

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING

2015 Annual Report

2015 Membership

Becky Brimhall-Lepire, Chair – Carefree, AZ

Tonya L. Watson, Vice Chair – Flagstaff, AZ

Patsy Gillis, Secretary – Phoenix, AZ

Charles A. Brown – Sunsites, AZ

Andrew B. Compton – Mesa, AZ

Deborah Hankerd – Tombstone, AZ

Diane Joens – Cottonwood, AZ

Deborah M. Lavinsky – Phoenix, AZ

Teresa Ramirez Lopez – Phoenix, AZ

Doyle Meredith – Prescott Valley, AZ

Lisa M. O'Neill – Tucson, AZ

Allison Perrin – Phoenix, AZ

Melinda Preston – Tempe, AZ

Trudy W. Schuett – Yuma, AZ

C.T. Wright, Past Chair – Fountain Hills, AZ

Established by state law in 1980, the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GACA) is a statewide body of fifteen members appointed by the Governor to serve three-year terms.

Purpose: "to advise the Governor, Legislature and all State Departments which the Council deems necessary on all matters and issues relating to aging, including the administration of the State Plan on Aging."

Mission: "to enhance the quality of life for older Arizonans."

Implementation of Strategic Plan

2015 was a transition year for the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging; efforts centered on the implementation of an action plan resulting from the 2014 strategic planning process. The recommendations served as the foundation for change in focus and operation to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Efforts included:

- Continuing to build/strengthen relationships with state agencies, Area Agencies on Aging and organizations across the state dealing with aging issues;
- Fully engaging all GACA members;
- Modifying committee structure and processes;
- Increasing awareness of the Council throughout the state;
- Conducting joint training and educational opportunities about aging issues in Arizona with other agencies and aging-related organizations around the state; and
- Organizing an even-numbered year summit of statewide aging officials and leader, alternating with Senior Action Days during odd-numbered years.

Measurable outcomes were established for the Advisory Council's working committees and the subcommittees. Members of the Advisory Council on Aging were surveyed to solicit information on their individual skills, abilities and interests and ascertain how they might contribute to the efforts of the whole. New members were provided timely orientation to encourage participation in the work of the Council and training was offered ahead of the first 2015 meetings to those agreeing to leadership roles. To track progress being made on the six areas of focus and the new measurable outcomes, a [dashboard](#) (Attachment A) was created and posted to the GACA [website](#) then updated throughout the year. A review of the information outlined in the dashboard reveals goals were met in five of the six areas during this transitional year.

With the restructuring of committees, change in operations, and the inclusion of measurable outcomes, the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging demonstrated their commitment to collaboration and improvement.



Compliance with Statutory Purpose

As required by federal law, the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging continued to work with the DES Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) to monitor the administration of the [State Plan on Aging](#). DES/DAAS staff provided updates, answered questions and discussed progress being made at the 2015 GACA meetings. Because of shared goals and in an effort to avoid duplication and improve efficiencies, it was proposed by the Governor's Office on Aging that the Aging 2020 state agency partners engage in the work of the State Plan on Aging. That transition is underway and will be a part of future reporting to the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging.

In compliance with its legislative mandate, the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging continued the focus on Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Subcommittee of the Aging in Community Committee was created to help collect and disseminate information. The Council's email newsletter (*Legislative Update*) tracked legislation about Alzheimer's disease and offered links to current research and reports as well as the latest information on the National Alzheimer's Project Act, the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and the work of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care and Services. The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging supported the Governor's Office on Aging's leadership role in the Planning Group of the Arizona Alzheimer's Task Force and the launch of the [Arizona Alzheimer's State Plan: A Framework for Action](#). Work is underway to engage the members of the Alzheimer's Subcommittee in the implementation phase of the Arizona Alzheimer's State Plan.

Legislative Update Email Newsletter

The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging continued to track state and federal legislation impacting older adults and reported it through the non-partisan *Legislative Update*. The intent of the email newsletter is to inform readers about the legislative process and help older Arizonans and aging advocates formulate their own opinions and ensure their voices are heard. Each issue included a link to state legislation tracked by the Council and brief overviews of federal legislation. In addition, current information and resources were offered from local, regional, state and federal programs that comprise the aging network.

Senior Action Days

Older adults and their advocates were invited to join members of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, state legislators and local officials at seven Senior Action Days held around the state from Friday, September 18, 2015 to Tuesday, October 6, 2015. Events were held in Apache Junction, Cottonwood, Kingman, Phoenix, Prescott Valley, Sunsites and Tucson, Arizona. These special affairs offered an opportunity for older adults and their advocates to engage in a dialogue with their legislators, local leadership, federal liaisons and members of the Council on issues of importance. Senior Action Days provided elected officials with the opportunity to hear directly from older constituents in their respective districts in a manner that's as time efficient and cost effective as possible. Information collected through the Senior Action process is used by the Council to help develop priorities and is shared with state agencies for planning purposes.



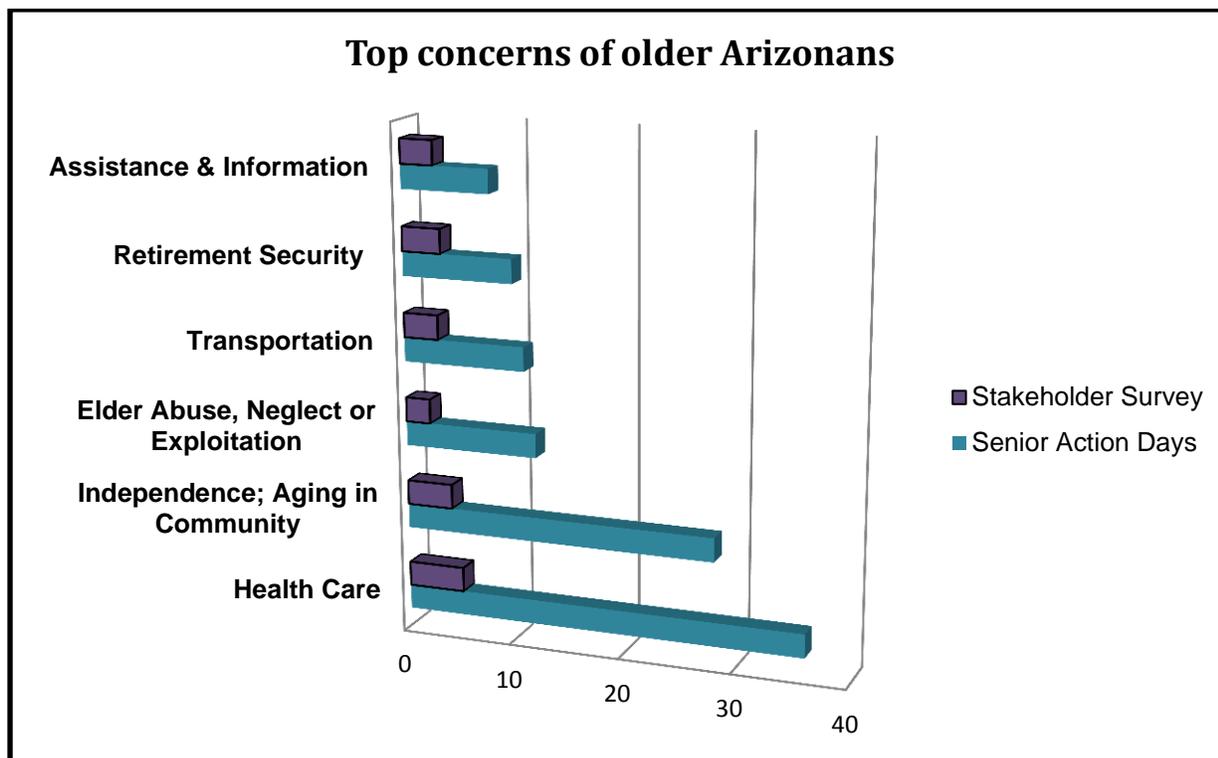
(Senior Action Day at Verde Valley Senior Action Day, Cottonwood, Arizona, September 29, 2015. Photo courtesy of Christine Bryson-Lazo)

More than 347 people participated in the seven events. Constituents were joined by nine legislators, thirteen municipal staff from the various locations, six members of the county Board of Supervisors, staff from six EMS/fire departments and seven law enforcement personnel. Staff from Congressional and Senate offices attended six of seven events and 32 stakeholders, representing service providers, local agencies, state departments and Area Agencies on Aging, were in attendance.



(Senior Action Day at Kathryn Heidenreich Adult Center, Kingman, Arizona, October 6, 2015. Photo courtesy of Tiffany Fraser)

For those unable to attend the events, fliers were widely distributed that invited older constituents to share their opinions by email, phone call or mail. (Attachment B) More than 100 individuals took time to provide direct input at the events, through email, mail or by calling the Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging office. The following is a summary of concerns raised through the 2015 Senior Action Day process.



Through the Senior Action Day process, older adults were provided with an endorsed channel of communication to elected and state officials and those officials attending had the opportunity to hear directly from constituents about older Arizonans’ concerns.

Members of GACA view their responsibility for bringing information on aging issues to the Governor, legislature and state departments as one of the Council’s primary roles. In addition to collecting input from Senior Action Days, Council members and staff participated in the White House Conference on Aging Regional Forum in Phoenix, and included the reports from the forum and the regional listening sessions in the annual review of customer feedback considered by the Council during their annual planning process.

Ongoing input

Liaisons to the Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging provided ongoing input and expertise as participants in the Council meetings and the annual planning process. Those partners included:

Arizona Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Region V - Olivia Guerrero;

Arizona Attorney General's Office - Amilyn Pierce;
Arizona Department of Economic Security/Division of Aging & Adult Services - Lynn Larson and Cindy Saverino;
Arizona Department of Health Services - Wayne Tormala and Babak Nayeri;
Arizona Department of Transportation - Cydney DeModica;
Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System - Jay Dunkleberger;
Arizona Indian Council on Aging - Ronald Moore; and
Arizona State Veterans Home - Kristin Fray.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging is grateful to Christina Corieri; the Governor's Policy Advisor for Health and Human Services who took time to meet with leadership and provided input throughout the year. Additionally, the Council is thankful for dedicated liaisons, community partners, members and staff who supported the purpose and mission of the Council and engaged in the work of the Advisory Council on Aging.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging is honored to serve as an internal, non-partisan sounding board for the Governor and the Legislature on all matters related to aging and looks forward to the opportunity to make a difference in the year ahead.

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