

John Bel Edwards  
Governor



Leslie Louviere-Keen  
Chairwoman

**State of Louisiana**  
Executive Board on Aging

**MINUTES OF THE LA EXECUTIVE BOARD ON AGING (LEBA) MEETING  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS  
602 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Wednesday April 19, 2023 11:00 AM  
Galvez Building in the Pensacola Conference Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Quarterly Meeting of the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging (LEBA) started at 11:00 AM by Ms. Leslie Keen, LEBA Chairwoman with Ms. Cheri Crain serving as Secretary, in person.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh  
Invocation: Mr. Willie Lewis

**ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen  
Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh  
Ms. Emily Tilley  
Ms. Ann Keene  
Mr. Willie Lewis  
Mr. Donald Mallet  
Ms. Blanche Wilks  
Mr. Huey Beverly

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mr. Ricco Thomas  
Mr. Johnny Berthelot  
Ms. Blanche Wilks  
Mr. Terry Courville  
Ms. Worlita Jackson  
Mayor Gerard Landry  
Ms. Heather Prejean

**GUESTS:** Area Agency and Council on Aging Directors and staff

**GOEA STAFF:**

Ms. Shirley Merrick, Director, Ms. Cheri Crain, Secretary, Mrs. Amanda Smith, GOEA General Counsel, and Mrs. Kayla Doyle, Program Manager 1A

**ROLL CALL**

Chair, Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen asked Ms. Cheri Crain to call the roll. Members present eight.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the December 7, 2022 were presented for approval. **MOTION:** Mr. Huey Beverly moved and it was seconded by Mr. Charles "Buddy" Pugh that the December 7, 2022 minutes be approved. Motion carried.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:**

Ms. Shirley Merrick stated that Ms. Kayla Doyle emailed a copy to the Board members prior to the meeting. Ms. Merrick reviewed the report with the Board. Some highlights from the report:

### **FY2024 Budget (7/1/23 – 6/30/24):**

Discussion of GOEA's request for \$834K in order to upgrade the WellSky software, which is one-time funding. This software is used to report service data to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). We will keep a watch to be certain that this funding gets earmarked for GOEA. Advocacy assistance may be necessary when the budget reaches the legislature.

### **GOEA Website Update:**

The new website is now live. Thanks to Cheri Crain Compliance/Planning Manager for taking the lead on this effort.

### **2023 Louisiana Legislative Session:**

Session started April 10, 2023. Michelle Guillory, Program Manager, is tracking bills that may directly or indirectly affect the population we serve.

**Senate Bill 116** – Advocacy needed. The language in HB1 for Fy2022 increased the base allocation for Senior Centers from \$25K to \$50K but language to amend RS.46:1608 which governs Senior Centers was not addressed. We have since learned that this was not the author's intention. Senate Bill 116 amends RS.46:1608 to change the base amount from \$25K to \$50K. Failure to pass Senate Bill 116 means having to make this "ask" yearly to the Legislature. The bill passed Senate Finance on 4/17/2023.

### **Older Americans Month:**

Each May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month (OAM). The 2023 theme is Aging Unbound, which offers an opportunity to explore diverse aging experiences and discuss how communities can combat stereotypes. A statewide activity, coordinated by the LACOADA, is scheduled for May 1, 2023. GOEA has arranged for a meet and greet with Governor Edwards at 9 a.m. that day on the fourth floor of the Capitol in the Governor's Press Room.

### **State Plan:**

The State Plan documents that the state units on aging are required to submit to the Administration of Community Living, is entering the countdown to completion. As mentioned in a prior report, Cheri Crain, Manager of Compliance and Planning, is in leadership position for this task. Some "data gathering" for the plan comes from the Area Plans submitted by the 34 Area Agencies (AAAs) for the same time period. The Home and Community Based Services Unit, under the leadership of Shavon Humphrey, developed the tools necessary for the AAAs to successfully complete their plans.

### **Disaster Update:**

Hurricane season starts June 1, 2023. “The CSU (Colorado State University) Tropical Meteorology Project team is predicting 13 names storms during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1st to November 30<sup>th</sup>. Of those, researchers expect 6 to become hurricanes and 2 to reach major hurricane strength with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or grater.”

### **Senior Services:**

Ms. Shirley Merrick prepared two sets of data. She took a look back to see if the network is recovering by taking a snapshot at March 31, 2020 and comparing it to the unit data received by April 12, 2023 for the period ending March 31, 2023. The comparisons indicate that the congregate and “in community” services are getting closer and in some cases surpassing service provided pre-pandemic times. I want to thank Kayla Doyle, Program Manager in Compliance and Planning, for stepping in and “gleaning” the data for this report. The second data set summarizes some of the responses received statewide to the Needs Assessment developed by HCBS Unit and collected through the Area Plan process by the 34 Area Agencies on Aging. The current State Plan that ends June 30, 2023 indicates that the priorities at that time of submission were access to services and resources, meals (congregate and home delivered) and transportation.

### **Get Vaccinated:**

“Make Mine a Double” is the headline in a recent CDC article. It refers to the importance of not only getting the COVID-19 vaccine but also getting the Flu vaccine. The article states “Both COVID-19 and flu vaccines have been shown to reduce illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccine are still available. You can get both vaccines at the same time if you are eligible and the timing works.

**LACOADA**: Presented by Ms. Darlene Schexnayder: Senior Day at the Capital is May 1, 2023. LACOADA will have a table in the rotundra to educate and advocate for the senior citizens. The Legislature Breakfast will be on May 3, 2023. Working on getting Senate Bill 116 passed. Ms. Darlene expressed how there has been a 20% increase in cost per meal and the small parishes are struggling. Vans are getting 4 miles per gallon and repairs needed require a computer that sells for \$1,200.

**LANA**: Presented by Ms. Debbie Fleming: This year’s annual conference is scheduled for August 15 – 17, 2023 at the L’Auberge Casino in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Discussion on Rebranding Senior Centers Statewide:** Ms. Leslie Louviere Keen “senior stigmatism” possibly changing to Wellness Center or Aging Center; possible donations from people to continue; meet with Directors to get their option to change name; check with local colleges for social media for interns to do marketing campaigns to get the word out; ASA removed “senior” and uses “older adult”; the more you’re seen the more funding could come in; will bring up at LACOADA for more discussions.

**SCHEDULE 2022 QUARTERLY MEETINGS:** The tentative dates scheduled for 2023:

Wednesday, August 16, 2023  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023

**ADJOURN:** Motion to Adjourn: Ms. Ann Keene moved and seconded by Mr. Donald Mallet.  
Meeting adjourned at 12:14 PM.

Prepared by Cheri Crain, Manager Compliance & Planning, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs