



Older Americans Act Services and Current Public Comment Process

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Welcome and Introductions

Housekeeping Items

- Today is a time to share information with and hear from older Minnesotans, family members, and caregivers
- To stay focused:
 - We will pause after some major topics and ask for questions and comments at that time
 - "Chat" is not enabled for this meeting

Today's Agenda

- Overview of Older Americans Act services in Minnesota
- Introduce the MN Board on Aging and its purpose
- Explain the purpose & process of MBA's public comment period
- Review of several key policies for your awareness and feedback
- How to provide comments and by when

What is the Older Americans Act?

- Congress first passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965 to provide a range of services and supports for older Americans, defined as adults who are 60 years and older
- The OAA has been modified over time and today provides funding for a range of services for older adults
- The State of Minnesota also provides funding for vital programs and services for older adults

Older Americans Act Services

Service Category	Examples of Available Services	
Supportive services to help individuals live at home and in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chore • Homemaker • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted Transportation • Legal Assistance • Information & Assistance
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals provided at congregate dining sites • Home-delivered meals • “Grab and go” meals • Nutrition counseling and education for individuals and/or groups 	
Health Promotion to improve health and well-being and/or reduce risk of injury, disease or disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Prevention classes 	
Caregiver Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about available services to help caregivers • Caregiver consultation • Counseling & support groups 	

Background: the Minnesota Board on Aging

- A 25 member Governor-appointed governing body
- MBA members work to create a collective vision that represents the best interests of older Minnesotans
 - Administers state and federal funds with support of MBA staff
 - Creates public awareness, encourages research on aging issues, and provides technical assistance and grants to local aging organizations
 - Advises on and coordinates government plans around aging to ensure that federal Older Americans Act requirements are met

Administration of OAA Services

- Federal and state funds are distributed to seven Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) located in different parts of Minnesota
- AAAs are responsible for creating plans for how to spend those resources in their geographic area
- AAAs also contract with service providers, who are the entities providing vital services to older Minnesotans
- MBA also administers the Senior LinkAge Line and the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Older Americans Act Final Rule

- The OAA has changed significantly over time, but the regulations that help guide program implementation have not been kept up-to-date
- The federal government published updated final rules in February 2024 to address this issue
- Part of the new federal rules require state aging agencies to ensure core policies and procedures are in place

A Greater Focus on Compliance

- The State of Minnesota is also putting more required policies and procedures in place to ensure public funds are spent consistent with their purpose
- Together, these policy updates at the federal and state level prompted MBA to examine and propose updates to its policies and procedures
- MBA has published 58 different policies and procedures on its website and is soliciting public feedback about them

Overview of Public Comment Period



Began on Monday, January 6 and will conclude on Friday, February 7



Stakeholders can submit comments through on-line process and by mail

Engagement Opportunities

1. January 16th Direct Service Provider Webinar
2. Today's webinar for older Minnesotans to highlight OAA services & consumer-facing policies

Goals of Public Comment Period

- Raise general awareness of Older Americans Act services and requirements across Minnesota's aging network and beyond
- Solicit input from service providers, older Minnesotans, and other stakeholders about new policies and procedures
 - An opportunity to offer feedback
 - In many cases, there isn't a "choice" about the new policies & procedures, but *how* they are specified and implemented is important

How to Provide Feedback

- Public Comment period open until February 7, 2025
- Preferred method for submitting comments is [here](https://tkearns86.wufoo.com/forms/oaa-title-iii-final-rule-public-comments) on-line. Full link:
<https://tkearns86.wufoo.com/forms/oaa-title-iii-final-rule-public-comments>
- May also submit comments by mail:
Minnesota Board on Aging
Attn: Planner
P.O. Box 64976
St. Paul, MN 55164-0976

Highlighting Policies of Interest

Policies We are Reviewing Today

- AAA Advisory Councils
- Eligibility criteria and completion of program registration forms
- Confidentiality
- Consumer Contributions
 - Voluntary Contributions
 - **Cost Sharing – a special focus of the public comment period**
- Grievance Process

AAA Advisory Councils

- Each AAA is required to have an Advisory Council to review and provide input into how Older Americans Act funding will be allocated as part of its planning process
 - Advisory Council must include at least eight members
 - At least half of the Advisory Council must be comprised of older adults
 - The Advisory Council must meet at least annually

AAA Advisory Councils, cont'd

- Advisory Councils can also provide comment on policy issues impacting older adults in the community & generally represent the interests of older adults
- An important vehicle for incorporating perspectives of older adults into service planning and prioritization

Eligibility Requirements

- Age 60+ to receive most Older Americans Act-funded services
 - Priority is on serving individuals with greatest social needs and greatest economic needs
- Eligibility for home-delivered meals and congregate meals also includes other individuals meeting specific requirements
- Eligibility for Title III-E Caregiver Support Services is more complex
 - Adults caring for older adults (meaning care receiver is 60 years or older)
 - Other specific caregivers of children or adults with disabilities
 - Other criteria related to specialized types of caregiver support services

Information Related to Client Eligibility and Service Needs

- Service providers are required to assess whether an individual meets eligibility criteria for certain services by asking them a set of questions
 - These questions must be asked on an annual basis and, generally, in person
- This information is important to know
 - To confirm individuals are eligible to receive services
 - To better understand what other services an individual may need
 - To have information on the populations of individuals receiving services

Sample Registration Form

Home Delivered Meal Program Registration Please complete this form. Shaded areas are for office use only.			
Contact Date		AAA Region	Choose an item.
Eligibility Category (Check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Client <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Individual with a Disability under 60			
Section A. Basic Demographics			
Last Name:	First Name:		Middle Initial:
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Unspecified	Date of Birth:		
Address:		Address #2:	
City:	State:	Zip Code:	County:
Home Phone:	Mobile Phone:		Work Phone:
Section B. Social History			
Race (Check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Other		Ethnicity (Check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic	
Household Size (Check One): <input type="checkbox"/> I live alone. <input type="checkbox"/> I live with others.			

Sample Registration Form, section D and E

Section D. Emergency Contacts		
Emergency Contact Name:	Emergency Contact Relationship:	Emergency Contact Phone:
Section E. Nutrition Risk Assessment		
Have you changed the way you eat due to illness or medical condition? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are there times when you don't have enough money to buy the food you need? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you eat less than 2 meals a day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you eat alone most of the time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you eat few fruits or vegetables or milk products? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you take 3 or more prescribed or over-the-counter drugs each day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you have 3 or more drinks of beer, liquor or wine almost every day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Have you lost or gained 10 pounds in the last 6 months without wanting to? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you have tooth or mouth problems that make it hard to eat? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are there times when you are not physically able to shop, cook or feed yourself? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Sample Registration Form, section F and G

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Section F. Activities of Daily Living	
Can you walk around inside without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you bathe or shower without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you sit up or move around in bed without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you use the toilet without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you comb your hair, shave, wash your face, or brush your teeth without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you dress without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you get in and out of bed or chair without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you manage eating without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Section G. Independent Activities of Daily Living	
Can you answer the telephone or make a phone call without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you do heavy house cleaning, like yard work and laundry, without any help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you shop for food and other things you need without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you take your medications without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you prepare meals for yourself without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you handle your own money, like keeping track of bills without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you do light housekeeping, like dusting or sweeping, without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you use public transportation or drive beyond walking distances without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Confidentiality & Disclosure of Information

- Procedures must in place to protect confidentiality of information collected about individuals receiving services
- No entity should collect social security numbers for purposes of administering programs and services we are discussing today
- Individuals need to be informed why information is being gathered and how it will be used
- Staff must take annual training on keeping data safe
- Systems storing this information must be kept secure

Questions for Your Feedback

- How do you feel about the questions asked on the registration form?
- Do you have any suggestions about the questions included on the form or the process of how it is completed?
- What would make you more likely to respond to most of or all the questions on the form?

Consumer Contributions for OAA Services

- Most provisions of federal rules are requirements, not options
- One exception to this is related to Cost Sharing
- OAA has two ways in which older adults can help pay for part of services
 - Voluntary contributions
 - Cost sharing

Consumer Contributions to Cost of Services

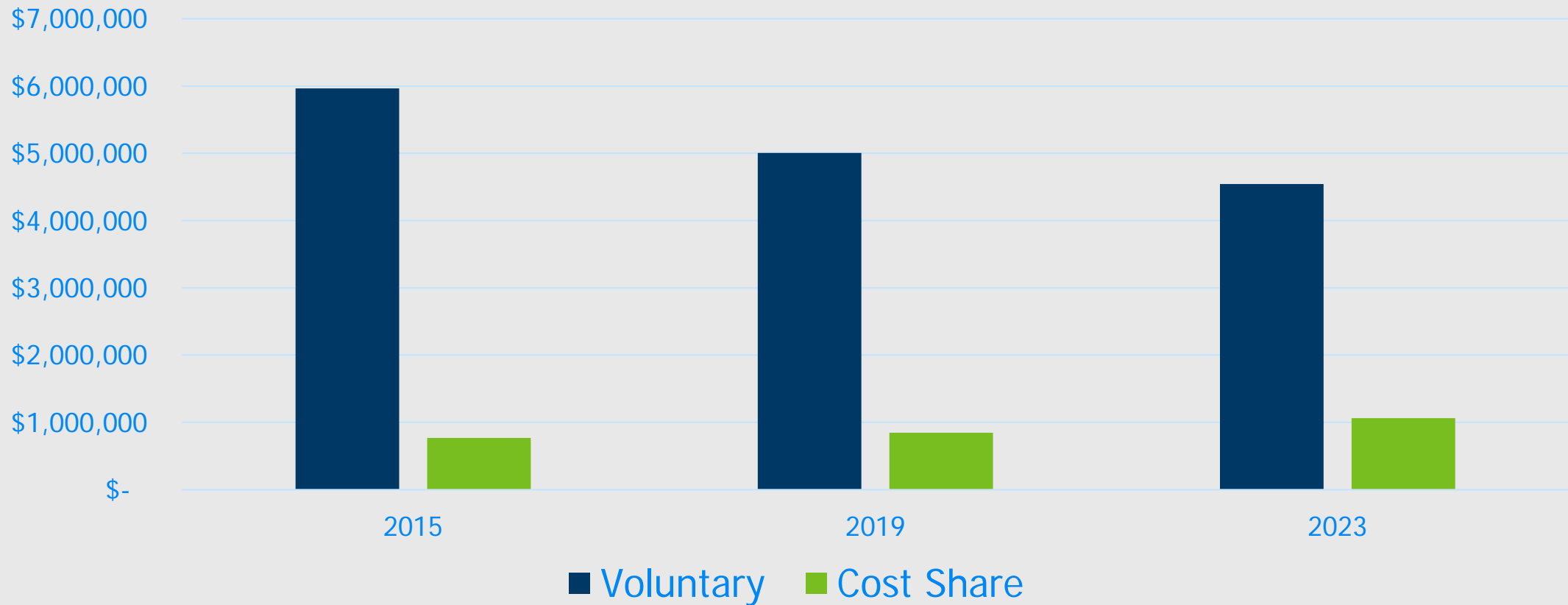
Voluntary Contributions	Cost Sharing
<p>FEDERAL REQUIREMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All participants in OAA-funded services must be given the opportunity to make a voluntary contribution to offset costs of all services<li>• Older adults known to have income at or above 185% of Federal poverty level should be encouraged to make voluntary contributions	<p>STATE OPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• States MAY require cost sharing and Minnesota is currently one of a smaller number of states to do so<li>• Certain populations and services are exempt<li>• Exempt populations include those under the Federal poverty level or those on a waiver program<li>• Can't require cost sharing to be paid

Where Does Cost Sharing Currently Apply?

Services subject to Cost Sharing	Services EXEMPT from Cost Sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor• Telephone Reassurance• Counseling• Transportation• Assisted Transportation• Homemaker• Chore• Home Modification• Health Promotion• All Caregiver Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutrition• Information & Assistance & Benefits Counseling• Ombudsman• Elder Abuse Prevention• Legal Assistance or Other Consumer Protection• Any service provided by a tribal organization

Consumer Contributions Over Time

Consumer Contributions Over Time



Potential Options on Cost Sharing

1. Maintain	Maintain current services subject to cost sharing & otherwise align with final rule
2. Scale Back	Exempt additional services from cost sharing (exempt services would also include visitor, telephone reassurance, counseling through Title III-B)
3. Caregiver Only	Apply cost sharing only to caregiver support services
4. Eliminate	Eliminate cost sharing altogether & focus only on voluntary contributions

Comparing the Options

Reasons to Maintain Cost Sharing	Reasons to Scale Back or Eliminate Cost Sharing Requirement (and still have voluntary contributions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Given inadequate funding for OAA services, it is important to retain all opportunities to have consumers contribute to cost of services so more services are available to more people• Those who can contribute to the cost of their services should be required to do so• The aging network should be offering high quality services that consumers are willing to pay for because consumers see their value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It isn't clear whether cost sharing raises more revenue than what a strong system of voluntary contributions would do on their own. May be smarter to focus on effective implementation of voluntary contributions.• Given the lift needed to comply with the federal rules overall, reducing scope of cost sharing or eliminating it altogether would alleviate an administrative burden for AAAs and service providers

Questions for Your Feedback: Consumer Contributions

- What are your thoughts about how older adults should help contribute to the costs of services they receive?
- Does it make sense to have both voluntary and required cost sharing?
- Does this impact whether you wish to access services?
- Is the communication you receive about these opportunities to contribute clear to you? How could these communications be improved?

Grievance Process

- If you or a family member have a significant concern about the service you are receiving or trying to receive, service providers are required to help consumers or family members file a grievance if you would like to do so
- The goal of the process is to resolve grievances closest to point of service delivery
- Includes how to report concerns on vulnerable adult abuse or concerns about fraud or waste
 - These serious issues need to be reported through other channels and the policy explains how to do that

Grievance Process, cont'd

- If you or a family member have a significant concern about the service you are receiving or trying to receive, you can let your service provider know that you would like to file a grievance (also called a “complaint”)
- This will involve putting your concerns in writing so they can be documented, which will require the service provider to respond to you in writing and help pave the way for your concern to be resolved
- Service providers will need to respond within 14 calendar days of receiving your complaint

Where to Find Policies about Different Types of Services

MBA Operations

AAA Operations

Title III Admin and Financial

Provision of Title III Services

Provision of Title III Services

1. [A Listing and Definitions of Allowable Services](#)
2. [Requirements for client eligibility](#)
3. [Limitations on frequency, amount of type of service](#)
4. [Supportive services](#)
5. [Legal services](#)
6. [Nutrition services](#)
7. [Closing or Relocating a Dining Site](#)
8. [Food Delivery Support](#)
9. [Health Promotion services](#)
10. [Caregiver support services](#)

Examples of Service-Related Policies

Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group dining sites and home delivered meal programs must operate at least five days/week• Meals must meet certain dietary requirements• Food must be handled in accordance with health and safety rules
Relocating a Group Dining Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service providers must obtain approval in advance from their AAA before doing so• Service providers must inform clients who participate in a group dining site at least 30 days of notice before the relocation or closure
Caregiver Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains that any adult caring for another older adult is eligible to receive support services (don't have to be related or live together)• Includes training requirements and credentials needed for individuals to become caregiver consultants

For Your Reference

How to Find the Policies We Reviewed Today	Policy Numbers and Titles
AAA Operations	#2: Advisory Councils
Title III Administrative and Financial Requirements	#14: Confidentiality
	#15: Voluntary Contributions
	#16: Required Cost Sharing
	#19: Grievance Process
Provision of Title III Services	#2: Requirements for Client Eligibility & Periodic Assessment
	#4: Supportive Services
	#6: Nutrition Services
	#7: Closing or Relocating a Senior Dining Site
	#9: Health Promotion Services
	#10: Caregiver Support Services

Final Questions and Comments for Today

How to Provide Feedback After Today

- Public Comment period open until February 7, 2025
- Preferred method for submitting comments is [here](https://tkearns86.wufoo.com/forms/oaa-title-iii-final-rule-public-comments) online. Full link: <https://tkearns86.wufoo.com/forms/oaa-title-iii-final-rule-public-comments>
- May also submit comments by mail
 - Minnesota Board on Aging
Attn: Planner
P.O. Box 64976
St. Paul, MN 55164-0976

Thank you!