

John Bel Edwards
Governor



Leslie Louviere-Keen
Chairwoman

State of Louisiana
Executive Board on Aging

**MINUTES OF THE LA EXECUTIVE BOARD ON AGING (LEBA) MEETING
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS
602 North 5th Street, 4th Floor
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Wednesday August 16, 2023 11:00 AM
L'Auberge Casino Ball Room A**

CALL TO ORDER

The Quarterly Meeting of the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging (LEBA) started at 11:09 AM by Ms. Leslie Keen, LEBA Chairwoman with Ms. Cheri Crain serving as Secretary, in person.

Pledge of Allegiance: Ms. Heather Prejean
Invocation: Mr. Donald Mallet

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen
Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh
Mr. Johnny Berthelot
Ms. Worlita Jackson
Mr. Willie Lewis
Mr. Donald Mallet
Ms. Heather Prejean
Mr. Huey Beverly

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Ricco Thomas
Ms. Ann Keene
Ms. Blanche Wilks
Mr. Terry Courville
Mayor Gerard Landry

GUESTS: Area Agency, Council on Aging Directors, staff, Dr. Chaunda Mitchell, Deputy Chief of staff and Mrs. Katina Semien Smothers, Esq.

GOEA STAFF:

Ms. Shirley Merrick, Director, Ms. Cheri Crain, Secretary, Mrs. Amanda Smith, GOEA General Counsel, and Mrs. Kayla Doyle, Program Manager 1A

ROLL CALL

Chair, Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen asked Ms. Cheri Crain to call the roll. Members present eight.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 19, 2023 were presented for approval. **MOTION:** Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh moved and it was seconded by Mr. Donald Mallet that the April 19, 2023 minutes be

approved. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Ms. Shirley Merrick stated that Ms. Kayla Doyle emailed a copy to the Board members prior to the meeting. Ms. Merrick reviewed the report with the Board. Some highlights from the report:

State Plan (7/1/23 – 6/30/27):

The State Plan document that State Units on Aging are required to submit to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) was submitted for approval on July 26, 2023. The Compliance and Planning Unit, under the leadership of Cheri Crain, is responsible for submitting the plan. I want to thank Shavon Humphrey, Jessica Ross, Angela Calhoun and Laura Jackson for their contributions in assisting Compliance and Planning readying the plan for submission.

Louisiana Legislative Auditors (LLA) Report – Elderly Protective Services:

The LLA issued, July 5, 2023, a report of its findings from their audit of GOEA's Elderly Protective Services Program. The LLA evaluated GOEA's oversight of the Elderly Protective Services function during fiscal years 2018 – 2022. The last audit prior to this was conducted February 2016. There were 20 recommendations made.

Dr. Chaunda Mitchell, Deputy Chief of Staff, Governor's Office of Community Program and Mrs. Katina Semien Smothers, Esq., Director of the Office of Community Programs are working closely with GOEA to address the recommendations in the audit. The audit report was heard at the Legislative Audit Advisory Council meeting, Tuesday, July 25, 2023. Dr. Mitchell, Attorney Smothers and I attended the Council meeting. GOEA's response to the recommendations was discussed - https://senate.la.gov/s_video/VideoArchivePlayer?v=senate/2023/07/072523LAAC (recording of meeting).

There have also been news reports about the audit. The cases cited in the news reports occurred during the period that began July 2017. The last case cited in the media happened March 2020. These cases were addressed by GOEA during that time frame. The staff's focus has been on working the cases. GOEA EPS staff accepted more than 23,000 cases during the period of the audit, which represented 92.5% of the cases they received. It took the auditors coming in and taking a bigger look to highlight systems that need tweaking. GOEA is grateful for this and do want systems that work to protect one of the most vulnerable populations. The staff is eager and highly motivated to work with the Governor's office team and the LLA to put in place and implement the recommendations made by the LLA. The goal is to have all recommendations implemented by September 11, 2023 (the release date for the new data management system).

Unfortunately, EPS cases are not diminishing. EPS closed 6,615 cases in fiscal year 2023. July 1 – August 7, 2023, EPS has received 606 cases of suspected abuse. The top 3 types of cases received were Self-Neglect (170), Financial Exploitation (148) and Caregiver Neglect (126). The other type cases were Emotional Abuse, Extortion, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse.

Data Software Updates:

GOEA is in the midst of upgrading its data management software for Elderly Protective Services (EPS) and for Older American Act (OAA) programs funded through the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The vendor for the Elderly Protective Services upgrade is Louisiana Office of Technology Services and the vendor for the OAA program upgrade is WellSky. The EPS upgrade is funded with federal funding and the OAA upgrade is funded through surplus FY23 state funding by the Louisiana Legislature. Again, thank you and Deputy Chief Chaunda Mitchell for all your advocacy to bring this to fruition.

Development stage:

- OTS - Elderly Protection Services Management System (EPSM) Modernization Project – The software is scheduled to go live September 11, 2023.
- WellSky – OAA Program Data Management Project launched July 17, 2023.

Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman

I have attached a copy of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Newsletter prepared by Rosa Walton, State Ombudsman. GOEA's mission is to provide services that help the population we serve remain in community for as long as possible. Sometimes that is not possible. The LTC Ombudsman Program is funded under the Older Americans Act. It is housed under the Compliance and Planning Unit at GOEA. The LTC Ombudsman serve as an advocate for residents in nursing home and assisted living facilities. There is a local Ombudsman assigned to every long-term care facility in Louisiana.

Calcasieu Council on Aging (COA)

Congrats to Calcasieu COA - Hurricane Laura destroyed the Calcasieu COA main office. The COA now has the funding needed to rebuild. Ms. Jackie Green, Executive Director of Calcasieu COA, stated, "Hooray!!! After almost 3 years of prayer and patience, we have finally received our FEMA obligation to rebuild our main office complex. The first award of \$4,944,971.00 was received last week. We received notice of the second award today in the amount of \$1,245,439.80, bringing the total to \$6,190,411.50. We are so grateful and looking forward to building the new facility. It was definitely worth all the pressure, sleepless nights and doubt that we experienced during this process." - Link to the announcement of the funding - <http://www.cassidy.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cassidy-announces-5-million-to-calcasieu-parish-voluntary-council-on-the-aging-inc-for-hurricane-laura-relief>

Disaster Update

Repeat: Hurricane season started June 1, 2023. "The CSU (Colorado State University) Tropical Meteorology Project team is predicting 13 named storms during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. Of those, researchers expect six to become hurricanes and two to reach major hurricane strength (Saffir/Simpson category 3-4-5) with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or greater." You can read the full report at <https://tropical.colostate.edu/>. The contact at GOEA for "all things" disaster is Kayla Doyle – kayla.doyle3@la.gov.

Senior Services

The data set attached to the report presents a snapshot of services provided FY22 in comparison to services provided for FY23. Thanks to Kayla Doyle for "gleaning", the data

needed to do the report. Services are returning to normal post COVID. A “look back” at FY2019 (pre-pandemic) showed Home Delivered Meals provided at 3,400,599 compared to 4,120,661 at end of FY23. Even though the number decreased in FY22, we have surpassed FY19 numbers. National trends have shown that when you close a congregate site, it is difficult to rebuild attendance. FY19 Congregate meals provided totaled 1,434,924 compared to 1,234,401 at the end of FY23. The FY23 number, however, represents a 28% increase over FY22. The sites are coming back slowly. I highlighted the services that have increased 40% or more since FY22.

GOEA Statewide Training

A training conference for sub-recipients of funding through GOEA will be held September 18 – 20, 2023, at the Country Inn and Suites in Pineville, LA. A copy of the agenda is attached. If you would like to attend, please reach out to Cheri Crain.

Get Vaccinated

Repeat: “Make Mine a Double” is the headline in a recent CDC article. It refers to the importance of not only getting the COVID-19 vaccine but also getting the Flu vaccine. The article states “Both COVID-19 and flu vaccines have been shown to reduce illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccine are still available. You can get both vaccines at the same time if you are eligible and the timing works. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/coadministration.htm>

LACOADA: Presented by Ms. Darlene Schexnayder: October 24th, 25th & 26th setting up meeting with candidates to discuss funding; educate them on what the costs are for seniors etc. Ms. Darlene Schexnayder met with Representative Nelson this morning and trying to schedule a meeting with Attorney General Landry.

Ms. Darlene Schexnayder recognized Ms. Shirley Merrick for the great job she is doing and to hold her head up high.

LANA: Presented by Mr. Billy Joseph: This year’s annual conference has been good with great information to take back home. Mr. Billy Joseph’s term ends on August 17, 2023. LANA has spent funds to work on membership and program along with activities to boost up volunteers.

SCHEDULE 2022 QUARTERLY MEETINGS: The tentative dates scheduled for 2023:

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

ADJOURN: Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Charles “Buddy” Pugh moved and it was seconded by Mr. Donald Mallet. Meeting adjourned at 11:52 AM.

Prepared by Cheri Crain, Manager Compliance & Planning, Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs