



DARYL G. PURPERA,
CPA, CFE

Report Highlights

Management and Oversight of the Aging Network in Louisiana

Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs

Audit Control #40130057

Performance Audit Services • November 2014

Why We Conducted This Audit

We evaluated the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs' (GOEA) management and oversight of the aging network in Louisiana. Specifically, we identified the challenges faced by Louisiana in providing these services and provided recommendations on how GOEA could improve its management and oversight to ensure that elderly citizens receive quality services. Louisiana's aging network consists of GOEA as the state unit on aging, 36 federally authorized Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), 64 parish Councils on Aging (COAs), and 132 senior centers.

What We Found

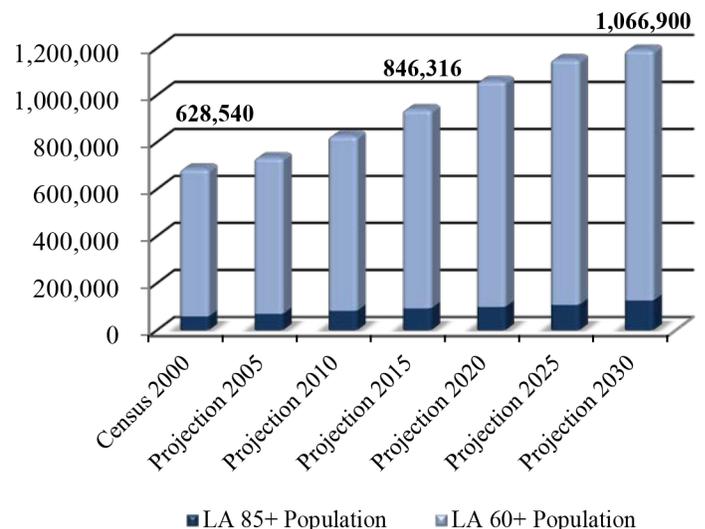
GOEA has undergone numerous changes over the last few years. In November 2014, voters rejected an amendment that would have allowed the Department of Elderly Affairs to become the 21st executive branch agency. Overall, we found that having stronger and more consistent oversight and strategically using data to evaluate and manage would help GOEA ensure that effective and relevant services are delivered to the increasing number of elderly in Louisiana. We also identified various challenges Louisiana faces in providing services to the elderly. These issues are summarized below.

Challenges to Providing Services

GOEA, AAAs, and parish COAs face numerous challenges in providing quality services to the elderly population in Louisiana. These challenges include the following:

- The unique structure of the aging network and the environment in which it was created resulted in a larger network of entities with unclear roles and responsibilities.
- Not all entities in Louisiana's aging network have the appropriate skill sets to effectively manage data.
- COAs face numerous challenges in providing quality services, including lack of funding, lack of transportation, and a poor tax and industry base in some communities.
- Louisiana, like other states, will have to serve a growing number of Baby Boomers with different service needs than previous generations.

Projected Population Aged 60 and Older in Louisiana



Continued on next page

Management and Oversight of the Aging Network in Louisiana

What We Found (Cont.)

Management of the Aging Network

With a growing population and limited resources, it is important that GOEA find ways to better target needs and improve oversight of service delivery in the aging network. As the state unit on aging, GOEA is required by federal law to serve as a visible and effective advocate for the elderly. GOEA's management and oversight responsibilities include assessing the needs of the elderly in the state, developing a state plan to address those needs, developing a funding formula to allocate federal funds to AAAs, and monitoring AAAs to ensure that services are delivered. GOEA's management could be improved through the following:

- **GOEA could better manage the aging network if it had an executive director to serve as a visible advocate for the elderly as required by federal law.**

GOEA's executive director position has been vacant since 2012 when the last director resigned. Although the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging (LEBA) has recommended one candidate for the position since then, the Governor has not appointed anyone.

- **Using additional factors in its funding formula may help GOEA better target funding to areas with the greatest needs.** GOEA's current formula does not consider rural areas or target minorities although most other states use these factors in their funding formulas.
- **Using available demographic and waiting list data could enhance GOEA's needs assessment efforts.** GOEA already captures information on clients including what activities of their daily lives are impaired, whether clients live alone or are homebound, and whether clients are at nutritional risk. COAs also maintain waiting lists for services to identify unmet needs. However, GOEA does not use this information to identify needs in each parish as part of its statewide planning process.
- **Requiring that AAAs monitor service providers in a consistent manner would help GOEA ensure effective and efficient service delivery.** AAAs are responsible for monitoring contracted providers and COAs to ensure services are delivered; however, some AAAs have not developed a monitoring process and others monitor inconsistently.
- **Requiring that COAs standardize management practices would help GOEA compare performance and enhance accountability.** As a measure of efficiency, we compared administrative costs to total funding received by each COA. We found that administrative costs ranged from 0.03% for the Ascension COA to 81.8% for the Iberville COA for fiscal year 2013, with 31 COAs reporting administrative costs that exceeded 20% of total revenue. However, GOEA has not developed a standard definition and accounting procedure for administrative costs.
- **Using Social Assistance Management System data would help GOEA more comprehensively evaluate compliance and determine if its services are effective at meeting the needs of the elderly.** In fiscal year 2013, COAs assessed 25,948 individuals as having high nutritional risk, but only 17,133 (66%) of these individuals received some type of nutrition service. The remainder (8,815 or 34%) did not receive a nutrition related service although they were assessed as high nutritional risk.

State and Federal Funding for Older Americans Act Services

