula grants must be spent.
- Describes the services that can be delivered.
- Defines the role of the State, ACoA, and providers.

Roles in the OAA

SDS:

- State Unit on Aging
 - The OAA requires that each state designate a State Unit on Aging
 - In Alaska, SDS serves this function.

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- The State Unit on Aging is “responsible for the planning, policy development, administration, coordination, priority setting, and evaluation of all State activities related to the objectives of [the Older American’s Act.]” 42 U.S.C. 3025(a)(1)(C).
- Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

ACoA:

- Area Agency Advisory Council.

SDS’s Role

- Lead on aging issues statewide: Serve as a leader on all aging issues in the State and develop comprehensive, coordinated systems of service delivery (§ 1321.5).
- Develop and submit the State Plan: Including content, public participation, and submission to the Assistant Secretary for Aging for approval (§§ 1321.25, 1321.27, 1321.29, 1321.31, 1321.33).
- Monitor compliance: Ensure grant funds are used for authorized purposes consistent with federal law (§ 1321.9(a)).
- Data collection and reporting: Submit required data to ACL at least annually (§ 1321.9(b)).

ACoA

- The OAA describes ACoA’s role: § 1321.63 – Area Agency Advisory Council.
- The Area Agency (SDS) shall establish an Advisory Council (ACoA).
- The council shall carry out advisory functions which further the... mission of developing and coordinating community-based systems of services for all older individuals and family...

ACoA in the OAA

§ 1321.63 Shall advise SDS in:

- developing and administering the area plan
- ensuring the plan is available to ... the public
- conducting public hearings
- representing the interests of older individuals and family caregivers.

ACoA in State Statute

Article 8, Sec. 44.29.750 – Alaska Commission on Aging

- Describes who should be on the ACoA board
- Describes specifically what ACoA does and how they can do it.
- Approving the State Plan
- Making recommendations to SDS, the Governor, and Mental Health Trust
- Conduct education and outreach
- Request data, reports, and program information from applicable state agencies.

State Plan Requirements

SDS and ACoA collaborate on creating the State Plan.

- SDS ensures its completion and submission to ACL
- ACoA advises SDS on its content through public advocacy, outreach, and other stakeholder engagement.

§ 1321.27 Content of State Plan

- Outlines required State Plan content
- Addresses core elements of the State Plan that are required by the Act.

INTRODUCTIONS

Kathy Romain introduced herself to the Commission.

Acting Chair Pawlowski welcomed Kathy to the Commission and noted that a public seat remains vacant. She would like to see it filled someone from Western Alaska, Kodiak, rural Alaska, or another region that hasn't been represented for some time.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICE

Erin Walker-Tolles presented to the Commission as follows:

Who We Are

Catholic Community Service provides rides, meals, and support to thousands of people across Southeast Alaska each year. In FY'25, Catholic Community Service provided 77,804 meals and 45,932 rides to seniors and elders so they can stay healthy, engaged, and part of the community.

Southeast Senior Services

Senior Services available to all of Southeast Alaska:

- Senior and Caregiver Resource Center
- Elder Caregiver Support
- Counseling
- Case Management
- Tai Chi for Seniors
- Grants for Respite, PCA, Chore Service
- Education for Caregivers

In Juneau:

- The Bridge Adult Day Center

Senior Centers:

- Angoon
- Craig / Klawock
- Haines
- Hoonah
- Juneau
- Kake

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- Saxman / Ketchikan
- Sitka
- Skagway
- Wrangell

Serving Elders is About Community

For over four decades they have partnered with local tribes, acting on their behalf to serve elders across southeast Alaska. 43% of those served are Alaska Native.

Senior Services Title VI Model

For over 40 years they have been providing senior services to all eligible residents by leveraging Title III regional funding with local Tribal Title VI funding.

Each relationship is governed by a service agreement between the Tribe and Catholic Community Service. CCS acts on behalf of the Tribe managing Title VI funding including:

- Assessment of community need
- Applying for grant funding
- Operating programs
- Drawing down funds
- Financial and programmatic funding
- Maintaining policies and SOPs
- Hiring and managing all staff.

Senior Services – NTS Senior Centers

Services: NTS Nutrition, Transportation, and Support Services:

- Congregate meals
- Home-delivered meals
- Rides
- Resource and referral

Funding

- Title VI Part A and NSIP
- Title III NTS
- Local funding
- Donations
- Medicaid waiver

Who is Eligible?

- All seniors age 60+
- Tribally enrolled elders age 60+
- Seniors and elders must be homebound to be eligible for home-delivered meals.

Services: Caregiver Support

- Coordination and funding of chore and respite
- Support services
- Resource and referral.

Services: Senior and Caregiver Resource Center

- Case management
- Resource and referral.

Funding

- National Family Caregiver Support
- Title VI Part C
- Local funding
- Senior In-Home.

Who is Eligible?

- All caregivers of seniors age 60+
- Caregivers of tribally enrolled elders age 60+
- Senior, elders, and caregivers are all welcome to use the resource center.

Senior Services are Funded by:

- Tribal Title VI
- State of Alaska
- Local funding
- Donations
- Medicaid Waiver

Regional Funding Model

Total Revenue: \$6,412,144.36

Senior Services braids funding:

- Ten local tribes with Title VI that is restricted to funding tribally enrolled elders.
- Local funding from cities, boroughs, and villages is often restricted not only to a single community but sometimes a specific item (food, fuel, single program/staff position).
- Contributions and donations most often restricted to a single location.
- Medicaid waiver fee-for-service.
- State of Alaska grants that are regional are used to supplement all sites/programs.

Program Prospects

Non-profits in Southeast Alaska often cite one, two, or all three of the following as a primary reason for dissolution of their non-profit:

- Lack of workforce.
 - The current environment is failing service providers. In Southeast, the social services workforce has decreased by 30% over the last 10 years, and the senior population has increased by 63%.
- Lack of adequate sustainable funding.
 - Reduced funding plus inflation leads to reduced services.
- Unfunded increase in compliance and reporting requirements

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- Increased reporting and compliance requirements and lack of confidence in ongoing funding impacts agencies' abilities to maintain administrative competency and reduces resources dedicated to services.

BREAK

Marty Lange took roll after the break, and a quorum was present to conduct business.

Commissioners discussed how Director Newman must designate someone to represent SDS in his absence. Sara Chambers noted that for the purpose of quorum and representing an official seat on the board, the Commissioner would need to have that person listed in her delegation of authority.

ANNUAL REPORT EVALUATION

Marty Lange stated that he mailed a copy of the annual report to Commissioners and had asked that they take some time to look it over and be prepared to give feedback. Staff would like to ensure that all pertinent information is included as the annual report is distributed widely, particularly throughout the legislature.

The last time ACoA printed an annual report was around 2018 – 2019. He and Yasmin worked very hard on this 2025 annual report based on suggestions from Commissioners, and now he is asking for their feedback on the final product.

Questions were posed, and feedback was offered as follows:

As Commissioners, do you feel like your role as a commissioner and the board's overall role is accurately portrayed in the publication, and does the publication show how Commissioners contributed throughout the year?

Art Delaune thought the information the annual report contains is what the Commission talks about through the year, and it seems that Commissioners' input and partners' input make the book come alive. This report shows exactly what the Commission does.

ACoA has been mandated to use plain language that is clear and easy to read. Does this report speak in a clear, plain language voice, and how does the tone feel?

Vivian Stiver feels that aging is universal, and personalizing it the way Marty did in his opening statements of the report is important. It is important to convey personal experiences to legislators, and getting their attention on a personal level is the best way for people to realize what it means to age and stay in your own home and the challenges that people face.

Acting Chair Pawlowski thinks it's all about being personal. It's the story of who they are, what they do, and what Alaskans need to continue to live independently and be successful.

Art Delaune agreed with Paula and Vivian. When they attend all these meetings, they look at a lot of data. It's nice to have the data, but what does it mean, and how does it affect people? It needs to be as personal as possible.

Sara Chambers feels the data is easy to access, and this is a tool that legislators, members of the public, and partners will reach to for data. The content strikes the right tone, and it's understandable to a layperson or someone who might need the information. She thought there were some bizarre layout choices looking at the table of contents and the headers, and there were random headers and graphics that didn't reflect the hierarchy of the content organization in the table of contents. It doesn't impact the actual data, but it's perhaps something that could have been caught in design review.

Sara also noted that at the very end there is the MASST support section, and it wasn't clear to her as a stakeholder why MASST would be the only supporting entity that is called out. She wondered why this was singled out as opposed to any of the other partners they work with, and it felt kind of random and odd. Acting Chair Pawlowski agreed. She said that they mentioned partners in the past, and they can call out all their important partners next year.

Acting Chair Pawlowski thought the only thing that was missing was a look to the future, and that could have been fleshed out a little bit more. Although there was a section in the annual report that touched on that, Vivian suggested that it could be highlighted at the end of the report.

After reading the annual report, Kathy Romain was shocked by how much the Commission does. She felt that MASST wasn't singled out. She took it as a highlight crediting people from the MASST program that worked for ACoA. She thought it was nice that they included that, because those are often the people who get overlooked.

Yasmin Radbod asked Commissioners to reflect on what they have accomplished this year and what they would want to showcase in the next annual report. They will showcase Angela Jackson as their intern, and that was the same idea with showcasing their MASST volunteers. She said one thing they discussed when putting together this annual report was highlighting stories from people in the community, and that might be something to consider for the next one. She remarked that the design process is pretty intense and consists of a lot of back and forth with the Communications Team. She would love for Commissioners to review the draft to catch any typos or other issues.

Acting Chair Pawlowski commended staff and said they should be proud of the first one they put out. Staff probably also have some things they would want to do differently next time too. Marty Lange would like to get started on the annual report sooner in the year to keep activities of the fiscal year fresh. The document needs to be published by the end of the year, but it would be easier to work on it earlier once the fiscal year ends.

Did Commissioners feel like there was enough collaboration between staff and Commissioners on the annual report, or do they want more collaboration?

Art Delaune didn't recall having much input into the annual report, and he volunteered to be on a committee or just help out putting it together.

Does the annual report accurately reflect what ACoA is hearing from seniors in rural communities, and does it highlight the most urgent policy areas?

Sara Chambers asked for clarification on what's being requested. Are Commissioners being asked to endorse content they haven't reviewed and voted on, or simply confirm it looks accurate? If it's the former, she's not comfortable voting on something that wasn't on the agenda as presented. If these are items ACoA already voted on in 2025 with minutes to back them up, she's fine with it. She also noted this document was produced under former Commissioners no longer on the Commission.

Marty Lange suggested they discuss next year's recommendations at the next quarterly meeting, where Commissioners can come together, vote on recommendations, and include them in the annual report.

Vivian Stiver asked for the question to be rephrased.

Did this year's recommendations reflect what we're hearing from communities and highlight the most urgent policy areas?

Marty Lange noted with that in mind, Commissioners should come to the next meeting prepared with recommendations to pass on to the Governor based on feedback from Alaskans.

Art Delaune noted that the annual report is a snapshot in time. Recommending something for a document that looks backward is difficult, and 2025 recommendations may not be appropriate for the 2026 report.

Vivian Stiver added that with a new administration coming in, this document will quickly become outdated.

Yasmin Radbod suggested reviewing the results of the 2025 recommendations and any Governor feedback. She also noted that not every item needs to be new as some recommendations are ongoing. The 2025 report was built on feedback received throughout the year.

Sara Chambers reiterated that an annual report looks back, not forward, and wanted to ensure that Commissioners aren't being asked to endorse anything the FY'25 ACoA didn't already endorse.

Acting Chair Pawlowski expects much of the 2026 report content will come from the Senior Summit and State Plan public outreach and suggested looking at what may have been missed last year to ensure it is captured going forward.

Art Delaune suggested including a section in the 2026 annual report that discusses what ACoA recommended to the legislature, Governor, and other agencies during the year. It can also include whether or not they were successful.

Acting Chair Pawlowski feels that having a couple of Commissioners help on the next annual report will be very helpful for staff. She congratulated staff on their efforts.

Any areas for improvement?

Marty Lange summarized that he is hearing the recommendations section could be improved.

Acting Chair Pawlowski suggested including partnerships, people ACoA works closely with and depend on for their expertise. She also encouraged Commissioners to send any recommendations to Marty as they think of them.

Kathy Romain liked Art's recommendation that they summarize recommendations that were made to the Governor and which ones were successful. This would be helpful to provide history to new Commissioners.

Christine Saling commented that for last year and this year, there has been a lot of feedback about the personal care assistance, assisted living homes, transportation, personal needs allowance, and cost of care. She thinks those should be highlighted as these are ongoing issues that are making it so seniors cannot age in place.

SENIOR SNAPSHOT EVALUATION

Marty Lange explained that the Senior Snapshot is data that's publicly available condensed into one document so it's easy to find the statistics and data about seniors across the state in one publication. It includes data related to economics, medical, homelessness, food security, and all the issues that affect seniors statewide. The Senior Snapshot was hand delivered to each legislator, which lead to interesting conversations. It is a valuable document that is accessible to all who are interested.

Do you feel like the Senior Snapshot represents the Commission well? Is the Commission accurately portrayed in the Senior Snapshot, and does this represent us as a Commission?

Vivian Stiver likes the Snapshot because it's not overwhelming and contains more charts than words. She noticed that the most recent Snapshot is almost three times bigger than the previous one, and she thought it was supposed to be a shorter publication. She thinks a smaller publication with great graphics would draw more people in. All the content was relevant, but it was just a little too big.

Sara Chambers thinks the document is amazing and contains a ton of information. If they are trying to hand stakeholders an encyclopedia of relevant senior information, this is a great tool as the document allows legislators to have all the data at their fingertips.

Kathy Romain feels like this is more of a reference manual than past Snapshots. For providers and grantees, this is an amazing resource. She is blown away by what this state offers for seniors. She congratulated staff and remarked that it's very easy to read and contains a lot of information. She appreciates having trusted information.

Art Delaune agreed with Kathy. One section he really liked is where it talked about the contributions of older Alaskans, particularly economically. Acting Chair Pawlowski

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noted that Alaskan seniors are not like seniors in other states. Alaskan seniors contribute to the economy; they don't drag it down.

Yasmin Radbod shared that several months ago, the Commission reviewed all the additions to the Snapshot, which were based off of feedback from Commissioners from last year, particularly increasing the use of graphics and including projections. The Communications Team did an amazing job putting it together. She shared that they hear feedback that the Snapshot is used for grant writing.

Acting Chair Pawlowski said that they have been told for the last five to ten years by legislators and aides that this document is what they depend on. Many of them use the Snapshot as a regular reference. She appreciated the larger print in this edition. Her recommendation is to have a two-page pullout that is a "Senior Snapshot at a Glance." In the glance would be ACoA's top four priorities. Vivian Stiver was thinking the Snapshot was an at-a-glance document, and she thinks creating an at-a-glance pullout is a great idea.

Marty Lange said that once staff gather their information for the Snapshot, they send it to the Communications Team for review. They have a person there that researches every data point to validate it. He referenced the extensive footnotes that tell where the data came from.

DISCUSSION: STATE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE SELECTION

Acting Chair Pawlowski stated that she was asked to give an overview of what they did for the last State Plan for Commissioners. She remembers having a contracted company assist ACoA in putting together the State Plan along with a small core advisory group. She suggested they review the list of prior members and determine who else they need to ask to join.

She explained that activities of the committee included reviewing the results of the surveys for seniors and providers. ACoA also held approximately 40 listening sessions across the state over the course of two years for the previous State Plan. She noted how successful they can be when they talk to people face to face. The top four issues identified statewide included transportation, food security, access to healthcare, and housing.

Acting Chair Pawlowski also noted that according to the requirements of their State Plan, ACoA is supposed to have strategic planning in place.

Marty Lange shared his observations from the last survey that in the contract with Agnew::Beck, there was nothing about survey design, and there were several questions on the survey that were poorly written. He is looking to redesign the survey so that the questions are pared down to the essentials and the questions are straightforward. He is currently getting some estimates from some data groups on designing a better survey. He also wonders if they should design a sample group to ensure they have a true representation of Alaska's population. He noted that some populations were underrepresented on the last survey, including Native Alaskans.

He queried Commissioners opinions on having a sample group.

Sara Chambers felt unsure of this process and wanted more information about the higher level processes that can inform the next steps. She also noted that the agenda heading is “State Plan Advisory Committee Selection,” and that was all she was prepared to discuss today. She also feels that new members to the Commission could benefit from additional information.

Marty said they can hire a consultant to do the bulk of the work for this State Plan.

Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that there isn’t currently a timeline of activities for the State Plan, and they need to make a calendar.

Sara Chambers asked for a link to the Older Americans Act requirements for the State Plan. She agreed on needing a calendar and would like to know information about the budget. She would also like a definition of advisory committee. She doesn’t believe that having a committee member brainstorming session today will be fruitful. She thinks they need to understand what the required makeup of the committee is and reach out to potential members through ACoA’s communication pathways. She feels like there should be a process, but there isn’t anything in their packets to assist with that. She would be in favor of convening a time-limited task force to think through all these details with staff.

Acting Chair Pawlowski reiterated that the purpose for today’s agenda item was to discuss what they had done in the past, and this is not an action item. She asked Yasmin to send Commissioners a link to the 45-page State Plan guidance document from ACL, and Marty put the link in the chat. Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that they also need to determine who ACoA will be advising at SDS regarding the State Plan, and they need to consult with SDS to determine what SDS’s timeline is. She believes there is enough talent in the department that they will not need to hire an outside consultant.

Yasmin Radbod noted that ACoA will be working on the funding formula as part of the State Plan.

MEETING LENGTH, FUTURE PLANS, DATES

Monthly Meetings

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to eliminate monthly meetings because the intention was to have the quarterly meetings be a little shorter, which doesn’t seem to be happening, **SECONDED** by Sara Chambers.

Vivian further explained that the hope was to have quarterly meetings be half-day meetings. Having the monthly meetings seemed to just burden Commissioners and staff with extra work.

Sara Chambers is not opposed to an ad hoc meeting being called if there is something time sensitive, but she doesn’t believe they need to have monthly meetings. Vivian agreed and said that this motion does not negate any ad hoc meetings that may need to be called.

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Cheryl Howdyshell noted that it would be helpful to break the meeting up into two half days.

Art Delaune agreed that they should cancel the monthly meetings.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

- Acting Chair Pawlowski – yes
- Art Delaune – yes
- Vivian Stiver – yes
- Cheryl Howdyshell – yes
- Kathy Romain – yes
- Sara Chambers – yes

The motion **PASSED**.

Meeting Length

Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that when the Commission used to meet in person, the meetings were two-and-a-half days long. She agrees with other Commissioners that having full-day Zoom meetings is difficult. Marty Lange suggested either mornings over two days or a morning and an afternoon, and the schedule would be similar to today's meeting, just spread out over two days. He feels people are fresher in the mornings, and he suggested 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Vivian Stiver prefers half days, and mornings would be fine. Sara Chambers agrees with two subsequent mornings, as does Kathy Romain.

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** that their quarterly meetings be in the morning on two consecutive days and not extend past 12:00 [sic], **SECONDED** by Art Delaune.

Marty Lange had suggested during discussion that the meetings be from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on two consecutive days. Vivian Stiver agreed with this, but the motion was stated as 12:00.

Marty Lange did a roll call vote as follows:

- Acting Chair Pawlowski – yes
- Art Delaune – yes
- Vivian Stiver – yes
- Cheryl Howdyshell – yes
- Kathy Romain – yes
- Sara Chambers – yes

The motion **PASSED**.

Dates of Next Meeting

- Strategic planning training in Anchorage June 23 – 24, 2026 starting at 10:30 a.m. at 1835 Bragaw in the 3rd floor conference room.
 - Acting Chair Pawlowski announced that she and Bob Pawlowski will be hosting dinner at their house the night of the 23rd.

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- Sara Chambers noted that when the Commission gathers for dinner at the Pawlowskis' house, what conforms with the Open Meetings Act is that they will not be discussing ACoA's business during that time.
- It was proposed to hold the next quarterly meeting via Zoom the mornings of August 24 – 25. Commissioners will be queried as to their availability.

COMMISSIONER FINAL COMMENTS

Final comments are summarized as follows:

- Thanks to Bob Pawlowski for his passion for veterans and the information he has shared about the Pioneer Homes over the years.
- Thank you to Kori Mateaki for her time on the Commission.
- Christine Saling was going to critique the Guidehouse report and curious if there was any follow up to that. Cheryl Howdysshell will follow up with Christine.
- Enjoyed today's meeting, particularly the discussions about the Snapshot and the State Plan. Looking forward to meeting face to face in June.
- This has been a great eye opener and glad to be part of this team. Thanks to Marty and Yasmin for all they do on a daily basis.
- Welcome to Kathy Romain.
- Appreciation to Acting Chair Pawlowski for stepping in for Chair Bob Sivertsen.
- Amazed at the power and the work accomplished by this small staff of two.
- Want to acknowledge the amazing quality and quantity of work that Yasmin does. Feel privileged to have her working for the Commission.
- Thank you to all the Commissioners who serve on this volunteer board.

Acting Chair Pawlowski shared a conversation she had with Kori Mateaki where they discussed having a system in place for seniors similar to the educational system for children, something universal that all seniors knew where they were going to land when they became seniors.

ADJOURN

Acting Chair Pawlowski adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

QUARTERLY MEETING

Videoconference

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Public Testimony

Pages 1 - 11, inclusive

Commissioners:

Paula Pawlowski, Acting Chair

Bob Pawlowski

Vivian Stiver

Cheryl Howdyshell

Art Delaune

Kathy Romain

Christine Saling

Sara Chambers, ex-officio

Staff:

Martin Lange, Executive Director

Yasmin Radbod, Program Coordinator 2

Transcribed by: Paula DiPaolo, Notary Public

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Do you want to have
3 Laura go ahead and start public comment?
4 **MARTIN LANGE:** Yasmin, can you --
5 **SARA CHAMBERS:** Marty?
6 **MARTIN LANGE:** Yes.
7 **SARA CHAMBERS:** Sorry, this is Sara. It
8 looks like Marianne, not Art, Marianne Mills has her
9 hand up.
10 **MARTIN LANGE:** Okay, I know that
11 Marianne also --
12 **SARA CHAMBERS:** It just may be the way
13 that the Brady Bunch grid is showing on your screen.
14 **MARTIN LANGE:** No, that's fine. I know
15 that Marianne also wants to make public comment, so
16 we've got three people in the queue right now. We're
17 going to start with Laura Norton-Cruz.
18 **LAURA NORTON-CRUZ:** Great, thanks. And
19 do I have three minutes, is that correct?
20 **MARTIN LANGE:** You do, yes.
21 **LAURA NORTON-CRUZ:** Hi, my name is Laura
22 Norton-Cruz, I am a social -- I'm a licensed master
23 social worker and a film producer. I work on a series
24 of documentary films that currently is called "The
25 Early Childhood in Alaska Series" along with

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1 Branstetter Film.
2 And our three films in the series so
3 far, and we're working on a fourth one, have focused
4 on early childhood and have made a significant impact
5 on legislation, funding, and on regulatory issues in
6 Alaska. So we've made a major impact on what
7 regulatory issues got addressed in childcare as well
8 as funding for and the passage of legislation to
9 support the Infant Learning Program.
10 The reason I'm talking to you about that
11 is because I'm interested in sharing with you the idea
12 of film as a tool for advancing your goals in terms of
13 policy and regulatory change.
14 What we found in particular with the
15 Infant Learning Program film, which had strong backing
16 from a coalition of organizations, non-profits, and
17 foundations that were already working on Infant
18 Learning Program because we had that kind of support
19 to make the film and to disseminate it, we were able
20 to help the other advocates working on it to not only
21 increase the funding for the Infant Learning Program
22 for the first time in 11 years, but to pass SB 178,
23 which passed just about two weeks ago, which changes
24 the eligibility criteria.
25 So kind of big system policy change,

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1 lots of attention. It applies pressure in a way. It
2 helps move the hearts and minds of policymakers in a
3 way that graphs and good presentations and speeches
4 and reports just can't do. Film is incredibly
5 powerful for getting people on board, especially when
6 you do the filming in a region where you need certain
7 policymakers or influencers to be involved. If you
8 make the film in their region, if they are somehow
9 involved in it, they buy in, they participate, they
10 become champions for the issue. And so through that
11 filming process, we brought on new champions for
12 Infant Learning Program or for childcare.
13 And so I'm aware of your work. I really
14 appreciate the work that you do. I've read the ACoA
15 2025 annual report, the legislative priorities, Senior
16 Snapshot, and I just think that film would be a really
17 powerful way to help tell these stories to move people
18 to action, you know, to make people cry, to make
19 people really feel these things and feel the urgency
20 of addressing the issues that you're looking to
21 address.
22 We have a lot of experience. We do the
23 research, we work with the subject matter experts, you
24 know, pull in citations and reports, do all of the
25 legal stuff, you know, the media releases, the

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1 location scouting. So we don't require a lot of work
2 of the agencies that we partner with. We just need
3 really the funding and the backing as well as
4 collaboration so that you can make sure that we're
5 going in the right direction to tell the stories that
6 you most want told.
7 So I know I don't have long but hope to
8 be in contact with you if that idea is of interest to
9 the Commission.
10 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Thank you, Laura, very
11 much. It sounds very intriguing, and we do know it is
12 all about the stories, and we see that in every scope
13 and sequence we participate in.
14 **LAURA NORTON-CRUZ:** Absolutely.
15 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** We'll go with Liz
16 Clark.
17 **LIZ CLARK:** Good afternoon, can you hear
18 me?
19 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Yes, thank you.
20 **LIZ CLARK:** Perfect, thanks. Good
21 afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Clark, and I serve as
22 the aging and disabilities division manager for the
23 Bristol Bay Native Association Elder Meal Program. We
24 currently serve meals to eligible elders in the
25 Bristol Bay and Lake & Peninsula Boroughs.

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1 Thank you for the opportunity to provide
2 public comment today regarding the impact of the
3 Alaska Commission on Aging's Kodiak redesignation
4 decision on Bristol Bay's Title III funding
5 allocation.
6 In 2023, ACoA changed Kodiak's
7 designation from remote to rural in the Title III
8 funding formula. Kodiak's population comprises nearly
9 70 percent of district 7's population. The
10 redesignation has had profound impacts on the funding
11 formula to Bristol Bay, Dillingham, and Lake &
12 Peninsula.
13 Region 7's allocation for the Title III
14 funds has dropped from 40 -- from 445,000 to roughly
15 295,000 per year. Bristol Bay and Lake & Peninsula's
16 annual Title III funding specifically was reduced from
17 approximately 91,000 to \$51,000 per year.
18 While this may appear administrative on
19 paper, the impact at the community level is
20 significant. BBNA currently supports approximately
21 19,000 elder meals annually across the Bristol Bay
22 region through partnerships with local school
23 districts. We reimburse districts for each meal
24 served. Because of this funding reduction, we
25 anticipate having to reduce reimbursement rates to

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1 these districts, placing additional strain on already
2 limited school service funding.
3 The reduction also threatens our ability
4 to maintain nutritional site workers who play a
5 critical role in delivering meals to elders who are
6 unable to travel to meal sites due to medical
7 conditions, mobility limitations, or lack of
8 transportation.
9 In a region as geographically isolated
10 as Bristol Bay, these services are not supplemental,
11 they are essential. For some elders, the delivered
12 meal is not simply a convenience. We serve elders who
13 cannot safely leave home during winter conditions, who
14 no longer drive due to medical limitations, or who
15 live without reliable transportation. In some cases,
16 that delivery may be the only reliable hot meal and
17 in-person contact that they receive that day.
18 Our concern is heightened by what we are
19 seeing directly from elders in our regional surveys.
20 More than half of respondents report not eating
21 adequate fruits and vegetables, eating meals alone
22 regularly, or reducing the number of meals that they
23 eat each day for financial constraints.
24 At the same time, demand for elder
25 nutrition services continues to increase across the

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1 region, and we anticipate that that trend will
2 continue upward. Unlike some areas of the state, many
3 of the elders we serve are not in a financial position
4 to offset these reductions through donations or
5 increase local support. The realities of poverty,
6 transportation barriers, and high rural food costs
7 make these services critically important to
8 maintaining elder health and independence.
9 I want to emphasize that my comments
10 today are not political in nature, and I'm not here to
11 communicate anything on behalf of BBNA as a --
12 lobbying, sorry. I'm just here simply trying to say
13 that we have a significant need out here and that
14 ACoA's decision has severely impacted our programming.
15 I appreciate the Commission's
16 consideration of the impacts this funding reduction
17 has made and welcome to talk about this further.
18 Thank you.
19 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Thank you, Liz, very
20 much. And as you know, we're approaching a new state
21 plan, and I'm sure SDS will be able to help us work
22 through those issues as that will be part of the new
23 state plan according to the federal requirements.
24 Marianne, welcome.
25 **MARIANNE MILLS:** Thank you. My name is

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1 Marianne Mills, and I'm the president of AGEnet, which
2 is Alaska's association of providers who serve older
3 Alaskans around the state.
4 This session we had three legislative
5 priorities, and we were very successful. The first
6 one was House Bill 133, which Marty was asking about,
7 and that is to ensure prompt payments to senior
8 service grantees, including non-profit organizations
9 and municipalities. So that bill passed the House and
10 Senate, and it is waiting to be transmitted to the
11 Governor.
12 The second priority is to support
13 funding for our non-Medicaid grants, of which senior
14 centers are a big part. And I want to thank the
15 Commission on Aging for advocating for additional
16 funds. We received 500,000 additional funds for
17 Alaska senior centers because of your work on that, so
18 thank you very much.
19 And then our third priority is to
20 protect the \$1.15 million in the Governor's budget
21 related to home modifications and upgrades to retain
22 housing. So we were very successful this session.
23 We're going to be having our annual
24 meeting on June 15th at the Anchorage Senior Activity
25 Center, and we're looking forward to hearing Marty and

1 Yasmin as some of our presenters at that event.
2 And I just want to end by saying AGEnet
3 is looking forward to increased partnership with the
4 Alaska Commission on Aging in the coming months in
5 regard to the Summit on Aging and the state plan. So
6 thank you very much.
7 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Thank you, Marianne.
8 Yes, combining efforts has been successful in the
9 past, and we'll continue to do so in the future.
10 Do we have anyone else for public
11 comment, Marty?
12 **MARTIN LANGE:** I do not see anyone else.
13 Oh, okay. Yeah, no one waiting to give public comment
14 that has their hand raised.
15 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Okay, do we have any
16 commissioners with questions? I can't see the hands.
17 No.
18 **MARTIN LANGE:** There are no hands.
19 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Marty, at this time do
20 we know if Stephanie Wheeler will be able to join us
21 at 1:50? Have you had an update?
22 **MARTIN LANGE:** Stephanie Wheeler? I
23 have not had any updates from her. I'm assuming no,
24 but if I see her come online, I will check with her.
25 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** Okay. What I would

1 like to do, because we just have three minutes left in
2 public comment, is I would like to ask Kathy to hold
3 off for 1:50 to do an introduction of herself for the
4 Commissioners, because I don't want to chop her off at
5 three minutes.
6 Is that okay with Kathy?
7 **KATHY ROMAIN:** Yes, that's fine. Maybe
8 you do want to cut me off at three minutes.
9 **PAULA PAWLOWSKI:** I doubt that
10 seriously. Thank you so much for allowing that.
11 I really appreciate the public comment.
12 You guys have covered a vast variety of subjects, and
13 it's exactly the type of input that we're looking for
14 from the public. It does very good work for us.
15 Thank you so much.
16 So at 1:15, two minutes from now, I have
17 Kelda on board, and Kelda is program officer for the
18 Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and her handouts
19 are in your packet from page 129 to 136. Kelda, are
20 you available?
21 (End of public testimony)
22
23
24
25

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