



Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging 2021 POLICY AGENDA

Iowa's Area Agencies on Aging Responding to the needs of older Iowans

Priority 1: **STRENGTHEN ELDER JUSTICE IN IOWA**

Elder Abuse is broader than Dependent Adult Abuse

It is time to enhance protection and services for older Iowans vulnerable to elder abuse. Elder abuse follows civil proceedings for legal relief. Unless otherwise determined in different criminal aspects of Iowa law, elder abuse itself does not have criminal relief.

I4A supports the establishment of specific penalties for acts of elder abuse including assault, theft, financial exploitation, consumer frauds, & dependent adult abuse.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness program (EAPA) through the aging network is underfunded.

I4A supports a \$400,000 appropriations increase for EAPA supports and services.

Priority 2 **STRONG COVID RESPONSE and** **POST-COVID SUSTAINABILITY**

AAAs must remain responsive to the needs of older Iowans

Iowa's AAAs have responded to the call for safe access to community-based supports and services. Demand for services will continue beyond the pandemic as Iowa's older adults population grows from 17%¹ to 20%¹ in the coming years.

Over 94% of Iowa's COVID-related deaths have been older adults.²

The aging network requests an increase of \$600,000 appropriations for Elderly Services that help older Iowans remain independent, safe in the home, and connected to their community.

Older adults may become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse if they are:

- Socially isolated
- Undernourished
- Dependent on others to manage finances, access healthcare, and transportation

Iowa's AAAs responded to nearly 290 referrals for assistance to address elder abuse during the pandemic (April-Nov 2020) including:

- *Self-neglect*
- *Financial exploitation*
- *Financial assistance*

Priority 3 **AFFORDABLE BROADBAND ACCESS**

Iowa's aging network has found that as much as 70% of older Iowans accessing services in parts of Iowa cannot afford broadband, if it is available at all, to stay connected to community and reduce social isolation and potential for elder abuse.

I4A supports legislation for increased broadband access across Iowa that is affordable for older Iowans, individuals with disabilities and family caregivers.

Area Agencies on Aging Respond to COVID:

Advocacy

- Over \$12 million in federal relief funding (e.g., Older Americans Act, Families First, CARES Act)
- Statewide workplace and service delivery framework

Safe access to food

- Expanded access to nearly 11,000 home-delivered meals
- Innovative local partnerships for safe access to food

Enhanced safety and assurance for older Iowans

- Over 19,000 calls to AAAs for supports and services
 - Represents a **34% increase** in requests for assistance compared to previous year
- COVID-related calls were for meals, basic needs/daily essentials, & financial assistance

Reduce elder abuse and social isolation

- Established virtual/online services and programs that connect older Iowans family, friends, community, and services

References:

1. State Data Center of Iowa & Iowa Department on Aging (May, 2020). Older Iowans: 2020. Accessed: <https://www.iowadatecenter.org/Publications/older2020.pdf>
2. State of Iowa (2020). COVID-19 in Iowa: Outcomes Analysis (Deaths) Dashboard. Retrieved 1/7/2020. <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/outcome-analysis-deaths>