

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING

WEBEX MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan Vega, Kim Hunt, Britta Larson, Anthony Frazier, Paulette Hamlin, Christina Hardin-Weiss, Talat Khan, Susan Lawler, Steven Lord, Phyllis Mitzen, Crystal Odom-McKinney, Edgar Ramirez, Kate Schwartz, Sherry Sparks, Representative Rita Mayfield represented by Wandreeka McBride, Maura Hirschauer represented by Kat Machio

ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:

Julie Bobitt, Melvin Grimes, Sylvia Mahle, Meijian Linda Yu, Senator Laura Fine, Senator Mattie Hunter, Senator Dave Syverson

VISITORS and GUESTS:

None

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Killough, IDoA Director
Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel
Michelle Hoersch, Chief Planning Officer for the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging
Sandy Pastore, Senior Policy Advisor
Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, Division Manager of Home & Community Services
T’Kira Siler-Wilkerson, Deputy Division Manager of Home & Community Services
Derek Hedges, Division Manager of Planning, Research, Development & Training
John Eckert, Deputy Division Manager of Planning, Research, Development & Training
Adrienne Grover, Deputy Division Manager of Advocacy & Prevention Services
Lee Moriarty, Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Glenda Love, Deputy State Home Care Ombudsman
Iris Huber, Public Information Officer
Jennifer Hebel, Special Research Assistant for the Executive Office
Roberta Vojas, Legislative Administrative Assistant
Joslyn Washington, Secretary to the Director
Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach
Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Division of Community Relations & Outreach

SUMMARY

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Council Chair Susan Vega. Roll call was taken by Vice Chair Kim Hunt and it was determined that a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Chair asked Council members for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2025 meeting. Phyllis Mitzen entered a motion and Susan Lawler seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Multi-Sector Plan on Aging Overview & Discussion:

Michelle Hoersch, Chief Planning Officer for the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging (MPA), updated the Council on the goals of the MPA. Michelle explained that the MPA is the result of an Executive Order issued by Governor Pritzker in August 2024. She shared that many states are implementing an MPA or authorized to develop an MPA. The MPA is a 10-year blueprint to support healthy aging in Illinois communities, while addressing issues related to healthcare, housing, transportation, and other social determinants of health.

The MPA, "*engAging Illinois*," is a cross-agency plan that includes direct feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders. The MPA will have a broad focus with an emphasis on aging through the lifespan. She noted that the MPA establishes that we are all aging throughout our lifetimes and that healthy children and healthy adults equal healthy older adults. She said that the MPA is data driven looking to identify areas of unmet need and new initiatives that can potentially be put into use to ease the aging process. Data will be gathered to measure progress. The MPA will be refreshed every year and progress made towards the goals will be shared.

The MPA is designed to reframe how we think about aging and combat common stereotypes of aging and ageism. The principles included are equity and inclusion, person-centered care, reframing aging, similarity of needs in aging and disability, life course approach, social drivers of health, innovation and technology. The four focus areas are: 1) creating livable and connected communities; 2) ensuring health for all ages; 3) investing in caregivers; and 4) affordable aging.

Michelle said public engagement sessions regarding the MPA are near conclusion with one being held later that day in Carbondale. She also shared that a virtual session is scheduled to be held on October 2 and encouraged members to join. She added that the MPA is to be submitted to the General Assembly and the Governor's office by December 31, 2025. She asked ICoA members to reach out with any questions or comments to her at michelle.hoersch@illinois.gov or visit the *engAging Illinois* website at <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/forprofessionals/multi-sector-plan-for-aging>.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, Home & Community Services Division Manager, shared information regarding the State Plan on Aging for FY25 to FY28. The Older Americans Act (OAA) requires all State Units on Aging (SUA), such as IDoA, to prepare and publish a State Plan on Aging. Amy said that IDoA is waiting final approval of the State Plan but it was expected soon. The goals of the State Plan include: 1) statewide visibility of the Aging Network; 2) continuous quality assurance and improvement activities; and 3) increased public awareness and knowledge of caregiver needs. She thanked ICoA members for their input and contributions to the State Plan. Amy also mentioned the possibility of a federal government shutdown with a potential pause on funding. She shared that no disruption in services would be expected. She added that funds would be disbursed to IDoA partner agencies as soon as available.

IDoA Planning, Research, Development & Training Division Manager Derek Hedges informed the Council that rate increases associated with the Persons Who Are Elderly Waiver are proposed to go into effect on January 1, 2026. The waiver is a component of the Community Care Program (CCP) provided by IDoA. He also mentioned that the waiver has a five-year approval set to expire in September 2026 so staff will begin working on renewal activities that will include an opportunity for the Aging Network to provide comments. In addition, Derek shared that IDoA is initiating a rate study to look at the rates associated with all waiver services, Case Coordination Unit (CCU) activities, and Adult Protective Services (APS). Derek also shared that IDoA is participating in a statewide aggregation activity associated with Electronic Visit Verification (EVV). EVV is a technology-based system that verifies home visits. Congress passed the Century Cures Act requiring states to implement the use of EVV in all Medicaid-funded personal care services and home health care. He added that in-home service providers already operate with an EVV system but will soon be trained on an enhanced program.

IDoA Deputy State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Lee Moriarty spoke to the Council about their last year's state initiative. The initiative challenged long-term care communities to embrace person directed living and promote systemic change in long-term care culture. To support this effort, the Resident and Family Support Council went into communities and asked residents about their experiences and recommendations for improvements. Lee reported that each Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman was also requested to submit their ideas for making local improvements. Several regions looked at language and how to use different wording to enhance residents' experiences. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) also looked at developing care plans *with* the resident, instead of *for* the resident. In addition, the Ombudsman looked at accessibility issues to help residents feel more independent. This year, LTCOP is focused on promoting safety and good care in long-term care communities. Lee shared that the LTCOP is currently conducting quality assurance reviews with feedback and opportunities for improvements. She also mentioned that State Long-Term Ombudsman Kelly Richards is spearheading efforts to increase visibility of the program, including hosting a podcast. Lee introduced Glenda Love as the new Home Care Ombudsman (HCO). The HCO Program provides advocacy and assistance to older persons and adults with disabilities living in the community receiving Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).

Director Killough introduced new IDoA Deputy Director of Advocacy & Prevention Services, Adrienne Grover. The Director also announced that the IDoA Conference, *Framing the Future*, will be held October 15-16 at the Peoria Convention Center. She mentioned that the purpose of the Conference was to bring people together and understand how we all work together to support older adults in Illinois. She noted that there were many new professionals joining the Aging Network as people retire and emphasized the importance of collaboration. She encouraged Council members to attend the Conference.

NEW BUSINESS:

ICoA member Kate Schwartz shared information about a work group to develop a new Bill of Rights for LGBTQ persons in long-term care settings. Vice Chair Kim Hunt added that the Pride Action Tank and AIDS Foundation of Chicago are also involved and building a coalition to work on LGBTQ and HIV aging issues. Kim will discuss the initiative and participation with Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging. It was confirmed that the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is also involved and plans on attending meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was asked for by Chair Susan Vega, a motion was made by Paulette Hamlin and seconded by Britta Larson.

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.



Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Illinois Council on Aging