



**State of South Carolina**  
**Department on Aging**

**Henry McMaster**  
Governor

**Connie D. Munn, MSW**  
Director

May 1, 2023

The Honorable Joseph Jefferson  
Subcommittee Chair, Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Jefferson,

Please accept this letter as our official notification of our responses to the questions requested by the various members of the subcommittee.

We look forward to our next opportunity to present testimony to the Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee. Meanwhile, if you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie D. Munn".

Connie D. Munn, MSW

## Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Qualifications/Training/Services

- 1. Please provide the following information regarding Area Agency on Aging (AAA) directors.**
  - **Identify the requisite qualifications and skills required to serve in this position.**
  - **Identify the general responsibilities assigned to this position.**

The director of an AAA shall be qualified by education and experience to provide leadership in area-wide aging and disability programs. The director is to be an actively engaged and informed aging advocate who works to promote senior matters, and to educate the community on issues facing the aging network and the planning and service area. The aging unit director is full-time and shall devote at least 37 ½ hours per week solely to activities referenced in the area plan. If a AAA director is absent from work for an extended period or is temporarily unable to perform the assigned duties, the AAA shall notify the Department on Aging via PSAHelp@aging.sc.gov and provide the name and contact information for the acting director; Activities in the area plan consist of:

- Services that facilitate access, such as transportation, outreach, and information, referral and assistance;
- Services provided in the community, such as temporary respite at an adult day care center, congregate meals, employment services, insurance counseling, and legal assistance, as well as recreational, wellness, educational, and cultural services delivered at multi-purpose senior centers;
- Services provided in the home, such as home-delivered meals, minor home maintenance, homemaker services, housekeeping, in-home respite care, and telephone reassurance;
- Ombudsman services to residents of care-providing facilities; and
- Caregiver support services provided by respite.

- 2. If a new, inexperienced, AAA director were hired, what type of training would they receive and who would be responsible for providing that training?**

The Department on Aging trains the new Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) Directors and staff to ensure that orientation to aging services and programs is provided, Such as the State Health Insurance Program Assistance (SHIP), Family Caregiver, Information and Referral Assistance (I&R/A), Ombudsman, Assessments, Policy, and Accounting/Administration, to list a few. This training may be available through conference calls and virtual meetings, etc. The AAA Directors have the opportunity to identify and address training needs with the Department on Aging when necessary, thus allowing the AAA Directors to be forthcoming and proactive with their needs and to discuss specific statewide training needs for the programs and services with the Department on Aging.

- 3. What type of formal training should a newly hired AAA director receive, regardless of their level experience? Does agency leadership believe every AAA director has received this requisite training? If not, please explain why.**

See the answer above in the previous question. In addition, the only AAA director who has not been through orientation is Judy Richburg in Lower Savannah. Ms. Richburg, the new AAA from Upper Savannah and Central Midlands, will be trained in July. The agency is awaiting the hire of the AAA director in Central Midlands so that they can participate in the orientation together.

**4. Does the Department on Aging require AAA directors, and their staffs, to attend regularly scheduled mandatory trainings?**

- **If so, please list the topics covered in these trainings (e.g., Older Americans Act, finance, budgeting, etc.).**

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) has monthly scheduled meetings in which the following topics are covered: Policy, Program Development (resources, processes, tools), protocols and procedures, Advocate (title of the role within the regions) duties, caregiver needs, fiscal updates/Q&A, marketing and outreach, reporting, and self-care. Most of these meetings are virtual, and two are in person. Advocates are also included in the monthly I&R/A and Assessment training per their director's instruction unless it is a caregiver-specific resource, in which case the invitation is sent by the Program Manager.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) requires paid representatives of the Program to attend monthly training meetings. Topics range from federal and state law updates, Medicaid/Medicare, Transfer and Discharge, Consumer Protection, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation, regulatory changes, updates from other state agencies (ex. Attorney General's Office, DHHS, DHEC, DDSN), database documentation, volunteer recruitment and retention, etc.

Finance, SHIP, IR&A, and Assessors

- **If not, is there value in regularly recurring trainings designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's AAAs?**

**5. How many AAA directors are on corrective action plans? How does the agency work with these directors to correct the issues associated with the action plan?**

The SCDOA does not place an AAA director on Corrective Action Plans (CAP). It is the AAA agencies that are placed on CAPs when deficiencies on their monitoring reports are determined.

- One AAA for FCG, Assessments, and Fiscal
- One AAA for FCG and LTCOP
- One for Assessments and Homecare

The SCDOA reviews the plans and works with the AAA directors and their by providing any needed technical assistance (TA) to bring the program into compliance. The TA will consist of virtual and in-person assistance dependent on the specific needs of the region.

**6. Identify each AAA director and provide the following information: Name; Date hired; and Number of years serving as director.**

Name	Region/Organization	Experience
Tim Womack	Region I - Appalachia	September 2010 Interim Aging Director twice (while working as the Information & Referral/Assistance Specialist), then permanently beginning in June 2015  8 years as Director
Linda McAllister	Region II – Upper Savannah	-AAA Director – 2020 – Present -Aging Finance Director – 2010-2023 -COG 2010  3 years as Director (Retiring June 2023)
Barbara Robinson	Region III - Catawba	-AAA Director – November 2004 – Present  19 years as Director
Candice Holloway	Region IV – Central Midlands	Former AAA Director -2020-April 21, 2023 (Resigned) Central Midlands 5 ½ years  2.5 years as Director
Reginald Simmons	Region IV – Central Midlands	Interim AAA Director as of Monday April 24, 2023 Central Midlands 2004 – Present  19 years with Central Midlands
Judy Richburg	Region V – Lower Savannah	-AAA Director – October 2022-Present Director of Senior Programs, Aging in America – 2007-2013 -Program Administrator, Westchester Co. Dept. of Senior Program & Services – 1991-2007(OAA Title V Programs, Transportation, Various Programs)  8 months as Director
Janae Stowe	Region VI – Santee Lynches	AAA Director – 2019 – Present Santee Lynches -11 years total  3.5 years as Director
Sheila Welch	Region VII – Pee Dee	AAA Director 4/2004 - Present AAA-FCA 9/2001-4/2004 Marion County Council on Aging – 9/1999-11/2001  19 years as Director
Kim Harmon	Region VIII - Waccamaw	-AAA Director 1996 - Present -Vital Aging of Williamsburg County - 3 years/Finance Director 1996-1999 -Santee Senior Services - 3years/Program Coordinator 1993-1996

		27 years as Director
Stephanie Blunt	Region IX - Trident	-Trident AAA Director - January 2002 - Present -Program Manager, Trident AAA - August 2000-December 2001 -Program Director, Berkeley Seniors, Inc. – Feb 1(Provider)196-August 2000
Letisha Scotland	Region X - Lowcountry	21 years as Director -AAA Director – January 2020 - Present -Director of Lowcountry Family Svcs (Provider) 2014-2020  3 years as Director

**7. Identify the errors most frequently made by AAAs when submitting information or completing administrative processes required by the Department on Aging.**

The most common mistakes made in the reimbursement process are:

- incorrect transfers of values from systems report to the payment requests
- missing documents to verify their expenses

Does the Department on Aging have an established process to track AAA errors (e.g., internal staff documentation of errors, etc.)? **Yes, there is a process to track errors in place.**

**8. Does the Department on Aging view the AAAs as customers? If so, has the agency ever conducted an anonymous survey to get feedback regarding how the agency could improve?**

The AAA's are subgrantees and such requires them to comply with policies and procedures for;

1. SCDOA
2. Older Americans Act
3. N45 Code of Registry (CFR Parts 74, 75, 1321)

To our knowledge, this agency has not conducted this type of survey. However, we are open to developing a process to collect feedback on how our agency can improve.

**9. Are links to the AAAs websites available on the Department on Aging website? **Yes****

- If yes, how many clicks does it take to access this information on the agency's website?  
<https://www.getcaresc.com/about/area-agencies-aging> (2 clicks)  
<https://www.getcaresc.com/about/area-agencies-aging> (2 clicks)
- If no, please explain why.

**Silver Haired Legislature**

**10. Please explain how the Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) works with the Department on Aging, the AAAs, and the provider network.**

Code Section 43-21-190 – Model legislature on aging issues

The Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) is tasked with studying aging topics and issues. This model legislature shall:

- (1) identify issues, concerns, and possible solutions for problems facing the aging population in S.C.;
- (2) make recommendations to the Governor and members of the General Assembly and to the Joint Legislative Committee on Aging;
- (3) arrange educational forums to explore issues related to older South Carolinians; and
- (4) promote good government for all South Carolinians.

The participants must be sixty years of age or older and must be selected pursuant to procedures adopted by the South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature, Inc. in coordination with the state's network of aging programs. The nonpartisan model legislature shall conduct its general assembly annually.

The unicameral body has 76 Representatives and 76 Alternates, all of whom are registered voters over age sixty. Representatives and Alternates are elected by counties on a ratio of one each per 10,000 South Carolinians over age sixty. There is Caucus Chair and Board Member for each corresponding AAA Region.

**11. How much pass-through funding is appropriated to the Silver Haired Legislature?**

The total pass-through funding appropriated to the Silver Haired Legislature is \$15,000.

**12. Does the organization receive funding from other sources (e.g., local governments, grants, etc.)?**

No, the SHL organization does not receive funding from other sources.

**13. When was the Department on Aging last invited to attend a SHL meeting?**

SCDOA was last invited to attend a SHL meeting in 2019. Due to the pandemic, the SHL shifted to conducting their meetings virtually and corresponding via email. The SC Advisory Council on Aging has invited a representative of the SHL to speak to the members at least once a year at one of the quarterly meetings.

**Palliative Care and Quality of Life Study Committee**

**14. Were any of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Study report recommendations implemented? If so, please identify them. No**

**15. The Palliative Care and Quality of Life Study report was published December 31, 2019. Are any of the report's unimplemented recommendations still pertinent in 2023? If so, please identify these recommendations.**

The Palliative Care and Quality of Life Study disbanded upon the completion of the report as defined by the Joint Resolution ([H. 4935](#)) on December 31, 2019. This study determined the need for:

- Education and Awareness
- Technology
- Workforce
- Policy and Regulation
- Payment strategies
- Quality of life and services

Please refer to the link provided below for more information:

<https://aging.sc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/SC%20Palliative%20Care%20and%20Quality%20of%20Life%20Study%20Committee%20Report.pdf>

**South Carolina’s Provider Network**

16. According to testimony provided at the April 4, 2023, subcommittee meeting, services offered by AAAs hinge on the availability of providers in each of the 10 regions.

- List the regions, in order, based on diversity of available services. Include the available services by region and county. **See attached.**
- List the regions, in order, based on total unspent funds in the previous fiscal year. Make note of the regions unable to spend funds due to the absence or shortage of providers. **See chart below.**

SCDOA SPENDING BY AAA FOR TITLE III AND HCBS AS OF June 30, 2023

	% TOTAL LEFT TO SPEND	% SPENT TOTAL	TITLE III SERVICES % LEFT TO SPEND	% SPENT SERVICES
APPALACHIAN	27%	73%	27%	73%
UPPER SAVANNAH	52%	48%	60%	40%
CATAWBA	31%	69%	36%	64%
CENTRAL MIDLANDS	52%	48%	47%	53%
LOWER SAVANNA	36%	64%	40%	60%
SANTEE LYNCHES	31%	69%	21%	79%
PEE DEE	47%	53%	52%	48%
WACCAMAW	45%	55%	39%	61%
TRIDENT	31%	69%	29%	71%
LOW COUNTRY	27%	73%	27%	73%

17. Does the agency have a strategy to address the absence of providers in high need areas across the state? If so, is this strategy included in the State Plan on Aging?

- Our goal is to work with aging partners and stakeholders to address the needs and develop strategies that aid in a more efficient coordination and delivery of aging services throughout the state.
- In order for South Carolinians to live longer and healthier lives, there must be greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure older adults to have the opportunity to live with dignity and to participate fully in life.

This strategy is interwoven throughout the State Plan.

**18. Has agency leadership sought out partnerships with the state's workforce development agencies to assist with the development of the provider network (e.g., Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Workforce, SC Technical College System, etc.)? If not, does agency leadership believe building these relationships may help address provider network issues?**

Many of our AAA's have partnerships with their technical colleges to utilize interns in the healthcare profession. Many times this encourages our younger generations to learn how to better advocate and work with our older adults.

SCDOA continues to foster partnerships by inviting various guest speakers to the AAA trainings to highlight opportunities for building their provider network. Most recently, Let's Walk, a non-profit agency, spoke with the AAAs on how to expand this program statewide.

Yes, the agency leadership strongly believes building these relationships will help address provider network issues. We are currently working with the Department of Employment and Workforce to address employment opportunities for our older adult population.