

STATE OF MICHIGAN

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF ALLEGAN

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF WESTERN MICHIGAN (AAAWM)—APPROVE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (AIP) FY26

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2025, the County's Commission on Aging (COA) reviewed the AIP plan and recommends the Board of Commissioners (Board) approval.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with all statutes and policies governing the AAAWM, the Board supports the AIP for FY2026, as presented.

DRAFT

Allegan County Commission on Aging



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Chairperson: Rich Butler
Vice Chairperson: Sally Heavener

COMMISSION ON AGING - MINUTES

Chair Rich Bulter called the meeting to order at 9:02 am on June 18, 2025

Pledge of Allegiance, Roll call

The Commission of Aging met in the Zimmerman Room of the Human Services Building.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Mark DeYoung, Chairperson Rich Butler, Vice Chairperson Sally Heavener, Mary Campbell, Larry Ladenburger, Pat Petersen, Lue Phelps, Jim Storey, Jo VerBeek

EXCUSED ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Director Jen Garcia and Teresa Galloway, Senior Services; Sallie Prins with Holland PHO; Judy Habetler, public attendee from Allegan.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA- ADOPTED AS PRESENTED

Approval of the agenda moved by Jim Storey, supported by Sally Heavener. All in favor, motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS: Susan Evans, Program Manager, Alzheimer's Association Michigan Chapter; Presented virtually

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Sallie Prins with Holland PHO an entity of Holland Hospital. Judy Habetler, public member on the COA Senior Workgroup, from Allegan.

ACTION ITEMS:

Motion made by Larry Ladenburger, supported by Pat Petersen. All in favor, motion carried.

- Motion to recommend Board of Commissioners approval of AAAWM FY26 Annual Implementation Plan (Attachment A) as received.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

-2026 Draft Budget Review (ACSS): Director Jen Garcia reviewed proposed 2026 budget for millage contracted services (Adult Day Services, In Home Support, Home Delivered Meals, Personal Emergency Response Devices, and Senior Transportation.

-Home Delivered Meal (HDM) Service: Vice Chairperson Sally Heavener, Chair of the COA Policy & Procedure Committee, led a member discussion around current HDM service with contractors Milestone's Senior Services for meal preparation, and Community Action of Allegan County for meal delivery. Heavener documented satisfaction and/or feedback received and member feedback on meal type (frozen vs. ready to eat). Policy & Procedure Committee will continue work towards HDM year-end contracting and report back to COA.

Mission Statement

"Dedicated to serving Allegan County seniors by developing and coordinating services that support their independence, maintain their dignity, and preserve their quality of life"

-Senior Workgroup Goals: Chairperson Rich Butler led a discussion with a handout provided to members that included intended Senior Workgroup Goals and objectives. The handout included a listing of Allegan County libraries and local Township contact information.

-Allegan County Senior Expo, June 26: Director Jen Garcia provided an update on Senior Expo to date, with over 250 pre-registered participants and over 45 senior-focused vendors for the vendor fair. John Dudley will be the Emcee and entertainment, providing a magic show at 12:30PM during the lunch service. All workshop sessions are completely full. COA volunteer roles will be emailed out prior to June 26; members are asked to arrive by 7:00AM wearing COA shirt/smock, or Allegan County apparel. Commissioner Mark DeYoung noted that June 26 is a Board of Commissioners meeting day. Commissioner DeYoung has asked fellow members to adjourn for lunch attendance at Senior Expo.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

ROUND TABLE (COA MEMBER TIME):

Director Jen Garcia provided an update and response from a question presented at the May 21 COA meeting directly related to COA Bylaws, Article III, Member section. Boards and Commissions were discussed at the June 12 Board of Commissioners meeting. One of the Board Strategic Plan items is to review all the Boards and Commissions Bylaws and update for consistency across the organization.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL: July 16, 2025

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chairperson Heavener, supported by Jim Storey. All in favor, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:51am. Next Meeting July 16, 2025 from 9:00 am-11:00 am in the Zimmerman Room at the Human Services Building.



The Source for Seniors

May 29, 2025

Gale Dugan County Board Chair
Allegan County Board of Commissioners
3283 122nd Avenue
Allegan, MI 49010

Dear Commissioner Dugan,

Enclosed is the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan's (AAAWM) proposed Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for fiscal year 2025.

Upon approval by the State of Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging in August 2025, this plan will secure funding for programs and services that benefit older adults and caregivers, in Allegan County from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

We kindly request your County Commission's written approval of this plan. Please ensure your response is received by AAWM on or before July 19, 2025. If we do not hear from you by this date, we will assume the County Commission's implied approval of the plan.

Please send your response to:

Sheri Harris, Director of Advocacy and Planning
3215 Eaglecrest Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Alternatively, you can email a response to: Sherih@aaawm.org

If the Commission does not support the AIP, please let me know. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached via email at sherih@aaawm.org, fax at 616-456-5692, or by phone at 616-222-7015.

Sincerely,

Sheri Harris, Director of Advocacy and Planning

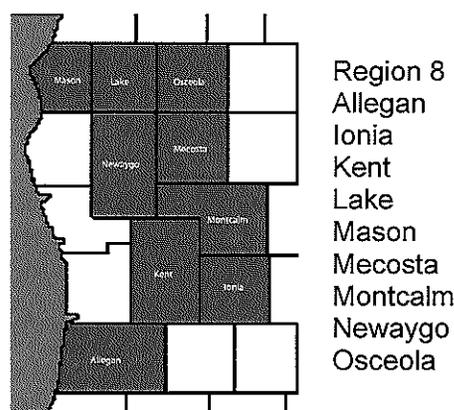
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Allegan County Administration

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan: The Plan Summary FY26

Since its founding in April 1974, the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) has been at the forefront of ensuring older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers across Region 8—spanning Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Newaygo, and Osceola counties—have equitable access to the support they need to age with dignity and independence. With a blend of internal expertise, collaborative partnerships, and strategic advocacy, AAAWM continues to lead with innovation and compassion.



Strategic Progress: Building for the Future

We continue progress in meeting our 2024-2026 Overarching Strategic Plan goals by engaging in new initiatives with agencies to develop partnerships to help diversify funding and expand to meet unfulfilled needs. We have implemented a strategic marketing calendar to build brand awareness to increase referrals to services and are in the process of implementing a new database to track those referrals and strengthen outreach and support region wide. We continue to focus on advocacy to have a greater impact on policy changes and improve our legislative influence by representing those we serve and communicating their needs.

Strengthening Internal Capacity

To ensure AAAWM remains an inclusive workplace, we have refined our recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retention practices. These enhancements are paired with ongoing educational opportunities to support professional development and cultivate a collaborative, mission-driven workforce.

Addressing Senior Housing

We're in active discussions with senior housing agencies to confront the rising cost of rent and the growing number of older adults being priced out of their homes. These partnerships are vital to our strategy in addressing housing instability and home maintenance challenges.

Advocacy in Action

Through steadfast advocacy, we helped secure an additional \$3 million in funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) program, adding two full-time LTCO positions to our region and contributing to the statewide goal of 33 new positions. Our FY25 advocacy priorities remain focused on the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the sustainability of the MI Choice Waiver program, lifelines that provide essential services such as meals, caregiver support, and transportation.

In FY25, our advocacy efforts were grounded in building intentional, long-term relationships with legislators throughout our region. These relationships have allowed us to elevate the visibility of the issues facing older adults and individuals with disabilities, while ensuring our elected officials are informed partners in advancing policies that support these populations. Through consistent engagement, education, and collaboration, we have positioned ourselves as a trusted resource on aging and long-term care issues.

Looking ahead to FY26, our advocacy work will continue to build on these priorities, while also adapting to the evolving policy landscape. We will closely monitor and respond to proposed changes at both the federal and state levels, particularly around Medicaid and OAA funding. As these conversations unfold, we will work to ensure that the voices of older adults and those who serve them remain central to decision-making processes.

Financial Stewardship Amid Changing Funding Streams

We have monitored the Older Americans Act (OAA) funding with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), dollars ending in FY24. By maintaining ongoing conversations with our partner agencies and reviewing spending monthly, we are on track with our OAA spending to avoid any funding cliffs, due to phasing out ARPA dollars. We continue to monitor spending with the anticipated carryover cap resuming at the end of FY26.

AAAWM recently received a MDOT grant in collaboration with our transportation service partners that will help expand service and assist with rising transportation costs.

Caregiver Support: Expanding and Innovating

Caregivers are at the heart of aging in place, and we've taken bold steps to support them. AAWM opened a new Caregiver Resource Center, expanded caregiver programming through the Caregiver Resource Grant, and launched innovative initiatives like the Caregiver Supplemental Service and Kinship Grandparent Back-to-School Gift Card Program. These initiatives provide both urgent assistance and long-term support, and feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive.

Through the **Caregiver Resource Center Grant**, we have been able to expand support to caregivers in our region. We renovated part of our building to create a Caregiver Resource

Center where we host caregiver events and programs and have partnered with Impart Alliance for them to conduct DCW Trainings to those interested in joining the much-needed DCW workforce. Programs we have provided under this grant include the Dementia Caregiving Series, Self Care and Mindfulness, Hands-On Skills Training for Informal Caregivers, and expanded the Caregiver Supplemental Service to assist with one-time caregiver needs. We were also able to translate our caregiver service brochures and resources to various languages to increase access to the important services and information. We have been able to take many of these programs out across our region to meet caregivers where they are at and have received positive feedback from these programs.

We've also translated key caregiver resources into multiple languages, improving access and inclusivity across our region.

Nutrition: Beyond the Meal

While home-delivered and congregate meals remain foundational, we recognize that nutrition is about more than food. That's why, looking ahead to FY27, we're exploring partnerships to launch nutrition education and counseling services that address holistic dietary needs for older adults and their caregivers.

Options Counseling & Person-Centered Services

AAAWM is deepening its commitment to person-centered care through the expansion of our Options Counseling services. In collaboration with Regions 4 and 14, we are preparing to roll out Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC) alongside SHIP/MIPPA services in FY25. Until full implementation, we continue delivering both Options Counseling and MMAP services without interruption—ensuring clients have access to resources and support that match their individual needs.

Data-Driven Equity: Prioritizing Those Most in Need

Serving those facing the greatest economic and social barriers is not just a goal, it is our mandate. We consistently analyze year-end service data, communicate expectations to our partners, and refine strategies using Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) data. These efforts help us reach underserved populations and promote health equity across our diverse communities.

Community Engagement and Visibility

Our visibility strategy has focused on reaching underserved communities through local expos and marketing events. These touchpoints allow us to connect directly with community members, build relationships, and ensure that resources are known, trusted, and accessible.

Veterans Services: Honoring Those Who Served

AAAWM proudly leads in serving veterans through the Veteran-Directed Home and Community-Based Services (VD-HCBS) program, becoming the first AAA in the country to do so. We've partnered with the Battle Creek VA Medical Center to support mental health summits, connected caregivers with services, and conducted staff training to deepen our understanding of veteran needs. These efforts ensure veterans receive the high-quality, personalized care they deserve.

A Year of Impact

In FY24, AAAWM and its partners served over 15,700 clients—an incredible milestone that reflects the dedication of our network. Our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren initiative provided essential back-to-school assistance to 52 families, while our advocacy helped strengthen key aging programs statewide.

Caregiver support was expanded through hands-on training, mindfulness programs, and caregiver events hosted at our newly renovated Caregiver Resource Center. Interpreter services and improved communication strategies are in development to further reduce access barriers for diverse populations.

Looking Ahead

As we move into FY25 and beyond, AAAWM remains committed to innovation, inclusion, and advocacy. We're navigating challenges within the MI Choice Waiver program, adapting to the evolving policy landscape, and embracing strategies that keep person-centered care at the core of everything we do. Through bold leadership, collaborative partnerships, and a clear mission for the future, we will continue to uplift and empower the aging population of Western Michigan.