

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY  
Friday, September 23, 2023**

**Members Present**

Andrea Suhaka	Arapahoe County
Barbara Boyer	Arapahoe County
Bob Brocker	At Large – Denver
Cathy Noon	Arapahoe County
Connie Ward	Jefferson County
Donna Mullins	Jefferson County
Ed Moss	City and County of Broomfield
George Teal	DRCOG Board – Douglas County
Gretchen Lopez	Douglas County
Houston “Tex” Elam	At Large – Arapahoe County
Jim Dale	Former DRCOG Board – Golden
Karie Erickson	Douglas County
Perla Gheiler	City and County of Denver
Phil Cernanec	At Large – Arapahoe County
Steve Conklin	DRCOG Board – Edgewater
Valerie Robson	At Large – Jefferson County
Wynne Shaw	DRCOG Board – Lone Tree

**Guests Present**

No Guests were present.

**DRCOG Staff Present**

AJ Diamontopoulos, Senior Management Analyst, Doug Rex, DRCOG Executive Director, Erika Dubray, ADRC Manager, Fonda Buckles, Community Resources Manager, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, AAA Division Director, Jennifer Reeves, Veterans & Community Options Manager, Kelly Roberts, Community Resource Specialist, Mindy Patton, Division Assistant, Shannon Gimbel, Ombudsman Manager, Zack Feldman, Data Science and Analytics Program Manager

Karie Erickson Committee Chair – Called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Public Comment Period (Non-ACA Members)**

There was no public comment.

**Report of the Chair – Karie Erickson**

There was no report from the Chair.

**Report of the AAA Director – Jayla Sanchez-Warren**

- Attended the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative
  - Denver Homeless Initiative told Jayla many people over 70 are becoming homeless.
  - They wanted to know what DRCOG could do to help.
  - Jayla said they could use DRCOG as a resource, but that DRCOG had waiting lists.

- Jayla asked them to look for money that DRCOG could help them with.
- DRCOG staff will be participating in the Denver Homeless Initiative meetings.
- Jayla had a meeting with Representative Rod Bockenfeld. He expressed his support for increased funding for older adults.
- Jayla presented at the DRCOG Board.
  - She updated the board on the contractors and how they were doing.
  - She told the board about the challenges ahead for the AAA.
  - During the board meeting several community leaders said they had already made cuts to their budgets for services which will make funding even more of a challenge for next year.
- Jayla and Doug Rex went on a tour of the new Volunteers of America facility.
  - Volunteers of America is the only organization that still takes people to meal sites in Clear Creek and Gilpin counties. Jayla would like to investigate expanding that service into the metro area which would help provide meals and socialization to those in that area.
- Jayla has spent a lot of time with Rich Mauro and AJ Diamontopoulos on the public awareness campaign.
- For many years, DRCOG's AAA has been working to establish partnerships with hospitals to help pay for services for older adults. Since the results have been limited, Jayla and AJ are now working with a consultant to help develop contract templates, pricing and messaging to present to insurance companies.
- State advocacy is the current focus, federal advocacy will happen next year closer to the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.
- The federal lobbyists are updating DRCOG frequently which has been very helpful.
- A federal shutdown will not affect the AAA but may affect other departments of human services within the state.
- The SHIP program is gearing up for open enrollment which will begin on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Move to approve consent agenda

Items on the consent agenda included: August 23, 2023, meeting summaries.

Phil Cernanec motioned for approval. Tex Elam seconded the motion; the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Agendas and summaries are posted on the [DRCOG website](#) from the link choose the month and date of the meeting, click on the event. Once clicked, you will find the link to the meeting for that month.

## **Informational Briefings**

### **Public Awareness and Advocacy Campaign for Future Funding – Kelly Roberts, Jennifer Reeves, and Rich Mauro**

Jayla began the work session by telling the committee that beginning in FY2024/2025 there will be a serious shortfall to the AAA of \$8 million dollars. The AAA may need to consider cuts in unregulated services to allow Older Americans Act required services to continue. Jayla also stated that cities and counties are beginning to cut their budgets as well.

#### **Public Advocacy Campaign – Rich Mauro**

- Rich spoke about the work he and Jayla were doing to increase funding.
  - AAAs have requested \$5 million dollars be added to the Governor’s budget in a letter dated August 1, 2023.
  - The Governor’s budget is required to be published and to the public by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Rich would like to have the Joint Budget Committee include a companion bill for funding in their budget which would be built into the system for consistency and have guidelines for inflation and population growth.
  - Pandemic relief funds are ending which eased the shortfall through FY2023/2024.
  - A second letter to the Governor is being completed with follow-up information.

#### **Jen Reeves – Public Awareness Campaign**

- DRCOG is working on developing a tool kit.
  - The toolkit will help promote a unified message.
  - The toolkit will be able to be customized.
  - It is expected to be out by the end of October.
- DRCOG is creating a flyer to be completed in October.
  - Staff were seeking ACA member input.
- In addition to the toolkit there will be media outreach.
  - In newspapers.
  - A social media campaign.
    - This campaign will build awareness.
    - Have a call to action.
    - Educate.
  - There will be segments on PBS television.
- There will be outreach to the legislature, media, DRCOG providers, mover and shakers in the industry and storytelling from recipients.

Karie Erickson introduced a video Douglas County made as an example for something the campaign could generate to show how services benefit those served. The video can be found [on the Aging Resources of Douglas County website.](#)

#### **Kelly Roberts – Flyer and Tool Kit Discussion**

Kelly led a discussion among the committee, some of the comments/suggestions are listed below.

- Flyer
  - Show amount of money savings by being proactive.
  - Flip the back to front.
  - Title needs to be a different color to stand out better.
  - Different graphs that show costs.
- Toolkit Content
  - Provide a short explanation of the Area Agencies on Aging.
  - Show impact of community-based services to ordinary people.
  - Make it real, show people who have services now that are going to lose them and how people will need to go into a higher level of care which will cost more.
  - Personal stories
    - Scenario of an older adult who is homeless – how did they end up here?
    - How AAA also serve veterans.
- Formats
  - Create a scripted elevator speech.
  - Provide a template for letters/messages to legislators.
  - Have monthly themes – especially for social media posts.
  - Use questions to launch the information such as “Do you know if your mom... or Did your dad get to his Dr. appointment?”
  - Brochure for contractors’ clients with legislators’ contact information.
  - Provide promotional statements that can be used for local chambers, rotaries, etc.
- Targets/Outlets
  - Medical offices and hospitals.
  - Local chambers, rotaries.
  - Get to and involve younger people.
  - Metro’s school of design/art and communications.
  - Local television programs.
  - Provide the number of older adults in their districts to legislators and other officials.
- Miscellaneous
  - Hold a forum – for people who have been helped and for the people/volunteers who have helped.

#### DRCOG Board Report

- Steve Conklin, DRCOG Board Chair said the board appreciated the presentation Jayla provided at the September board meeting and appreciated the work the AAA staff does. Wynn Shaw added that many board members were unaware of the funding problem.

- There was a [Proposition 123 Affordable Housing Programs](#) presentation by DOLA.
- There was also a report on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the DRCOG region.
- Chair Conklin said it was good when talking to elective officials to promote the aging population not just for additional funding but in other policy decisions that might affect them.
- Chair Conklin reminded everyone of the DRCOG Awards ceremony on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### County Reports

#### City and County of Denver – Perla Gheiler

- Denver has a new Mayor.
- Office on Aging hired a new person who is on a limited contract through December of 2024. She will be handling their data and creating stories for the Aging Matters report.
- The migrant arrival has started up again, and has been very costly.
  - The original plan was to outsource the project to one company, but the company did not have good reviews so was voted down by the city council.
  - They are now piecing out to local organizations who know and can do the work.
- The Unhoused 1000 Initiative.
  - The Initiative did 90 town halls.
  - Denver is clearing out the homeless encampment by the Governor's Mansion. They plan to take some of them to a hotel operated by the Salvation Army.
  - In December there will be another hotel available that will have 300 to 400 rooms.
- Many older adults are becoming unhoused, many are women.

#### Douglas County – Gretchen Lopez

- Gretchen reminded everyone about the Vintage and Vibrant event in Douglas County on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### Jefferson County – Donna Mullins and Jim Dale

- Met with legislators. Discussed the disconnect with older adults who want to work but cannot due to various barriers such as technology.
- Voters approved the collection of a lodging tax intended to mitigate visitor impacts and to fund community projects and capital improvements. The lodging tax has community funding grants available.
- Golden will also have funding from the marijuana tax that is dedicated to health and human services.
- Golden has partnered with Colorado School of Mines for Ore Cart which is a free shuttle service more information can be found at [Ore Cart](#).
- City of Golden collaborated with the county to help people in the mobile home park to purchase their park with 40 units. This is very helpful as the park has several seniors who were unable to move their units and are now able to stay in their homes.

- Scott Vargo the City Manager hired Sarah Vain to be the Thriving Community Manager, she will be tracking the funds and making sure the grants are accountable.

Arapahoe County – Cathy Noon

- Centennial partnered with the YMCA to open an intergenerational facility at the Streets of Southglenn. The facility is now open.

#### Other Matters by Members

No other matters were brought to the attention of the committee.

Next meeting – **October 27, 2023.**

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.