

# Report Highlights

## 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.

## What DLA Recommends

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.

# A Sunset Review of the Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Commission on Aging

April 10, 2015

Audit Control Number 06-20090-15

## 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.

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April 30, 2015

Members of the Legislative Budget  
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Alaska Commission on Aging, and the attached report is submitted for your review.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING  
SUNSET REVIEW

April 10, 2015

Audit Control Number  
06-20090-15

The audit was conducted as required by AS 44.66.050 and under the authority of AS 24.20.271(1). Per AS 44.66.010(a)(4), the Alaska Commission on Aging is scheduled to terminate June 30, 2016. We recommend the legislature extend the termination date to June 30, 2024.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Fieldwork procedures utilized in the course of developing the findings and recommendations presented in this report are discussed in the Objectives, Scope, and Methodology section.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kris Curtis".

Kris Curtis, CPA, CISA  
Legislative Auditor

## ABBREVIATIONS

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ACN	Audit Control Number
AHFC	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
AMHTA	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
AOA	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging
AS	Alaska Statutes
CISA	Certified Information Systems Auditor
commission	Alaska Commission on Aging
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Services
DLA	Division of Legislative Audit
DSDS	Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
FY	Fiscal Year
OAA	Older Americans Act

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# ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

## Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging (commission) was established in 1981 for the purpose of helping ensure that people over the age of 60 maintain good health, honor, and dignity.<sup>1</sup> The commission is organizationally located within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).

The governing statutes of the commission, AS 47.45.200-.290, outline the commission's authority, purpose, and scope of work. The primary functions of the commission include the following:

1. Approve a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and, with reference to the approved plan, prepare and submit to the governor and legislature an annual analysis and evaluation of the services provided to older Alaskans.
2. Make recommendations directly to the governor and the legislature with respect to legislation, regulations, and appropriations for programs or services that benefit older Alaskans.
3. Encourage the development of municipal commissions serving older Alaskans and community-oriented programs and services for the benefit of older Alaskans.

### Exhibit 1

#### Alaska Commission on Aging Members January 31, 2015

Mary Shields, Chair  
*Public Member*

Rolf W. Numme, Vice Chair  
*Public Member*

David A. Blacketer  
*Public Member*

Marie Darlin  
*Public Member*

Eleanor Dementi  
*Public Member*

Edna DeVries  
*Public Member*

Anna M. Frank  
*Public Member*

Rachel E. Greenberg  
*Senior Service Provider*

Duane Mayes  
*Division of Senior and  
Disabilities Services Director  
Commissioner Designee*

Paula R. Pawlowski  
*Serve Alaska  
Executive Director  
Commissioner Designee*

Robert W. Sivertsen  
*Pioneers' Homes Advisory  
Board Member*

<sup>1</sup>Chapter 79, Sec. 1(b), SLA 1981.

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4. Employ an executive director who serves at the pleasure of the commission.
  5. Help older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives.
  6. Request and receive reports and audits from state agencies and local institutions concerned with older Alaskans' conditions and needs.
  7. Upon request, give assistance to the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation senior housing office in administering the senior housing loan program under AS 18.56.710-.799 and in the performance of the office's other duties under AS 18.56.700.
  8. Provide recommendations concerning the integrated comprehensive mental health program for persons with dementia-related illnesses to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for its review and consideration. Also, provide recommendations regarding the use of monies in the mental health trust settlement income account in a manner consistent with regulations adopted under AS 47.30.031.

The commission is comprised of 11 members: one senior service provider and seven public members appointed by the governor who serve overlapping four-year terms, two department commissioners or their designees, and the Alaska Pioneers' Homes Advisory Board chair. At least six of the commissioners must be 60 years of age or older, with at least two being 65 years of age or older. Commission members should be representative of low income persons, minorities, and rural and urban areas. Additionally, appointments should secure statewide geographical representation on the commission. The commission is comprised of four staff: an executive director, two planners, and an administrative assistant. The FY 15 budget is \$557,800.

The commission is required to conduct four meetings annually. These meetings include the presentation of reports from governmental and private organizations who serve older Alaskans. The commission has also formed several committees to carry out its duties. The commission's standing committees include: executive,

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## Federally Required State Unit on Aging

planning, legislative advocacy, bylaws, older workers' recognition, and nominating. Committee activities are reported during quarterly commission meetings.

The federal government, through its Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging, provides funding to support services for individuals over the age of 60 as required by the *Older Americans Act* (OAA).<sup>2</sup> To be eligible to receive OAA funding, each state must designate a "state unit on aging" and develop a state plan. The State of Alaska has designated DHSS as its state unit on aging.

The operations of Alaska's state unit on aging are carried out jointly by DHSS' Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) and the commission. DSDS administers state and federally funded grant programs. The commission is responsible for developing the state plan and performing advocacy, outreach, and educational activities.

In accordance with OAA Section 305, a state may be divided into a number of planning and service areas or, as in the case of Alaska, be a single planning and service area. OAA Section 306(a)(6)(D) requires that planning and service area agencies:

*Establish an advisory council consisting of older individuals (including minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas) who are participants or who are eligible to participate in programs assisted under this Act, family caregivers of such individuals, representatives of older individuals, service providers, representatives of the business community, local elected officials, providers of veterans' health care (if appropriate), and the general public, to advise continuously the area agency on aging on all matters relating to the development of the area plan, the administration of the plan and operations conducted under the plan.*

In Alaska, the commission serves as the "advisory council."

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<sup>2</sup>Funding is awarded in accordance with the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended in 2006.

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# REPORT CONCLUSIONS

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In developing our conclusion regarding whether the Alaska Commission on Aging's (commission) termination date should be extended, commission operations were evaluated using the 11 factors set out in AS 44.66.050. Under the State's "sunset" law, these factors are to be used in assessing whether an agency has demonstrated a public policy need for continuing operations.

Overall, the audit concluded that the 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 including developing and administering a state plan, and operations conducted under the plan.

In accordance with AS 44.66.010(a)(4), the commission is scheduled to terminate June 30, 2016. We recommend that the commission's termination date be extended eight years to June 30, 2024.

The audit makes two recommendations to improve commission operations: one to improve public noticing commission meetings, and one to reduce resources spent on monitoring legislation not directly related to the commission's objectives. (See Recommendations 1 and 2.)

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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Alaska Commission on Aging's (commission) 2007 sunset audit included one recommendation to consider amending state law to reflect the commission's current mission. In 2003, the commission's grant responsibilities were transferred to the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services when the commission was moved from the Department of Administration to the Department of Health and Social Services. Statutes were not updated at that time to reflect the reorganization. The prior recommendation was addressed in 2008 when the commission's governing statutes were amended, removing responsibilities for grant administration.

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### **Recommendation 1: The commission's executive director should implement and follow procedures to public notice all commission meetings.**

The commission did not provide adequate notice for all public meetings held during the audit period. Specifically:

- The commission did not provide reasonable advance notice for one of nine tested quarterly meetings.<sup>3</sup>
- The commission did not provide reasonable advance notice for two of nine legislative teleconferences held during 2011.<sup>4</sup>
- The commission did not public notice any of the 40 committee meetings held between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015.

Alaska Statute 44.62.310(e) requires that reasonable public notice be given for all public meetings of a governmental body. Due to oversight, the commission did not consistently follow written procedures for publishing notices of all quarterly meetings and teleconferences. Furthermore, the commission was unaware that public notice requirements applied to the committee meetings. Inadequate public noticing may decrease the commission's effectiveness by reducing public input.

We recommend the commission's executive director implement and follow procedures to public notice all commission meetings. Procedures should include public noticing commission committee meetings.

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<sup>3</sup>Reasonable advance notice is defined as 10 calendar days. Between July 1, 2010, and September 18, 2014, 17 quarterly meetings were held, of which nine were tested.

<sup>4</sup>One public notice is issued by the commission each calendar year for all teleconferences held during the year. Public notice for teleconferences held during calendar years 2011 through 2014 were tested.

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**Recommendation 2:  
The commission's  
chairperson should  
review and approve the  
legislation watch list prior  
to distribution.**

Between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015, the commission published five annual watch lists identifying legislative bills that were of interest to the commission. However, the watch lists included at least eight bills unrelated to the commission's statutory objectives. Unrelated bills included topics such as exempting firearms from federal regulation, prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving in school zones or on school property, and the length of regular legislative sessions.

In accordance with AS 47.45.240(a)(2), the commission is required to make recommendations to the governor and legislature with respect to legislation and appropriations for programs and services that benefit older Alaskans. The commission periodically holds legislative teleconferences to gather public input and discuss legislation affecting seniors. Watch lists are distributed to public participants attending the commission's teleconferences to facilitate discussion when deciding what legislation the commission should support.

A commission staff member is responsible for preparing and distributing the watch list to teleconference participants. The audit found there was no review of the watch list to ensure its contents accorded with the commission's statutory objectives. Monitoring legislation outside of the commission's objectives results in an inefficient use of resources.

We recommend the commission chairperson review and approve the legislation watch list prior to distribution.

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# ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC NEED

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The following analysis of the Alaska Commission on Aging’s (commission) activities relate to the public need factors defined in AS 44.66.050(c). This analysis is not intended to be comprehensive, but addresses those areas we were able to cover within the scope of our review.

As part of the audit, a survey was conducted. The survey was sent to 218 service providers and stakeholders, and 64 (29 percent) responded. The survey questions and responses are presented as Appendix A.

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## Sunset Criteria No. 1

### **Determine the extent to which the board or commission has operated in the public interest.**

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 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging (AOA) grant funding.

The commission served as an advocate for and educator on the needs of older Alaskans. Between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015, the commission provided over 50 recommendations to the legislature and governor regarding legislation and appropriations for programs or services that benefit older Alaskans. The commission worked with both the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) to assess and provide education regarding seniors’ needs. The commission’s work with AMHTA and AHFC included developing and issuing *Alaska’s Roadmap to Address Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias*, hosting a senior housing summit to address seniors’ statewide housing needs, and hosting the Power of Aging in Alaska Symposium providing education on seniors’ role in society.

Survey results indicate that 72 percent of respondents believe the commission operates in the public’s interest either *always* or *most of the time*, while 12 percent responded *sometimes*.

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**Sunset Criteria No. 2**

**Determine the extent to which the operation of the board or commission has been impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, procedures, and practices that it has adopted, and any other matter, including budgetary, resource, and personnel matters.**

Commission operations have been impeded by commission staff not actively maintaining the commission's website. Minutes for meetings held from September 2013 through January 2015 were not available via the commission's website at the time of the audit. Additionally, the website contained numerous broken or outdated hyperlinks. When informed of these deficiencies, the commission staff significantly addressed the problems.

As shown in Exhibit 2, total FY 14 commission expenditures were \$526,124. The general fund provided approximately 64 percent of funding.

**Exhibit 2**

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**Alaska Commission on Aging  
Schedule of Operating Expenditures and Funding Sources  
July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014  
(Unaudited)**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 10</b>	<b>FY 11</b>	<b>FY 12</b>	<b>FY 13</b>	<b>FY 14</b>
Personal Services	\$ 379,503	\$ 403,294	\$ 363,921	\$ 440,208	\$ 462,067
Travel	74,042	41,995	44,517	64,920	32,595
Services	34,145	33,392	23,028	30,386	25,805
Commodities	4,953	5,832	14,354	7,396	5,657
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 492,643</b>	<b>\$ 484,513</b>	<b>\$ 445,820</b>	<b>\$ 542,910</b>	<b>\$ 526,124</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>					
General Fund	\$ 354,607	\$ 394,900	\$ 326,896	\$ 392,331	\$ 338,090
Federal	53,652	-	22,725	37,184	74,529
Alaska Mental Health Trust	84,384	89,613	96,200	113,395	113,505
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$ 492,643</b>	<b>\$ 484,513</b>	<b>\$ 445,821</b>	<b>\$ 542,910</b>	<b>\$ 526,124</b>

Source: Alaska Commission on Aging.

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### Sunset Criteria No. 3

#### **Determine the extent to which the board or commission has recommended statutory changes that are generally of benefit to the public interest.**

As Alaska's planning and service area agency, the commission is federally required to advocate for the needs of older Alaskans. The commission's advocacy activities include commenting on and supporting budget increments, as well as legislation that will benefit older Alaskans.

The commission annually sets legislative advocacy priorities to address the needs of older Alaskans and writes position papers in support of advocacy priorities. Between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015, the commission wrote 20 position papers advocating for the needs of older Alaskans. Additionally, the commission wrote letters of support for 47 legislative bills or appropriations for programs or services that benefit older Alaskans. Position papers were submitted to legislators and the governor, and letters of support were submitted to bill sponsors.

Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents stated that legislative bills and priorities supported by the commission are generally of benefit to older Alaskans either *always* or *most of the time*, while 25 percent of respondents stated *some of the time*.

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### Sunset Criteria No. 4

#### **Determine the extent to which the board or commission has encouraged interested persons to report to it concerning the effect of its regulations and decisions on the effectiveness of service, economy of service, and availability of service that it has provided.**

Since the commission does not establish regulations or provide services, this criterion is not applicable.

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## Sunset Criteria No. 5

### **Determine the extent to which the board or commission has encouraged public participation in the making of its regulations and decisions.**

The commission encourages participation in its decision-making by allotting time for public comment during its quarterly meetings, one of which is held in a rural location each year. During the audit period, the commission met at least four times per year as statutorily required. Additionally, committees formed by the commission met 40 times between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015. A public comment period was available and public testimony was given at all commission meetings.

The commission also encouraged public participation in the formation of the FY 12 through FY 15 *State Plan for Senior Services* by surveying seniors and senior providers, and holding community forums throughout the State. To help develop the state plan, the commission formed a steering committee that included participation from local organizations, municipalities, senior providers, and senior citizens.

Fifty-three percent of survey respondents stated that the commission encouraged public participation in the making of its decisions either *always* or *most of the time*, while 20 percent of survey respondents stated *some of the time*.

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## Sunset Criteria No. 6

### **Determine the efficiency with which public inquiries or complaints regarding the activities of the board or commission filed with it, with the department to which a board or commission is administratively assigned, or with the office of victims' rights or the office of the ombudsman have been processed and resolved.**

No complaints against the commission were filed with the Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) Commissioner's Office, the Office of Victims' Rights, the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions, or the Office of the Ombudsman from July 1, 2010, through January 30, 2015.

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**Sunset Criteria No. 7**

**Determine the extent to which a board or commission that regulates entry into an occupation or profession has presented qualified applicants to serve the public.**

Since the commission does not regulate occupations or professions, this criterion is not applicable.

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**Sunset Criteria No. 8**

**Determine the extent to which state personnel practices, including affirmative action requirements, have been complied with by the board or commission in its own activities and in the area of activity or interest.**

This audit found no indication that hiring practices or commission appointments were contrary to state personnel practices. No complaints against the commission were filed with the Department of Administration's Division of Personnel, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, from July 1, 2010, through January 30, 2015.

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**Sunset Criteria No. 9**

**Determine the extent to which statutory, regulatory, budgetary, or other changes are necessary to enable the board or commission to better serve the interests of the public and to comply with the factors enumerated in this subsection.**

The audit identified two operational changes that would allow the commission to better serve the public's interests. The first concerns public noticing meetings. Public notice was not provided for commission committee meetings. Additionally, public notice was not consistently provided with reasonable time in advance of quarterly commission meetings and legislative teleconferences. (See Recommendation 1.) Issuing adequate public notice for all meetings will allow for increased public participation in the commission's decisions and activities.

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The second area for improvement concerns monitoring pending legislation. Legislation watch lists prepared by commission staff were not reviewed and approved by the commission prior to distribution to participants of legislative teleconferences. (See Recommendation 2.) Review and approval of watch lists will help ensure that the commission is tracking legislation pertinent to its objectives and purpose.

Alaska Statute 47.45.240(a)(3) requires the commission to encourage the development of municipal commissions serving older Alaskans. Municipal commissions currently operate in the major population hubs — Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. During the audit period, commission efforts to encourage development of municipal commissions included meeting with the Kodiak mayor to discuss a municipal commission in Kodiak and giving a presentation to interested parties in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

According to the commission, there was limited interest from municipalities in forming new commissions due to resource constraints. Consequently, encouraging the development of municipal commissions was not a priority.

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## Sunset Criteria No. 10

**Determine the extent to which the board or commission has effectively attained its objectives and purposes and the efficiency with which the board or commission has operated.**

The commission actively worked towards attaining the following primary objectives:

- Prepare and approve a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies and addresses the concerns and needs of older Alaskans.
- Prepare an annual analysis and evaluation of the services provided to older Alaskans.
- Advocate for older Alaskans' needs.
- Make recommendations to AMHTA regarding programs and use of funds.

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The commission prepared and approved the FY 12 through FY 15 *State Plan for Senior Services*. The plan was submitted to the DHSS commissioner, the governor, and the AOA; all three entities approved the plan.

As required by AS 47.45.240(a)(1), the commission prepared annual evaluations and analyses of services provided to older Alaskans in reference to the state plan. The evaluations and analyses were compiled into annual reports. These reports also included a summary of the commission's activities during the year. The annual reports were submitted to the legislature and governor.

In advocating for older Alaskans, the commission developed 20 position papers making recommendations on legislation and appropriations that the commission believed to be beneficial for older Alaskans. Additionally, the commission wrote letters of support for 47 legislative bills considered beneficial for older Alaskans.

As required by AS 47.45.240(a)(8), the commission regularly presented at AMHTA board meetings regarding the needs of older Alaskans. Additionally, the commission provided recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs and use of funds.

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## Sunset Criteria No. 11

### **Determine the extent to which the board or commission duplicates the activities of another governmental agency or the private sector.**

The commission's advocacy efforts are duplicative of other organizations that share common goals such as AARP and the Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network. Common goals shared between the commission and other organizations include availability of senior housing and in-home services. Although the commission's advocacy efforts are duplicated by other organizations, as the State's planning and service area agency, the commission is required by the *Older Americans Act* to advocate on behalf of older Alaskans. *Older Americans Act* advocacy requirements include making recommendations regarding budgets and legislation affecting older Alaskans.

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The commission collaborates with several state and local organizations on commission projects. The commission's collaborative efforts included developing the FY 12 through FY 15 *State Plan for Senior Services*, sponsoring educational and outreach events such as the Power of Aging in Alaska Symposium, and assisting with community oriented programs such as the senior fall prevention campaign.

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# OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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In accordance with Title 24 and 44 of the Alaska Statutes, we have reviewed the Alaska Commission on Aging's (commission) activities to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for its continued existence and if it has been operating in an efficient and effective manner.

As required by AS 44.66.050(a), this report shall be considered by the committee of reference during the legislative oversight process in determining whether the commission should be reestablished. Currently, under AS 44.66.010(a)(4), the commission will terminate on June 30, 2016, and have one year from that date to conclude its administrative operations.

## Objectives

The three central audit objectives were:

1. Determine whether the commission's termination date should be extended.
2. Determine whether the board is operating in the public's interest.
3. Provide a current status of recommendations made in the prior sunset audit.

## Scope and Methodology

The assessment of commission operations and performance was based on the criteria established in AS 44.66.050(c). Under the State's sunset law, these criteria are to be used in assessing whether an agency has demonstrated a public need for continuing operations.

The audit reviewed the commission's operations and activities from FY 11 through January 31, 2015. A schedule of commission operating expenditures and funding sources was prepared for FY 10 through FY 14.

During the course of the audit, the following were reviewed and evaluated:

- Applicable statutes to identify commission functions and responsibilities, including member composition and required qualifications.
- Commission member applications and resumés filed with the Office of the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions to verify that

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members and commission composition met statutory requirements.

- Commission meeting minutes to understand commission proceedings and activities as well as to determine the nature and extent of public input.
- The FY 12 through FY 15 *State Plan for Senior Services* to verify compliance with statutory requirements and identify public participation in developing the plan.
- Publications issued by the commission concerning older Alaskans' needs including *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*, the executive summary of the Power of Aging in Alaska Symposium, and the commission's annual reports for FY 11 through FY 14.
- Reports presented during commission meetings by state agencies and local institutions.
- Public notice documentation to determine whether public notices for commission meetings were published as required by Alaska Statutes.
- Commission budget information from the Governor's Office of Management and Budget and expenditure activity from the Alaska State Accounting System to gain an understanding of the commission's operations.

We inquired of the following organizations to determine if any complaints were filed against the commission or its members, and whether complaints were efficiently resolved:

- Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) Office of the Commissioner
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Alaska State Commission for Human Rights
- Office of Victims' Rights
- Department of Administration's Division of Personnel and Labor Relations

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- Office of the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions
  - United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

A random sample of nine commission meetings was selected from 17 meetings held between July 1, 2010, and September 18, 2014, and assessed for compliance with public noticing requirements. A sample of over 50 percent was considered necessary as results of testing were significant to developing report conclusions. The testing results were projected to the population.

All commission staff and two commission members including the current commission chair and the DHSS commissioner's designee were interviewed to gain an understanding of the commission's activities. Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) representatives were interviewed to gain an understanding of the commission's collaboration with AMHTA and AHFC in addressing the needs of older Alaskans. Additionally, AMHTA meeting minutes were reviewed to identify the commission's recommendations to AMHTA regarding programs and trust fund use.

A random sample of five of 47 letters of support for legislative bills, and three of 20 position papers providing recommendations on legislation and appropriations issued between July 1, 2010, and January 31, 2015, were selected and assessed for compliance with the purposes and duties of the commission. In determining sample sizes, the inherent risks were considered limited, and the risks of noncompliance were considered low. The testing results were projected to the population. Watch lists of legislative bills being monitored and discussed by the commission were also reviewed.

A survey of senior service providers and stakeholders was conducted to obtain opinions on various aspects of the commission's activities, including whether the commission operated in the public's interest, and if a public need exists for the commission's continuation. The population of senior service providers and stakeholders included Division of Senior and Disabilities Services care coordinators, aging and disability resource centers, and senior centers. The survey was sent to 218 service providers and stakeholders, and 64 (29 percent) responded.

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# APPENDICES

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As a part of this audit, a survey was provided to 218 senior service providers and stakeholders. Of those surveyed, 64 (29 percent) responded. The survey results are summarized in Appendix A.

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# APPENDIX A:

## Alaska Commission on Aging Survey Results

**Question 1: In your opinion, does the commission operate in the public interest?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Always	27	42%	72%
Most of the time	19	30%	
Some of the time	8	12%	12%
Never	0	0%	
Unsure	10	16%	16%
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 2: Are you familiar with the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	47	73%	73%
No	17	27%	27%
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 2a: Do you believe the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services adequately addresses the concerns and needs of older Alaskans?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	20	43%	43%
No	15	32%	32%
Unsure	10	21%	25%
No Opinion	2	4%	
Total Respondents	47	100%	100%

**Question 3: Are the legislative bills and priorities supported by the commission generally of benefit to older Alaskans?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Always	16	25%	58%
Most of the time	21	33%	
Some of the time	16	25%	25%
Never	0	0%	
Unsure	9	14%	17%
No Opinion	2	3%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 4: Does the commission encourage public participation in the making of its decisions, including decisions to support specific legislation?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Always	15	23%	53%
Most of the time	19	30%	
Some of the time	13	20%	22%
Never	1	2%	
Unsure	11	17%	25%
No Opinion	5	8%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 5: Does the commission encourage the development of community-oriented programs and services for older Alaskans?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Always	17	26%	56%
Most of the time	19	30%	
Some of the time	11	17%	19%
Never	1	2%	
Unsure	11	17%	25%
No Opinion	5	8%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 6: Does commission membership adequately represent the various interests of older Alaskans?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	28	44%	44%
No	12	19%	19%
Unsure	19	29%	37%
No Opinion	5	8%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 7: Do you believe there are other agencies, government or private, that serve the same purpose or duplicate the activity of the commission?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	11	17%	17%
No	25	39%	39%
Unsure	23	36%	44%
No Opinion	5	8%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 8: Has the commission been effective in helping older Alaskans lead dignified, useful, and meaningful lives?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	38	59%	59%
No	3	5%	5%
Unsure	18	28%	36%
No Opinion	5	8%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

**Question 9: Do you believe a public need exists for the continuation of the commission?**

Responses	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	
Yes	42	66%	66%
No	4	6%	6%
Unsure	12	19%	28%
No Opinion	6	9%	
Total Respondents	64	100%	100%

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# Agency Response from the Department of Health and Social Services



THE STATE  
of ALASKA  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

## Department of Health and Social Services

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Anchorage  
3601 C Street, Suite 902  
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Main: 907.269.7800  
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350 Main Street, Suite 404  
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RECEIVED  
MAY 27 2015  
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

May 26, 2015

Kris Curtis, CPA, CISA  
Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Budget and Audit Committee  
Division of Legislative Audit  
P.O. Box 113300  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-3300

Dear Ms. Curtis:

RE: Confidential Preliminary Audit Report, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Alaska Commission on Aging Sunset Review (ACoA) on April 10, 2015

We appreciate the recommendation that the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) be extended to June 30, 2024. Below are the responses for each of the recommendations included in the preliminary audit report dated May 7, 2015.

#### Recommendation No. 1

The commission's executive director should implement and follow procedures to provide public notice for all commission meetings.

DHSS concurs with the recommendation. It is the practice of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) to calendar its quarterly board meetings one year in advance and provide those dates on the published agenda for each meeting. Additionally, it posts the statewide legislative advocacy teleconference dates through the state's online public notices during the legislative session. DHSS has posted the fiscal year 2014 and 2015 ACoA committee meeting agendas and approved minutes to the commission's website at the following link <http://dhss.alaska.gov/acoa/Pages/default.aspx>. ACoA has also updated its practices to provide notice of the committee meeting dates on the State's online public notice website.

#### Recommendation No. 2

The commission's chairperson should review and approve the legislative watch list prior to distribution.

DHSS concurs with the recommendation. ACoA has amended its policy and procedure manual requesting the commission chair and/or its legislative advocacy committee chair to approve the

6  
Ms. Kris Curtis, CPA, CISA  
May 26, 2015  
Page 2 of 2

watch list prior to public distribution. This policy and procedure and was approved by the ACoA By-Laws committee prior to the commission's May board meeting.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to address these outstanding issues and to provide additional insight into your evaluation of them.

Sincerely,



Valerie J. Davidson  
Commissioner

Cc: Sana Efird, Assistant Commissioner  
Jon Sherwood, Deputy Commissioner  
Mary E. Shields, Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging  
Denise Daniello, ACoA Executive Director  
Linnea Osborne, Accountant V

# Agency Response from the Alaska Commission on Aging



THE STATE  
of ALASKA  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of  
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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RECEIVED  
MAY 19 2015  
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

May 19, 2015

Kris Curtis, CPA, CISA  
Legislative Auditor  
P.O. Box 113300  
Juneau, AK 99811-3300

Subject: Response to Confidential Preliminary Report, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS),  
Alaska Commission on Aging Sunset Review

Dear Ms. Curtis:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) has received the confidential preliminary report regarding the findings from the audit conducted by the Division of Legislative Audit in preparation for the commission's termination date of June 30, 2016. We appreciate this opportunity to provide a response to the recommendations identified in the audit findings and our proposed corrective action strategies.

**Recommendation #1: The commission's executive director should implement and follow procedures to provide public notice for all commission meetings. (Please see page 7.)**

Response: ACoA concurs with the audit's findings. Based on this recommendation, ACoA's executive director has directed staff to post on-line public meeting notices for all ACoA board and committee meetings following state regulation regarding public notification of meetings, AS 44.62.310(e). As a practice, the commission calendars the quarterly board meetings one year in advance and lists those dates on the published agenda for each meeting. Further, we post all of the statewide legislative advocacy teleconference dates on the online public notices in advance of those meetings for the duration of legislative session. We believe that audit recommendation #1 has been addressed through these corrective actions.

**Recommendation #2: The commission's chairperson should review and approve the legislative watch list prior to distribution. (Please see page 8.)**

Response: ACoA concurs with the audit's findings. Based on this recommendation, ACoA has amended the commission's policy and procedure manual with a new requirement for the commission chair and/or ACoA's legislative advocacy committee chair to review and approve the watch list prior to public distribution. The commission recommends adding the chair of ACoA's legislative advocacy committee to provide an alternate commission member in the event that the chair is not available in order to provide timely review and approval of the watch list prior to the senior legislative advocacy teleconference meetings. ACoA's approved policy and procedure amended manual is attached to this response. Further, we have implemented this practice for the remaining FY15 senior legislative advocacy teleconference meetings. We believe that audit recommendation #2 has been addressed through this corrective action.

### Supplemental Comments

Alaska is the state with the fastest growing senior population in the nation for the past five years, and people age 60+ are the fastest growing demographic in the State. This demographic trend is due to the large number of aging baby boomers who arrived in the state during the economic boom of the pipeline era (1970s-1980s) and have remained permanent residents.

The commission is charged with planning, advocacy, education, and interagency collaboration to address the needs and concerns of Alaska seniors and their caregivers. By statute, we advise the Governor and Legislature of the needs of Alaskans age 60 and older and coordinate with multiple agencies statewide to ensure that senior interests are considered in their plans for service provision. The commission is a resource and respected voice for older Alaskans. We would like to take this opportunity to offer further comments regarding this audit review that relate to the commission's core service activities that were not noted in the management letter.

*Sunset Criteria No. 1: Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or program has operated in the public interest. (Please see page 9).*

### Education/Public Awareness Activities

In addition to ACoA's educational activities already identified in the audit, the commission engages in other public awareness efforts that we would like to bring attention. First, the commission, in partnership with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the DHSS contracted with the UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research to produce the "Report on the Economic Well-being of Alaska Seniors (2007)" that focused on the social and economic resources that older Alaskans bring to the communities where they live. To our knowledge, this was the first report to publicly recognize the economic value of the retirement industry.

Second, the commission conducted two targeted public outreach and education efforts to promote health and reduce injury for Alaska seniors in coordination with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the DHSS division of public health. The *Healthy Body, Healthy Brain Campaign* focused on the relationship between positive lifestyle choices - healthy eating, physical activity, mental challenges, and social engagement - and reducing the risk for developing dementia. The commission also spearheaded the creation of the *Alaska Senior Fall Prevention Coalition*, which included participation from many DHSS agencies, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and senior service providers, to help reduce accidental falls, which are the number one cause of injury to Alaskans age 65 and older. This effort included a senior fall prevention toolkit of education materials for senior centers, media promotions, and participation in community presentations.

Third, the commission partners annually with the Department of Labor's Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Program (MASST) to promote awareness of the contributions of the older worker during "Employ Older Alaskan Workers Week" through a Governor's proclamation, presentations, and media efforts to strengthen a diversified workforce.

Finally, we would like to note that the commission's Alaska Senior Housing Summit mentioned in the audit was the *first and only* conference devoted to the discussion of senior housing issues in the state. (Please see page 9, fourth paragraph). The purpose of the summit was to bring together policy makers, housing resource program specialists, seniors, senior providers, and community stakeholders to discuss the pressing needs for affordable, appropriate and sustainable senior housing along the continuum of care that include independent senior housing, senior housing with support services, and long-term care housing such as assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The summit was well-attended and received high commendation based on participant response to the conference

evaluation surveys. A summary of the Summit's proceedings was published in a white paper that was distributed to policy makers and public members.

#### Planning Activities

We would like to take this opportunity to provide follow-up information concerning *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*. (Please see page 9, fourth paragraph.) The Roadmap was developed in response to the former administration's request to ACoA for a statewide comprehensive approach to address the multiple and complex challenges that dementia presents to individuals, their families, caregivers, and the long-term care system in Alaska. The commission partnered with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, DHSS division of senior and disabilities services, and coordinated efforts of several other agencies to develop the Roadmap, the *first ever* state plan to address the care needs of a growing population of Alaskans impacted by dementia. Advanced age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's disease.

Due to the aging of Alaska's population, particularly the increase of those age 85 years and older, Alzheimer's disease is rapidly becoming a critical public health issue and one of the few major causes of death that is rising in Alaska. In addition to outcomes from community forums and caregiver surveys, the Roadmap also includes findings from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), which is the first time that surveillance data has been gathered in Alaska about perceived cognitive impairment. The Roadmap includes an implementation plan of prioritized strategies and conveners to implement the specific strategies. The Roadmap was presented at the Alzheimer's Vision to Reality Conference (November 2014), Alaska's Public Health Summit (January 2015), Medical Care Advisory Committee (January 2015), and to the State House Health and Social Services Committee (March 2015). The plan is published and posted on ACoA's website.

*Sunset Criteria No. 9: Determine the extent to which statutory, regulatory, budgeting, or other changes are necessary to enable the agency, board or commission to better serve the interests of the public and to comply with the factors enumerated in this subsection. (Please see pages 13-14.)*

The commission regularly partners with municipal senior commissions with respect to our core services of advocacy, planning, and public awareness to strengthen supports for seniors. (Please see page 14, second paragraph. To reinforce advocacy efforts, the commission collaborates with municipal senior commissions to gather input about local senior needs through surveys and community forums that have statewide implications. We attempt to address these needs in the commission's budget and policy recommendations that form the base for our annual advocacy priorities. As a result, the municipal commissions often work with their local governing bodies to pass resolutions that support a shared platform of senior advocacy priorities which they submit to their legislators.

The commission also participates in the planning efforts of municipal senior commissions. We provide technical assistance, data, and information as requested to develop their senior needs assessments. In October 2014, the commission provided technical assistance to stakeholders of the MatSu borough in response to their interest to implement a regional senior advisory commission. The MatSu planning efforts resulted in the formation of the MatSu Senior Advisory Council. The Council invited an ACoA Commission member, who is also a MatSu resident, to serve on their board.

Regarding public awareness, the commission collaborates with the Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Advisory Commission and the Anchorage Muni Senior Advisory Commission in their annual planning activities for "May is Older Americans Month in Alaska" to honor older Alaskans. The commission requests the official proclamation,

invites the Governor or their designee to attend the celebration, and co-hosts one of the events with a municipal commission as often as possible. For the 2013 Older Alaskans Month celebration, the commission partnered with the DHSS commissioner's office to promote a special recognition of Alaska's centenarians, persons 100 years of age and older. For those who provided consent, their names were read aloud at the Older Alaskans Month celebrations and posted on the DHSS/ACoA websites. Each centenarian also received an official letter from the DHSS commissioner's office and an Older Alaskans Month Executive Proclamation signed by the Governor.

*Sunset Criteria No. 11: Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency duplicates the activities of another governmental agency or the private sector. (Please see pages 15-16).*

While the commission concurs with the audit's finding that its advocacy efforts may appear to be "duplicative" of other organizations like AARP and AgeNet, ACoA's role of providing support to the DHSS as Alaska's state unit on aging is mandated by law through the Older Americans Act, Section 305 to "serve as an effective and visible advocate for older individuals by reviewing and commenting upon all State plans, budgets, and policies which affect older individuals and providing technical assistance to any agency, organization, association, or individual representing the needs of older individuals." For this reason, advocacy is a core service of ACoA and it is through such activities by the commission that the base for other advocacy efforts is established.

Although AARP, AgeNet, and ACoA all work to improve the quality of life for Alaska seniors, each organization has unique missions. While AARP is concerned about senior consumer needs and the focus for AgeNet is provider issues, the commission is a multi-task body focused on all senior issues in Alaska and represents these interests on behalf of older Alaskans to the Governor and Legislature with respect to policies, legislation, and budget items.

The commission coordinates advocacy efforts with several public and private sector agencies including the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (to provide support for seniors with dementia and their caregivers); the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Adult Protective Services (to protect the health and safety of vulnerable seniors); AHFC Senior Housing Office (to promote affordable, accessible and quality senior housing development); Pioneer Home Advisory Board (to improve the quality of life for Pioneer Home residents); UA Trust Training Cooperative (to support workforce training and development of direct service professionals serving Alaska seniors); department of labor's Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training program (to promote workforce training and employment of Alaska seniors); the Alaska Brain Injury Network (to support seniors with brain injury); the Statewide Independent Living Council (to support the needs of older people with disabilities) in addition to the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (to improve systems that deliver home and community-based services and supports for older adults and their caregivers) and the national Alzheimer's Association (to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers).

Rather than duplicate, the commission complements the advocacy efforts of other organizations but more importantly, the Commission represents older Alaskans by providing a broad perspective to advocate for the comprehensive needs of older Alaskans across the continuum of care.

Through our interagency collaborative role, the commission participates as a resource in planning activities for other state agencies to ensure that the unique needs of seniors are considered and addressed by providing information, data, and serving on designated committees. (Please see page 16, first paragraph.) Examples include participation with the DHSS and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority in the ongoing development of the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan; the Healthy Alaskans 2020 Project coordinated by the division of public health and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; development of the DHSS Long-Term Care Plan

prepared by a contractor; ongoing development of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers as the single point of entry for Alaska's long-term support services serving seniors and disabled persons; and other joint planning efforts.

We truly value the opportunity to contribute to the department's mission in serving Alaska's seniors, particularly older persons who are most vulnerable. Thank you for this opportunity to review and provide response to the ACoA confidential preliminary report. Please feel free to contact the commission for further information.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Shields  
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Cc: Valerie Davidson, DHSS Commissioner  
Jon Sherwood, DHSS Deputy Commissioner  
Sana Efird, DHSS Assistant Commissioner  
Duane Mayes, DSDS Director  
Linnea Osborne, DHSS Federal Allocation Manager  
Denise Daniello, ACoA Executive Director

**APPROVED OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL  
OF THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING**

**Introduction**

**Section 1**

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) Bylaws outline the Commission's responsibilities. These procedures are guidelines to carry them out.

The Mission and Objectives of the Commission are included in its specific statutes. Introduction of business of a motion that falls outside of the Mission and Objectives requires a two-thirds vote of the members listed in AS 47.45.200(a).

**Orientation**

**Section 2**

Members of the Commission shall receive an orientation that covers the responsibilities of the Commission members by the Chair and Executive Director at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission following appointment or at a special meeting called for the purpose of orientation.

**Meetings**

**Section 3**

Regular or special meetings of the Commission shall occur at the call of the Chairperson, request of a majority of the voting members or at a regularly scheduled time as determined by a majority of the voting members. The beginning time and duration of a meeting shall be set by the Chairperson & Executive Director.

When attending regular or special Commission meetings in a community in which a Commission member maintains a primary residence and when overnight lodging is not required, a meal allowance may be paid in lieu of per diem as allowed in the State of Alaska Administrative Manual Volume II.

**Section 4**

**Executive Session**

Executive sessions may be called during a regular meeting as specified in AS 44.62.310. The motion to have an executive session must be made during a public meeting.

No subjects may be considered at the executive session except those mentioned in the motion calling for the executive session, unless auxiliary to the main question. No action may be taken during the executive session.

(a) The following subjects may be discussed in an executive session:

(1) Matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the government unit;

(2) Subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion; and

(3) Matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential.

(b) The above subjects shall be construed narrowly in order to avoid unnecessary executive sessions.

Section 5

Public Comment

The purpose for having public comment is to provide an opportunity for the public to present information and advise the Commission about problems and issues related to older Alaskans. This comment may be provided in-person, by tele-conference, and/or videoconference.

(a) The public comment period will not be considered a hearing and cannot be used for that purpose. Organizations are required to request a hearing in advance in writing and, when granted by the Commission, such hearings must be given public notice in accordance with law.

(b) Public comments will be held to a maximum of five minutes per speaker. Organizations may be represented by not more than three speakers whose combined comments may not exceed ten minutes. A waiver to the time limit may be granted by order of the Chairperson or by motion adopted by the Commission.

(c) The Commission shall not take action during the comment period but may take matters under advisement.

(d) The Commission may consider matters identified during public comment under new business. However, issues the Commission may consider at that time must be balanced against the public's right to be informed.

(e) Responses or comments by Commission members or Commission staff during public comment periods will be held to a minimum.

## Committees

### Section 6

#### Committee Structure

The ACoA By-laws designates six standing committees and allows for ad hoc committees as needed for special purposes. Committee membership and goals are generally established for two-years with the first year coinciding with the first year of the legislative session. Committee membership, specified in ACoA's by-laws, includes at minimum ACoA's Chair (voting member) and Executive Director (ex officio, non-voting member).

ACoA's Chair is responsible for selection of each Committee Chair (during the first year) or their confirmation (during the second year) at the last board meeting of the fiscal year for standing and ad hoc committees. Committee members may be selected by the ACoA Chair or by each Committee Chair as determined by the ACoA Chair. All Committees may include public members with the exception of the Executive and Nominating Committees. Committee Chairs and their membership are responsible for developing their two-year committee goals. The Committee Chair is responsible for reporting these goals annually to the Commission during the first meeting of the fiscal year and Committee activities at each board meeting.

### Section 7

#### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, immediate past Chair, and Committee Chair as designated by the ACoA Chair. Three of the four voting members constitute a quorum.

The role of the Executive Committee is to orchestrate and keep track of activities of the full Commission through standing and ad hoc committees. The Executive Committee reviews and takes action on the recommendations forwarded by other committees and reports these actions at the next board meeting.

The Executive Committee is responsible for developing board meeting agendas; taking action on budget/policy recommendations that establish ACoA's legislative advocacy platform; providing oversight for development of ACoA's annual report; planning for the rural outreach meeting; preparing an evaluation of ACoA's Executive Director with input from Commission members; in addition to other responsibilities.

### Section 8

#### Legislative Advocacy Committee

The Legislative Advocacy Committee includes a minimum of three voting Commission members that includes a Committee Chair in addition to ex officio non-voting members. A quorum is established by the majority of members. All Commissioners are encouraged to serve on this Committee.

The Legislative Advocacy Committee provides leadership and support to the Commission in its decision-making regarding legislation, budget, and policy matters that impact Alaska seniors. This Committee reviews legislative issues by conducting surveys; assessing information heard through public testimony

presented at board meetings; discussing issues during the Senior Legislative Advocacy Teleconferences; providing testimony on relevant issues to legislative committees; providing oversight for the development and implementation of ACoA's advocacy platform, including position papers and legislator meetings; and other activities as needed.

This Committee convenes the statewide *Senior Legislative Advocacy Teleconferences* with the purpose of educating Alaskans about legislation, budget items, and other issues affecting Alaska's older adults and encouraging public input on senior issues in order to inform the Commission of its decisions to support/not support legislation and budget items. The Senior Legislative Advocacy teleconferences are held every other week during legislative session and weekly during the last month of session. Senior centers and other senior congregate locations are encouraged to serve as host sites for seniors to attend the senior legislative advocacy teleconferences. Commissioners are encouraged to actively participate in these meetings and to advocate for legislation and budget items approved by the Commission with their elected officials.

ACoA staff prepares the "watch list" and "discussion list" of legislation and budget items for review at the Senior Legislative Advocacy Teleconferences. ACoA's Chair and/or ACoA's Legislative Advocacy Chair are required to review and approve the watch list prior to distribution to ensure its content is in accord with the commission's statutory requirements and relates to programs, services, and policies that affect older Alaskans.

Decisions regarding legislation and budget items may be made in one of two ways. First, the Legislative Advocacy Committee may take action on whether to support particular legislation after considering input from public members during Senior Legislative Advocacy teleconferences. This support may consist of, but not be limited to, letters of support and legislative committee testimony. In addition, the Chair and Executive Director may take action to offer the Commission's support for legislation and budget items through letters of support and legislative committee testimony as necessary.

#### Section 9

##### Planning Committee

The Planning Committee, comprised of a minimum of three members, has responsibility for developing annual budget and policy recommendations in collaboration with the Legislative Advocacy Committee that are presented to the Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and serve as the platform for the Commission's legislative advocacy efforts. In addition, the Planning Committee provides guidance and leadership to the State Plan Advisory Committee to develop the four-year Alaska State Plan for Senior Services; reviews the State Plan's implementation activities; gathers public input and other information for the periodic White House Conference on Aging; and . guidance for other plans related to the responsibilities of the Commission.

#### Section 10

##### Nominating Committee

The Nominating committee, consisting of three Commission members as appointed by the Chair, develops and presents a slate for the election of Chair and Vice Chair for two-years at the last meeting of the fiscal year.

In deciding the slate, Committee members will consider the following attributes:

- Previous experience serving on boards and commissions;
- Knowledge of senior programs/services;
- Time to attend and meaningfully participate in ACoA Board and Committee meetings;
- Understands the role of the board in being a policymaker;
- Possesses a statewide perspective to serve all older people in Alaska;
- Has two years remaining in their term;
- Belief in ACoA's mission; and
- Demonstrated commitment to the organization.

The Nominating Committee is responsible for meeting to discuss potential candidates based on a review of Commission members who are eligible to serve {in accordance with AS 47.45.200(a), (3), and (5)} and their possession of the required attributes. This Committee will design a plan for reaching out to prospective candidates to determine their interest in serving as an ACoA officer including which Committee member will contact the prospective candidate, the means for contacting them, and a date for finalizing the slate.

#### *Election of Officers*

The Nominating Committee will provide oversight for the election of officers. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by a majority vote during the last meeting of the fiscal year. New officers shall assume duties at the first meeting of the new fiscal year. The Nominating Committee will issue a secret ballot when multiple candidates are nominated for an officer position.

#### Section 11

##### Bylaws Committee

The By-Laws Committee, consisting of a minimum of three members of the Commission, shall be appointed to review the By-laws and Policies and Procedures Manual bi-annually at least once during alternate years and to recommend revisions as appropriate to the full Board.

#### Section 12

##### Outstanding Older Alaskans' Recognition Committee

This Committee shall be represented by two (2) members. The responsibilities of this committee consist of planning and implementing activities to recognize older Alaskans.

#### Section 13

##### Ad Hoc Committee

This Committee may be appointed by the Chair on an as needed basis to complete the business of the Commission. Past examples include the State Plan Advisory Committee and special conference committees. Future examples may include a special committee to develop a succession process along with events to recognize senior centers.

**Section 11**

**Endorsements**

It is the policy of the Alaska Commission on Aging not to:

- (a) Endorse or support candidates for any elective public office, partisan or nonpartisan;
- (b) Seek membership of in-state organizations to avoid a possible conflict of interest;
- (c) Provide letters of support for specific projects that do not have statewide benefit.

**Section 12**

**Authorization**

The Chair and the Executive Director are jointly authorized to execute official correspondence from the Commission that includes letters of concern or support to the Legislature, the Governor, and Congressional delegation for proposed legislation. The ACoA Executive Director is authorized to execute official correspondence for other ACoA business purposes.

**Adopted:** 12.10-2014

Amended & Approved: 05.05.2015

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