

Section 1

Introduction

The North Delta Area Agency which is designated under section 305(a)(2)(A), of the Older American Act is required to write a four-year Area Plan which shall be governed by the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Plan provides a comprehensive and coordinated system for Supportive Services, Nutrition Services, and Multipurpose Senior Center Activities for seniors 60 years and older. Consideration is given on the number of older individuals who have greatest economic need; low income minority with the greatest economic need; greatest social need; and low income minority with the greatest social need.

The Area Plan is a grant application submitted by the Area Agency to the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs in order to receive funds. It also contains provisions required in implementing regulations by the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. In addition, other sections of the Plan address the following:

- Provision of assurances that an adequate proportion of funds are provided for Services (decision making and budget development)
- Address the identity of designated focal points
- Provision for the establishment and maintenance of Information & Assistance Services
- Goals and Objectives set to provide services to specific target groups
- Recognition of the Area Agency Advisory Council, who serves as advisors
- Establishment of effective and efficient procedures for coordination of Services
- Recognition of current census data
- Description of activities of the Area Agency; also Communications with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs
- Provision of information by educating the public, service providers, and local officials
- Fulfilling Older American Act requirements

The Plan also provides assurances that the Area Agency provides leadership and advocacy on behalf of seniors for the following:

- Community Awareness
- Coordination of services with other providers
- Increase access to Activities and Services
- Provision of comprehensive serviced delivery in East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Richland, Tensas and Union Parishes

Section 2

“A LOOK AT THE NORTH DELTA AREA ON AGING”

North Delta Regional Planning & Development District was established in 1968 to serve Northeast Louisiana and to promote development of the largely Delta area. The Agency recognized the importance of economic development and has responded by providing necessary resources to perform a variety of activities and provide a solid base for development.

Through communication, planning, policymaking, coordination, advocacy, and technical assistance, the District serves local parish and municipal member governments. As requested, they provide technical assistance to members on a variety of topics. The professional staff and departments of each District serve to fulfill the individual development needs of their constituents.

One of North Delta's established programs is the Area Agency on Aging. On May 5, 1975 Governor Edwin Edwards, signed an Executive Order declaring the North Delta Regional Planning and Development District, Inc. as the “Overseer” for the Area Agency. North Delta was the first regional to receive Area Agency on Aging funds. Through the coordinated efforts of Representative T.W. Humphries and other local legislators, the Planning District was informed of the availability of funds and requirements for operation of the program.

Our primary functions are to provide leadership and advocacy on behalf of all older persons within the geographic area for which the agency is responsible; to determine the need for social services in the planning and service area, and with special attention being given to the needs of low income and minority elderly. The Area Agency on Aging is also responsible for establishing measurable program objectives and priorities for implementation of the area plan; the plan with existing planning grants for inaugurating or strengthening supporting and gap-filling services for elderly persons. The goal of the agency is to identify untapped resources to serve the elderly, and coordination of services to develop a comprehensive system of services for seniors in the community.

North Delta is “overseen” by its Board of Directors that resides within the eleven-parish area. The Area Agency, a subcontractor of the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is advised by the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council communicates and reports to the Board of Directors. The Council also consists of representatives from the seven parish area. Their primary function is to carry out advisory functions which further the Area Agency's mission of developing and coordinating community based system of services. The Council also follows operational procedures established by the Area Agency governing body. The Executive Director of the Planning District and/or Aging Director reports functions and activities of the Area Agency, which has been initially approved by the Advisory Council at the Board of Directors meetings. He also hires the Agency employees with approval of the Board of Directors and Area Agency Advisory Council where applicable. The Director of the Area Agency/Nursing Home Ombudsman Coordinator reports functions of the Agency and approval of Contracts to the Area Agency Advisory Council and Board of Directors for approval. The Director of the Area Agency/Nursing Home Ombudsman Coordinator also supervises the Ombudsman Recruiter, SAMS Coordinator, SenioRx/ADRC Coordinator, and Nutritionist Consultant.

The Area Agency Director and Planning District Executive Director also review activities of subcontractors and other service providers. This established system has much strength with no existing weakness of coordinated efforts. Finally, the Area Agency Advisory Council initially reviews approval of Services and Programs. These programs are:

Titles: III B (Supportive Services)

III C (Congregate Meals)

III C2 (Home Delivered Meals)

III D (Preventive Health)

III E (National Family Caregivers Program)

The Planning District Board of Directors conducts all final approvals for implementation of services.

Section 3

“A LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY”

The seven parishes subcontracted with the North Delta Area Agency are predominantly rural. Therefore, we obtained the most recent census data over the past ten years. This data consisted of demographics outlining the Median Income, Income Below Poverty Level, Percentage with a Disability, Population 60 and over along with other important data. Our primary concern is to concentrate on the seniors with Greatest Economic Needs, Greatest Social Needs, Low Income, and Low Income Minorities.

The main source of industries within the service area consists of farming cotton/soy beans, paper mills, catfish ponds, and industrial parks. Each Council-designated Senior Center which is classified as Focal Points for senior 60 and over has its own “bare roots” and history. These focal points are included in the Area Plan.

Because of the pending percentages, the strengths of these rural towns are the relationship developed with various service providers. Actually, there remains a “one on one” relationship. Their mission is to assist other in need (other than finances). Collaboration of services is shared among the regions, especially for the poor economical areas such as East Carroll Parish. The weaknesses of these parishes and other special needs are limited resources which deter in the need of the elderly, including adequate funding.

1050 copies of the Needs Assessment designed by the Governor’s Office were disseminated throughout the service area. A total of 641 were returned with very good information shared. The purpose of the Assessment was to review the needs of seniors within each community. The needs of the seniors living alone and without informal support, the special needs of older low-income minority people in the service area; and the needs of older seniors residing in rural areas were also reviewed. After the accumulation of the data, an analysis was done on the 1st most needed service, 2nd most needed, and the 3rd. Totals were also counted in this order. Assessments were mailed from the Area Agency Offices to Council on Aging Board Members, North Delta Regional Planning District Board Members, Advisory Council Members, politicians, police jurors, Aging Disability Resource Center participants, caregivers, SenioRx participants, waiting lists, Community Meeting Clientele recommended, targeted demographic areas, present participants, and also Office walk-ins. We also coordinated (Needs Assessment - Part 2) with other Service Providers (both public and private) within the service area. This section along with Part 1 assisted us in the gathering of information. Staff members of North Delta assisted the Area Agency in the manual calculation of these Assessment forms.

There were interesting comments shared from the designated groups as a result of the Needs Assessment. The Priorities were:

- Difficulties in meeting the cost of living
- Utility bills constantly increases
- Additional Caregivers hours to relieve the individual providing care
- Care/Services for a disabled senior

- Penalties relating to Medicare Part D
- Van for each service area
- Eligible services for seniors not qualified for Medicaid
- Assistance with finances so seniors can remain in their homes
- Home Health services need monitoring
- Provision of Transportation for church services
- Waiting list maintained (need ongoing follow-up)
- No coverage for hearing aids

The North Area Agency Information & Referral data base was also used to forward Needs Assessments to Public and Private Service Providers within the service area. This group consensus focused on the needs of low-income socially and economically seniors, also minorities who do not have adequate transportation to medical facilities outside of the area where they reside. The Area Agency maintained a file on each Council explaining the comments from the Needs Assessment. The provision of these items will be reviewed for future references and services for seniors.

A Community Meeting was held at the Union Council on Aging on December 14, 2010. Personnel from local hospitals, dialysis centers, rural clinics, Sheriff Office, Fire Department, Home Health Agencies, and Council on Aging Board, as well as the general public (represented from minority older seniors and older individuals) were also invited. The purpose of the Community Meeting was to involve people and groups not traditionally associated with Aging Programs, and to obtain information on the Area Agency's role in the service area along with the initial process and implementation of the Area Plan.

The Agenda was as follows:

Purpose of Community Meeting (Census-Data-Establish Plan of Action)

Summary of Needs Assessment (Part 1 & 2)

Advisory Council Involvement

List of Unmet Needs

Specific Target Groups

Transportation Service in Area

Coordination/Delivery of Services

Strength-Weaknesses

Comments-Questions

The above agenda will aid us in providing a clear and concise description of the Area Plan and service areas, also various targeted groups along with resources.

Section 4

Action Plan

The Priority Objectives have been established; therefore the Area Agency has determined the steps to be taken to insure that the specified end product will be achieved. It is ultimately imperative that the end product will be achieved by the due date. The action plans listed in the content of this section will include lists of steps to achieve the objectives and specific tasks. It also consists of a time table. After consideration of resources, barriers and gaps, the following objectives are priorities:

1. Goal Area/Statement: To establish a comprehensive network of Personal Care Services (for non-certified Medicaid Homemakers) which are needed by the Low Income, Minority Older Individuals and Frail Homebound (Isolated Elderly) within the entire North Delta service area.
 - 1.1. By 3/30/2011 request permission from the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs to coordinate Personal Care Services with Homemaker Services.
 - 1.2. By 3/30/2011 have an effective training program designed to meet the Personal Care needs of seniors by regions.
 - 1.3. To determine by 7/1/2011 how Personal Care Services will be effectively operational within the service area.
 - 1.4. By 7/1/2011 identify potential problems and adjust activities to avoid duplication of services by other providers if applicable.
 - 1.5. To begin assessing and monitoring in quarterly intervals by 1/30/2012 the results of Councils on Aging efforts.
2. Goal Area/Statement: To provide program and technical assistance to Councils on Aging serving seniors 60 and over with Minor Home Repair needs.
 - 2.1. By 8/1/2011 design a specific questionnaire and assistance on the type of repairs needed.
 - 2.2. By 9/20/2011 identify list and selection criteria for targeted groups of seniors according to North Delta computerized maps.
 - 2.3. By 10/29/2011 review information received from Advisory Council members in helping to identify needs of their constituents according to the maps.
 - 2.4. By 11/20/2011 identify potential agencies and grantee organization for funding.
 - 2.5. By 12/20/2011 from the identified resources, compile a list of funding agencies or private nonprofit Agencies/Churches.
 - 2.6. By 1/20/2012 apply for funding if applicable.
 - 2.7. By 3/30/2012 Monitor and Assess the effectiveness of the service.
3. Goal Area/Statement: To meet the Transportation needs and inquiries of seniors with Doctor Appointments, Shopping, and Visiting.
 - 3.1. By 6/30/2011 have in operation a revised Transportation Risk Management Plan that will result in increased units of services and assistance rendered.
 - 3.2. By 11/30/2011 locate a target population on computerized mapping of seniors who have been identified in need of service.
 - 3.3. By 3/15/2012 conduct interviews with participants for a report of their pending unmet/met needs.

- 3.4. By 6/30/2012 review the increased units rendered.
- 3.5. By 9/15/2012 review results for revisions at present.
4. Goal Area/Statement: To conduct a meeting with local Legal Service Provider to write an effective plan to target older seniors needing Services and residing in a wider demographic area.
 - 4.1. By 8/1/2011 design a questionnaire for dissemination among seniors on the type, selection criteria, and availability of Legal Services within the various communities.
 - 4.2. By 11/1/2011 write a data analysis plan on information with performance, and effective increase of service units.
 - 4.3. Contact Legal Provider by 1/15/2011 on the result of the plan.
 - 4.4. By 3/1/2012 introduce plan to Councils on Aging.
 - 4.5. By 6/30/2012 begin assessing Provider at designated intervals on revised programs such as Prevention of Abuse, Promotion Awareness, Custody and Advocacy Programs and freedom of discrimination on the basis of age or disability.
5. Goal Area/Statement: To establish an innovative alternative for dissemination of Health Issues and New Meds.
 - 5.1. To complete an individual need profile of the Low-Income Older Seniors, Frail, Homebound/Isolated Elderly on Health Issues and New Meds by 7/1/2011.
 - 5.2. To analyze needs and determine priorities on Information on Health Issues by 7/1/2011.
 - 5.3. By 7/1/2011 identify alternatives for the SenioRx Program for the best selected approach for continuance if not funded.
 - 5.4. By 1/30/2012 revise commitment of resources from Public and Private Agencies which are directed toward meeting the needs and services.
 - 5.5. By 7/1/2012 Assess information of Advisory Council Members on action taken on the level of performance for Program continuance.
 - 5.6. By 10/25/2012 complete an assessment of efforts/inputs.
6. Goal Area/Statement: To increase the number of Home Delivered Meals for an unduplicated total earmarked for the designated targeted population and area not tapped according to North Delta mapping.
 - 6.1. By 7/1/2011 complete an analysis of seniors presently served (unduplicated numbers) without dispersing alternatives to meet projected units.
 - 6.2. By 10/30/2011 review projected units with Advisory Council Members for a review of the analysis plan for increased units.
 - 6.3. By 1/30/2012 provide assistance to Councils on Aging in innovative ways to maintain increased units/unmet needs.
 - 6.4. By 4/15/2012 sign an Inter-Agency Agreements with Home Health Agencies that have committed to assist Councils on Aging.
 - 6.5. By 9/30/2012 Field test the innovative approaches to insure validity and clarity.
 - 6.6. By 12/15/2012 Revise analysis plan based on the field test to its final form.
 - 6.7. By 3/1/2013 initiate a complete revised monitoring and assessment plan for the Home Delivered Meals program.

Section 5

Budget Implications

Exhibit 1 of the attached Area Plan explains how estimates are required to meet the Goals/Objectives of various programs funded by the Older American Act.

Initially, we will make adjustments for a uniformed training program for Personal Care Services to be coordinated with Homemakers if granted by the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. The projected units will be based upon the amount of funding allocated for Homemaker Services with equal allocation of other III-B Services.

Since we do not have the projected amount of funding at this time for the initial phase of the Plan, we feel this process will be the most feasible option. The remaining Objectives do not require the transferring of other remaining funds.

Section 6

Area Plan Summary

In the initial phase of the North Delta Area Agency on Aging four year Plan, information was shared about the agency and its pending existence. Since its inception several programs have been implemented to address the needs of various communities within the region. North Delta is a Multi-Planning District administering numerous programs. The Agency is housed at 1913 Stubbs Avenue, Monroe, Louisiana, 71201.

The Area Agency which is part of the district's services is required by the Older American Act and Governor's Office to do a four year Area Plan. This plan phase will begin July 1, 2011-12 and ends June 30, 2015-16. The Plan is designed to do the following:

- Educate and inform the Public, Service Providers, and local Officials of Activities
- Fulfillment of Older American Requirements
- Use as a management tool to guide, make decisions, and navigate
- Communications with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, Councils on Aging, and Service Providers
- To become acquainted with new Service Providers
- Coordination of local services
- To monitor, assess the effectiveness of services provided

It took several months to compile information for the Area Plan. Initially, training was provided by the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs on August 26, 2010. Their main purpose was to clarify the following:

- Present Purpose of Plan
- Administrative Functions
- Overview of the Format
- Write Plan to be "Reader Friendly"
- Purpose of Goals/Objectives
- The Needs Assessment
- Strengths and Challenges of the Plan
- Community Meetings/Public Hearings

After the meeting, preparation was made for a mailing list to mail the Needs Assessments. The purpose of the Assessments is to do as stated, "Determine the Needs." At that point, Assessments were mailed to over 1,000 individuals. Some of the forms were returned immediately whereas others were received months later. Assistance was also received from the Council by disseminating the Assessments throughout their community whereas others were mailed to the Area Agency.

After the assessments were returned, we assorted them by Walk-Ins, Advisory Council Members, Board of Director Members, Politicians, Participants, Baby Boomers, and also other Community Providers. Several volunteers within the Office rendered their services to learn the process, therefore the

outcome/final results of the Assessments were done manually. Afterward, we met with the Advisory Council to inform them of our plans and their input needed.

The results of the Needs Assessments assisted me in conducting one Community Meeting. Several individuals/Providers not associated with the Council daily were invited to this meeting, although only two from the groups were in attendance. Very good comments were received from the Community Meeting which assisted me in the preparation of presenting the Needs Assessment at the Public Hearings. A Public Hearing was held throughout the seven parish region.

A second meeting of the Advisory Council has been scheduled in January due to the holidays. At that meeting, a final report of all activities will be presented. Although they are aware that the Priority Services are:

- Personal Care
- Minor Home Repairs
- Transportation to Doctor Appointments, Visiting, Shopping
- Innovative Approaches to Information on Health Issues/New Meds
- Innovative Approaches to providing more Home Delivered Meals
- Revisions in Legal Service Assistance

Section 7

Emergency Preparedness

Through the efforts of Melissa Rhodes (GOHSEP Coordinator) who is housed at North Delta, and Emergency Plan has been developed. Although, additional updates are required, a copy of the Plan is attached for review.

An Emergency Staff Tree has been designed which has been acknowledged. The purpose of the Staff Tree is to be assured that the Councils within the service area follows the correct procedures to demonstrate their ability of assisting seniors during a crisis. The following branches explain the members involved. Also, each Council has designed a Plan which is on file for review.

- Emergency Preparedness Staff
- Council on Aging Director/Board Members
- North Delta Area Agency on Aging
- Civil Defense/National Guards
- American Red Cross
- Sheriff's Office/City Police/City Hall Personnel for water supply and food handling storage – sewage disposal/garbage
- All Transportation Providers including Ambulance Services
- Health Units
- Medical Centers
- Bountiful Foods
- Mental Health
- Community Action Providers
- Ministerial Support
- Coroner

Each Council, Site Manager and Coordinator will be the lead staff to be assured the office is covered, although the Health Medical Offices will accompany all coordination approved by the Emergency Preparedness Disaster.

We fully understand the phrase, "prepare for War in time of Peace." It is vital that a well planned support is in place after a disaster occurs. If additional support resources are needed, the Councils have been instructed to report such assistance from neighboring parishes. The Councils are also aware to contact State and Federal Agencies if support is unavailable locally.

All of the above information will be updated annually and given to each involved individual and agency to maintain/implement if deemed necessary.

The North Delta Area Agency on Aging also encourages each Council to participate in mock drills sponsored by the town with a returned report of activities.

Each Council Office alternate Office is the City Hall or local Civil Center.