



SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization

Advisory Council on Aging Agenda

DATE: Thursday, October 16, 2025

TIME: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

In-person @

Benson Hospital Conference Room 450 South Ocotillo Ave. Benson, Arizona 85602

or

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 210 264 060 476 9

Passcode: v9v2b3EM

I. CALL TO ORDER	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	
a. Pledge Allegiance		
b. Introductions		
c. Roll Call		
II. STAFF PRESENTATION	ELSA CENTENO	
a. Medicare Open Enrollment		
III. ACTION ITEMS*		<u>Page No.</u>
a. Approval of July 17, 2025, meeting minutes	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	3
b. Open floor for nominations to vacant seats	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	7
IV. INFORMATION ITEMS		
a. AAA Programs & Area Plan Update	CELESTE VASQUEZ	10
b. AAA Legislative Updates	CELESTE VASQUEZ	15
V. MEMBER/STAFF INFORMATION EXCHANGE	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	
VI. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING January 15, 2026	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	
I. ADJOURNMENT	PRESIDENT MONTOYA	

*Agenda items requiring action by the Advisory Council on Aging. NOTE: All agenda items are subject to action by the Advisory Council on Aging. Individuals with disabilities who require special accommodation may contact Michele Miller at (520) 432-2528 extension 220 at least 72 hours before the meeting to request such accommodation.

Meeting Minutes
SEAGO Area Agency on Aging, Region VI
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING

Thursday, July 17, 2025
10:00 am – 12:00 pm.
450 S. Ocotillo Ave. Benson, AZ 85602.
In person and Virtual

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Frank Montoya, President	Bob Rivera, by Proxy
Arnold Lopez, 1 st Vice President	Lisa Lane, Virtual
Jaime Aguilar, Secretary	Arnoldo Montiel
Susan Lange	
Brenda Chacon	Kathy Spangler
Sue Baz	Wanda Leikem, Virtual

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Kathy Spangler	Eva McElroy
Ricky Martinez	

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dr. Varona

STAFF PRESENT:

Carrie Gibbons, Deputy Program Director	Celeste Vasquez, AAA Director
Michele Miller, Office Specialist	Shi Martin, LTC Ombudsman/HNC
Seana Riffle, Case Mgmt. Coordinator	

I CALL TO ORDER
Pledge of Allegiance
Introductions
Roll Call

II ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of April 17, 2025, minutes
Jaimie Aguilar moved to approve April 17, 2025, meeting minutes; Lisa Lane seconded. The motion passes unanimously by those present.
2. Open floor for nominations to vacant seats – tabled from April 17
Director Vasquez reviewed the tabled item from the April 17th ACOA Meeting. The Advisory Council on Aging's (ACOA) revised bylaws, Article IV.A. – Titles, state, "The Officers of the Advisory Council shall be the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Secretary." Article IV.C.2-4 – Nomination and Terms states, "Officers shall be seated upon the conclusion of the meeting at which they were elected. Nominations will be made from the floor at the April meeting, with the nominee's consent. The President shall not serve for more than three (3) successive one-year terms." There are no term limits for any other position.
3. Election of Officers

Jaime Aguilar moved to approve the slate of officers presented, Lisa Lane seconded the ACOA's slate of officers:
Frank Montoya, President
Arnold Lopez, First Vice President
Gary Clark, Second Vice President
Jaime Aguilar, Secretary

The motion passes unanimously by those present.

III INFORMATION ITEM

1. AAA Programs Update

Director Vasquez feels AAA has been kind of hot in the news. SEAGO AAA in the last quarter has been doing a lot of advocacies for our programs.

Case management & Family Caregiver Support Supervisor Seana Riffle found a family caregiver that has been positively impacted by our program. He shared his story regarding his wife and our assistance in her end of life care. The KGUN 9 Tucson video was shared with the ACOA members. Attorney General Chris Mays attended AAA's Elder Abuse Town Hall and Fraud and scam education in Douglas. The event and media coverage was successful. There was coverage on Channel 4 KVOA and Douglas Dispatch. It was an amazing event.

Our Facebook has 978 followers; we keep inching closer to 1000 followers.

Vasquez was invited by Congresswoman Contreras to present at the Community and Legislative Partners on Aging, at the House of Representatives, in Phoenix on May 22nd. She focused the presentation on educating them on the services offered through the older Americans Act and the adverse effects it would have on the State if the programs were not funded federally.

We do have a new development program that we're working on with in Douglas. We've partnered with Arizona Community Health Centers and Community Health Workers Association. The AzCHOW received a grant from Legacy Foundation so that the seniors can receive vouchers for additional produce, a \$20 voucher a week. It is called "Comiendo Fresco" (eating fresh). It is a pilot program in Douglas. Our case manager is evaluating clients and anyone who she sees who may need additional help with food. She can provide them with this voucher. They have worked with the smaller corner stores in Douglas that have produce and might be walkable. The grant is for two years.

Director Vasquez reviewed each program update, included in the ACOA packet.

2. AAA Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Subawards

SEAGO AAA completed the SFY2025-2026 Subawards by June 30, 2025.

In this packet there is a summary of the funds awarded to our contractors/providers. We closely monitor the use of these funds, and if needed, we may reassign funds to another service or provider to fully utilize what we have been awarded by the state. If additional funds become available, we will evaluate the needs within the region and request them as needed.

AAA Legislative Updates

Director Vasquez reviewed her Legislative Updates memo dated July 17, 2025, with the ACOA Board.

IV MEMBER/STAFF INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- Dr. Arnoldo Montiel announced his resignation from the ACOA Board, he has been a member for twelve years. His wife and kids are asking him to slow down. He thanked the Director and the rest of the staff; you guys do a wonderful job. This is a wonderful organization.
- Lisa Lane stated they have partnered with the Tucson VA and other programs to host a Town Hall at the American Legion Post #32. They brought in fifty veterans and their families, giving them information on benefits and eligibility and different programs. There is the annual resource fair being held in Graham County at the Fairgrounds on September 5th, they are anticipating a good turnout. They have expanded to two buildings.
- Susan Lange feels Patagonia is changing, there are few rental homes available, no job opportunities, the senior population is suffering with the changes. The Patagonia senior center continues to be busy with congregate meals. There are several groups utilizing the Senior Center space. She asked if anyone in the SEAGO office could help the Patagonia Senior Center get their billing squared away with ADOT, they are delinquent in their payments to the center.
- Jaime Aguilar feels it is time to listen to people; Mental health is important, and anxiety is running high for everyone including our seniors.
- Dr. Arnoldo Montiel stated their congregate site continues to grow. They are hoping to acquire the building next to the congregate site by December. They have outgrown the current building and will add another. The City of Nogales is very supportive towards the Senior Center.
- Wanda Leikem has been helping a woman from the Bisbee Senior Center with Medicare issues, penalties and late fees.
- Suz Baz thanked Dr. Montiel for his years of service to AAA. The Tombstone Congregate site continues to be busy. The former manager of the Tombstone Senior center has retired; they had a well-attended going away party for her. The Healthy Tombstone and Resource Fair is scheduled for November 7th. She hopes that AAA will be there to provide information to the community regarding Trualta training as well as information on how to avoid elder scams. She thanked the AAA staff for organizing the Elder Scam Town Hall in Douglas, you are the most awesome group of people she has known. That meeting with Attorney General Kris Mayes was very well attended.
- Arnold Lopez reported that they are putting together an all-native Indian baseball tournament for the 12–16-year-olds. They were hoping to have six teams, but they have fourteen. Donations have come from all over the place, different tribes, California, New Mexico. He invited the council to attend if in the Phoenix area and Talking Sticks field, it's free.
- Brenda Chacon continues to learn the ropes, she learns so much by attending these meetings. Next meeting she will have more to report on from her area. She helps seniors in her neighborhood. If she has questions she will give AAA a call.

- Frank Montoya has been listening to different podcasts and doctors. They say walking is good, but strength training, maintaining your muscular heart is what will help you. The elite agers or the elite of the senior citizens, only 5% of the elderly population can get up off the floor without aid.

- Kathy Spangler reviewed some of the issues with Medicare Open Enrollment that are affecting her job, with Banner Insurance. Before open enrollment, there are many decisions that still must be made at the state level, clients are getting letters, they are confused and afraid of the changes being made to their plans. She has worked for Banner for ten years. Everything is currently on hold, hopefully they figure it out by October 1st. The AAA SHIP Coordinator is going to be very busy this year.

V SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING **October 17, 2025**

VI ADJOURNMENT

Jaimie Aguilar moved to adjourn the quarterly meeting of the Advisory Council on Aging. Lisa Lane seconded the motion. Motion passed by all members present at 11:23 am.



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING PACKET

MEMO TO: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING (ACOA)
FROM: CELESTE VASQUEZ, AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR
DATE: JULY 17, 2025
SUBJECT: NOMINATIONS FOR VACANT COUNCIL MEMBER SEATS

The Advisory Council on Aging's (ACOA) revised bylaws dated February 21, 2025, state, under Article III – Composition and Membership, Section A.1., that the ACOA consists of eight representatives from Cochise County, four from Graham County, three from Greenlee County, and three from Santa Cruz County.

Section A.1.a. states that at least ten of the eighteen members shall be age sixty or older and that every effort shall be made to ensure the inclusion of persons with the greatest economic or social need, minority individuals, and participants in services funded through the Agency.

Section B.4. states that members appointed by the SEAGO Executive Board shall serve three years (3). Each member shall be limited to two (2) consecutive terms. However, a previous member can be reappointed if a vacancy cannot be filled in 90 days. The Advisory Council on Aging may submit a member to the Executive Board for reappointment for an additional term.

There are currently **five (5) vacant** seats, and members are selected to represent incorporated cities, towns, and the unincorporated portions of each county. The current vacancies apply to the following:

Cochise County (3):

One (1) seat for Huachuca City
One (1) seat for the City of Willcox
One (1) seat for County Unincorporated

Santa Cruz County (1):

One (1) seat for the City of Nogales
One (1) seat for County Unincorporated (**previously taken by Mr. Ricky Martinez**)

There is currently one (1) member whose successful second three-year term is due to expire on November 10, 2025. The following member is not eligible for reappointment as he has reached his two-term limit.

Cochise County:

Mr. Gary Clark, representing the **City of Douglas**

There are currently two (2) members whose successful first three-year term is due to expire on December 1, 2025. The following members may be reappointed for a second three-year term if they wish to continue:

Cochise County:

Ms. Kathy Spangler, representing the **City of Benson**

Graham County:

Mr. Arnold Lopez, representing the **City of Safford**

Nominated representatives will commence their term on the date approved and appointed by the SEAGO Executive Board, which is scheduled for November 21, 2025.

Attachments: Council Resignation Letter from Mr. Ricky Martinez

Action Requested:

☐

Information Only

☒

Action Requested Below:

A motion to approve the proposed representatives to the SEAGO Executive Board for appointments to fill seat vacancies.

Board Resignation Letter

Ricardo Martinez

1843 N. State Drive

Nogales, AZ 85621

ricardomartinez@azdes.gov

520-604-8483

July 15th, 2025

Dear Board Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to formally resign from my position as a board member for the SEAGO Advisory Council effective July 15, 2025.

The decision has been a difficult one, as I have truly valued the opportunity to contribute to our shared goals and work alongside such a dedicated and talented team. However, due to increasing responsibilities at work, I find that I must step down to fulfill my professional obligations effectively.

I am grateful for the experiences and growth I have gained during my tenure and am proud of the progress we have made together. I would be happy to assist in any way I can during this time to ensure that the board continues to thrive after my departure.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve on the board. I wish the organization continued success and growth.

Warm regards,

Ricardo Martinez



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING PACKET

MEMO TO: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING
FROM: CELESTE VASQUEZ, AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR
DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2025
SUBJECT: AREA AGENCY ON AGING PROGRAMS & AREA PLAN UPDATE

Administration:

- We had our AZ State Plan Public Input Session on August 8th. The virtual session was live streamed at a congregate site in each region. The participation and input received were not as responsive as I had hoped; however, we are hopeful that we had more involvement on the survey than we did in the virtual session.
- Attorney General Kris Mayes has now visited all the counties in our region by holding an Elder Scams Town Hall. The last Town Hall was held in Nogales on August 12, 2025. We are very thankful for their partnership and support.
- We are now fully staffed in case management after several months of vacancies. Marlon Marshall, a seasoned direct care worker, has been appointed to the Benson Case Manager position. Manuel Mungarro, who has extensive experience in case management and adult protective services investigations, has accepted the Douglas Case Manager position.
- We have conducted several outreach events educating the communities on the programs available, as well as Medicare Open Enrollment.
- We continue the partnership with Arizona Community Health Workers Association (AzCHOW) with the "Comiendo Fresco" (Eating Fresh) grant implementation. The program will continue to provide vouchers to seniors, enabling them to purchase fresh produce at local stores.
- We attended the USAging Conference in Chicago in July and had the opportunity to visit the Chicago Senior Center. It was an excellent opportunity to see how other AAAs partner with their local communities.



Case Management & Family Caregiver Support Program:

- 2.1.A- CMG/FCSP receives strong support through central intake in onboarding new caregivers and connecting them to appropriate programs and resources, ensuring they have the guidance and tools needed to access services effectively.
- 3.1.D - Case Managers continue to participate in ongoing monthly training to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills, ensuring efficient service delivery. Although a minimal waitlist currently exists, Case Managers continue to evaluate high-need clients and advocate for services as funding becomes available.
- 3.2.C - CMG/FCSP will continue working with SEAGO's transportation program and local city transit services to raise awareness of AAA programs among transit riders. Staff will continue promoting TSP vouchers through Dial-A-Ride partners and provide information via outreach efforts and social media to encourage participation in available programs.
- 3.2.E - CMG/FCSP will continue partnering with Central Intake and medical facilities to help caregivers sign up for Trualta. FCSP staff will work alongside case managers during trainings to ensure caregivers receive targeted tools and guidance that support their well-being and mitigate the effects of caregiving demands.
- 3.5.A - CMG/FCSP continues to engage with PCOA and SAGE trainings and will continue to do so to strengthen their cultural competence and better serve LGBTQ+ older adults and other diverse community members.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program:

- 1.2B-1.2C The coordinator is actively engaging in community outreach efforts to recruit volunteers for the Tai Chi and A Matter of Balance programs. The primary focus is on recruiting volunteers to cater to the needs of the rural population. Currently, we have three prospective volunteers in Graham County and three prospective volunteers in Cochise County.
- 2.1 C The HPR Program currently has two Tai Chi classes ongoing in Santa Cruz County, with both ending in October. Additionally, the HPR Volunteers are starting a new class in Duncan at the end of October.

Information & Referral/ Central Intake:

Top 3 Ways I&R Received



Phone
73.6%

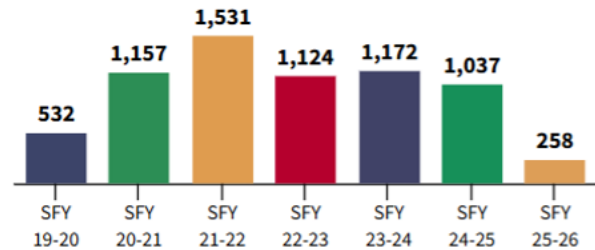


Email
18.8%

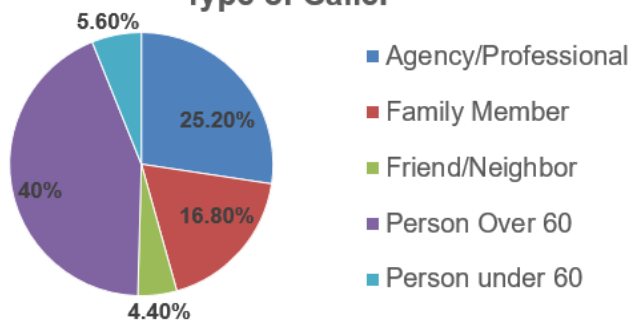


In-Person
0.8%

I&R Calls Per SFY



Type of Caller



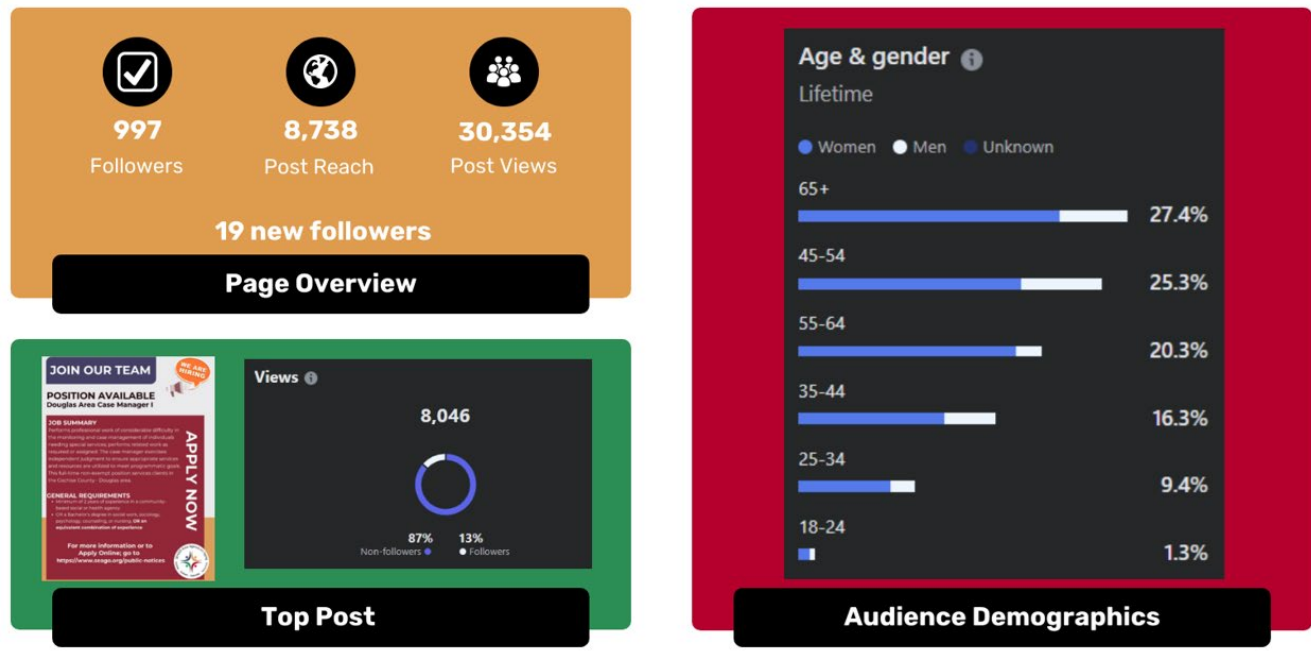
TOP 3 REASONS for calls

1. Medicare 30%
2. Home-delivered Meals 16%
3. Attendant Care 14%

Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

- The Long Term Care Ombudsman and program Volunteers are consistently providing support to residents in long-term care settings. Graham County has experienced the closure of two assisted living facilities. Essential Care 1 and 2, with an expansion of beds at The Beehive.
- 3.3 B A trained and designated long-term care Ombudsman has joined our team. This extraordinary Volunteer Ombudsman has long-term care experience and brings invaluable skills to the Ombudsman program.
- 2.1B The SouthEastern Arizona Elder Abuse Taskforce (SEAEAT) has been consistent in providing education to rural areas in Arizona.

Social Media:



State Health Insurance Program and Senior Medicare Patrol:

- 2.1A-SHIP counselors offer details regarding coverage alternatives and can specify any annual benefits available for dental care with each plan. Please note that these specifics are subject to change within the following year. Benefits, including dental, vision, hearing, transportation, and other features tied to Medicare Advantage, could see restrictions.
- 1.3B-The SouthEastern Arizona Elder Abuse Taskforce (SEAEAT) has been consistent in providing education to rural areas in Arizona. The goal is to capture the community's attention and share information about the services offered by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), as well as raise awareness among seniors. We must partner with the Attorney General, police departments, mayors, and other prominent community members.
- 2.1B-The SHIP-SMP Coordinator has involved current volunteers and partners to enlist more volunteers during community events and within their local areas. Currently, the SHIP/SMP-AAA staff are organizing an annual training session and a volunteer appreciation event to close out the year. This effort will enhance volunteers' skills through training and provide them with acknowledgment and information, keeping them updated on areas that require improvement.
- 3.2C-SHIP-SMP continues to supply information regarding insurance transportation coverage. Limitations remain a concern for transportation needs; other options are being considered, and we continually seek future solutions, such as exploring possible VA transit options and investigating volunteer transit organizations like ViCap and Social Sisters.

Attachments: none

Action Requested:

☒ Information Only

☐ Action Requested Below:



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING PACKET

MEMO TO: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING
FROM: CELESTE VASQUEZ, AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR
DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2025
SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal Update:

Following weeks of political posturing, Congress has officially shut down the government after disagreeing on a funding deal at the start of the federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. While the House passed a continuing resolution (CR) the last week of September to fund the government until mid-November, the Senate rejected both the House Republican bill and a Democratic alternative.

In addition to continued funding at FY 2025 levels for the Older Americans Act (OAA) and other discretionary programs, the House Republican CR also includes a funding extension for the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act, which AAAs, SHIPs and ADRCs use to help beneficiaries learn about programs that can save money on Medicare costs.

The issue taking center stage in this stand-off is the year-end expiration of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits, which are designed to offset the cost of premiums for people purchasing health insurance through ACA. Republicans declined to extend this funding in their One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which they did not need Democratic votes to pass in the Senate. To pass a CR or a final spending bill, however, Senate Republicans need at least seven Democratic votes. Unless extended, the expiration of these ACA subsidies is widely expected to result in many medical insurers significantly increasing premiums for 2026, making it impossible for millions of Americans to afford health care coverage.

Why Does the Government Shut Down?

The lack of an appropriations bill or short-term funding patch is what causes the government to shut down when a new fiscal year begins (or short-term funding ends). Federal programs funded on the discretionary side of the government's ledger immediately suffer from the inability to continue operating, but essential federal employees who manage these systems and programs are furloughed and cannot legally work.

While states, AAAs, and other federal grant recipients can continue to use already secured funding during a shutdown, the challenge occurs when FY 2025 funding runs out before new FY 2026 funds are made available by Congress and then allocated out to states by the administration.

There is considerable uncertainty about how long the shutdown could last, given both sides' entrenched positions. During the first Trump Administration, a partial shutdown occurred (HHS and other agencies were not affected), lasting 35 days and making it the most extended government shutdown in more than 40 years. We hope the picture will become clearer in the next few days.

To preserve funding and continue providing essential services to our clients, I have implemented an austerity plan, effective October 1, 2025.

Attachments: SEAGO Area Agency on Aging Austerity Plan

Action Requested: ☒ Information Only ☐ Action Requested Below:



SEAGO Area Agency on Aging Austerity Plan

October 1, 2025

Overview

SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization - Area Agency on Aging is immediately implementing the following austerity plan.

This project is of utmost importance, as it serves as a cornerstone for the program's continued provision of vital service offerings. With multiple programs to navigate, it demands a diverse array of resources, skilled staffing, and substantial financial awareness to ensure its successful execution and ultimate impact on the organization.

Individual Programmatic Details

Program:	Action Taken:	Responsible Staff:
Attendant Care; Respite Care; Home Delivered Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No increase in units• New clients to be placed on waitlist	Seana Riffle, Case Manager Supervisor
Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No changes	
Central Intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No changes	
Congregate Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No changes	
Family Caregiver Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No increase in units• New clients to be placed on waitlist• No Appreciation Event	Seana Riffle, Case Manager Supervisor
Health & Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No new classes• No new volunteer enrollment	Shi Martin, Health & Nutrition Program Coordinator
Long Term Care Ombudsman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site visits quarterly	Shi Martin, Long Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator
Senior Medicare Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No outreach events/education	Elsa Centeno, State Health Insurance Coordinator
State Health Insurance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No changes	
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No changes	



SEAGO Area Agency on Aging Austerity Plan

October 1, 2025

Funding Source Detail

The SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO) - Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is funded through the Older Americans Act, administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS).

On September 26, 2025, DAAS Leadership announced that they could hold the Area Agencies on Aging in Arizona for a minimum of two weeks, meaning they have funding to reimburse expenditures for a full two weeks. Celeste Vasquez, AAA Director, is responsible for obtaining ongoing funding updates from DAAS and reporting these to Christopher Vertrees, Executive Director, to discuss edits to this plan.

Additional Expenditure Reduction Detail

With the anticipation that this Federal Government Shutdown may last longer than the two weeks, DAAS can reimburse. SEAGO-AAA has implemented the detailed departmental changes detailed on page one of this document, as well as the following:

- No merit increases
- Travel is limited to mission-critical needs
- No conferences or out-of-state travel
- No purchases of over \$500
- All outreach events are cancelled
- No participation in activities that are not strictly mission and grant-funded

Right now, there's no indication that a staff evaluation is necessary. SEAGO has reserves that can cover staff salaries and benefits for approximately six months.