



**Serving Eastern Maine
Since 1973**

**Area Plan
2012 - 2016**

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VERIFICATION OF INTENT

The Area Plan on Aging is hereby submitted for the Eastern Area Agency on Aging Planning and Service Area for the period FY 2012 through FY 2016. It includes all assurances and plans to be followed by the Eastern Area Agency on Aging under provisions of the Older Americans Act, as amended during the period identified. The Area Agency identified will assume full authority to develop and administer the Area Plan on Aging in accordance with all requirements of the Act and related State policy. In accepting this authority the Area Agency assumes major responsibility to develop and administer the Area Plan for a comprehensive and coordinated system of services and to serve as the advocate and focal point for older people in the planning and service area.

The Area Plan on Aging has been developed in accordance with all rules and regulations specified under the Older Americans Act and are hereby submitted to the State Agency on Aging for approval.

May ____, 2012 (Signed) _____
Noëlle L. Merrill, Executive Director
Eastern Area Agency on Aging

The governing body of the Area Agency has reviewed and approved the Area Plan on Aging.

May ____, 2012 (Signed) _____
Virginia Fortier
President of Board of Directors

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Eastern Area Agency on Aging to be the best source of information, options, and services for seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers.

VALUES

Upholding the following values will be at the core of Eastern Area Agency on Aging's efforts as we work to meet the goals and objectives of this area plan:

◆ *Individual*

We value:

- independence, and efforts to preserve it throughout the aging process
- older persons as individuals and respect their rights to self-determination
- good physical, emotional, and mental health -- living well and aging well
- older persons right to choice

◆ *Community*

We value:

- older persons as a group, with an active voice and role in their communities
- collaboration among community members, individuals, and groups to fulfill our vision
- community spirit and strength through cooperation and communication
- partnerships with non profit and for profit members of the business communities

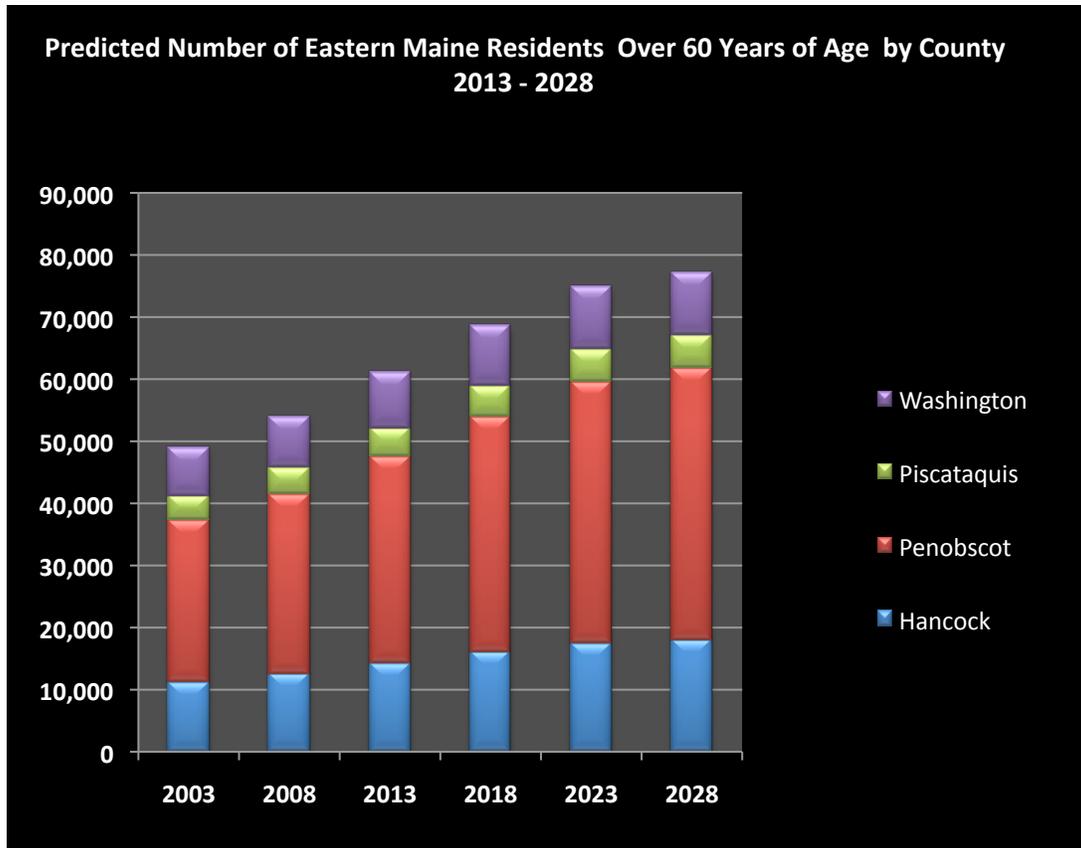
◆ *Workplace*

We value:

- Employees as individuals as well as part of a cohesive unit with a shared vision
- creativity and a working environment that fosters it
- productivity and employees with a strong work ethic
- integrity and accountability
- honesty and open communication
- responsiveness through accessibility, flexibility and the ability to listen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maine’s Aging Population: (The following graph taken from numbers provided by “Maine Population Outlook, Maine County and State Population Projections 2013 – 2028”, March 2010 Economics and Demographics Team, State Planning Office.)



Area Plan Guiding Vision

"A Maine Where Seniors, Caregivers and Individuals with Disabilities
Enjoy Life to the Fullest"

By 2016, Eastern Area Agency on Aging, as the major contributor and connector of services for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers, will have an established presence that is visible to all who might benefit from our services. There is a new social consciousness of seniors, where the focus is on possibilities vs. limitations and positive expectations vs. learned helplessness - where people live their lives with purpose to the very last day. We help our clients remain

independent and stay in their homes and communities, where they are best served and desire to be. This will be accomplished by:

- providing a well-known, central resource to all seniors, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers;
- spurring creative and innovative solutions to the needs of our constituencies, through community efforts and legislative changes;
- collaborating with other organizations and eliminating duplication of effort;
- directly providing services in addition to information and resources;
- effectively using technology to extend our reach and reduce costs of services; and
- securing increased and diversified funding to guarantee our ability to deliver this Vision.

As a result, we will significantly advance the health and welfare of seniors, individuals with disabilities and caregivers. The impact of our work will be measurable, recognized and respected as a vital part of Maine's quality of place.

Agency Information

Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA) was established in 1973, and serves Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Washington counties, a rural area of approximately 13,000 square miles. EAAA bases staff in home offices throughout the region utilizing partnerships and volunteers to provide services. Goals included in this plan will include empowering consumers to make informed decisions about their own care through a broad use of media; helping them stay in their own homes as long as possible through programs such as, but not limited to nutrition services, home repairs, transportation, technology, care navigation and providing evidence-based programs to help consumers reduce their risk of disease, disability and injury.

Media

We fully expect to see a large increase in the number of seniors seeking and needing help in the next four years. Utilizing volunteers, technology, partnerships and media will be key to our efforts going forward. Annual events that draw large numbers of seniors to central locations will enable us to link many of our consumers with valuable service information. Regular scheduled media events already have put EAAA on the map for consumers of all ages and will continue

into the future thanks to our television, radio and print partners. 39 community cafés provide regional venues for staffs, volunteers and agency executives to provide regular outreach, focus group and educational and health related activities. A fully functional and technologically current website, complete with live chat will serve consumers and caregivers throughout the state.

Information and Assistance

Providing the assistance consumers need is essential. EAAA will continue to provide a live person answering the main telephone. Staff and volunteers will provide regular outreach and benefits enrollment meetings throughout the region as well as offer individual consultations. Working with local universities, we plan to develop Nutrition Improvement Counselors to educate clients about the importance of a good balanced diet. Caregivers will have access to support groups and a variety of training opportunities. Training more of our staff in options counseling is key to providing more comprehensive help to greater numbers of individuals.

Services to Help Older Adults Remain Safely in Their Homes

We will continue to operate a network of 39 plus Community Cafés by partnering with churches, senior housing, municipalities and schools. Benefits counseling will help older people stretch their limited funds so they are more able to pay for their heating and cooling needs. Facilitating programs driven by private donors will offer unique fixes to Eastern Maine's challenging winter. Offering affordable meal alternatives to those older people unable to qualify for Title III meal services, yet who desperately need help in maintaining a balanced diet will improve health for many of our regions' seniors. Folding our Housekeeping, Rides for Me and Phone Friends into the Elder Buddies Program will streamline access to these options and offer many more opportunities for volunteers.

Elder Abuse and Rights of the Elderly

EAAA currently hosts and provides fiscal management of the Penobscot County TRIAD, whose goals are to educate seniors about the various types of fraud and crime, to help reduce fear and provide moral support for older persons and to use trained volunteers to assist law enforcement agencies. One of the main projects of this TRIAD has been to offer low-cost reflective number signs to as many homes as possible, and distributing the File of Life.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be educated and trained on identifying elder abuse. We are developing quick links to be available on the EAAA website making it easier for consumers to report elder abuse of all variety.

EAAA provides funding to support Legal Services for the Elderly (LSE), whose mission is to provide free, high quality legal services to Maine's socially and economically needy elderly aged 60 and over. We also provide one LSE staff with low cost space in our Bangor office.

The Community Cafés are regional focal points where we will continue to provide education, trainings and outreach on the subject of elder safety, scams and abuse.

Goals of the Area Plan

Going forward, we plan to improve and enhance our role as the “one-stop shopping” service for seniors, adults with a disability and caregivers. Given the limited options for long-term care in our region, we understand firsthand the importance of providing the necessary services for people to remain safely in their homes for the long-term. Our programs, partnerships and efforts are all designed for our rural territory and will continue to be a mainstay for seniors who want to remain in their own communities for the rest of this decade.

CONTEXT

Eastern Area Agency on Aging strives to meet the unique and complex needs of older persons living in its four county, 13,000 square mile service area with a mix of direct services and connecting people to partner services. The needs vary due to circumstances, such as living alone as opposed to living with a spouse, family member, or in a senior housing situation; being a caregiver, or needing services as a disabled person. Different needs such as transportation crop up for seniors depending on whether they live in rural areas or in town. Income, health and help from family and friends are factors when determining seniors’ needs.

Demographics

The number of residents over 65 years of age is expected to double in the next decade and Maine is currently the oldest state based on median age. Based on the US 2010 Census Quick Facts, there are currently 42,277 residents over 65 living in EAAA’s extremely rural service area. The poverty rate for Maine’s elders

is higher than that in the US as a whole. Based on three-year estimates from the Census American Community Survey the poverty rate in 2008-2010 for those aged 65 and over in Maine was 10.1 percent, while nationally it was 9.4 percent. The four counties served by Eastern Area Agency on Aging poverty rate for those 65 and older averages 10.5 percent. Piscataquis and Washington counties having the highest rates – 12.6 and 12.7 percent. Hancock and Penobscot counties having the lowest – 7.3 and 9.4 percent.

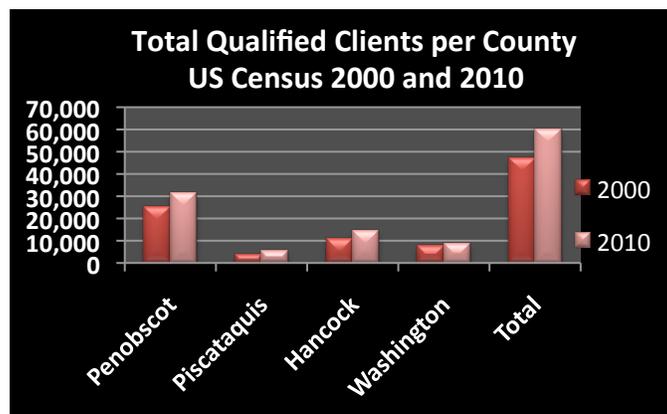
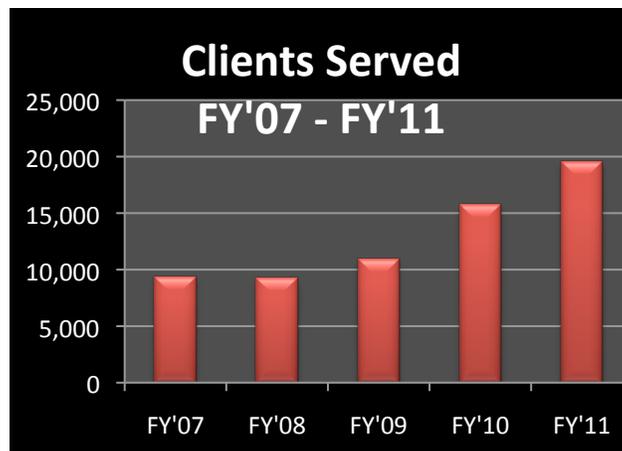
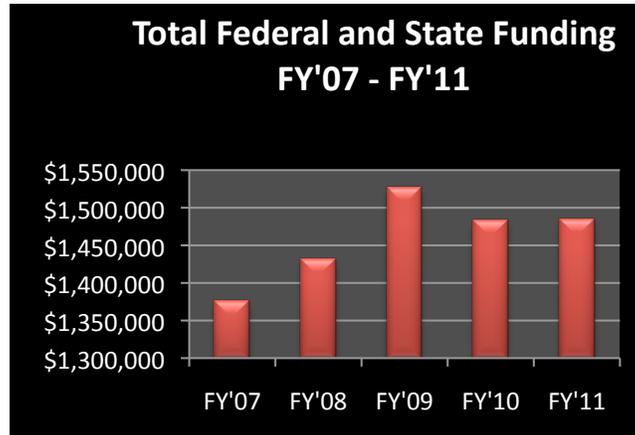
Maine Seniors at Risk

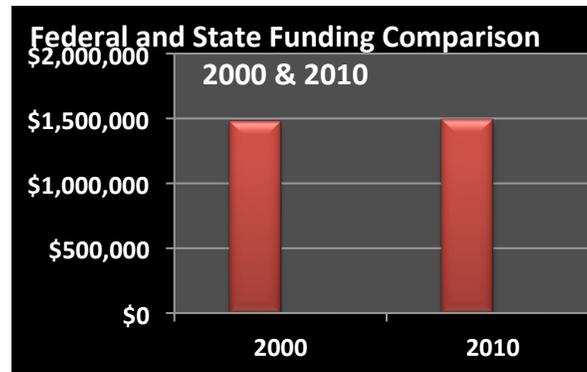
Maine is the “oldest” state in the nation and seniors in Maine live in poverty at higher rates than the national average. That creates unique challenges. Many seniors struggle to pay medical bills, purchase prescription drugs, heat their homes, and keep food on the table, all within a fixed income which is often less than \$1,000/month. Major increases in the cost of heating oil and deep federal cuts in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program mean many seniors will struggle to stay warm this winter. Advocacy and enabling seniors to self advocate is an important role for EAAA during these challenging times of complex governmental and regulatory change.

Resources

Flat funding has been a matter of course for this agency. Restricted grants and restrictive rules have limited the agency’s ability to directly address many of the services that are desperately needed. The Title III allotment to EAAA of \$1,079,535 plus match would only provide a meager \$31/person/year for services if all residents over 65 needed assistance. EAAA resources are prioritized for those most in need and in the last 12 months more than 17,000 seniors, caregivers and adults with a disability were served. The agency’s 45 member staff is spread over 24 separate programs. The agency’s general fund has dwindled because of rising demand and limited resources. This year, waiting lists for services were established for the first time in two decades. Despite the rising need for more transportation; domestic and other abuse; care navigation; home care help; home modification, trainings, and the myriad of other gaps in requested, our efforts can only go so far. Volunteers are struggling to deliver meals due to the high cost of vehicle fuel and as a consequence, we are now delivering frozen meals. In short, the agency is doing its best to help consumers stay in the community for the long-term. With no expected increases in funding for community based resources, the gaps and needs will grow.

The following graphs illustrate the challenge of serving a growing demand with no expected increases in funding in sight and ever increasing costs for operations.





Needs Assessment

Eastern Area Agency on Aging’s board established four Regional Advisory Councils in the fall of 2010 and planned a vigorous schedule of public meetings to address the need for more input from geographically different and distant communities. The process of inviting 24 members from around the four counties to meet quarterly in Bangor was proving ineffective in providing guidance to the agency. Included in this needs assessment are the gaps in service identified by participants in EAAA’s regional public meetings held in 2011.

Transportation has dominated many of the public discussions we facilitate. In 2010, with the help of a Weinberg Foundation Rural Caregiver Grant, we surveyed 3,000+ consumers 60 years of age and older living in Washington County. There were 973 surveys returned, a 27% result. Less than 20 persons reported having difficulty getting to where they needed to go and 512 respondents reported they had no awareness of any public transportation in the area. Most notable was that no matter what the respondent’s age, they didn’t think they would need transportation help in five years.

In addition, using Weinberg Foundation Rural Caregiver Grant funds, the University of Maine Center on Aging conducted surveys and focus groups to develop an asset and gap map for both Hancock and Washington counties.

Key findings in Washington County pointed to the need for more streamlined access to services, making respite more affordable and available, and the need for support groups and targeted trainings. Respondents recommended that providers address the issue of barriers to accessing programs and increasing service coordination including developing networks of professionals that could exchange resources and increase coordination among each other. Challenges mentioned include: a lack of transportation options, a lack of resources in the region, and the

tendency toward independence and individualism. Assets identified included: natural support networks that already exist, an inclination to help other community members, and existing programs and professionals who are viewed as resources.

Key findings in Hancock County revealed that there is a lack of individuals listening to caregiver concerns and providing guidance towards identifying and obtaining useful resources. Compensation for providing care, affordable services, and adequate numbers of professional caregivers were also discussed as resources that were lacking. Obstacles to supporting caregivers locally include doubts about trustworthiness and dependability of care workers, nonexistent or poorly advertised services, a lack of transportation options, and problematic regulations surrounding service eligibility. Lack of transportation options, income inequality, poverty and isolation were also mentioned as challenges. Respondents also wanted more workshops and training related to issues such as medications, personal care, dementia and Alzheimer's disease, other medical conditions, diets and nutrition, and caregiver self-care.

When EAAA altered its concept of advisory council and created regionally specific public meetings, called "Friends and Neighbors", much information was gathered about residents' needs and their issues to guide priority setting. From the summer of 2010 to November 2011, 14 meetings were held with a total of 121 community members in attendance. Numerous local providers, EAAA staff and volunteers also attended.

In some instances and because of the comments provided in these meetings, partnerships and service delivery was created in response to the obviousness of the need. An example of this occurred in Eastport when seniors complained about the lack of transportation from their town to other locations. Washington Hancock Community Agency staff was in attendance and within a short time, had developed a ride system for those residents. In Lubec, after listening to the community members, EAAA arranged for regular rides on a WHCA van from Lubec to Calais, Lubec to Machias and Lubec to Bangor all once a month and funded with EAAA's state medical transit funds.

One of the accomplishments of these meetings is that local residents are informed about the services of Eastern Area Agency on Aging and also of the other providers who attend. We know from our 2008 needs assessment that

word of mouth is a significant method of how Eastern Mainers receive and share information, so each attendee really represents many more.

The “Friends and Neighbors” meeting in Deer Isle identified the following as major needs of the community, which echoes other conversations held in EAAA’s four county region:

- Affordable housing
- Social isolation
- Jobs in the winter months
- Transportation
- Drug abuse
- Lack of activities for children and young people
- School is listed as a failing school
- No drugstores
- Economic class splits
- Literacy
- No opportunities for women
- Domestic abuse
- Lack of support for men
- Eating disorders
- Poverty

A “Friends and Neighbors” meeting was held on Indian Island with the Penobscot Indian Nation in the spring of 2011. Statistics provided by the tribe shows the following, all much greater percentages than national averages:

- 36% report having diabetes
- 32% had at least one fall in the last year
- 89% are overweight or obese
- 41% live alone
- 30% care for grandchildren

Indian Township Reservation in Princeton, Washington County, Maine, will host a “Friends and Neighbors” meeting in 2012 in response to a request for more help with the increasing number of tribal elders living much longer than in the past.

In addition, the University of New England and Critical Insights, a public opinion polling firm, was subcontracted to facilitate statewide focus groups, telephonic and internet based survey work to identify gaps. The ten most needed services from the focus group work of the UNE component were:

- Transportation
- Food/Nutrition
- Home Care/Homemaker
- Health/Social Care
- Financial Services
- Fuel Assistance
- Check-in Service
- Home Repair
- Medications/Prescriptions
- Life Line

Goals

1. Empower older people and their families to make informed decisions about, and be able to easily access, existing health and long-term care options.
2. Enable older adults to remain safely in their own homes ensuring a high quality of life, for as long as possible, through the provision of home and community-based services, including supports for family caregivers.
3. Empower older people to stay active, healthy and connected to their communities through employment, civic engagement, and evidence-based disease and disability prevention programs.
4. Protect the rights of older adults, and enhance the response to elder abuse.

These goals will be achieved through the most effective methods using Older Americans Act funds, state and private grants and donations. Grant contracts will reflect measurement expectations/techniques, and output data will be collected electronically in an aging services software product.