

South Carolina Department on Aging  
Budget request summary for SFY 24-25

The South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) is requesting additional recurring funds in the amount of \$5,991,743. Federal funds requested total \$3,351,376, the bulk of which comes from our priority 6 requests to increase the authorization of federal funds as the agency has significantly increased the number of federal funds being awarded to assist citizens within our state. The additional state funds requested, \$2,640,367 will be utilized to expand and enhance services to seniors.

**Priority 1:** Request recurring state funds in the amount of one million dollars to continue the services started with the HUD grant which expires October 2024, to expand the services to all 46 counties in the state. In addition, to increase the dollar threshold to provide the necessary repairs and modifications not currently allowed under the federal award. These funds would cover the cost of salary for the Occupational Therapist, the OT Assistant, as well as an administrative assistant, to track all applications and appropriate data. The estimated operating cost to oversee the program is \$333,000, leaving \$667,000 to pay contractors for work on the homes.

**Priority 2:** Request recurring state funds in the amount of \$1,113,854 to increase the capacity to provide services and support to those persons living with dementia. These funds will be utilized to hire ten additional staff to provide community education and support and raise awareness of early detection and diagnosis. Through a one-time federal grant, SCDOA hired a Dementia Care Specialist who has developed and implemented a replicable program for providing support and education throughout the community. These funds would allow SCDOA to hire additional staff to provide these programs throughout the state.

**Priority 3:** Request recurring state funds in the amount of \$258,311 in federal authority and the same amount in state funds. These funds will be used to retain staff currently working as temporary grant employees to full-time employees. Also, these funds will allow additional staff to be hired to increase partnerships and collaboration with agency stakeholders. These trainings will include continuing education for VAGAL and LTCO volunteers, as well as AAA agency staff on the new databases software that will be available in the state fiscal year 24-25. The agency also plans to hire a Veterans Assistance Specialist dedicated to assisting older veterans in our state.

**Priority 4:** Request recurring state and federal funds in the amount of \$109,488, with \$16,423 making up 15% of state funds to increase staff for the Long Term Care Ombudsman at the state office level.

**Priority 5:** Request recurring state funds in the amount of \$63,450 to be utilized in the VAGAL program. This increase will incentivize staff to obtain a license in social work. These funds would allow SCDOA to be competitive with other state agencies that utilize licensed social workers and retain current qualified staff.

**Priority 6:** Request recurring authorization of \$3,000,000 in federal funds. As the agency has applied for and received additional federal grant awards, historically, we have requested mid-year Federal authority increases. This increase will allow the agency sufficient Federal authority to expend those additional federal funds.

## State funds carried to SFY24

Proviso 40.1	State funds to match grant	573,015.00
Proviso 40.2	Aging Assistance State Match	5,272,587.00
Proviso 40.5	HCBS Carry forward for same purpose	14,796,319.84
Proviso 40.6	Geriatric Loan Forgiveness	35,000.00
Proviso 40.7	Caregivers Carry Forward	4,010,200.00
Proviso 40.7	ARCC	259,710.00
Proviso 40.8	Vulnerable Adult GAL Carry forward	1,194,292.00
Proviso 118.18	Darlington County	250,000.00
	10% allowed	780,459.00
Total state funds carried forward to SFY24		<u>27,171,582.84</u>

HUD Special State Funds	142,781.00
ARP Special State Funds	2,685,869.00

### Plans for Use:

#### **Proviso 40.1 State funds to match grant**

These are funds used to match many of the smaller grants we receive.

#### **Proviso 40.2 Aging Assistance State Match**

These funds are used for the required match to the major Federal grants. The federal funds continue to be expended past the end of the state fiscal year, therefore the state match funds must carry forward in conjunction with these federal funds.

#### **Proviso 40.5 HCBS Carry forward (for same purpose)**

The Agency is working with the aging network to provide more units of service where there is capacity. The Agency is putting efforts into reducing the time from innovative idea to implementation, and being more proactive in addressing individual regions' underperformance and upside potential.

#### **Proviso 40.6 Geriatric Loan Forgiveness**

These funds are paid out at the end of the state fiscal year thus are on the books as carry forward each year.

#### **Proviso 40.7 Family Caregiver Carry Forward Funds Explanation:**

In FY 20-21 a great deal of non-recurring federal funds were given to states to support family caregivers. South Carolina is fortunate in that we have been awarded such funds to support our family

caregivers for over a decade. This did mean, however, that the state funds that would have been utilized built up and as of July 2023, there was \$4 million in Family Caregiver Carry Forward funds.

Our plans to expend the additional funds are:

- Additional Family Caregiver Support Funds awarded to AAAs
- Additional funds to South Carolina Respite Coalition
- Expansion of an Innovative Working Caregiver Pilot Program to keep family caregivers employed and in the workforce, while allowing for care of their loved ones
- Respite Programming Incentive

Our goal is to provide every eligible South Carolinian with accessible and affordable respite options to ensure family caregivers are equipped to handle the demands of their role. We work closely with the SC Respite Coalition as our Lifespan Respite Grant partners and many other organizations to enhance and expand respite.

**Proviso 40.7 Alzheimer's Resource Coordination Center (ARCC) Grant Carry Forward Explanation:**

Currently, there are 18 ARCC grantees. All of the funds awarded annually as well as carry forward funds of \$259,710.00 are committed/allocated to community organizations providing dementia-specific services to those living with dementia and their family caregivers.

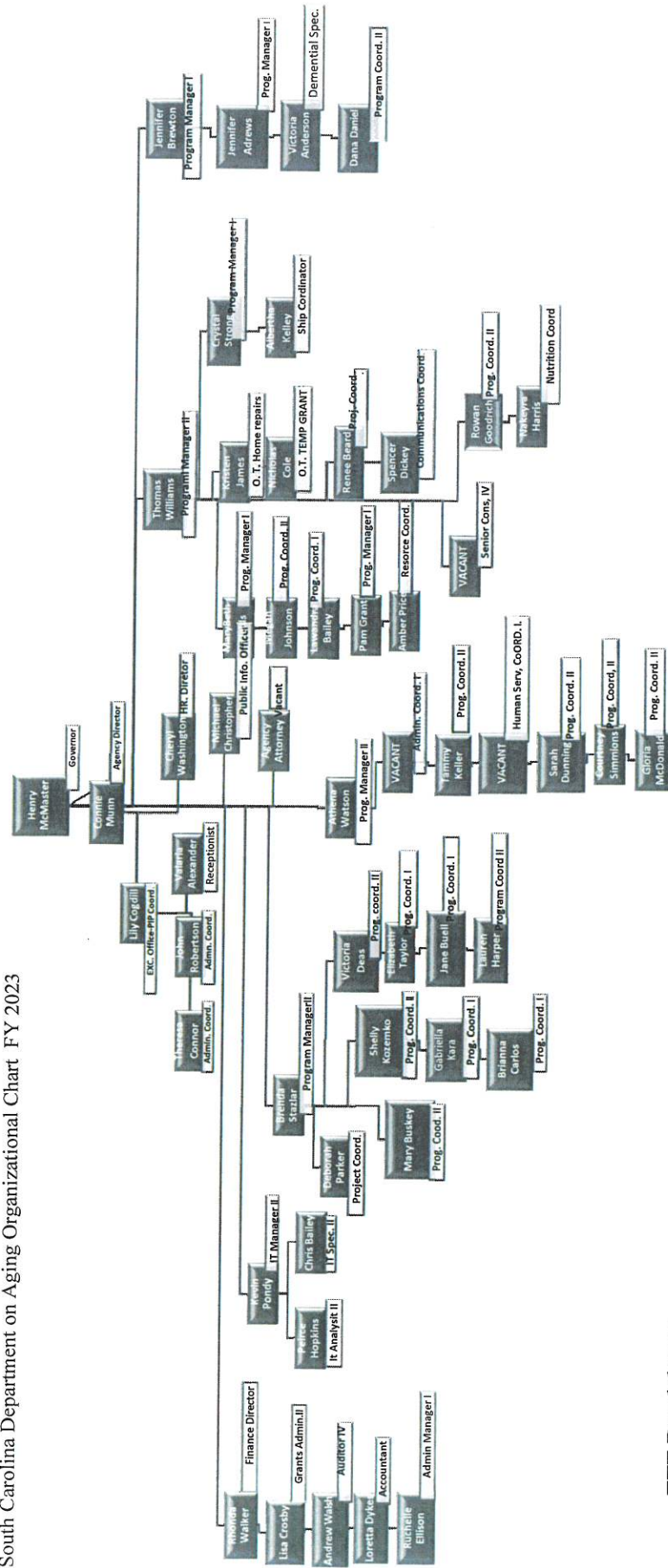
**Proviso 40.8 Vulnerable Adult GAL Carry forward**

The VAGAL program budgeted for a new case management system, which ended up costing less than we had budgeted for, so the surplus reflects that amount. Additionally, there was a vacancy in the division that has since been filled.

**Proviso 118.18 Darlington County**

The appropriated earmarked funds have been dispersed.

## South Carolina Department on Aging Organizational Chart FY 2023



**FTE Breakdown:**  
46 Filled FTE's  
3.5 Vacant FTE's

## SCDOA Year-End Review

### **The Department on Aging as the State Unit on Aging**

With the state's aging population increasing, the Department on Aging meets the OAA mandate to serve seniors, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable adults with the greatest social and economic needs, by advocating, facilitating, coordinating, educating, granting, and regulating, as well as providing critical funding for aging services and programming. The Department on Aging is also the clearinghouse for aging data and information and serves as a think tank for planning, and innovative ideas in order to meet the needs of seniors and adults with disabilities.

State Proviso 40.5 stipulates that all state funds appropriated for Home and Community-Based Services (aging services) are to be allocated to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) based on the methodology of the Intrastate Funding Formula.

### **Services provided through Department on Aging Funding**

The Department on Aging funds numerous resources and services for seniors and adults with disabilities in South Carolina. These critical services provide assistance that benefits seniors and adults with disabilities by allowing them to live at home independently and safely for as long as possible, thereby preventing costly institutional placement. Direct services provided through federal and state funds include rental assistance, legal services, respite care, caregiver support, nutrition, health promotion, disease prevention programs, transportation, homemaker services, minor home repair, and Long Term Care Ombudsman programs.

- The Area Agency on Aging's (AAA) received **28,808** calls through the Information and Assistance/Referral (I&R/A) system this past year to assist seniors.
- The AAAs conducted **22,066** assessments this past year.

Additionally, the Department on Aging offers insurance counseling, Medicare fraud prevention through the Senior Medicare Patrol Program, Dementia 101 training, and I&R/A services.

Our agency has continued to work with the aging network and our federal, state, and public/ private partnerships to meet the needs of our older population, which has quickly become the fastest-growing population in the US. We know that we must coordinate and collaborate with these stakeholders to meet the needs that will continue to keep our older adults, caregivers, and those with disabilities actively engaged and living healthy, independent lives while they are allowed to age in place with dignity and choice. There is a need to increase the aging network's capacity to provide person-centered services for seniors, persons with disabilities, caregivers, and vulnerable adults. Failure to meet this goal could result in declining levels of health among the senior population and greater levels of costly institutionalization.

As well as continuing to meet our goals to keep our older adults active in their communities, we have also continued to advocate and intervene to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of seniors and adults with disabilities living in long-term care facilities. It would be detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents in long-term care facilities if we are not able to meet this goal.

### **Department on Aging Strategic Planning**

The Department on Aging's planning process is an ongoing activity that evaluates the met and unmet needs of a rapidly growing senior population. The department's leadership has conducted ongoing meetings and planning sessions with staff, the AAAs, and regional service providers. The South Carolina Department on Aging hosted its first annual Aging Summit in Columbia in June 2023. The purpose of this summit was to create space for meaningful conversations with SCDOA, AAAs, and

service providers to connect, to share educational, informative updates, and effective practices that improve the well-being of the older adults in our communities.

### **Collaborative Initiatives and Partnerships**

**Senior Planning and Resources for Emergency Preparedness (P.R.E.P)** - SCDOA recognizes the fact that our older population and adults with disabilities are more at risk during emergency situations. In order to ensure our most vulnerable population receives the resources they need in emergency situations SCDOA this past year revamped the Senior P.R.E.P. partnership with Walgreens and SCEMD. There have been two press conferences in the midlands and upstate with two more planned in the coastal regions before hurricane season in 2024.

SCDOA continues to work with the EMD and SEOC in ESF-6 (Mass Care Operations) as needed for future emergency events. SCDOA continues to participate in conference calls to receive updates and additional training. SCDOA staff is assigned to the Essential Service Function (ESF-6) at the State Emergency Management Division's State Emergency Operations Center.

**Social Isolation Task Force** - In partnership with the South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health, the South Carolina Department on Aging has collaborated with South Carolina experts and those with lived experiences to create state-specific recommendations to reduce social isolation in older adults. The recommendations in the report are noted as the top areas of concern and have suggested ways to reduce problems associated with social isolation in our most vulnerable population. These findings were released in June 2023. This group of more than forty stakeholders met monthly to address this critical issue. Our staff serve on the newly formed coalition to ensure that the efforts of the Task Force to reduce the social isolation in older adults continue, to lead the charge, and to continue building partnerships and fostering intervention strategies across sectors.

**SC ABEL** – In partnership with SC ABEL, SCDOA was able to assist our disabled population during emergencies by providing weather assistance kits to **100** older adults who required assistance during incremental weather to ensure their safety.

**Telehealth Cart Project** - In partnership with Palmetto Care Connections, SCDOA is placing telehealth carts in senior centers across the state. PCC is conducting site assessments in eligible senior centers on aging to determine each agency's telehealth readiness and broadband capabilities for the purpose of installing telehealth carts to include peripheral devices. PCC will provide the carts for the first phase of the pilot.

**Social Isolation Project with Walton Options**- Seniors are not only group of people with high rates of social isolation. Social isolation and loneliness rates are also high among non-seniors with disabilities who reside in nursing homes. To address this problem, the SCDOA created a pilot to help **13** disabled people, aged 28-54, who live in nursing homes in two rural communities. SCDOA purchased individually designed I-Pads for each program participant to address their specific impairment(s). Participants received one-on-one digital literacy training from USC's Assistive Technology program. Program participants learned how to stimulate their brains with games, connect with family and friends through Zoom and Facebook, and participated in telehealth visits. Upon learning how to use the devices, the residents were able to participate in peer support groups facilitated

by MUSC's SC Safe Seniors Program. Walton Options Center for Independent Living is continuing to manage this pilot.

**Alzheimer's Association** - In collaboration with DHEC in working through their awarded BOLD (Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure) Grant, the SCDOA's ARCC Council acted as the governing body to help inform recommendations for the Statewide Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD). This five year plan focuses on five major components: Education for Healthcare Providers and the general public, Advocacy and Policy making, Access and Connection to Care, Caregiver Support, and Improved access to coordination of and uses of ADRD data and resources. While all ARCC Council members were involved, other key stakeholders, such as the Alzheimer's Association, SCDSS, SCDHHS, and many others, participated.

**Alzheimer's State Plan** - The South Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 569, to develop a statewide plan to address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and was signed by the Governor on 5/19/2023. The plan must be updated every 5 years by our agency. In partnership with SCDOA and the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Resource Coordination Center, a ceremonial signing event held at the Statehouse on September 6, 2023.

**Family Caregiver Partnerships** - SCDOA continued its partnerships with SC Department of Education, Kinship Care, and Carolina Family Engagement Center to enhance the outreach of the Seniors Raising Children component of the Family Caregiver Support Program and to support resources necessary for families and individuals.

**Home Stabilization Funding** - In partnership with the Department of Social Services, SCDOA received an award of \$200,000.00 to help vulnerable adults, elderly adults, and adults with disabilities remain in their homes and not enter into Adult Protective Services custody. This program is at no cost to the adults and by addressing the safety issues in the homes, an adult is better situated to age in place.

**Operation Spread the Joy** - The SCDOA continues the partnership with the SC Department of Corrections "Operation Spread the Joy" that began during COVID 2020. This initiative gives long-term care residents handmade cards, artwork, and gifts made by inmates to target social isolation among the residents. There were about 2,000 items delivered to residents across the state. Inmates in 20 of South Carolina's 21 prisons made gifts for this project, which many said allowed them to help someone in this time of need. Since it began, close to **12,000 items** have been made by the inmates for our long term care residents.

**Partnership with SC Women Involved in Rural Electrification (SC WIRE)** - SCDOA's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program partnered with SC WIRE (SC Women Involved in Rural Electrification) to provide **600** personal hygiene kits to long-term care residents of residential care facilities for relocation when they are displaced.

### **SCDOA Accomplishments**

**ADRC No Wrong Door Grant** - Under ADRC, this grant allowed us to have Our Best Shot Campaign that produced four videos (a vaccine video, a senior video, a 30-second commercial, and a 60-second disabilities video) through the No Wrong Door Grant. We reached hundreds of seniors with these videos to encourage them to receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

**Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Grant** - The South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) was recently awarded a grant through the Administration for Community Living called "Improving Access to Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS) for Individuals and Family Caregivers." This grant is centered around establishing a formal No Wrong Door System for South Carolina that will encompass State Governance and Administration collaboration, public outreach and coordination with key referral sources, person-centered counseling, and establishing streamlined eligibility for public programs.

As part of an effort to create the No Wrong Door System, SCDOA established South Carolina's first No Wrong Door Governing Body. The Governing Body includes the Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Mental Health, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Department of Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs, and key representatives from local organizations, older adults, family caregivers, and adults living with disabilities in South Carolina's LTSS system.

**Lifespan Respite Grant Recipient** - The Lifespan Respite Grant is a competitive ACL-funded grant that SCDOA has been awarded since 2009. The primary purpose of this program is to build and sustain a comprehensive respite network across South Carolina for caregivers of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. The primary partner for the Lifespan Respite grant is the South Carolina Respite Coalition (SCRC).

**HUD Older Adult Home Modification Program (OAHMP):**  
Program Data:

- Total number of homes assessed: **91**
- Number of homes completed and cleared: **60**
- Amount spent on direct modifications: **\$374,583.00**
- Waitlist of seniors with completed applications: **67**

**Cost Savings to the State:**

- Modification Cost of 60 homes: **\$374,583.00**
- Cost of 1 year in Nursing Homes for 60 seniors: **\$5,322,480.00**
- Savings to the State: **\$4,947,987.00**

**SC Nutrition & Health Care Workgroup ('Food is Medicine')** U of SC SNAP-Ed Initiative - SCDOA continues to partner with the SC Nutrition & Health Care Workgroup ('Food is Medicine') U of SC SNAP-Ed Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to convene state-level healthy eating and healthcare partners to increase coordination to identify and facilitate the implementation of state-level policy, systems, and environmental change strategies.

**SCDOA Long Term Care Ombudsman Division** - LTCOP Education Conference was held September 21, 2023 to help reignite the Ombudsmen's passion for advocacy and come together again after COVID. National and local speakers discussed the many tragedies residents experienced through COVID-19, elder abuse and neglect, changes to regulations, resident rights, and team building. Ombudsmen left the conference equipped with tools to empower and advocate for residents in long-term care facilities and to identify abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- Made 4,395 visits to nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Investigated 2635 complaints
- Provided 128 Community Education Sessions
- Provided 3,056 instances of Information and Assistance to individuals
- Provided 1,155 instances of Information and Assistance to facilities
- Conducted 149 training sessions in facilities to include topics as resident rights, reporting abuse, neglect and expectation

**Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem Program (VAGAL-SC)** – This program provides volunteer Guardians ad Litem to advocate on behalf of a vulnerable adult, in abuse, neglect, and exploitation proceedings in South Carolina Family Courts.

In FY 2023, the VAGAL SC program provided the following services:

- Guardian ad Litem representation in SC Family Courts for **500** vulnerable adults who were at substantial risk of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation
- Guardian ad Litem representation in **561** court hearings for vulnerable adults
- Supervision for **37** volunteers from across the state who served as Guardians ad Litem in FY 2023
- **8** new volunteer and continuing education training events with a total of **116** participants

### **Coordination**

**Faith-Based Symposium** - SCDOA held its sixth annual symposium for faith-based and community leaders. These symposiums provide faith-based communities and community leader's opportunities to gather to communicate, collaborate, and provide best practices on providing resources for their older congregation members. Our agency realizes the importance of spiritual health that our faith-based communities have on our older adults.

**Family Caregiver Conference** - In recognition of National Family Caregivers Month, the Family Caregiver Division, hosted the "Family Caregiver Conference" on November 8, 2023. The conference was a virtual event to provide family caregivers with information, education, and resources regarding family caregiving.

Since April 2023, the Dementia Specialist began hosting monthly "Dementia 101" Zoom educational webinars to provide education to the community about dementia. Our caregivers are thirsty for knowledge on how to care for their loved ones. These webinars have been very well received.

**Senior Day** - In recognition of Older Americans Month, SCDOA hosted our annual Senior Day Celebration in May 2023. We were able to celebrate with our seniors, and learn what it means to explore diversity among our older adults and how we, as a state unit on aging, can combat stereotypes for aging adults. This year's theme was Aging Unbound. Over 800 seniors were in attendance.

**World Elder Abuse Day** - In recognition of World Elder Abuse Day, June 15, 2023, SCDOA led a team of agencies, including SC Victims Assistance, MUSC's Elder Abuse and Mistreatment Program, SCADVSA, SC Respite Coalition, and others, in a day of virtual events that included a Proclamation from the Governor and a series of panels to highlight the problem of elder abuse.