

Alaska Commission on Aging

ANNUAL REPORT SFY2025



Alaska
Commission
On Aging

Aging With Dignity And Independence

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Ensuring the
dignity and
independence of
all older Alaskans

From the Executive Director



Over the last decade, Alaska had the fastest growing senior population per capita in the United States. As noted in last year's Senior Snapshot, the percentage of Alaska's population ages 60+ more than doubled between 2010 and 2024. Today, people ages 60 and older make up 21% of the population, and that number is projected to grow to 22.6% in the next ten years.

I'm part of the aging population trend. I grew up in Juneau, moved away when I was 18 years old, and moved back when I was 57.

Conventional wisdom says, when Alaskans near 60, they will move south, so they won't have to shovel snow or endure five months of winter. But there is something special about Alaska that draws us back and keeps us here. I have traveled the world and lived for years "outside." Yet, quietly and persistently, something in me always yearned to return home.

Alaska has beautiful geography: mountains, glaciers, pure water running in abundant streams and rivers, tundra dotted with lakes, islands growing and shrinking with the tides. The diverse beauty that surrounds us awakens our awe and wonder. But even more powerful than the Alaskan landscape is the bond we share of our need to survive.

Alaskans rely on one another to thrive in this rugged environment. Despite our fierce independence, when tragedy strikes or weather takes its toll on a community, we Alaskans come together and help. Our seldom-acknowledged **need for one another** is the thing we don't find when we move out of state. That strong "I am an Alaskan" spirit is missing from the other places we visit.

Because of our sense of community and belonging, rather than leaving the state as we age, we settle in for the duration. We want to stay in our communities because that's where our friends and loved ones are. We stay here because this is where our hearts are connected.

But for all the same reasons, Alaska is a difficult place to live out our days. Everything is more expensive. It's hard to get from one place to another. Weather can disrupt our plans. Many places lack the capacity to deal with aging-related health issues.

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA, or "the Commission") is to "ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation."

ACoA serves Alaskans by charting a course into the future to ensure the needs of Alaska's seniors can be met. Every four years, ACoA produces The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, which serves as a roadmap to make sure needs are recognized and planned for. ACoA also connects with agencies that serve Alaska's seniors, to help them avoid duplicating services.

Even the best plans and service providers are of little use unless people know they exist and understand how to use them. ACoA strives to educate the public about the resources and services available to them and how to access them. The Commission holds meetings and listening sessions across Alaska and presents at public events. We also use daily Facebook posts and weekly emails to share vital information with the public.

We invite you to read our state fiscal year 2025 (SFY2025) annual report to learn more about how ACoA is striving to make Alaska a place where we can live out our days in the communities and landscapes of our choice — the places we call home.

Sincerely,
Marty Lange

From the Chair



I would like to congratulate the Commission and the staff of the Commission for a wonderful year. We have stayed true to our mission by connecting seniors with services, including expanded and improved outreach. Across the state, the needs are many, and learning about and understanding the hardships and challenges our seniors face is both important and enlightening.

As we know, our seniors are amazing and resilient, but they are not invulnerable. Our mission is multifaceted. “Ensure dignity,” the state of being worthy of honor or respect. Whether lifelong Alaskans or those who made Alaska their home, from all backgrounds and cultures, our seniors helped build the Great State of Alaska and deserve our respect. They passed down their history, knowledge, and culture to today’s workforce and leaders.

Maintaining independence as we age with remoteness and isolation, along with subsistence lifestyles, financial pressures, and housing shortages is increasingly challenging, and for some, impossible. Seniors deserve our support.

At the same time, we must remember that many seniors who have given so much to this state continue to contribute today. These individuals remain active, engaged, and supportive of Alaska’s economy through their presence and service.

“Assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives.” We can help defend against isolation and loneliness by visiting with seniors, acknowledging them, and respecting them. They are Alaska’s foundation.

Commission members and our partner agencies and organizations collaborate to plan, advocate, and educate the citizens of Alaska. By working with providers, legislators, and administrations, and by using accurate data, face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, technology, and every available tool, we support Alaska’s senior population.

As we all know, it ultimately comes down to funding. The Commission respectfully thanks everyone who supports our senior population in the many ways possible.

My challenge for 2026 is for each of us, in some small way, to touch the life of a senior in need.

With the deepest respect,



Bob Sivertsen

About the Commission

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA, or “the Commission”) was established in 1981 for the purpose of ensuring the dignity of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation. The Commission meets the federal requirement, as described in the Older Americans Act (OAA), 306(a)(6)(D), that every state establish an advisory council to advise policymakers on matters related to aging.

The Commission:

Advocates for the needs and concerns of older Alaskans to the Governor, Legislature, Congressional delegation, and the public.

- **Provides recommendations** to the Governor and federal Administration for Community Living officials on senior needs and plans to address them over the next Alaska State Plan for Senior Services period (four years).
- **Advises** the Governor, Legislature, congressional delegation and the public on current and potential programs and services for older Alaskans and their caregivers.
- **Provides recommendations** to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority on programs and services to improve the lives of senior Trust beneficiaries.
- **Advises and assists** the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation’s (AHFC’s) Senior Housing Office, when requested, on programs and policies that support senior housing in Alaska.

The Commission is composed of 11 members, seven of whom are public members (including six ages 60 and older), appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Two seats are filled by the commissioners of the Department of Health and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. The remaining seats are reserved for the chair of the Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board and a senior services provider, regardless of age. In state fiscal year 2025 (SFY2025), the Commission was supported by an office staff of three: the Executive Director, the Program Coordinator, and the Rural Outreach Coordinator. The Rural Outreach Coordinator position was eliminated at the end of SFY2025.

Outreach

SFY2025 (July 2024–June 2025)

Ongoing participation:

- Older Persons Action Group (OPAG) / Senior Voice newspaper
 - Alaska Dementia Action Collaborative (ADAC)
 - Rural Elder Services Network (RESN)
 - Southeast Regional Elder Coalition (SREC)
 - Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network (AGEnet)
 - Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Human Services Transportation
 - Nutrition, Transportation, and Support Services (NTS)
 - Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS)
- Alaska Statewide Falls Prevention Community of Practice
- University of Alaska, Anchorage (UAA) Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Lab (AIR)

Exhibited at:

- Denakkanaaga Elders and Youth Conference, Galena (June 2024)
- Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) AmeriCorps Seniors Conference
- Fairbanks 50+ Art and Science of Aging Summit
- Alaska Disability and Aging Summit
- Improving Lives Conference
- Full Lives Conference
- Mat-Su Senior Services Wills Clinic with Alaska Legal Services Corporation
- Alaska Civil Rights Conference
- First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference
 - 2024 Annual Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention
 - Southcentral Foundation Elder Fall Potluck and Winter Gathering
 - Alaska Tribal Administrators Association and Alaska Native Village Corporation Association Conference
 - Walk to End Alzheimer's, Anchorage
 - Administration for Native Americans Alaska Region Training & Technical Assistance (TTA) Center Grant Writing Training
 - Cama'i Festival, Bethel

Attended:

- Southeast Alaska Economic Summit

- Food Bank of Alaska Anti-Hunger Network Conference
- American Society on Aging's On Aging 2025 Conference

ACoA Virtual Events:

- Senior Transportation in Alaska Teleconference
- Senior Centers in Alaska Teleconference
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Webinar: Estate Planning with Chelsea Riekkola

Additional Events Hosted:

- Virtual Dementia Tour with Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association and Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska at the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission
- Co-reception with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) at the Governor's Mansion

ACoA Listening Sessions:

- Valdez and Glennallen, May 2024
- Arctic Northwest: Kotzebue, Kivalina and Selawik
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Bethel and Kasigluk (Marshall canceled due to weather)

Partners & Partnered Outreach:

- UAA Alaska Native Community Outreach & Resources (ANCOR)
- Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA)
- Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Legislature Lunch and Learn presentation with AARP Alaska, Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman's Office (AKOLTCO), and AGEnet
- Listening sessions in Selawik and Kivalina reported on by The Arctic Sounder
- Older Persons Action Group / Senior Voice Alaska ACoA articles

Outreach Highlights

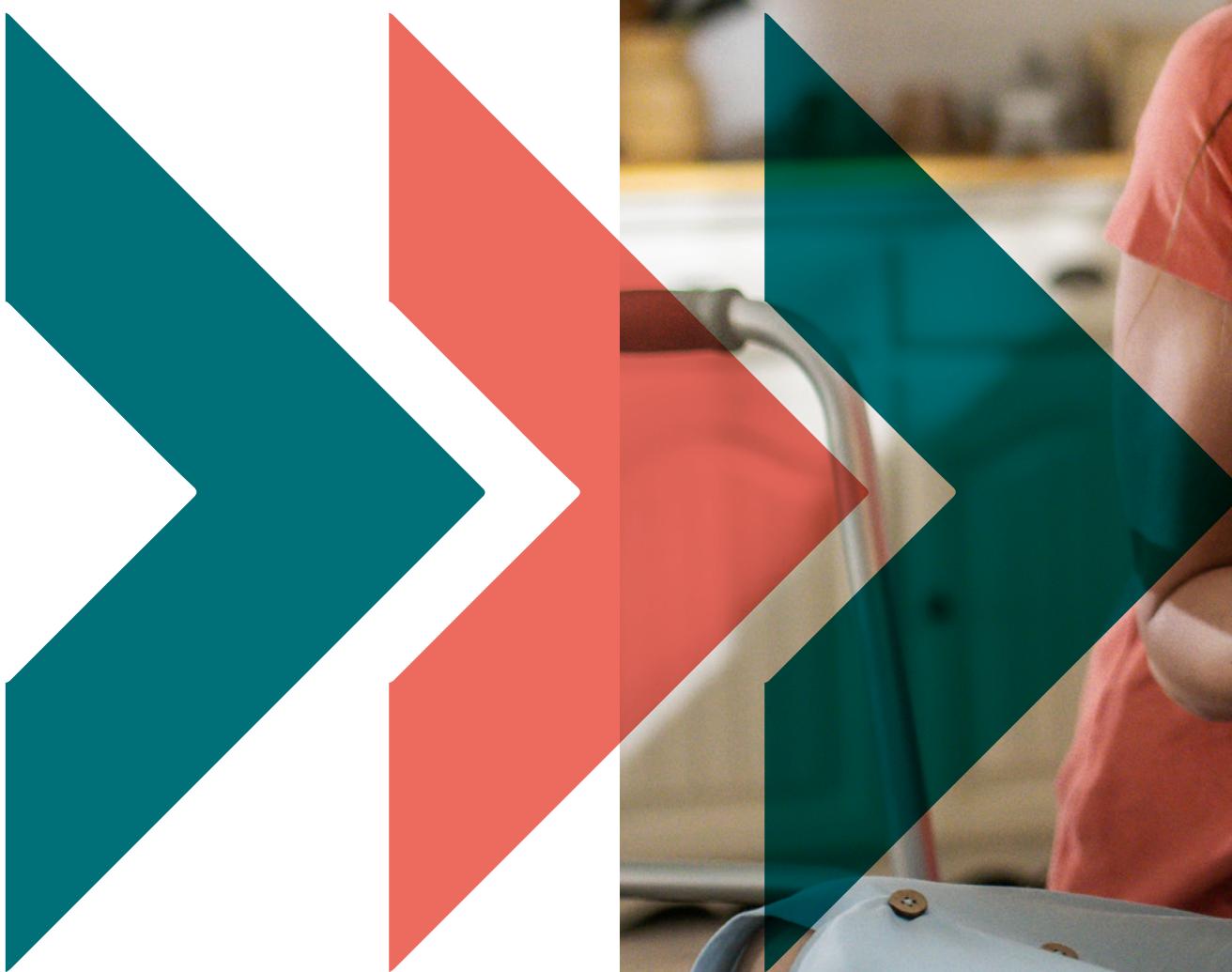
During the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference and AFN Convention, along with Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, we facilitated hosting a free Virtual Dementia Tour at the Anchorage Equal Rights Office, across the street from the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center. About 20 people participated in the immersive, interactive experience of what it is like to live with dementia.

For World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, we hosted a free Estate Planning Webinar with Alaskan Attorney Chelsea Riekkola, inviting senior centers to join by Zoom during lunchtime so their senior communities could participate easily. Seven senior centers from across the state joined us, with nearly 100 participants.

We will continue free educational webinars into SFY26 because of their success.



What We Learned



Rural Listening Sessions — Our Rural Outreach Coordinator organized listening sessions in the Copper River Basin, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Arctic Northwest, and, in July 2025, the Bering Strait Region, including Nome, Shishmaref and Unalakleet.

Results of ACoA surveys collected from participants throughout these regions included:

- Nearly 1 in 2 seniors (mostly ages 65 and older) reported “sometimes,” “often,” or “almost always” struggling to have enough food.
- About 1 in 2 seniors struggle paying their bills.
- About 1 in 5 said they have no one to count on for help.
- About 2 in 5 reported knowing others who have experienced abuse (most often emotional, but physical or sexual abuse and neglect were also reported).

Themes across all regions included:

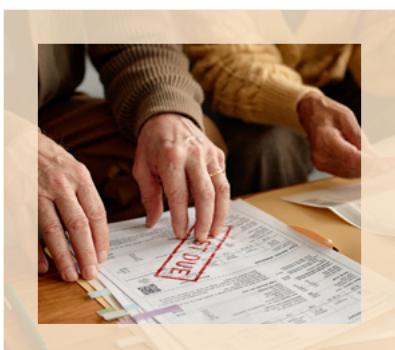
- A strong reliance on Medicaid, Indian Health Service (IHS), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicare, and Social Security
- Gaps in medical equipment, dental coverage, and medications
- Many Elders feeling only somewhat connected to their community
- Interest in both frozen, traditional Native meals and standard shelf-stable food boxes to support food security in rural communities
 - Logistics and transportation barriers in every region

These findings highlight an ongoing and urgent need to strengthen Alaska's aging network, particularly in rural and remote regions, where isolation, food insecurity, and limited access to care remain prevalent. Through continued outreach, data collection, and advocacy collaboration with Tribal and community partners, ACoA is working to elevate the voices of Elders and ensure that state and federal programs respond to the realities of life in Alaska's diverse regions.

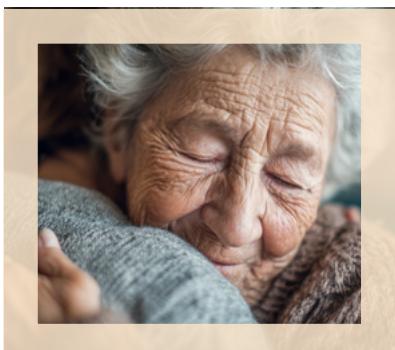
Adult Well-being Assessment — At community events this year, ACoA piloted the National Council on Aging's



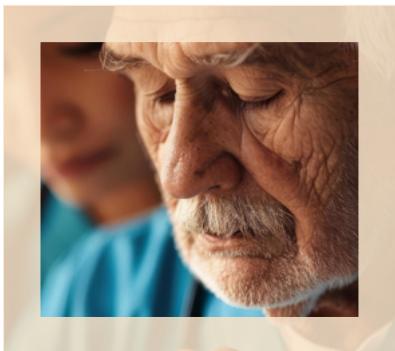
1 in 2 struggle to have enough food



1 in 2 struggle to pay their bills



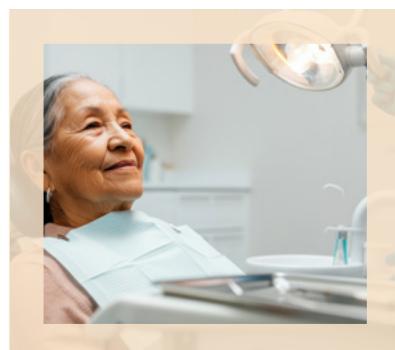
1 in 5 have no one to count on



2 in 5 know someone who has experienced abuse



Reliance on Medicaid, IHS, SNAP, Medicare and Social Security



Lack of medical equipment, dental coverage, and medication



Somewhat connected to their community



Logistics and transportation barriers in every region

(NCOA's) Adult Well-being Assessment (AWA), a standardized tool for measuring older adults' quality of life across multiple domains: life satisfaction, financial well-being, physical and mental health, social support, meaning and purpose, and isolation. The assessment framework and scoring guidance are available in the [NCOA Adult Well-Being Assessment Guide](#).

A total of 72 surveys were completed across four groups: statewide AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, Fairbanks seniors, and older Alaskans in Glennallen and Valdez.

Overall, most older adults responding reported strong life satisfaction and optimism about the future, but financial well-being remains a concern. Using a 0–10 scale, responding seniors had an overall average **life satisfaction** rating of 7.7, and **financial well-being** score of **6.9**. Life satisfaction and financial well-being are closely linked, showing a moderate positive correlation (0.59); this means that older Alaskans who reported being financially stable also tended to report higher overall life satisfaction. Across all participants, more than **two-thirds (68%) are thriving** in life satisfaction, while **nearly one in five (19%) are suffering financially**.

- The Fairbanks group demonstrated the strongest outcomes, with 86% thriving in life satisfaction and 82% thriving financially, coupled with high social support and low isolation.
- The Alaska AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, however, showed notable financial vulnerability: Only 43% reported thriving financially, while 1 in 3 (30%) reported suffering.
- Participants from the Glennallen and Valdez communities showed mixed results, with generally moderate life satisfaction and financial well-being, but slightly lower physical health and optimism scores compared to other regions.

Despite these disparities, results overall point to **strong social cohesion and purpose among Alaska's older adults**. Isolation scores were low, with meaning-and-purpose scores consistently high, suggesting that community connection remains a major source of resilience.

These findings underscore that **financial well-being is the most significant pressure point** affecting quality of life for older Alaskans, particularly among Alaska AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, while emphasizing the protective value of social support, optimism, and community engagement across the state.

Advocacy

Legislative Priorities

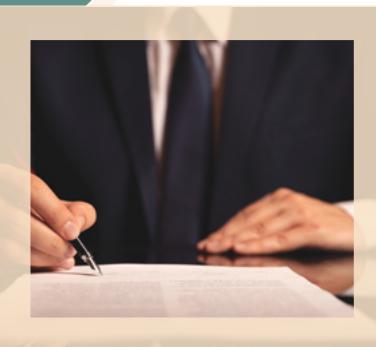
Non-Medicaid Senior Services Funding — ACoA's first 2025 legislative priority focused on increasing funding for Senior Community-Based Grants, which provide essential support to help Alaskans ages 60+ remain independent in their homes and connected in their communities. Administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS), these grants fund vital programs, including meals, transportation, adult day services, household assistance, health promotion, and operations for Alaska's Centers for Independent Living. Despite growing demand and inflationary pressures, funding has remained flat for years, creating widespread shortfalls across the state.

As part of our legislative advocacy, in partnership with AGEnet and AARP Alaska, ACoA conducted a survey of senior centers. The results highlighted the urgency of the situation: Food prices have risen more than 25%, roughly three-quarters of centers face staffing shortages, and nearly nine out of 10 are struggling to meet operating costs. Nearly 90% of Alaska's senior centers reported major funding shortfalls.

A final budget supporting and stabilizing funding for senior services grants by \$2.5 million was approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Dunleavy June 12, 2025. Of that, \$1.2 million went toward senior centers' meals, transportation and support services; \$300,000 to Adult Day Services; \$344,000 to Centers for Independent Living; \$466,000 to Senior In-Home Services; and \$163,000 to Aging and Disability Resource Centers.



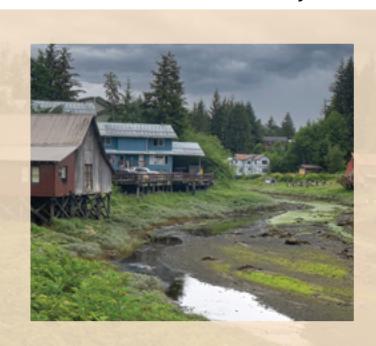
Food prices have risen more than 25%



\$2.5 million in additional funds approved by Legislature and signed by Governor Dunleavy



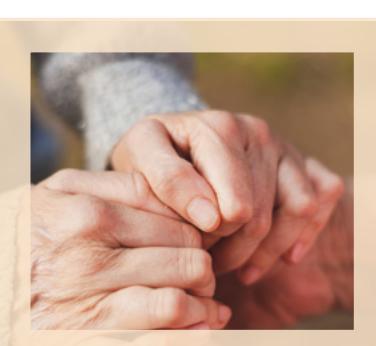
3/4 of senior centers facing staffing shortages



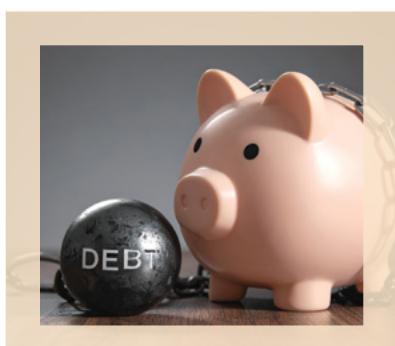
Housing continues to rank among top four needs



9 out of 10 centers struggling to meet operating costs



Letters of support helped to amplify Alaska seniors' needs



90% of Alaska's senior centers reported major funding shortfalls



The Legislature preserved \$1.75 million for senior housing

While additional investment will still be needed to meet long-term needs, this year's funding increase prevents deeper cuts, service reductions, and waitlists that would have further strained senior centers across the state. ACoA extends appreciation to legislative leaders, the Governor, service providers, and dedicated advocates for their commitment to protecting Alaska's senior community services.

Senior Citizen Housing — ACoA's second legislative priority in 2025 was to maintain capital funding for the AHFC's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund (SCHDF). The Legislature preserved \$1.75 million in the General Fund for this essential program; SCHDF has supported the construction of over 1,600 senior housing units statewide since 2001, an average of 66 new units annually. SCHDF also funds the Senior Access Program, which assists older Alaskans with accessibility modifications.

Housing continues to rank among the top four needs identified by Alaska seniors, with growing waitlists across communities as of December 2024: Kenai Senior Center (119 individuals), Nikiski Senior Center (51 individuals), and Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Centers (over 230 individuals, across independent, HUD, and assisted living units combined). Despite local fundraising, such as Nikiski's \$1 million secured toward an eight-unit expansion, projects remain delayed due to inflation and rising construction costs — underscoring the critical need to sustain SCHDF capital investment.

Letters of Support

Non-Medicaid Senior Services Funding — ACoA, AGEnet, and AARP jointly submitted a letter to the Anchorage Daily News, which published it in the Opinions section. The letter, titled "Meals, family support, independence: What \$3 million means to Alaska seniors," urged the Legislature to increase the budget for Senior Community-Based Grants to help senior centers reduce waiting lists for meals, hire staff, and not reduce services due to food and labor cost growth.

Title VI Cluster Training — ACoA wrote to the Office for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian



Programs for support to host the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title VI Cluster Training in Alaska in 2025. ACoA highlighted its collaboration with the SDS Grants Unit to develop an Alaska-based Title III and Title VI grantee-collaboration conference. ACoA emphasized that bringing the national Title VI Cluster Training to Alaska, timed alongside the state's Title III and VI conference, would strengthen coordination, elevate best practices, and support providers serving Alaska's elders.

Falls Prevention Coalition — The Commission wrote a letter of support for the Alaska Department of Health Injury Prevention & Surveillance Unit's (IPSU's) application to the NCOA to establish a statewide falls prevention coalition. The letter emphasized the importance of rebuilding a coordinated, data-informed falls prevention network in Alaska, and noted IPSU's strong foundation in statewide injury prevention efforts, Tribal partnerships, and experience managing communities of practice. ACoA highlighted how a renewed coalition would strengthen collaboration among state, Tribal, and community partners; improve dissemination of fall-related data; support targeted prevention strategies; and ultimately reduce fall risks for older Alaskans.

Complex Care Residential Homes — ACoA also wrote to the Alaska State Legislature to support HB 73 and SB 76, legislation that would establish a new license type for Complex Care Residential Homes (CCRHs) to address a major gap in Alaska's long-term care system. In the letter, ACoA emphasized that Alaska currently lacks appropriate residential options for individuals with complex behavioral, medical, and disability-related needs, resulting in costly hospitalizations, emergency psychiatric stays, and frequent out-of-state placements. The commission highlighted that CCRHs would provide smaller, home-like settings with 24-hour multidisciplinary care for populations such as individuals with severe mental illness, dementia with disruptive behaviors, or youth with complex behavioral health needs. ACoA underscored that establishing CCRHs would reduce preventable hospitalizations, keep Alaskans closer to their families, and offer more stable, sustainable care options for those with the highest needs.

Public Awareness, Community Education, and Collaborations

Lunch and Learn

February 5, 2025 — ACoA joined AARP and AGEnet to educate Legislators and their staff on the issues that are affecting Alaska's senior population. Executive Director Marty Lange shared ACoA's vision, explained who serves on the Commission, and described

what it does. He carefully explained the relationship among the federal government, state government, and ACoA, describing how OAA funds are procured and distributed to agencies providing senior services. He made it clear that the current levels of funding are inadequate to meet the needs of Alaska's growing population, echoing concerns raised by AARP and AGEnet. He alerted those present that ACoA would soon send them the Senior Snapshot 2024, a publication that contains data and statistics on senior issues to help guide their decisions on senior-related matters.

Quarterly Meeting Summaries

September 2024 — ACoA held a face-to-face meeting in Kotzebue focusing on senior housing, health care, and transportation challenges, especially in rural areas. Updates included progress on the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, new federal regulations, and digital equity initiatives. Reports highlighted workforce shortages, high costs, and unmet needs for elders. The Maniilaq Association presented on Tribal health and elder support programs. Discussion of legislative issues focused on funding, addressing workforce shortages, supporting housing and transportation investments, and improving access to services. Commissioners emphasized collaboration, data-driven planning, and ongoing evaluation to better serve Alaska's aging population.

December 2024 — The Commission met by videoconference. Staff reported on partnerships with various organizations, AFN convention outreach, and the Virtual Dementia Tour. Major concerns raised included critical funding shortages of senior centers, workforce shortages in long-term care, and inadequate Medicare provider availability statewide. The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) announced new senior housing projects. Legislative priorities for the upcoming session included increased senior grant funding, guardianship reform, AKOLTCO funding, and workforce development. The meeting highlighted ongoing struggles to balance regulatory compliance with practical service delivery in Alaska's unique geographic and demographic context.

February 2025 — The Commission held a face-to-face meeting in Juneau for its quarterly meeting to discuss legislative priorities. They took the opportunity to meet with state legislators and their staff, informing them of the need for increased senior grant funding and capital funding for senior housing. Key updates at the quarterly meeting included Marty Lange's transition to executive director, progress toward the launch of the "Alaska Wisdom and Wellness" podcast, rural outreach expansion to underserved areas, and collaboration with SDS on OAA compliance. The Commission discussed supporting HB 73 and SB 76 for Complex Care Residential Homes, reviewed the Medicaid rate methodology study, and



addressed challenges including food insecurity, workforce shortages, and the coming loss of the rural outreach coordinator position at the end of the state fiscal year.

May 2025 — The Commission met by videoconference to discuss monitoring state and federal budget challenges, particularly potential cuts to the Administration for Community Living. Yasmin Radbod moved from her position as Rural Outreach Coordinator to Program Coordinator 2, and the Commission reviewed rural outreach efforts showing increased engagement through the GovDelivery email system (E-blast) and social media. Updates covered Pioneer Homes operations, OAA requirements, and presentations from commissioners and partners, including Turnagain Social Club, AKOLTCO, AHFC, and various advocacy organizations. The Commission discussed researching a Permanent Fund Dividend raffle for senior services and planning the annual report and state plan.

Proclamations

In SFY2025, the State of Alaska reaffirmed its commitment to seniors and caregivers through three key proclamations.

November 2024 was declared both Family Caregivers Month and Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. The **Family Caregivers Month** proclamation recognized the essential role of more than 94,000 Alaskan family and informal caregivers who provide nearly 88 million hours of unpaid care each year: an estimated \$1.6 billion value. It highlighted the emotional, physical, and financial challenges caregivers face and called on Alaskans to support their well-being and respite needs.

The **Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month** proclamation raised awareness of the 11,000 Alaskans aged 65+ projected to be living with Alzheimer's by 2025, emphasizing the need for early detection, family support, and continued research and community resources to address this growing public health concern.

In May 2025, the Governor proclaimed **Older Americans Month**, celebrating Alaska's 160,906 residents aged 65 and older, now 21 percent of the state's population. Under the



national theme "Powered by Connection," the proclamation encouraged strengthening intergenerational ties, reducing isolation, and expanding inclusive services and technology access for older adults.

e-blast and Facebook

ACoA became increasingly known throughout the statewide senior community this year. We relaunched our newsletter, now called the ACoA e-blast, as a weekly news source. Subscribers have grown to more than 1,600. Our Facebook page grew from nearly 90 followers to more than 400. The goal of these outlets is to provide Older Alaskans, their caregivers, providers and advocates with reliable, timely announcements including funding opportunities, event registrations, and important updates. We also strive to emphasize important information for the Alaska Native community of Elders and Tribal Health Organizations.

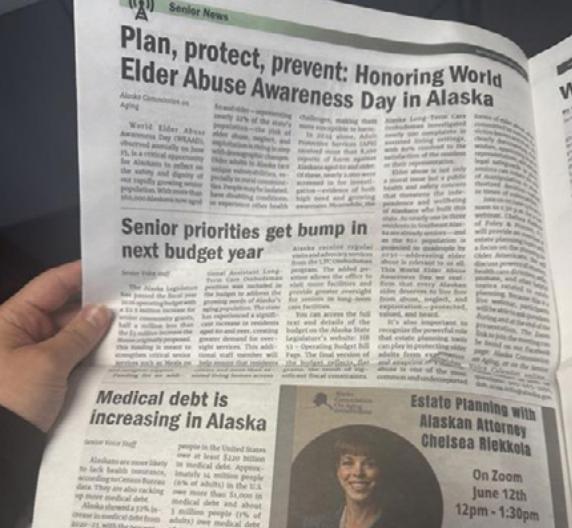
Looking Forward

Alaska continues to be a state with a very fast-growing senior population. With this growth comes new challenges. Issues that will be front and center over the next 25 years include:

- Health care (including dementia prevention, treatment, and care, and a workforce to support seniors' increased needs)
- Scams targeting seniors
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Housing

Building on our annual Senior Snapshot and working to implement the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, ACoA will continue to take into account the demographics of Alaska's seniors.

Alaskans are enjoying longer lives, thanks to advancements in health care, as well as to home- and community-based care providers, dedicated family caregivers, and seniors who prioritize healthy living. Continuing to invest in home- and community-based services to provide person-centered care for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers is vital. These services make it possible for older





adults to remain with their families and in their communities for as long as possible, rather than moving to a care facility.

Population projections from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development suggest that the number of Alaskans 80 years old and older will more than double in the next 25 years. This means that, across the state, an adequate workforce will be imperative to ensure their needs are met. More doctors, nurses, personal care assistants, caregivers, and service providers will be needed. Efforts to attract these workers to Alaska are therefore increasingly important each year. Alaskans can play an active role in recruiting by promoting the state to outsiders and encouraging them to consider moving here.

The risk of senior-targeted scams is also a concern, as seniors are often more vulnerable to financial exploitation due to their accumulated wealth and potential cognitive decline. To reduce these risks, Alaska will need to invest in education and outreach programs that enable seniors to identify and avoid scams.

Technology may have a role in helping Alaskans as they age. Robotics and artificial intelligence are being developed with caring for seniors as their primary focus. The technology is improving annually, but the deeper question remains: Do people want to be taken care of by robots? The Commission will be monitoring this developing field with interest.

Some seniors are feeling the financial burden of rising rents, while others are living in houses that are paid for but not designed for seniors. Affordable, adequate housing is an issue that affects Alaska's seniors. Housing units are being built that allow occupants to transition seamlessly from independent living to assisted living and nursing home care. This is happening in major cities, but for most rural and remote communities, this option is not available. The question remains: How will we live out our days?

Whatever the future may hold, Alaska's greatest asset for helping seniors age well is its residents. As we age, we can all take time to learn about the issues Alaska's seniors face. Most importantly, we can take time to notice the seniors around us and help as we are able. Alaskans taking care of Alaskans is how the state can become a better place for everyone to live out their days.



Recommendations to the Governor

Safety and Quality Assurance

Protecting vulnerable adults and ensuring services meet appropriate standards

Increase Adult Protective Services (APS) staffing: A 2024 State Ombudsman investigation found that high caseloads, turnover, and limited supervisory capacity impede APS's ability to protect vulnerable adults and recommended expanding staffing and multidisciplinary team coordination. As APS reports rise alongside Alaska's growing senior population, additional APS positions are needed to ensure timely, effective responses to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Strengthen care coordination requirements: Direct the Department of Health to update regulations to ensure care coordinators have sufficient, risk-based contact with clients to monitor quality of care, identify unmet needs, and respond to changes in conditions.

Workforce & Provider Stability

Ensuring services exist by making them financially and operationally viable

Increase Personal Care Services rates: The 2025 Guidehouse Medicaid LTSS rate review documents that current rates do not cover provider labor costs or support workforce stability, contributing to unmet need and access challenges. Rate adjustments are necessary to ensure services can be delivered as authorized.

Address private duty nursing access limitations: Despite recent funding increases, only one agency currently provides private duty nursing statewide, due to workforce

shortages driven by inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates. A rate review and sustainable funding model are needed to ensure access to essential in-home nursing care for medically fragile Alaskans.

Long-Term Care & Housing Continuum

Creating the right mix of residential and in-home options across acuity levels

Create tiered reimbursement rates for residential services delivered in assisted living homes, tied to level of care: Tiered payments would better reflect resident acuity, support higher-skill staffing (including nurses), and allow facilities to safely serve individuals with complex needs. Facilities operating at higher tiers should meet defined service and staffing requirements, including appropriate segregation by cognitive and care needs. Developing regional continuums of care would reduce gaps, prevent out-of-area placement, and allow Alaskans to age near family, culture, and community. The 2025 Guidehouse rate review highlights structural shortcomings in Alaska's assisted living rate system, particularly its inability to reflect differing levels of resident need. Tiered payments would be a policy response to these findings, supporting appropriate staffing and improved access to care.

Increase General Relief Assisted Living Home reimbursement rates: Although SFY2025 included a small GRALH rate increase, current reimbursement remains far below Alaska's assisted living costs, which are among the highest in the nation. Rates that do not reflect actual costs place financial strain on providers and limit access for low-income seniors and adults with disabilities.

Expand nursing-level and higher-acuity long-term care capacity: Alaska's long-term care system faces growing bottlenecks due to limited nursing-level options, private duty nursing shortages, and reimbursement structures that do not support higher-acuity care. As a result, assisted living homes are increasingly relied upon to serve individuals whose medical or cognitive needs exceed their licensed scope of services, creating risks to resident safety, workforce sustainability, and regulatory compliance. Expanding nursing-level capacity and aligning reimbursement with acuity are necessary to ensure appropriate care placement and relieve pressure across the system.

Prioritize investment in memory care capacity: Alaska faces a growing need for dementia-specific care as the number of older adults living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias continues to rise, while specialized memory care options remain limited, particularly outside urban hubs. Insufficient capacity contributes to inappropriate placement, caregiver burnout, and out-of-region transfers that separate individuals from family, culture, and community. The state should prioritize new and expanded memory care through targeted capital investments, public-private partnerships, and provider incentives, while also supporting the integration of dementia care into existing assisted

living and long-term care settings. Concurrent investment in workforce development is essential to ensure staff are trained to deliver safe, dignified, dementia-capable care close to home.

Continue Home Modification Grant funding and address delivery barriers: Home Modification Grants remain a critical support for seniors and people with disabilities, particularly as access to Medicaid waiver environmental modification services has become increasingly limited due to cost, contractor availability, and administrative barriers. Home modifications are a key safety net that help individuals remain safely housed and avoid more costly institutional care. Continuing funding, while addressing delivery and workforce challenges, is necessary to ensure essential home modifications can be completed and aging in place remains a viable option.

Health Care Access & Coverage

Improving access to medical, behavioral, and culturally appropriate care

Strengthen Alaska's Medicare provider network: Alaska faces a shortage of Medicare-participating providers, limiting access to care for older adults. The state should reduce administrative barriers for small and independent practices through partnerships with clinically integrated networks such as Envoy Integrated Health, targeted incentives and loan-repayment options for providers in shortage areas, and investment in shared services that make Medicare participation sustainable. Expanding Medicare capacity is essential to improving access, reducing avoidable hospitalizations, and keeping care close to home.

Conduct a targeted senior behavioral health needs assessment: Direct the Department of Health to evaluate evidence-based models such as the Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) and Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), assess workforce and funding needs, and develop an implementation pathway to reduce depression, social isolation, and suicide risk among Alaska's growing senior population.

Pursue a Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration to cover traditional healing practices: Alaska is one of the few states with a large Indigenous population that has not yet sought a Section 1115 demonstration to reimburse traditional healing services through Medicaid. In 2024, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved 1115 amendments in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Oregon allowing Medicaid and CHIP to cover culturally grounded services delivered by Tribal, IHS, and Urban Indian Health Program providers at 100-percent federal match for American Indian and Alaska Native beneficiaries. These demonstrations strengthen access to care, support behavioral and chronic health management, and advance health equity while reducing state costs.

Statewide Planning, Coordination, & Engagement

Aligning systems, agencies, and lived experience around aging policy

Support the statewide ACoA Senior Summit 2026: The administration's support for Alaska's first statewide Senior Summit would elevate aging as a shared state priority and strengthen coordination across agencies, as well as among Tribal governments, providers, advocates, and older Alaskans. As planning moves forward, Governor-level endorsement would help align the Senior Summit with development of a Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, reinforce cross-sector collaboration, and ensure that insights from lived experience inform policy, budget, and implementation decisions.

Launch a Multi-Sector Plan on Aging (MPA) through Executive Order: Alaska's rapidly growing senior population requires a coordinated, cross-agency approach to aging policy. An MPA would align health, housing, transportation, workforce, and long-term care systems; reduce service gaps and inefficiencies; and position the state to leverage federal funding while supporting older Alaskans to age with dignity in their communities.

Review of Senior Snapshot 2024 Statistics

Annually, we release the Senior Snapshot, which uses available statistics to present an overview of the health and well-being of Alaskans ages 60 and older. Following is a summary of high points from last year's data. For the latest data, refer to the 2025 Senior Snapshot.

Population

- Alaska has the fastest growing senior population per capita in the nation.
- Alaska's senior population increased 77% between calendar years 2010 and 2024.
- In calendar year 2024, Alaskans age 60+ (160,906) represented more than 20% of the state's total population (741,147). Southeast Alaska had the highest concentration, with 1 in 4 residents ages 60+.

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)

- About 1 in 11 Alaskans (or 8.8%) ages 65 and older were living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) in 2023. The older you are, the higher the risk.
- By 2050, Alaska's 85+ population is expected to nearly quadruple, to more than 29,000, representing a 270% increase over 2024. About 1 in 3 will experience ADRD.

Housing

- In November 2024, 1,923 people were on the senior/disabled waitlist, up 56% from 2021.
- Only 46 new senior housing units were funded for development in 2024, down from 96 in 2021.

Food Security

- In 2024, 8,670 Alaska Seniors (ages 65+) were on SNAP, with an average monthly benefit of \$343.
- 32.4% of older Alaskans (65+) are classified as obese.

Homeless Older Alaskans

- Seniors made up 17% of Alaska's total homeless population.
- 2,667 Alaskan seniors ages 55+ reported being homeless in 2024.
- 67% reported having a disabling condition; half also had one or more behavioral health issues. 43% identified as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous and 64% were men.

Safety

- There were 8,127 reports of harm to Adult Protective Services (APS) in FY 2024, nearly a 21% increase since 2020.
- Mortality rates for senior suicide, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, fatal falls, and alcohol-induced deaths are higher for the Alaska senior population than national averages.

Cost of Care

- In 2023, Alaska had the highest cost for skilled nursing facility care in the country; at \$1,099/day, it is almost four times the national average. Alaska also had the second-highest median cost per year for assisted living, at nearly \$87,000 per year. The highest cost was Washington, D.C., at \$88,829, and the lowest was Missouri, at \$38,192.

What gives you hope for Alaska's aging future?



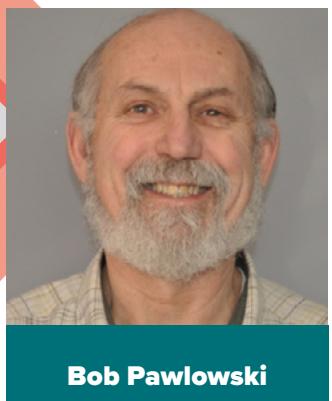
Bob Sivertsen, SFY25 Chair, Public Member, Ketchikan:

"Alaska's seniors are more resilient and resourceful than seniors in any other state. The ability to adapt and overcome over decades speaks to their strength. The smaller population of Alaska makes us, as the populous, closer, and helps us to understand the needs of the many. We have better programs and communication that allows the state to better understand its constituents and demographics. I have faith in the active and boisterous senior population of Alaska."



Vivian Stiver, Public Member, Fairbanks:

"I am inspired by the many local volunteers and advocates I personally have worked with over the years. From my community to the halls of the capital, Alaskans care about their seniors/elders. I am encouraged by the opportunities the state has provided by its establishment of the Commission on Aging and all the related departments that continually look to assist seniors as they age in our great state."



Bob Pawlowski, Alaska Pioneers' Homes Advisory Board Chair, Designated Seat, Anchorage:

"Knowing the capabilities and capacity of the Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson Joint Military-VA Hospital and the Alaska VA Healthcare Community Care Program, I am optimistic that our aging veterans and military retirees and their spouses will have the health support needed to live their full life in Alaska. Similarly, those with the Indian Health Service have comparable opportunities. Also, with advances in telemedicine and expanding health care training in Alaska, it gives me hope our seniors will have access to the health care they need."

Tony Newman, Department of Health, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, Designated Seat, Juneau:

"What gives me hope is that Alaskans have always looked out for one another and can be counted on to keep doing so — no matter what the future holds."



Darlene Supplee, Senior Service Provider, Designated Seat, Fairbanks:

"As an Alaskan senior provider, I witness the strength and commitment of our state's nonprofits to advance the aging-in-place movement. Safeguarding the fastest-growing aging population in three centuries takes a village. Local nonprofits lead the way for communities to come together, creating a strong volunteer network of kind hearts that has always been the backbone of Alaska, built through the determination of our Pioneers."



Arthur Delaune, Public Member, Fairbanks:

"I'm encouraged by the increased awareness around our state regarding the potential shortfall of services that will be required for our expanding senior population now and in the future. I think that this growing movement is inspiring Alaskans to pull together to make a positive impact in the lives of our aging citizens. I keep going back to the old adage: How we treat our elders is a reflection of who we are and who we aspire to be as people."



Sara Chambers, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Designated Seat, Juneau:

"Increasing and deepening connections with older Alaskans allows agencies to truly hear their hopes, needs, and concerns. These relationships provide a pathway to meaningful improvement of quality of life and longevity in our state."





Paula Pawlowski, SFY25 Vice Chair, Public Member, Anchorage:

“Alaskan seniors are not your ordinary seniors. They built this state and are still working, advocating and volunteering. They are independent, resourceful, and optimistic for Alaska’s future. The narrative for the future is being mapped by them and their children’s experienced leadership. This gives me hope that all seniors will have the quality of life in Alaska.”



Jan Engan, Public Member, Wasilla:

“I really don’t have a quote, but I’d use the word ‘resilience’ when looking at hope for Alaska’s aging future.”



Nona Safra, Public Member, Homer:

“A person’s value to the community increases with age and experience, making our elders a great asset to society.”



Jennifer Stoehr, Public Member, Anchorage:

“My hope is that Alaskans can age with dignity, connection, and purpose — surrounded by community, culture, and the natural beauty that makes Alaska home.”

Kori Mateaki, Public Member, Anchorage:

“My hope comes from the unwavering compassion and determination of the people who care for Alaska’s elders every day. They continue to rise above challenges, advocate for better programs, and ensure accountability is preserved even when the path isn’t easy. Their determination gives me hope — not because everything is working, but because they care enough to try.”



Kori Mateaki

ACOA SFY2025 Commission Members

Name	Position	Term Expiration Date
Robert Sivertsen	(Chair) Public/Restricted	12/2027
Paula Pawlowski	(Vice Chair) Public/Restricted	12/2027
Nona Safra	Public/Restricted	12/2025
Jan Engan	Public/Restricted	Resigned 5/2025
Kori Mateaki	Public/Restricted	12/2025
Arthur Delaune	Public/Restricted	12/2028
Vivian Stiver	Public/Restricted	12/2028
Jennifer Stoehr	Public/Restricted	12/2028
Darlene Supplee	Senior Service Provider	12/2025
Sara Chambers	DCCED Commissioner Designee	N/A
Robert Pawlowski	Pioneers’ Homes Advisory Board	N/A
Anthony Newman	DOH Commissioner Designee	N/A

ACoA is a proud supporter of the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills and Training (MASST) program



We are grateful to longtime MASST Participant Larry Johnson for his dedication to volunteering at ACoA. He has now graduated from the program, and we wish him all the best.

We welcomed two new MASST volunteers this fiscal year, Leona (Uyang) Seal and Zita Chikigak.





**Alaska
Commission
On Aging**
Aging With Dignity And Independence

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Governor Mike Dunleavy**

**Department of Health
Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner**

**Alaska Commission on Aging
Martin Lange, Executive Director**

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