



SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization

Advisory Council on Aging Agenda

DATE: Thursday, January 15, 2026

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

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Meeting ID: 210 264 060 476 9

Passcode: v9v2b3EM

I.	CALL TO ORDER	PRESIDENT MONTOYA
	a. Pledge Allegiance	
	b. Introductions	
	c. Roll Call	
II.	ACTION ITEMS*	<u>Page No.</u>
	a. Approval of October 16, 2025, meeting minutes	PRESIDENT MONTOYA 1
	b. Open floor for nominations to vacant seats	PRESIDENT MONTOYA 5
III.	INFORMATION ITEMS	
	a. AAA Programs & Area Plan Update	CELESTE VASQUEZ 7
	b. AAA Legislative Updates	CELESTE VASQUEZ 11
IV.	MEMBER/STAFF INFORMATION EXCHANGE	PRESIDENT MONTOYA
V.	SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING April 16, 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.

MINUTES

Meeting Minutes
SEAGO Area Agency on Aging, Region VI
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING
Thursday, October 16, 2025
10:00 am – 12:00 pm.
450 S. Ocotillo Ave. Benson, AZ 85602.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Montoya, President	Susan M. Lange
Arnold Lopez, 1 st Vice President	Brenda Chacon
Gary Clark, 2 nd Vice President	Bob Rivera
Sue Baz	Lisa Lane
Kathy Spangler	Stephanie Nabor, Teams
Wanda Leikem	

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Eva McElroy
Jaime Aguilar, Secretary

GUESTS PRESENT:

Arnoldo Montiel
Sandra Montoya

STAFF PRESENT:

Carrie Gibbons, Deputy Program Director	Celeste Vasquez, AAA Director
Michele Miller, Office Specialist	Elsa Centeno, SHIP Coordinator

I CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Introductions
- c. Roll Call

II Staff Presentation

Medicare Open Enrollment – Elsa Centeno, SHIP Coordinator
Elsa Centeno reviewed the 2026 Medicare enrollment and changes. Centeno and the ACOA had a lively discussion regarding insurance coverage and upcoming changes for 2026. Elsa outlined the way Medicare counseling appointments are scheduled through Area Agency on Aging and the number of outreach locations scheduled during open enrollment.

ACTION ITEMS

- a. Approval of July 17, 2025, meeting minutes
Gary Clark moved to approve July 17, 2025, meeting minutes; Bob Rivera seconded. The motion passes unanimously by those present
- b. Open floor for nominations to vacant seats

There are currently five (5) vacant seats, the current vacancies apply to the following:

MINUTES

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.

Bob Rivera moved to appoint Kathy Spangler, City of Benson and Arnold Lopez, City of Safford, to serve a second, three-year term on the ACOA Board. Gary Clark seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by those present.

- AAA Programs & Area Plan Update
Director Vasquez highlighted some of the updates for AAA Programs & the Area Plan, memo included in the packet.

The AAA is fully staffed with the addition of Marlon Marshall and Manuel Mungarro to the case management team.

AAA is partnering with AzChow (Arizona Community Health Workers Association). It is a pilot program that is funded by a grant, to provide vouchers to seniors, enabling them to purchase produce at local stores. The pilot is in Douglas, but AAA is hopeful with the data collected and the program's success it can be expanded to other communities in Region 6.

Arnold Lopez asked how to apply for a similar grant that would benefit Graham County.

- AAA Legislative Updates
Director Vasquez and the Board discussed the Legislative Update

MINUTES

included in the ACOA packet. Due to the government shutdown, SEAGO has an Austerity Plan in place, she reviewed the plan with the Board. She also reviewed the changes to the programmatic details outlined in the packet.

IV MEMBER/STAFF INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- Wanda Leikem asked if there could be better signage for the Area Agency on Aging building; people don't know where the office is located. She is a member of the Rotary Club and the question has been asked if there is a list of seniors that are at risk during local disasters. The fires in Bisbee have sparked concern. Carrie Gibbons stated AAA has a red dot list that identifies our most vulnerable clients. AAA has used it in the past, when Santa Cruz had cold temperatures and a power outage. Case managers called everyone on the Santa Cruz red dot list to ask, do you need blankets, can we call a family member to help, etc. AAA staff dropped everything to make those calls. The list has been shared with local authorities in each community.
There is an Are You OK program in the Cochise County Sheriff's office. You can sign up with the county for those daily calls.
Rivera stated that garbage collectors and mail delivery providers also notice if mail or garbage piles up.
Director Vasques will investigate options for a new AAA sign in front of the building.
- Lisa Lane stated they canceled the Veterans' Resource Fair for fear of flooding. In November, in Safford, they might have a small Town Hall for veterans' resources. The next Veteran's resource fair will be held in spring 2026. She has enjoyed hanging out at the Safford Senior Center to get to know people and services.
- Bob Rivera is involved in the Eastern Arizona Hispanic Heritage Corp. They are a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, and they educate people on their culture. Their November 1st event will have classic cars, food trucks, crafts etc. They raise money for scholarships.
- Susan Lange stated ICE Border Patrol has been in Patagonia recently visiting the schools and restaurants, and it has everyone up in arms. The Senior Center is doing really well with programs and allowing other groups to use the facility. She was included in a meeting regarding a grant opportunity for the community. She used to have a business that provided in-home assistance; she was asked to provide some incite for the project. There is a need for food for those who are homebound and cannot get out for meals.
- Gary Clark had back surgery and recovery is doing well.
- Brenda Chacon feels she has learned a lot today, and she will be going back home to share with her community.
- Dr. Montiel stated Nogales' senior population has grown; the Senior Center is still trying to acquire the building next to their current location, to expand. The Senior Center activities are well attended.

MINUTES

- Sue Baz has cancelled this year's Tombstone resource fair; they couldn't pull everything together this year. They will try again in the spring of 2026. The Senior Center is still doing really well. The Town is anticipating an influx of snowbirds for the winter. Eldorado Days is coming up; motels and Airbnb's are full. Every Monday afternoon, at the Senior Center, they have the Cochise Mobile Market; the truck comes with fruit, vegetables, and cheese. This is provided by a grant from the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension; they are not sure how long it will last into the future. The Senior Center is also working on Wellness Wednesday, an hour and half program provided by the Cochise County Health Department, cooking instruction, dietitian and nutrition. It is a grant funded program she is unsure when it will start.
- Arnold Lopez feels electric companies should have lists of local seniors, so when there are power outages, they could focus on those neighborhoods first. There have been 3 ribbon cuttings at the Graham Regional Medical Center, for different centers, they are very proud of this in such a rural area. Doctors there have been acknowledged with awards also. The lawn in front of the Safford City building has 750 American flags noting veterans. Lopez purchased a flag for Ira Hays, a native Apache. Hayes was one of the six men who appeared in the iconic photograph Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima by photographer Joe Rosenthal. It is the 30-year anniversary of the Mount Graham Safe Hose.
- Frank Montoya meets with a group of fellows every week and learned there are some cattle rustlings occurring in their area. Cattleman's Association has contacted. Duncan is concerned about potential flooding in the area and has contacted the governor to look into it.
- Kathy Spangler attended the September 20th Lantern Festival: it was for all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life. There was music, dancing, merchandise, arts & crafts and food & beverage vendors. It is a magical experience with the lanterns carrying up messages into the night.
ALTCs is on hold again, court held up with 2nd full year has been given to Banner. October 1 there are new forms for caregivers, scheduling. There is a parade this weekend in Benson, it is hours long and worth attending. She will be riding with her mom, who is the grand marshal.

V SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING January 15, 2026

VI ADJOURNMENT

Bob Rivera moved to adjourn the quarterly meeting of the Advisory Council on Aging. Susan Lange seconded the motion. Motion passed by all members present at 12:14 pm



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING PACKET

MEMO TO: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING
FROM: CELESTE VASQUEZ, AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR
DATE: JANUARY 15, 2026
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 **six (6) 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 City of Douglas
- 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

There is currently one (1) member whose successful second three-year term expired on November 10, 2025. We have not received any interest from other community members; therefore, once the seat has been vacant for 90 days, the previous member is eligible for appointment if they wish to retake the seat.

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 February 24, 2026. The following members may be reappointed for a second three-year term if they wish to continue:

Cochise County:

Ms. Eva McElroy, representing the **City of Sierra Vista**

Graham County:

Ms. Susan Lange, representing the **City of Patagonia**

Nominated representatives will commence their term on the date approved and appointed by the SEAGO Executive Board, which is scheduled for February 20, 2026.

Attachments: none

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.



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING PACKET

MEMO TO: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING
FROM: CELESTE VASQUEZ, AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR
DATE: JANUARY 15, 2026
SUBJECT: AREA AGENCY ON AGING PROGRAMS & AREA PLAN UPDATE

Administration:

The Department of Economic Security – Division of Aging and Adult Services will conduct a Contract Compliance Review for SEAGO AAA from January 19 to January 30, 2026.

Our last quarter was focused on outreach events and education on AAA services, as well as Medicare Open Enrollment. 2024 had been a record-breaking year for Medicare assistance, and we are proud to announce that 2025 surpassed the numbers of 2024, with approximately 60 more clients served. This is a great accomplishment, given that our SHIP Coordinator was short three volunteers this year.

SEAGO AAA has continued the partnership with the Arizona Community Health Worker office in Douglas with the Comiendo Fresco Project. However, we will discuss further involvement with them in the coming weeks, as they are now requesting that we only refer clients who attend a specific health center in the area. I have explained that we provide resources for all doctor's offices and cannot solely refer to one specifically. This stems from their wanting to obtain healthcare data for those in the program. I will update as more information becomes available.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program:

1.2B-1.2C HPR coordinator is passionately engaging in community outreach to recruit enthusiastic volunteers for the Tai Chi and Matter of Balance programs, focusing primarily on rural areas. We are excited to share that we currently have five committed volunteers in Santa Cruz County, two in Greenlee County, and one in Cochise County.

2.1C The HPR Program We had no classes during the government shutdown, and after that, no classes started due to the holidays. Region 6 now has three classes beginning in Tubac, AZ, on January 6th, Nogales, AZ, on January 7th, and Rio Rico, AZ, on January 6th as well.

Information & Referral/ Central Intake:

Top 3 Ways I&R Received



Phone
74.8%

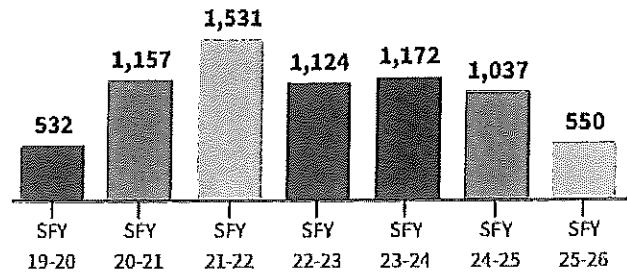


Email
19.2%



In-Person
1.3%

I&R Calls Per SFY



Caller

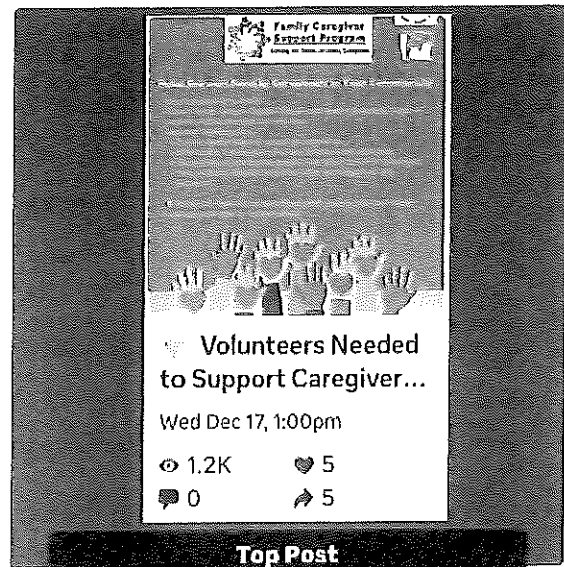
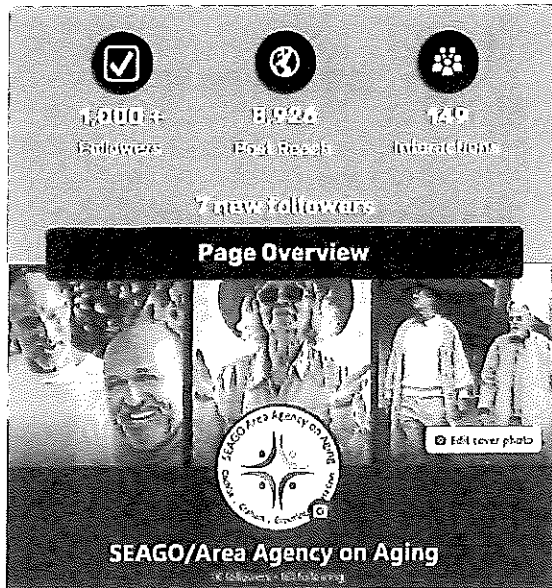
	Total	Percent
Agency/ Professional	120	22.6
Caregiver	1	0.2
Community gatekeeper	1	0.2
Family member	79	14.9
Friend/neighbor	18	3.4
Other	31	5.8
Person 60 or over	260	49.0
Person under 60	21	4.0

Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

A long-term care Ombudsman Volunteer has been trained and designated in Region 6. Sharon Valencia will visit Assisted living and nursing facilities in Graham County every month.

The Southeastern Arizona Elder Abuse Task Force (SEAEAT) will plan the WEAAD events for the 2026 Season. SEAEAT has significantly increased awareness among seniors and expanded its network of partners, thereby strengthening the task force's efforts against elder abuse.

Social Media:



State Health Insurance Program and Senior Medicare Patrol:

1.1A, 1.2A, 2.1A: SHIP-SMP offers counseling for Medicare needs while actively listening to the various concerns of beneficiaries. They refer these individuals to the Central Intake team, which evaluates the urgency of each case. This process also enables beneficiaries to access other services within AAA and to explore additional resources. For example, Central Intake continues to identify beneficiaries who need assistance with Medicare, Medicaid, medication costs, Social Security, and help with reporting fraud or scams. Phone calls have increased by 70% during Medicare Open Enrollment, with a decrease of 25% the beginning of December.

1.3C SHIP counseling allows for identifying the beneficiary's needs and provides information on coverage options and may outline any annual allowances available for dental care with each plan. During this Medicare Open Enrollment, more beneficiaries were looking for the benefit of spending allowance, OTC, and which plan was going to help pay for the premium B, which went up from \$185.00 to \$202.90 every month.

2.1C SHIP-SMP has established partnerships within Region VI to identify beneficiaries in need of Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) assistance. Collaborations have been formed with PCP offices, local libraries, Adobe, hospitals, and the Medical Center. For instance, during the Medicare Open Enrollment period from October to December, in-person counseling was provided at 17 different locations as part of these partnerships. Additionally, Chiricahua Medical Health Center has supported the SHIP-SMP Coordinator by offering guidance on AHCCCS and Food Stamp questions throughout Region VI.

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: JANUARY 15, 2026
SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Federal Update:

In mid-November, Congress passed, and President Trump signed into law, a spending package that ended the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. The legislation included three final appropriations bills and short-term funding for the remaining nine bills, including the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). It also provided temporary funding for programs under the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) through January 30.

Current Status

The January 30 funding deadline sets the stage for another round of high-stakes spending negotiations that may again go down to the wire. While some of the remaining nine appropriations bills may advance, it is unlikely that all of them will pass. As a result, Congress may need to pass another continuing resolution (CR), potentially a full-year CR, to avoid another government shutdown.

Key Funding Issues & Risks

Although collective advocacy efforts resulted in favorable funding levels in both House and Senate appropriations bills, there is a significant risk that final negotiations could reduce or eliminate key investments if other priorities prevail. Strong funding recommendations made earlier in the process must be incorporated into any final spending agreement.

Key concerns include:

- **OAA Title III-B (Supportive Services):**
The House Labor/HHS bill proposes millions of dollars in increases. We are urging lawmakers to retain these higher funding levels in the final bill.
- **OAA Title V (Senior Community Service Employment Program):**
The House provided no funding for FY 2026, while the Senate recommended continued funding. Our priority is for Congress to adopt the Senate's funding level.

- **MIPPA Programs:**
Current funding expires January 30. We are advocating for at least a full-year authorization in any final spending package.

- **Other Critical Aging Programs:**
We are also urging Congress to adopt the highest recommended funding levels for:

- OAA Title III-E, National Family Caregiver Support Program
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- AmeriCorps Seniors

Advocacy Priorities Moving Forward

Over the coming weeks, advocacy efforts will focus on:

1. Preserving favorable House and Senate funding recommendations during final negotiations
2. Preventing cuts to aging services amid competing legislative priorities
3. Securing full-year funding for MIPPA and strong funding outcomes for OAA programs

Takeaway

The upcoming January 30 deadline represents a critical inflection point for federal aging programs. Sustained and targeted advocacy will be essential to protect recent gains and prevent funding losses that could significantly impact older adults and the organizations that serve them.

Attachments: none

Action Requested:

Information Only

Action Requested Below:

