

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 December 6, 2023 11:00 AM
Galvez Building in the Pensacola Conference Room**

CALL TO ORDER

The Quarterly Meeting of the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging (LEBA) started at 11:00 AM by Ms. Leslie Keen, LEBA Chairwoman with Ms. Cheri Crain serving as Secretary, in person.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Ricco Thomas
Invocation: Ms. Ann Keene

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen
Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh
Mr. Johnny Berthelot
Ms. Ann Keene
Mr. Willie Lewis
Mr. Donald Mallet
Ms. Heather Prejean
Mr. Huey Beverly
Mr. Ricco Thomas
Ms. Blanche Wilks

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Worlita Jackson
Mr. Terry Courville
Mayor Gerard Landry

GUESTS: Area Agency, Council on Aging Directors and staff

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 ten.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 19, 2023 were presented for approval. **MOTION:** Mr. Huey Beverly

moved and it was seconded by Mr. Charles “Buddy” Pugh 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):

Follow up: The State Plan was submitted on July 26, 2023 to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) for approval. GOEA was informed September 19, 2023 of this in a letter from Alison Barkof, Senior official performing the duties of the Administrator and the Assistant Secretary for Aging, Again, thanks to Shavon Humphrey, Jessica Ross, Angela Calhoun and Laura Jackson for their contributions in assisting Cheri Crain in Compliance & Planning readying the plan for submission. Great job team.

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

Follow-Up: The recommendations outlined in the LLA report issued, July 5, 2023, relative to GOEA’s Elderly Protective Services Program, continue to be addressed. 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 worked closely with GOEA to address the recommendations in the audit. The recommendation to update the data management system has come to fruition – the system went live September 11, 2023. The recommendation to address the caseload carried by each investigator is being addressed in the FY2025 budget request. The organizational structure of GOEA was reviewed and reconfigured to formulate 8 distinct EPS regions with each its own supervisor. The previous structure had three (3) supervisors responsible for multiple regions. GOEA is requesting to increase the EPS staff by 16 full-time staff positions (1 Program Manager, 2 EPS Supervisors, 11 investigators, and 1 Intake Specialist). This requires legislative approval Advocacy from LEBA and the aging network is greatly appreciated. The EPS Manager reported November 11, 2023 that 1,978 cases have been accepted for investigation since July 1, 2023. Add to this the fact that they started the July 1, 2023 fiscal year with 1,928 open cases. It’s unfortunate, but EPS cases are not slowing down. I believe that it is the EPS program’s responsibility to provide the best possible outcome when that call or report of abuse is made.

WellSky Data Software:

Follow-Up: The contract was granted to WellSky July 17, 2023. This software update affects the reporting for Older American Act (OAA) funded programs through the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Compliance & Planning and HCBS are working with WellSky to develop and implement the new software.

Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman

I have attached a copy of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Newsletter for the quarter beginning October 2023, 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’s 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.

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 date chart attached to this report presents a snapshot of services for federal year October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022 in comparison to services provided for federal fiscal year October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023. These are the numbers that get reported to our federal partner, ACL. The data set looks different from prior reports. This is due to how the data can be extracted from the software at this point in time. The previous tool used to extract the data was retired by ACL and is no longer available for use. Some services are now reported under the heading of “Other”, i.e., Outreach, Recreation, Medical Alert, Material Aid, Telephoning, and Crime Prevention). The procedure necessary to extract the level of detail is possible but the steps needed to do this are quite tedious. The software upgrade should make this possible for future reports. Thanks to Cheri Crain for determining how to get the data in this report from the data base and to Kayla Doyle for extracting the data needed for the report.

GOEA Statewide Training

Follow-Up: The training held September 18-20, 2023 in Pineville, LA was a success. Thank you to the GOEA staff that developed and presented at the training, did all the “grunt” work at the training i.e., making sure rooms were set, food was served, and keeping crickets at bay (inside joke). The feedback from the participants was positive. We also want to thank the Area Agencies, Councils on Aging, and Senior Center staff for coming to the training. A special thank you to ACL Dallas Regional Manager, Derek Lee, for flying in from Dallas to provide us with a “what’s new” at ACL presentation.

Louisiana Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Also known as Farmers Market coupons have a new look and a new value. The objectives of this program include the provision of fresh fruits, vegetables, cut herbs, and honey and nutrition education to participants; promotion and use of farmers' markets as a source of nutritious, locally grown produce; and strengthening of farmers' markets as a direct marketing outlet for Louisiana farmers. The annual value has been raised to \$50 and the balance can be carried on the card until spent. GOEA renewed its MOU with the administrator of this program, LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry. The applications together with the guidelines for the program will be sent directly to the local Councils on Aging.

Happy Holidays and “See You Later”

This is my final report to you. I just want to express again how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve who I believe to be Louisiana’s most precious commodity – those who have attained the age of 60. As reported to you earlier, I will be retiring January 8, 2023. I just want you to know that I have been in the presence of some of God’s greatest – thank you. My hope is that you continue to be a beacon for the 60+ populations. All 1,039,987(2021 census number) of us who have chosen to spend our later years in the state of Louisiana need your strong advocacy. As mentioned earlier, the FY2025 budget

request includes 17 new positions at GOEA – 16 in EPS and 1 in Accounting. It was recommended by the Louisiana Legislative auditor in its report issued July 2023 that GOEA equip the EPS program with ample staff to reduce the caseloads that the current staff are carrying. The additional staff in EPS will also require GOEA shoring up it's accounting department by one.

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. Tamara Crane - Secretary: Discussed Senior Day at the Capital. Al Robichaux discussed issues:

- Constitutional amendments
- Governor combing GOEA with LDH and the replacement for the Director of GOEA. The Governor picks the candidate for the Director, LEBA interviews and picks the candidate to send to the Governor.
- ARP funds going away
- Newly elected President David Lewis and Treasurer Becky Bergeron

LANA: Presented by Ms. Debi Fleming: This year's annual conference will be held on September 17th – 19th at the L'Auberge Casino in Lake Charles, Louisiana. There will be two different tracks with more information will be forth coming.

SCHEDULE 2024 QUARTERLY MEETINGS: The tentative dates scheduled for 2024:

Discussed scheduling meetings on the 2nd week of the quarter on Tuesdays. The schedule will be looked at and meetings will be decided on at the next quarterly meeting.

ADJOURN: Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Willie Lewis moved and it was seconded by Mr. Rico Thomas. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

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