



RESPONSE TO THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AGING

November 21, 2024

As the federally designated State Unit on Aging (SUA) with responsibility for administering federal Older Americans Act (OAA) dollars, the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) has a mission “to ensure that older Minnesotans and their families are effectively served by state and local policies and programs, so we can age well and live well.” The MBA greatly appreciates the overall work of the Legislative Task Force on Aging to assess the current landscape of aging services and structures, engage with community advocates and older adults, and elevate aging issues at the policymaking level.

Upon reviewing the draft outline proposal presented by Representative Klevorn on October 29, 2024, the MBA has concerns about the need for a deeper analysis regarding the impact of any reorganization, including the potential unintended consequences on the service delivery system and existing valuable resources with the current model (i.e. administrative support, fiscal costs, staff capacity, etc.).

The Board believes that our fully operational structure and process represents a practical and affordable alternative for elevating aging in Minnesota. Therefore, in lieu of rebuilding an aging structure that has resulted in establishing best practices nationwide, the MBA proposes further exploration around its recommendations below, which were presented to the task force on September 17, 2024:

- Provide a direct line of communication to the governor and their office to give voice to older people.
- Commit resources to lead advocacy, research, analysis, community education and outreach, and cross-agency coordination.
- Integrate work with the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council through the Multisector Blueprint for Aging.
- Revise MBA’s legislative statute to strengthen its authority to work directly with the governor and their office, the legislature, state agencies, and Tribal Nations.

The MBA will continue to prioritize and participate in conversations centered on elevating and transforming aging in its role as an Advocate. We believe the best solution will be co-designed by all interested parties and our recommendation is to collaboratively work toward a vision for aging that is part of an ongoing co-design process. The MBA is open to recommendations regarding the need for additional resources or restructuring, such as the establishment of an Administration on Aging under DHS with an appointed Assistant Commissioner or other subcabinet-level entity within the state system. Overall, the MBA is committed to remaining actively engaged throughout this process to ensure the final structure included in the Legislative Task Force on Aging report reflects the best possible solutions for all Minnesotans.