

GROWS Advocacy Committee report: 6/29/21

Topics:

1) The Advocacy Committee has designed a flyer promoting GROWS. It can be used by membership as an add on to member communications and as a direct email piece to promote GROWS. Isabelle's has been working on a survey of GROWS members and how they are handling vaccinated workers. This will be sent to membership soon.

2) At the May 27<sup>th</sup> CoA meeting, the speaker topic was Rethinking Care for Older Adults. The Convergence Center for Policy Resolution and the Hartford Foundation brought together experts from around the country for three two-hour sessions to think about the future and the experts determined several things that Stuart Butler of the Brookings Institute discussed. He stated the Nursing home model needs to change and there should be a shift to home based care with respect to paying and affordability. There should be an increase in multigenerational, multi unit living communities. Caregiving should include the expansion of neighborhood village networks. There needs to be more workforce training, higher pay, and licenses for home care workers.

Upcoming COA meeting: June 25, 2021 - Affordable Housing – Design for Life (DFL) - Dean Packard

*July 15, 2020 - Strategic Planning Session*

*July 22, 2021 - Budget Priority Session*

The CoA introduced “The Austin Heyman Award for Inspiring a “Community for a Lifetime” in Montgomery County”. The “Praise the Good Award” is to be awarded once or twice a year to innovators, persevering individuals, risk takers for improving quality of life in the community.

Gloria posted the 2020 Annual report and the first Quarter 2021 CoA reports in the most recent newsletter.

The AAA director Patrice McGhee noted the State has the Draft plan 2022-2025 which is a blueprint for the Department's new vision, To Change the Trajectory of Aging. With five goals and a plethora of strategies, the State Plan opens a new chapter in the Department's planning to address the needs of older Marylanders over the next four years.

**3) CoA, Aging in Community:** GROWS liaison and Commissioner Mary Sweeney reported about the June Technology meeting with Neil Tantungco, CEO of Connected Home Living.

**4) CoA, Health & Wellness** discussed the idea of building a Compendium of Programs relating to Home Based Care in the County with the idea of keeping in mind the people that fall into the Senior Gap population (those too rich to be on

Medicaid and too poor to afford more expensive home based care or assisted living). Creating a sequel to the Senior Gap paper was discussed.

**5) CoA, Public Policy Committee:** Out of the 6 billion MoCo Budget that was passed, there is \$56 million for Senior Services. Almost half (\$2.8B) of the budget is for schools.

**Enhancements in the FY22 Recommended Budget include:**

Increase staff in the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate complaints of maltreatment of abuse and neglect against seniors, secure resources, and provide surrogate decision-making for adults adjudicated through the courts, and,

A project at North Montgomery Senior Housing that includes the acquisition and new construction of 111-units of senior affordable housing to be located in Gaithersburg. The project will include 97 one-bedroom units and 14 two-bedroom units, and

A project at Sandy Spring Village that will repurpose an existing three-story building commercial office complex into 56-units of residential housing for seniors. The project will have 47 units at 60 percent area medium income (AMI), 5 units at 50 percent AMI and 4 units at 40percent AMI and

St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Damascus is partnering with the Mission First Housing Development Corporation, a nonprofit housing developer, to construct 76 units of senior housing. The Church has received Preliminary Plan approval for the project which will provide affordable independent living for seniors. The building will feature 66 one-bedroom and ten two-bedroom units.

**Non-Departmental Account Community Grants**

The FY22 Recommended Budget provides grants to community partners of \$900,000 for services benefiting seniors. These community organizations are critical to an effective network of services and are sometimes able to provide these services in a more cost-effective, culturally appropriate, and flexible way. They are also able to leverage community resources that may be unavailable to County Government.

There is \$200,000 more for Senior Center programs that came from the American Rescue Plan.

**6) CoA, Communications Committee:** is working on Seniors Today The theme for the June *Seniors Today* is "Serving Diverse Communities in the Public Sector." The July theme will be "Serving Diverse Communities in the Private Sector." The August theme is "Faith Leaders."

Committee Budget Priorities are:

- *Campaign to advertise services available for Older Adults*
- **Senior Fellow Position for Public Information Office**
- **Senior Fellow Position for Office of Racial Equity**

Please check and promote the GROWS calendar for great educational and networking events. Promote the GROWS directory and website in your regular emails and correspondence.

The GROWS Advocacy committee meets monthly on Zoom the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 1pm.