



Alaska Commission on Aging Fact Sheet

- The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is an 11 member advisory council whose mission is to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation.
- The Alaska Commission on Aging satisfies a requirement of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA), allowing Alaska to receive almost \$11 million in federal funding in FY16. The requirements are that the council must:
 - Be comprised of older individuals eligible to participate in OAA-funded programs;
 - Advise the “state agency on aging” regarding matters of aging issues. In Alaska, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is the state agency on aging as designated by the Governor.
- The Alaska Commission on Aging develops the comprehensive *Alaska State Plan on Senior Services*, makes recommendations on legislation and appropriations beneficial for older Alaskans, and provides education/outreach regarding matters related to aging.
- The Alaska Commission on Aging also serves as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and advises the AMHTA on the needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. The Commission, in partnership with the AMHTA and other agencies, published *Alaska’s Roadmap to Address Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (2015)*. The Commission also makes recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs for Senior Trust Beneficiaries (older people with dementia and other cognitive impairments) and the use of funds that benefit this vulnerable population.
- The Alaska Commission on Aging serves as an advocate and educator regarding the needs of Alaska’s older people to help ensure the dignity, health, safety, and independence of Alaska’s seniors. In collaboration with partners, the Commission coordinated the *Power of Aging Symposium*, to provide information about senior issues, in addition to the *Alaska Senior Housing Summit*, which was the first and only summit devoted to a discussion of senior housing in Alaska. The Commission hosts regular community forums to encourage senior citizen input on issues affecting them and sponsors the bi-weekly statewide senior legislative advocacy teleconferences during session to examine and discuss legislation of interest to seniors.
- Legislative Audit conducted a sunset audit of the Commission in 2015, concluding that the Commission is serving the public’s interest by helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and useful lives and that the Commission meets the federal requirement for each state to establish an advisory council to advise the state on matters related to aging.
- The Commission’s FY2016 budget is \$542,700 (\$45.9 GF; \$348.1 Interagency Receipts that include federal pass-through funds; \$29.6 GF/MH; and \$119.1 MHTAAR). The commission consists of eleven members and has a staff of four full-time employees.

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ALASKA DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

06-20090-15

SUMMARY | A Sunset Review of the Department of Health and Social Services,
OF: Alaska Commission on Aging

Why DLA Performed This Audit

The purpose of this audit was to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for the commission's continued existence and whether its termination date should be extended. Currently the commission will terminate on June 30, 2016, and will have one year from that date to conclude its administrative operations.

Report Conclusions

Overall, the audit concluded that the Alaska Commission on Aging (commission) is serving the public's interest by helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and useful lives through advocacy, outreach, and education. Furthermore, the commission meets the federal requirement that each state establish an advisory council to advise the state on aging matters. We recommend that the commission's termination date be extended eight years to June 30, 2024.

Analysis of Public Need

The commission has operated in the public's interest by formulating and approving a comprehensive statewide plan — the State Plan for Senior Services. The plan identifies and addresses the concerns and needs of older Alaskans, and fulfills a federal requirement necessary to receive Administration on Aging grant funding.

The commission has also operated in the public's interest by serving as an advocate for, and educator on, the needs of older Alaskans. The commission submitted over 50 recommendations to the legislature and governor regarding legislation and appropriations for programs or services that benefit older Alaskans. Furthermore, the commission collaborated with several state and local organizations on commission projects including development of the State Plan for Senior Services and sponsoring educational and outreach events.

The audit identified two operational changes that would allow the commission to better serve the public's interests.

Findings and Recommendations

1. The commission's executive director should implement and follow procedures to public notice all commission meetings.
2. The commission's chairperson should review and approve the legislation watch list prior to distribution.