

Washtenaw County Commission on Aging

August 1, 2025 | 9am – 11am | Remote Via Zoom

Join by Zoom:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/85172952645?pwd=WCsITXxdYVpx8PaHaeha4JHQXptQ6G.1>

Meeting ID: 851 7295 2645 Passcode: 219086 Phone: 1-312-626-6799

[Commission on Aging | Washtenaw County, MI - Official Website](#)

Open Seat District 9: Apply Here - [Boards, Committees and Commissions Application](#)

Minutes

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Public Participation
 - a. Janan Saba Landsiedel – introducing herself. She is a project manager at UofM Center for Health and Research Transformation, looking forward to ways CHRT might be able to collaborate with the Commission
- IV. Commission Response to Public Participation
 - a. No comment
- V. Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2025
 - a. Motion by Larson, seconded by McKinney
- VI. Discussion Items
 - a. Presentation by Empower@Home
 - i. Presenter: Salma Habash (sfhabash@umich.edu), Research Project Coordinator at the UofM School of Social Work
 - ii. Empower@Home is an internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy intervention. 9 self-paced lessons in total (online course and a companion physical workbook) taking 20-30min each to complete over 10-12 weeks.
 - iii. Designed specifically for older adults, no experience with technology needed. There are coaches provided local to the client to discuss the courses, accountability, weekly phone calls, etc.
 - iv. Program is now in Phase 2. In Phase 1 there was a 90% completion rate and depression scores dropped significantly (half of participants (N=200) were considered “in remission” at the end of the program). Study uses a control group – they will have access to the program also, at a later date after the treatment group concludes.
 - v. Program is sponsored by NIMH. Clients must be 50 years or older, have mild-depression (PHQ-9 score of ≥ 5), cannot have dementia, terminal illness, be in crisis, substance-use disorder, etc. – clinical LMSW assesses potential clients.
 - vi. Questions/Comments from Commission

The Commission’s purpose is to define the needs of and advocate on behalf of Washtenaw County seniors 60 years of age and older to promote equitable well-being and quality of life opportunities and outcomes. This will include providing recommendations to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and relevant stakeholders on the prudent spending of public funds related to senior services.

1. Q: What about clients without internet access? A: A device with cellular-data is provided.
2. Q: What referral options are provided if a client has a need for more assistance. A: Immediate needs (ex: suicidal ideation) would be assessed during pre-screening. If treatment is needed post-program they would be referred back to their referring agency or the local Community Mental Health Authority.
3. Q: Is the program available in different languages? A: Not at this time.
4. Q: Is this appropriate for someone experiencing grief? A: Yes
5. Q: Can you provide an example of CBT activities? A: Goal-setting, Mindfulness practice, Identifying negative thoughts
6. Q: What % of older adults meet the eligibility criteria? A: Research team doesn't have an estimate, but they have noticed that the prominent disqualifier has been substance use or not scoring high enough on the PHQ-9. Research team has lowered criteria based on feedback from partner agencies.
7. Q: How much longer is the program funded for? A: 2.5 more years

b. Subcommittee Discussion

i. Communications –Gress, Litten

1. UofM is putting together a health-focused older adult townhall. Information will be shared with Marie when speaking panel, date and location are finalized.
2. Food Gatherers shared article re: how SNAP cuts will affect older adults

ii. Future Planning –Herzig, Astrein, Reynolds

1. None

iii. Townhall –McKinney, Litten, Foreman, Astrein

1. None

iv. Millage Workgroup – Larson, Astrien, Green, Foreman, Thompson, Ballard

1. None

VII. Report from the Board of Commissioners ([Upcoming Meetings](#))

- a. Millage framework and Director of Aging Services position approved. Job posting has been live for 1 month now, and RFP for transportation closes today.
- b. All 10 senior centers have received the contract agreement to receive millage funding (several have already finalized their contracts).
- c. Q: Will Commission on Aging members be able to participate in the hiring process for the Director of Aging Services? A: This is not a normal practice for the county due, but the suggestion was made and is being discussed (no decision yet).

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- d. Q: How was the RFP announced/promoted? A: Posted to a specific RFP posting spot on the web, via the county e-mail list, and publicly posted on the website.
- e. Q: Will the public be made aware of organizations receiving millage funding, a description of the services they are providing and their qualifications? A: Anticipating a website/dashboard will be created through the Office of Aging Services to display this information publicly.

VIII. Report from the Chair

- a. None

IX. New Business

- a. Suggestion by Astrien to begin thinking about strategies to address short & long term implications of cuts to Medicare/Medicaid and other benefits to older adults that may be reduced by the Federal Administration.
 - i. Discussion included utilizing the Annual Report to highlight qualitative data, distributing simple summaries of larger government and thinktank studies and strategies for aging services. The Future Planning committee will discuss further.
 - ii. Litten spoke on the Senior Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) receiving \$100K in funding for “barrier-buster” agencies to apply for – for Washtenaw residents 60+ clients of the agencies in a housing-related crisis (tax payments, rental arrears, utilities, etc.)
- b. Huron Valley PACE planned for September meeting (had to reschedule from today’s original date)
- c. Herzig invites all to attend a “mini-mission” at Jewish Family Services to familiarize the public with the services available at the agency. These happen once a month, dates are flexible.
- d. Senator Shink is hosting a Senior Summit today from 11-2 at Crouch Senior Center in Jackson.
- e. Astrien asked for any county connections to the ALICE anti-poverty definition. There is limited data available on older adults specifically.

X. Setting Next Meeting – September 5, 2025

XI. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Washtenaw County Commission on Aging meetings are recorded and are available at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR9rFHLfXEKHiQa3DQzHLSmdjIcf00Jtb>

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