

Testimony
Senate Bill 2012 – Department of Human Services
Senate Appropriations
Senator Holmberg, Chairman
January 20, 2015

Chairman Holmberg, and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am Cindy Marihart, Director of the Aging Services Division, Department of Human Services. I am here today to provide an overview of the programs and services that make up the budget request for the Aging Services Division.

Programs

The Aging Services Division (Division) administers programs that facilitate the delivery of home and community-based services to assist individuals to remain in their own homes and communities and to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents of long-term care settings and vulnerable adults in the community. The Division is a federally designated single planning and service area which requires the Division to carry out the responsibilities of the State Unit on Aging and the Area Agency on Aging as set forth in the Older Americans Act (OAA).

The Division administers various programs and services that are funded, in part, by the OAA and state funding. The Division operates the Aging & Disability Resource-LINK that provides one-on-one information services through a nationwide toll-free telephone number and e-mail access for the purpose of linking consumers with available resources. From October 2013 through September 2014, assistance was provided to 2,697 individuals.

Table 1 provides a comparative view of the total population of the state and the population age 60 and older. The impact of the 'baby boom' population is evident in the estimated increase of approximately 10,500 individuals age 60 and older from 2010 to 2013. Expectations of the 'baby boom' generation are very different from those who accessed the system before them. Service providers face new challenges in meeting the needs of a more diverse population group.

Table 1

North Dakota Demographics of Age 60 and Older		
Year	Total Population	Age 60 and Older
2000	642,200	118,985
2010	672,591	133,350
2014 Estimates	739,482	143,835
Age 60 and Older		
Total Males: 45%	Total Females: 55%	
Living Alone: 28%	In Poverty: 11%	
Rural: 47%	Urban: 53%	
In Labor Force: 30%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Special Tabulation on Aging-Population Characteristics, Prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 AoA-AGID Website.

Other programs and services administered by Aging Services Division include the following:

The **Nutrition and Supportive Services Programs** are generally for individuals 60 years of age and older with an emphasis on services to those with greatest economic need and greatest social need, with particular attention to low-income minority individuals, and older individuals residing in rural areas. Also included in the target groups are older individuals at risk for institutional placement, with severe disabilities, with limited English proficiency, and with Alzheimer's disease

and related disorders, and their caregivers. The Division contracts with local providers for service provision of meals, health maintenance, options counseling, assistive safety devices, legal assistance, and senior companion. During Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013, 23,202 older individuals received nutrition and supportive services. The executive budget recommendation includes 4/4% inflationary increase for home-delivered and congregate meals and supportive services. Previously those services did not receive the provider inflationary increases.

The **Family Caregiver Support Program** is designed to provide training, supportive services, and respite care to caregivers who provide unpaid care on a 24-hour basis to enable an older adult to remain in their own home. The program also assists grandparents or relative caregivers who are caring for a child age 18 or younger or an adult child with a disability. During FFY 2013, 285 unpaid caregivers received 24,856 respite care hours. As a result of a survey conducted in the fall of 2014, caregivers reported that respite care services helped them keep the older adult at home an average of 24 months longer than they could have without the support. Caregivers also reported the program provided them a positive way to cope with the challenges of providing 24-hour care in their home. The program is accessed through caregiver coordinators at the regional human service centers.

The **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** provides skills training, supportive services, and part-time employment opportunities for eligible persons 55 years of age and older with incomes up to 125 percent of poverty, with the goal of transitioning into permanent employment. From July 2013 through June 2014, there were 78 participants who received training and employment opportunities

through the program and 22 participants were placed in unsubsidized employment settings. The Division contracts with Experience Works to provide this service.

The **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** receives, investigates, and resolves concerns on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities and tenants of assisted living facilities. State and regional staff and trained volunteers work to protect the health, safety, welfare, and personal rights of residents and tenants. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has experienced a significant increase in the number of complaints received and cases opened. Through realignment of staff duties, one position was reassigned to better meet resident and tenant needs. Table 2 compares the number of complaints received and cases opened during FFY 2013 and 2014.

Table 2

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program			
Activities	FFY 2013	FFY 2014*	% Change
Number of Complaints Received	835	937	12.2
Number of Cases Opened	634	675	6.5

* FFY 2014 data has not yet been certified by US Dept Health and Human Services Administration on Aging.

The **Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Program (VAPS)** addresses the safety of vulnerable adults who are at-risk of harm due to the presence or threat of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. With the implementation of mandatory reporting on August 1, 2013, there has been an increase in the number of calls received. This increase has required additional staff time to evaluate and assess needs so that a referral could be made to the appropriate services. The Division is implementing a centralized VAPS intake process. This is expected to allow VAPS workers to have more time to conduct visits with the

vulnerable adults in their homes and will also allow more time to provide community education regarding the program. Table 3 illustrates VAPS activities for FFY 2013 and 2014.

Table 3

Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Program			
Activities	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	% Change
Number of Full Assessments	659	769	16.7
Number of Information/Referral	773	730	-5.6

In an effort to maximize capacity, realignment of staff duties was completed on November 1, 2014, which increased the availability of VAPS staff from 10.35 FTEs to 14 FTEs. The executive budget recommendation would provide funding for two additional contract positions for a total of 16 staff to provide VAPS and would fully fund the Cass County contract. Table 4 illustrates statewide VAPS staff coverage.

Table 4

Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Program		
2015-2017 PROPOSED STATEWIDE VAPS COVERAGE		
SERVICE AREA	PROVIDER/LOCATION	2015-2017 PROPOSED
Statewide	Aging Services–State Office	1
Northwest	Mountrail County Social Services (Contract)	1
North Central	Mountrail County Social Services (Contract)	1
Lake Region	Aging Services–Human Service Center	1
Northeast	Aging Services–Human Service Center	2
Southeast	Cass County Social Services * (Contract)	4
South Central	Hart Counseling (Contract)	2
West Central	Aging Services–Human Service Center	2
Badlands	Aging Services–Human Service Center	1
Undesignated	Contract Entity*	1
Totals		16

*Denotes additional contract positions.

The **Guardianship Program for Vulnerable Adults** provides funds for guardianship petitioning costs for those individuals that meet the definition of incapacity and have income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level, or who are Medicaid eligible. Referrals are received at the Aging Services Division from a variety of sources with 51 percent being initiated by VAPS staff. The requests for guardianship petitioning costs have increased significantly. The 2015-2017 budget recommendation supports an additional 52 requests for guardianship establishments for a total of 154. Table 5 shows the number of guardianships established in the 2011–2013 biennium and from July 2013 through November 2014.

Table 5

Guardianship for Vulnerable Adults Program		
Activities	2011–2013 Biennium	July 2013– November 2014
Number of Guardianships Petitioned	39	100

The **Dementia Care Services Program** provides care consultations and trainings to caregivers to address the unique and individual needs that arise throughout the various stages of dementia. People with dementia and their caregivers receive one-on-one assistance that enables them to better manage care and make more informed decisions regarding services and treatments. The program also provides education on dementia to medical professionals, law enforcement, caregivers, and the general public. The Division contracts with the Alzheimer’s Association Minnesota-North Dakota to provide this service. Table 6 shows data for services provided in the 2011–2013 biennium and from July 2013 through October 2014.

Table 6

Dementia Care Services Program		
Activities	2011–2013 Biennium	July 2013– October 2014
Number of Caregivers Served	1,158	1,242
Number of People with Dementia Served	620	598
Number of Care Consultations Provided	1,513	1,876
Number of Medical Professional Information/Trainings Conducted	1,194	869
Number of Law Enforcement Information/Trainings Conducted	23	84
Number of Caregiver Information/Trainings Conducted	411	576
Number of Public Awareness/Educational Events Provided	1,417	1,083

The **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Services Program (TEDS)** is designed to provide free, specialized telecommunications equipment to meet the needs of individuals who are communications-impaired and who might be otherwise disadvantaged in their ability to obtain such equipment. To qualify for TEDS, recipients must meet low-income guidelines, be age 5 or older, and have difficulty using a telephone because of a severe hearing loss, speech impairment, or physical disability, and are unable to use a telephone readily purchased from a retail store. The Division contracts with Interagency Program for Assistive Technology to provide this service.

Overview of Budget Changes

Description	2013 - 2015 Budget	2015 - 2017 Executive Budget	Increase/ (Decrease)
Salary and Wages	1,770,676	2,028,151	257,475
Operating	15,331,364	17,504,695	2,173,331
Grants	3,008,446	2,940,596	(67,850)
Total	20,110,486	22,473,442	2,362,956
General Fund	7,152,927	9,355,737	2,202,810
Federal Funds	12,677,559	12,837,705	160,146
Other Funds	280,000	280,000	0
Total	20,110,486	22,473,442	2,362,956
Full Time Equivalants (FTEs)	11.00	11.00	0.00

Budget Changes from Current Budget to the Executive Budget:

The Salary and Wages line item increased by \$257,475 and can be attributed to the following:

- \$152,461 in total funds, of which all is general fund, needed for the Governor's compensation package.
- \$30,776 in total funds, of which \$23,083 is general fund, needed to continue the employee increases approved by the last Legislative Assembly.
- \$23,555 in total funds, for health insurance coverage for a position where the current employee does not elect health insurance coverage and the employee is retiring.
- \$50,683 in total funds, of which all is federal funds, is a combination of increases and decreases to sustain the FTEs within this Division.

The Operating line item increased by \$2,173,331 and is mainly attributed to an increase of \$2,171,511 in Operating Fees and Services which is mainly comprised of:

- \$1,080,073 for the VAPS Program for the additional contract positions to provide services across the state and to fully fund services provided in the southeast region; \$793,025 to provide a 4% inflationary increase each year of the biennium and to continue the inflationary increase approved by the last Legislative Assembly; and \$130,000 to provide 52 additional guardianship slots.

The Grants line item decreased by \$67,850 which is due to the decrease in the Senior Employment federal grant.

The general fund request increased by \$2,202,810 with \$2,003,098 or 91% of the increase related to the increase in VAPS services, guardianship slots and provider inflation. The remaining \$199,712 or 9% is related to other salary and operating changes as described above.

The net change of \$160,146 in federal funds is a result of increases in the Older Americans Title III federal grants.

This concludes my testimony on the 2015–2017 budget request for Aging Services Division of the Department. I would be happy to answer any questions.