

Aging Services Planning and Service Area Designation Process for Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027

The Department of Public Health and Human Services is required to re-designate every four years the planning and services areas it utilizes for services to older adults aged 60 plus. This process coincides with the four-year planning process and requires us to inform each County's Commissioners and each Reservation's Tribal Council of options they have and to request written response, which must contain the rationale behind the request for their proposed change and clearly state their plan making the change by addressing the New Area Agency on Aging Criteria listed below. If there is no request for change and they are going to remain in the planning and service area (PSA) they are currently part of, no action is needed.

In order to begin the planning process for developing the FY 2024 to 2027 Area Agency on Aging Plans, the designation process needs to be completed by August 5, 2022. No response by a County's Commissioners or a Tribal Council by the August 5, 2022, deadline indicates that the Commissioners or Tribal Council agree to remain in their existing planning and service area with the current Area Agency on Aging that is serving them.

The following are the options you may consider in this re-designation process for the fiscal years 2024 through 2027 (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2027):

Option #1. You may retain the Area Agency on Aging by simply doing nothing. If we do not receive a response, the County or Reservation will automatically remain in the Planning and Service Area and re-designate the current Area Agency on Aging as the agency to serve your County or Reservation in the capacity of an Area Agency on Aging through September of 2027.

Option #2. You may request to be placed in another existing Planning and Service Area, which geographically borders your County, and choose to have the agency which is serving as the Area Agency on Aging for that Planning and Service Area designated as your Area Agency on Aging. A written rationale statement explaining why this option was selected needs to be submitted as part of your Designation Process. It needs to include the impact this change will have on the Area Agency on Aging and the remaining Counties and Reservations in the Planning and Services Area.

Option #3. You may request to retain the current Planning and Service Area but would like the Department to consider a new agency or organization to serve as the Area Agency on Aging. A written rationale statement explaining why this option was selected needs to be submitted as part of your Designation Process. The rationale needs to include the capacity of the new agency or organization to function as an Area Agency on Aging.

Option #4. You may request to have your County designated as a Planning and Service Area and select an agency or organization to be considered as the Area Agency for the Planning and Service Area. A written rationale statement explaining why this option was selected needs to be

submitted as part of your Designation Process explaining why this option was selected and addresses each of the items under the New Area Agency on Aging criteria listed below.

Currently, there are ten agencies designated by the Office on Aging in the Department of Public Health and Human Services' Senior and Long Term Care Division to serve as Area Agencies on Aging.

Note: If a County or Reservation were to choose either Option #3 or #4, that unit of government would have to absorb all of the administration costs associated with the new Area Agency on Aging. Also, in order for a new agency to be designated as an Area Agency on Aging, the following requirements must be met.

New Area Agency on Aging Criteria

In order for a new agency to be designated as an Area Agency on Aging by the Office on Aging in the Department of Public Health and Human Services' Senior and Long-Term Care Division, an agency shall:

1. Submit a letter of intent to the Office on Aging, by the County Commissioners and/or Tribal Government, requesting to be designated as a new area agency on aging. The letter needs to address the following:
 - a. Identify the agency the Commissioners and/or Tribal Government intends to have serve as the Area Agency on Aging.
 - b. Identify the county or counties or Tribal entity which will make up the planning and service area to be covered by the Area Agency on Aging.
 - c. Identify members who will make up the Board of Directors of the Area Agency on Aging.
 - d. Provide a copy of the Area Agency's By-Laws.
 - e. Indicate the financial support for the administrative costs of the new area agency on aging and agree that there will be no long-term financial impact to the rest of the aging network in Montana.
2. Provide letters of support by the interested parties within the proposed planning and service area, including but not limited to county commissioners or Tribal government, service providers affected or impacted by this proposal, senior centers, senior citizens involved in the services offered.
3. Provide a copy of letter(s) to the current area agency on aging, from the County Commissioners or Tribal Government for each county or Tribal Government seeking new area agency on aging status, which address the following:
 - a. Notifies the Area Agency and its Executive Board of the intent to withdraw from the Area Agency.
 - b. Indicates the financial support for the administrative costs of the new area agency on aging and agrees that there will be no long-term financial impact to the rest of the aging network in Montana.
 - c. Includes agreements between other counties involved in the establishment of the new area agency on aging.
4. Provide a plan on how the area agency and its programs will be marketed (advertising who the area agency is, what services they provide and how they are accessed).

5. Develop and submit an area plan to cover a three-year period designated by the Office on Aging, utilizing the format provided by the Office on Aging.
 6. Indicate how the agency will provide a comprehensive and coordinated system for:
 - a. The delivery of supportive and nutrition services; and
 - b. Where appropriate, the establishment, maintenance or construction of multipurpose senior centers.
 7. Determine the extent of need for supportive services, nutrition services, and multipurpose senior centers, taking into consideration the number of older individuals who have the greatest economic need, the number of older individuals who have greatest social needs, with particular attention to older individuals residing in rural areas, low-income minority needs, and the number of older individuals who are Indians residing in such area.
 8. Identify how the agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the use of resources in meeting needs of the senior citizens in the new planning and service area.
 9. Identify how the agency will conduct periodic evaluations of, and public hearings on activities carried out under the area plan, and an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of outreach.
 10. Identify the providers of services the agency expects to enter into agreements for supportive services, nutrition services, or multi-purpose senior centers for provision of such services or centers to meet such needs.
 11. Provide assurances that the integrity and public purpose of services provided will be maintained and provide to the State a list and nature of each nongovernmental contract or commercial relationship.
 12. Provide assurances that part B funds will be allotted for the delivery of access to services, in-home services, and legal assistance.
 13. Provide for the establishment and maintenance of ombudsman services and information, referral and assistance services.
 14. Set specific objectives for providing services to older individuals with greatest economic need and older individuals with greatest social need.
 15. Serve as the advocate and point of reference for the elderly within the community by monitoring, evaluating, and commenting upon all policies, hearings, budgets, and community actions which affect the elderly.
 16. Use outreach efforts that will identify individuals eligible for assistance.
 17. Assure that each activity undertaken by the agency will include a focus on the needs of low-income minority older individuals.
 18. Identify how the area agency will furnish technical assistance and information in a timely manner to providers of supportive services, nutrition services, or multipurpose senior centers in the planning and service area and how the area agency will get information back from providers.
 19. Establish an advisory council to advise on matters relating to the development, administration, and operation of the area plan.
 20. Develop and publish methods by which priority of services is determined.
 21. Establish procedures for coordination with providers of services for older individuals at the local level.
- Note - Facilitate the coordination of community-based, long-term care services.
22. Identify organizations involved in the prevention, identification, and treatment of the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals, and determine the extent to which the need for services is unmet.

23. Specify how the provider intends to satisfy the service needs of low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas in the area served by the provider.
24. Establish a grievance procedure for older individuals who are dissatisfied with or denied services.
25. Assure a drug free work environment.
26. Coordinate Title III and VII services with services provided under Title VI.
27. Indicate how the area agency will provide each service - directly or by contract. If services are to be provided directly by the area agency, the area agency will have to provide a list of services directly provided as well as the justification as to why the AAA is providing the service instead of a community partner. Please refer to the OAA Sec.307(a)(8)(A) as a reference.

The designation process for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2027 needs to be completed and submitted by August 5, 2022, to the Office on Aging in the Senior and Long-Term Care Division, P.O. Box 4210, Helena, Montana 59604-4210. If we have not received your designation changes by the August 5, 2022, deadline, we will take that as your reply to remain in the current Planning and Service Area with the current Area Agency on Aging.

We encourage you to contact your senior center(s), service providers and senior citizens for input prior to making you decision.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Kerrie Reidelbach at 1-800-332-2272 or 406-444-4077.