



AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

778 W. State St., El Centro, CA 92243
800.510.2020 | 442.265.7030 | www.aaa24.org

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, May 20, 2021

Proceedings:

The Imperial County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council met for a regular meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. via ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89725703645?pwd=QU1YSTNKT3lMbTg1aGZ1d3ZwR0ZzZz09>

Phone Number: +1 669 900-6833 | Meeting ID: 897 2570 3645 | Passcode: 286939

Voting Attendees:

Patsy Becerra
AJ Gaddis
John Hernandez
Benjamin J. Horton
Paul R. Monarrez
Virginia Ward
Veronica Wright
Helen Lopez
Daniel Romero
Oreda Chin
Javier Moreno
Sedalia Sanders
Terry Swing
Ismael Lopez
Manuel Sanchez

Representing Sector:

District 2
District 3
District 4
District 5
Disabled Interest
League of Cities
Senior Advocate
CSL – Senate
CSL – Assembly
Senior Organization
Law Enforcement
At-Large
At-Large
At-Large Alternate
At-Large Alternate

Non-Voting Attendees/Providers:

Sarah Enz
Madeline Dessert
Karla Flores
Joanna Zepeda
Marisol Luna
Monica Veliz De Leon
Heather Murray
Polo Salazar
Ivan Romero
Guadalupe Rodriguez
Daniel Glaser
Gil Rebolgar
Karla Corte
Sandra G. Alvarez

Acting Public Administrator / ICAAA Director
ICAAA Department Fiscal Manager
ICAAA Long Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator
ICAAA Administrative Analyst I
ICAAA Information & Assistance Coordinator
ICAAA Information & Assistance Coordinator
County of Imperial, Council
Catholic Charities, Program Manager
Catholic Charities, Quality Assurance Manager
Catholic Charities, Director of Outreach Imperial Valley
Elder Law & Advocacy, Attorney
County of Imperial Administration Office, Public Information Officer
Alzheimer’s Association
Adult Protective Services

Absent:

Gloria Grijalva
Sup. Ray Castillo
Mike Lara
Patricia A. Thompson
Lourdes Ramirez
Sup. Mike Kelley

District 1
County of Imperial
Senior Advocate
Service Provider
HICAP
At-Large Alternate



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Agenda Item / Action Taken:

I. FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL (MEMBERS), AND INTRODUCTIONS (GUESTS):

Chair Virginia Ward called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Flag Salute and Roll call were completed and quorum was established. Staff introduced guests.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Helen Lopez motioned to approve the April 15, 2021, Advisory Council meeting minutes as presented. Patsy Becerra seconded the motion. Chair called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays nor abstentions.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Virginia Ward opened up the floor for Public Comments; none received.

IV. ACTION ITEMS:

- a) **Chair to appoint Nominating Committee of not less than three (3) Advisory Council members to provide a recommendation to Advisory Council on providing vote of confidence to current officers and council members with terms expiring this Fiscal Year**

Chair Virginia Ward went over duties that will need to be accomplished by the Ad-hoc Nominating Committee. She asked for volunteers to appoint to this committee. Mr. Benjamin Horton and Patsy Becerra volunteered to join the committee. No other members volunteered. Chair Virginia Ward asked staff to check with the following two members that were not present for their availability: Veronica Wright and Patricia A. Thompson.

Chair Ward appointed the following members to the Ad-hoc Nominating Committee:

- Benjamin J. Horton
- Patsy Becerra
- Veronica Wright (once staff confirms)
- Patricia Thompson (once staff confirms)

V. PRESENTATIONS:

- a) **Elder Law & Advocacy – Legal Assistance and HICAP Programs – Daniel Glaser, Attorney**

Daniel Glaser, Attorney with Elder Law & Advocacy, introduced himself and let Advisory Council know that he will present on the Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) on behalf of Lourdes Ramirez, the HICAP Coordinator. HICAP provides confidential, one-on-one guidance and counseling for Medicare, Long-Term Care Insurance, and other insurance issues. Counselors help seniors understand their rights, provide educational presentations to the community, and help seniors plan for the future. Counseling and advocacy is available to seniors 60 years of age or older and to individuals younger than 60 years old if they have a disability. Community Education is offered to all age groups. HICAP provides assistance with enrollment, disenrollment, claims, appeals, hospital bills, and other insurance coverage issues.



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HICAP provides guidance to seniors with supplemental insurance, also known as Medigaps. The funding is covered by region which includes both Imperial County and San Diego County. HICAP program has seen a reduction in numbers this year. For Fiscal Year 2020-2021, HICAP has completed 44 intakes with 87 hours of time and one virtual community education event. This dramatic drop is due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Overall, the medical industry has seen a 20% drop in utilization of medical services. People are delaying their appointments and not seeking medical attention. HICAP advises people against this but unfortunately, the numbers have dropped. HICAP continues to recruit for volunteers. If interested please call David Weil at (858) 565-1392 or the local office at (760) 353-0223. The HICAP Hot Line number is (800) 434-0222. This concluded the HICAP portion of the presentation. He opened up for questions. None received.

Daniel Glaser continued his presentation with the Senior Legal Services. This program provides legal assistance to seniors, age 60 years old or older. This Fiscal Year they have 182 closed cases with a total of 365.3 hours completed. They also currently have 36 open cases with 47.6 hours. However, these numbers are lower than anticipated. He urged the Council to refer seniors that needed assistance with any legal matter. The most beneficial part of these services is providing assistance in drafting Power of Attorney and Advance Directive documents. However, a drop in requests for this services has been seen. Due to the pandemic, the office has remained closed but Elder Law & Advocacy continues to operate virtually via phone, email, and fax.

Elder Law & Advocacy also provides Caregiver Legal Services, which provides legal assistance to the caregivers or family members of people age 60 years old or older or dependent adults of any age. A dependent adult is someone that has advance Alzheimer's or Dementia or a developmental disability of any kind. Elder Law & Advocacy currently has 51 closed cases with 108.9 hours and 11 open cases with 12.6 hours for their Caregiver Legal Assistance service. Numbers are also low for this service.

Elder Law & Advocacy has held four community education events this year in conjunction with Adult Protective Services, Imperial County Area Agency on Aging, and Catholic Charities' Foster Grandparents group.

Elder Law & Advocacy will continue to operate remotely until their office is open, in about five weeks. Their office is moving to the basement of the courthouse in El Centro next to the back entrance. This will allow for individual offices for appointments. During the pandemic, it's been challenging to work with seniors who prefer to meet in person and shy away from calling or communicating via other means such as email or fax. Having said that, an increase caregiver calls has been seen. However, seniors do need to call to request services such as Power of Attorney and Advanced Directives. This concluded the presentation. Mr. Glaser opened up for questions, none were received.



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b) Imperial County Area Agency on Aging – Dignity At Home Fall Prevention Program – Marisol Luna, Information & Assistance Coordinator

Marisol Luna started her presentation with the mission of the Dignity At Home Fall Prevention Program, which is to reduce the number of debilitating falls that are suffered by older adults and people with disabilities. The funding, received from the Dignity At Home Fall Prevention, is being used to purchase injury prevention items and provide information on fall prevention to those accessing the program. The equipment provided is: a set of nightlights, a safety mat, and either a bath chair or grab bar. In order to qualify for the program a person must be 60 years of age or older or have a disability, have an income of less than 80% of the area median income, and be at high risk of falling. Marisol Luna reviewed the income limit graph. All information and equipment will be provided to seniors at their home once the intake is completed and the proof of income is provided to ICAAA. Marisol Luna concluded her presentation by showing a “6 Steps to Prevent Falls” video and links to other fall prevention resources. She opened up for questions.

AJ Gaddis asked how often the video was shown. Marisol Luna informed her that she showed the video to seniors participating in the program and at any community presentations.

Sandra Alvarez, APS, asked what the referral process would be. Marisol Luna informed her that she would complete the application. Sarah Enz clarified that anyone interested should call the office at (442) 265-7033 or directly with Marisol Luna at (442) 265-7040. This program is a one year contract and will end on June 30, 2021.

Ismael Lopez asked for the link for the video to be shared again.

Marisol Luna then shared pictures of the items that are being provided to the seniors: shower chair, grab bar, safety mat, and the set of four night lights.

Chair Virginia Ward asked whether any exercises were being provided to seniors. Marisol Luna responded that all information, including exercise plans, were provided to the senior in their home along with the equipment.

Manuel Sanchez, stated that this is a great program since Physical Therapy is great for improving balance. He was glad a program like this was being offered to seniors.

This concluded the presentation and no further questions were asked.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Virginia Ward asked Committee Chairs to provide a report for each committee.

Executive /Planning & Finance Committee: Ward asked AJ Gaddis to provide an update on the Executive/Planning & Finance Committee Meeting that took place on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. California Department of Aging (CDA) provided recommendation to award a one-year contract to Catholic Charities for the Senior Nutrition Program. The committee reviewed a



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summary that was provided by Sarah Enz regarding this matter. The Executive/Planning & Finance Committee decided to follow the recommendations from CDA. However, the Committee also recommended to move forward with filing an appeal to help them understand the process and understand the rights of the Advisory Council in making a selection locally. Committee felt that the decision and efforts made were not considered. The Committee will also look into the non-profit vs for-profit status of providers. Is it required for the providers to be non-profit? Finally, they will ask for additional guidance on the request for proposal (RFP) process.

Helen Lopez, clarified that CDA's response indicated that they could not make a decision on changing provider because the RFP process followed was flawed. Thus, they were allowing an extension on the current contract.

Further discussion followed regarding communication from CDA. AJ Gaddis stated that CDA keeps updating guidance for the RFP process. She took the time to provide kudos to staff and to the Advisory Council Members that participated in the RFP process for a work well done!

Legislative Committee: Helen Lopez advised Advisory Council that she had sent a Legislative Report via email earlier in the day and asked them to read it. A Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 17, 2021. Meeting invite will be sent out by staff soon.

Nutrition Committee: Chair Virginia Ward reported that the committee met on Thursday, May 13, 2021. They discussed the monitoring process. Unfortunately the committee was unable to monitor the Congregate Sites this Fiscal Year due to their closure caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Oreda Chin also reported that the committee discussed the reopening of Congregate sites. She mentioned that June 15th is the anticipated opening date. Sarah Enz clarified that June 15th was the anticipated date for opening up California per Governor Newsom. Plans are already underway for the reopening of the Congregate sites but those needed to comply with local Public Health guidelines. She invited Polo Salazar to provide an update. Polo Salazar provided an updated for each site as well as an estimated opening date. However, he reminded Council that actual opening dates would be dependent on local Public Health approval and the sites' own reopening plans.

Madeline Dessert, ICAAA Fiscal Manager, was happy to report that Catholic Charities recently remodeled the kitchen and dining areas in the El Centro Main Site at Desert Villas Apartments. The imperial County Public Health Department inspected the site and awarded of score of 98. AJ Gaddis requested pictures for the newly remodeled kitchen and dining site. Ms. Dessert offered a tour of the remodeled facilities to the Nutrition Committee.

Polo Salazar also reported that the volunteers from Senior Companions and CalWorks have returned to work. This allows Catholic Charities to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables in their meals. This concluded the Nutrition Committee report.



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Transportation Committee: Chair Ward reported that the committee met and discussed transportation needs. The committee is also planning to ride the bus line to help them get a better idea of the needs in that area. AJ Gaddis said that the best way to understand the need is to go on a ride and that's what they are doing. They are also trying to figure out a way to promote the transportation lines as fun. Transportation in other areas are used for tourism and she would like to do that locally. Chair Ward invited other Advisory Council Members to join them as they tour the valley on bus. This concluded the Transportation Committee report.

Social & Health Committee: Manuel Sanchez reported that the Social & Health Committee met and enjoyed a presentation from Sara Griffen and Alba Sanchez, from the Imperial Valley Food Bank. The concern regarding long lines at distribution sites for seniors has been addressed by having distributions at Senior Apartment complexes. The Committee will meet again next month to discuss other topics that were brought up. Before moving forward, Oreda Chin reported that the Imperial Valley Food Bank provides distribution of food through their Mobile Food Pantry program but is still in need of additional distribution sites and volunteers. She invited members that may have any new ideas for distribution sites to let the Social & Health Committee know. This concluded the Social & Health Committee report.

VII. INFORMATION:

The informational items included in the agenda packets consisted of the following: the attendance roster, the California Department of Aging (CDA) Master Plan For Aging, the 2021-2022 Annual Area Plan Update – Public Hearings Schedule, and information on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Before moving into the Director's Report, AJ Gaddis asked for the purpose of the Master Plan on Aging and how that is used for our local plan? Sarah Enz informed the Council that Governor Newsom had ordered an alignment of all services offered to older adults and disabled adults in California. He would use the plan to allocate funding for programs that were part of this Master Plan on Aging. Sarah Enz equates the State Plan to that of our local Area Plan. AJ Gaddis asked how our local Area Plan aligns with State's Master Plan and does that help with funding? Sarah Enz explained that our local ICAAA is already offering the services included in the Master Plan except that it does not currently have the ADRC designation. Sarah Enz hopes that we can get that designation established soon with the help of Helen Lopez and partnering with the Independent Living centers. The ADRC designation would allow the agency to provide services to both older adults and young disabled individuals. Most of the Public Administrator clients are young disabled individuals that would benefit from these services. AJ Gaddis asked what ADRC stands for. Helen Lopez informed the Council that ADRC stands for Adult and Disabled Resource Center. Helen Lopez stated that the letter of intent has been submitted and they are working to get this established for Imperial County. She also reported that she sends out emails and workgroup invites to the Advisory Council regarding the Master Plan of Aging. If anyone is interested in participating with the Master Plan, all they have to do is Google Master Plan on Aging. This



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will provide a list of work groups to participate in virtually. Manuel Sanchez commented that he was very impressed by the Master Plan, that it was very well put together.

Sarah Enz stated that funding is allocated to us by the number of seniors in the area. Helen Lopez reported that this area does get a small bump for being rural but nothing more. This concluded this discussion.

VIII. AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Sarah Enz provided the Director's Report. She reported that the senior meals are going strong with Catholic Charities and Mom's Meals providing meals to the seniors in our community. She reminded the Advisory Council that the Fiscal Year is coming to an end and that program will start again.

She invited the Advisory Council to read the Ombudsman and Information & Assistance reports. They continue to provide services every month.

Relief bags are still available but are being delivered per request and emergency-need only. Sarah Enz reported that ICAAA has a large number of shelf stable food boxes available for delivery to seniors in our community. The food included in this box is: crackers, oatmeal, beans, and other staples. Please have anyone in need contact the ICAAA office to request these shelf-stable food boxes.

Sarah Enz thanked AJ Gaddis and Helen Lopez who earlier reported on the Executive/Planning & Financing Committee. Sarah Enz reported that CDA did not approve the award of the Senior Nutrition Program contract to a for-profit entity. The Executive/Planning & Finance Committee has recommended the Advisory Council award a non-competitive one year contract to the current provider, Catholic Charities. Unfortunately, due to the timing on when the notices was received from CDA, this action item was not included in this agenda for discussion. In order to not delay the process, the Advisory Council June Meeting will need to be moved from June 17th to June 3rd. Further discussion followed. Advisory Council members suggested to hold a special meeting to discuss this item on June 3rd and still keep the June 17th regularly scheduled meeting. Staff will consult with County Counsel and send out the invitations once a response is received.

Sarah Enz reminded Advisory Council to submit Form 700 to the registrar of voters. She also reminded them to complete the CDA Privacy and Information Security Training and send a copy of their certificate of completion to Monica De Leon by the deadline of June 15, 2021.

AJ Gaddis advised members that if they serve on more than one board that requires Form 700 that they can include both on one form. Helen Lopez added that the form requires a wet signature so it must be submitted to the Admin Building. Monica Veliz De Leon reminded them to submit it to the Registrar of Voters or Elections Office. She also informed the Advisory Council that the form is due annually on the April 1 but that she will make sure to remind them every year.

This concluded the Director's Report.



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IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Chair Ward opened up the floor for announcements.

Virginia Ward invited members to join the City of Holtville in their Farmer's Market to be held on Thursday, May 27, 2021, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Hope Park in Holtville, CA.

Helen Lopez wanted to publicly thank AJ Gaddis and three other individuals that helped with the AARP Free Tax Assistance program. They provided service from the same location as the Campesinos Unidos VITAE program and formed a great alliance. The individuals that helped were Rosalynn Guerrero, Veronica Alvarez, Letty Taylor, and of course our own AJ Gaddis. Any one of these three folks would be a great addition to the Advisory Council team.

AJ Gaddis announced that Soroptimist International of El Centro will be having a Bingo fundraising event on June 14, 2021, at 6:30 pm. The fundraising includes a Virtual Silent Auction. If anyone is interested please let AJ Gaddis know and she will be glad to share a flyer with them.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Chair Virginia Ward opened up the floor for future agenda items. None were received.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Virginia Ward adjourned the meeting at 10:38 AM.

Sarah Enz
Acting ICAAA Director

Monica Veliz De Leon
Recording Clerk