



ACA Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes – Microsoft Teams
January 27, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Members

Julie Arnold	Darlene Kimes	Jolie Ryff
Kerry Armstrong	Liane Levetan	Wayne Stokes
Karen Ashley	Bob Reeves	Richard J. Sylvia Jr.
Lin Chao	Lois Ricci	Herman Weil
Aysha Cooper	Romona Jackson-Jones	Cynthia Tucker
Mildred Schmelz		

Staff

Mary Blumberg	Megan Malasarte	Liz Sanford
John Hammond	Shane Patilla	Jim Skinner
Doug Hooker	Connie White	Kate Sweeney
Becky Kurtz	Kim Yawn	

CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Romona Jackson-Jones at 1:00pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD Chairman Romona Jackson-Jones called for public comments. There was none.

MANAGER’S UPDATE Becky Kurtz reviewed four items as follows: newly issued Aging and Independence Services Annual Report, State Legislative Issues, Federal Issues and Committee Bylaws. A few highlights to note regarding the Annual Report: the aging population is growing rapidly. Last year, A&IS serviced over 61,000 people through the Empowerline interactive services and programs. ARC funded services provided by several local senior center entities. The overall goal was to maximize the health and independence of older persons with disabilities, along with assisting caregivers. Fellow committee member, Wayne Stokes, volunteers with AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program through Atlanta Regional Commission. There were about 102 volunteers totaling 3,129 volunteer hours all together.

During April to November 2020, ARC helped partner organizations adapt their funding to respond to older adults’ critical needs. There were 117,954 emergency home-delivered meals to 2,637 individuals. There was \$54,376 in material aid allocated towards assistive equipment such as easy-to-use can openers, short-term help with bills and groceries to allow people to live more independent lives in their own homes.

State Issues – COAGE Priorities (2021 Georgia General Assembly): Increase funding for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), both Medicaid and non-Medicaid. Behavioral Health and Housing Services is an ARC created coaching service., COAGE wants to expand this service in Georgia at additional AAAs [GCOA](#) can provide more detailed information on these topics.

Federal Issues –The Federal fiscal year 2022 begins October 11, 2021. By then, there will be slight changes in the Older Americans Act in the form of monetary increases.

Lois Ricci and Mildred Schmelz have been appointed as the Bylaws Subcommittee Co-Chairs. Additional member volunteers were requested to serve on the committee.

METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS *Listening to Pandemic Voices (2020 Results Overview)*, Jim Skinner, Project Manager of Metro Atlanta Speaks, Research and Analytics Group, Center for Livable Communities Metro Atlanta Speaks was inspired by an ARC LINK Trip with an overall goal of assessing perceptions and attitudes; maintain a stable core of questions with relevant timely topics and critical crosstabs. Now in their 8th year, the scope zeroes in on the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 impacted our world greatly, changed how we assessed our biggest problems and challenges, altered our perceptions of employment along with economic stability. It laid bare the inequities in our society, but there is still hope for the future.

In 2019, the biggest perceived problem was transportation. This year brought an additional focus to Public Health due to the pandemic. Concern of race relations and crime also went up last year. Crime has always been the biggest problem assessed by those 65+ over time. The extent of the pandemic's impact was well over two-thirds (in August) saw a major impact in their lives. Every age group saw a major impact, but those 55-65+ age group had an incrementally lower impact due to their decreased rate of employment.

There was a higher shared thinking overall that things will likely get better in the next 3-4 years. For any further questions on *Metro Atlanta Speaks*, visit <https://atlantaregional.org/atlanta-region/regional-data-resources/metro-atlanta-speaks-survey-report/>.

Mildred Schmelz posed the question of whether older individuals have been getting the vaccine and what it has been like for them getting appointments. Will this be a potential research project to explore?

To that, Becky Kurtz stated that the analytics group within ARC will delve into the data side of things while the Aging and Independence Services Group will seek out the information of vaccine locations. Once this information is acquired, there would be efforts to publish and push out the findings.

Darlene Kimes asked how the data gathered and presented by Jim Skinner would be shared with our law enforcement and transportation agencies in the region. Jim said they do need to be more explicit about the applicability to law enforcement in their recent findings and they will look to do that in the future. As an added response to Darlene's question, Becky Kurtz shared that ARC participates in Multi-Disciplinary Teams that focus on elder abuse and exploitation (led by county district attorneys). There are plans to share the survey data with MDTs in counties that have them.

Co-Chair Romona Jackson-Jones asked Jim if his group was working with the Geographical Information Systems departments to obtain some of their data. In response, Jim confirmed that they do work with the local jurisdictions, like GIS, to acquire information and data even on a regular basis for research.

EMPOWERLINE SELF SERVICE DEMO (MARY BLUMBERG) On the newly redesigned *Empowerline*, a consumer can find services on their own with the latest update. It is a complete searchable database where you can filter your search by category, service, communities served and price point. Once you have fine-tuned your search, you will see several options laid out on a map feature. Every provider had been vetted previously for this search in this database.

STATUS OF SENIOR CENTER’S OPENING (CONNIE WHITE) Fayette was first to open at the end of August. It has taken them several months to get up to ten members back into the facility. Cobb County has had three centers open since December. Cherokee County opened, then had to close as they did not want to take on the risk. All counties are participating in virtual programming for their members- continuing to keep older adults engaged and socialized through these programs. Connie went over the Area Plan on Aging update for FY2021 – FY 2024. It is a four-year plan created by the state as a requirement under the Older Americans Act. Each Area Agency on Aging develops strategies to meet objectives and measures to collectively execute the plan. It serves as a formal application for the state towards funding into the upcoming year. Essentially, it provides long-term services and support systems to enable Georgians to provide for their community.

Area Plan Timeline is as follows: on this day, January 27, the ACA Committee approves the update to the area plan and funding request. On February 10, the Governance Committee approves the update to the area plan and the funding request. On March 1, ARC submits FY22 update to the FY21- FY21 plan FY22 funding request to the Division of Aging Services.

Wayne Stokes asked if there had been any improvement on home delivered meals to seniors in the community especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Connie responded saying it has improved dramatically. If you know anyone still on the waitlist, provide that information to Connie White.

Mildred Schmelz made the motion to approve the update to the area plan. Darlene Kimes seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next meeting – March 24, 2021 at 1:00pm on Microsoft Teams.

MEETING ADJOURNED The motion to adjourn meeting was made at 2:30pm by Bob Reeves. Motion carried.