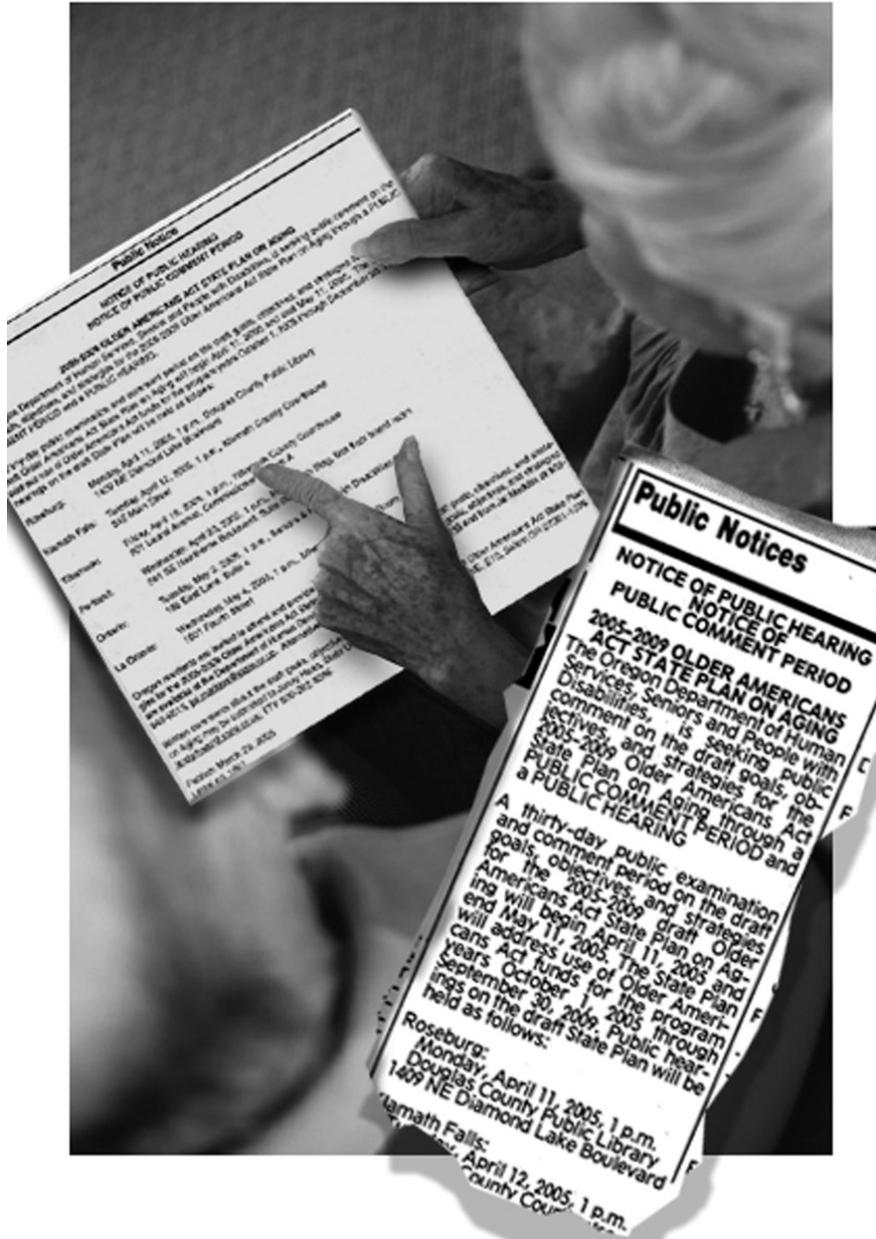


SECTION SEVEN PUBLIC HEARINGS



SECTION SEVEN

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS

Summary and Locations

DHS, Seniors and People with Disabilities, State Unit on Aging sought public comment on the draft goals, objectives, and strategies and intrastate funding formula for the program years October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2009 during a 30 day public examination and comment period and six concurrent public hearings held as follows:

April 11, 2005
Douglas County Library
1409 NE Diamond Lake Blvd
Roseburg 97470

April 12, 2005
Klamath County Courthouse
316 Main Street
Klamath Falls 97603

April 15, 2005
Tillamook County Courthouse
201 Laurel Ave
Tillamook 97141

April 20, 2005
Multnomah County Commissioners Chambers
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Ste 600
Portland 97231

May 3, 2005
Department of Human Services Building
186 E Lane Ste 4
Ontario 97914

May 4, 2005
Union County Commissioners Chambers
1001 4th Street
La Grande 97850

Oral and Written Comment

The State Unit on Aging is encouraged by the comments and concern of over 100 attendees representing the aging population. In addition to older Oregonians and their friends and family members, the hearings were attended by legal service representatives, tribal members, coalitions for the elderly, area advisory committees, and businessmen and women serving older individuals, and representing programs intended to meet the needs of older Oregonians and assist in maintaining independence within their own homes.

Comments vary in content but most frequently heard is the need for additional funding to sustain Older Americans Act programs. It is apparent that some who commented had not read the draft goals, objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes and instead fell into using the forum to voice opinion of dissatisfaction and how government policy should be structured.

Below are one-sentence summaries of oral and written comments received in response to public hearings and published draft 2005-2009 Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measurable Outcomes.

Goal Number One

Increase Health Promotion, Disease Prevention, and Access to Health Care

- The plan should address the problem of hunger and make people aware of food assistance programs
- The importance of nutritious meals, health and social services cannot be stressed enough
- Goals for nutrition services are not very specific
- Other organizations already emphasize education and information on healthful living—don't reinvent the wheel
- Better funding for meal sites is needed; home delivered meals are crucial for people
- Expand the health component in conjunction with senior meals
- Rural seniors have no access to doctors in their communities
- Emphasize prostate cancer detection and treatment
- Nutrition and health care are basic needs

Goal Number Two

Strengthen Supports for Older Oregonians with Mental Health Issues

- This issue needs to be looked at

Goal Number Three

Support Family Caregivers

- Frustrated families send their elders to hospitals; frustrated hospitals look for foster homes; support for family caregivers represents great progress
- Grandparents rearing grandchildren need our support
- Some grandparents are too young to benefit from support under the Older Americans Act

Goal Number Four

Affordable and Accessible Housing Options

- Senior housing is needed in rural communities (two comments total)
- Housing is a basic need
- Rents are so high that many seniors cannot pay their rent and pay for needed medicines
- Consumer guides for those choosing facilities already exist. Don't reinvent the wheel

Goal Number Five

Improve Access to Transportation for Older Oregonians

- Support of transportation collaboration is important to seniors in rural communities
- Rural seniors have no access to doctors locally, and no transportation to doctors who are not local
- Transportation is needed to allow seniors to continue to live in the community

Goal Number Six

Strengthen and Increase Long-Term Care Service Resources

- There needs to be state-funded effort to provide in-home support and services for people who do not qualify for Medicaid
- Paid caregiver wages need to be increased

Goal Number Seven

Strengthen Services and Access for Low-Income, Culturally Diverse, Frail, and Rural Older Oregonians

- We need more creative ways to attract non-English speaking populations to services
- Bringing people together, such as for congregate meals, reduces isolation
- The Oregon 211 Coalition is an important objective
- More development of outreach about basic services and programs is need; people may be unaccustomed to accessing basic support programs
- Relying on organizations like AARP, with low actual member participation, may not be effective
- Better communication with urban Native Americans is needed
- Outreach is lacking; many seniors don't know where to turn
- Rural seniors do not have the same level of access to services that people in more urban areas have because of the funding formula for area agencies and senior centers
- The definition of "older American" should be lower than 60 for Native Americans and other populations with statistically shorter life spans

Goal Number Eight

Promote Employment Opportunities for Older Oregonians

(No comments received regarding employment)

Goal Number Nine

Increase Awareness of Abuse and Reduce Victimization of Older Oregonians

- Advocacy services, particularly to the institutionalized, the homebound, the isolated, the non-English speakers, demand more resources than those for an individual who can travel to a legal aid office or senior center. Funding is inadequate
- There is a great need for education of elders about abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation
- Protection from abuse and neglect are important (three comments total)
- The justice system is unresponsive and unhelpful

Goal Number Ten

Promote and Improve Access to Legal Assistance For Older Oregonians

- Legal assistance for elderly is a crucial area and much more needs to be done; funding has not been adequate
- Increase the percentage of Title III-B funds for legal assistance; the need for civil legal services is not adequately met by the existing services network
- Free legal assistance to help people with housing, accessibility, etc, is very important
- Legal assistance is needed for persons with low incomes whose civil rights are violated

Goal Number Eleven

Effective and Responsive Management

- Paperwork for staff in the field needs to be reduced and consolidated
- Nurture the people in the field who are providing direct service; people need to know they are supported in their work
- Better funding is needed for all programs (six comments total)

Basic funding for area agencies needs to be increased. Agencies spend too much time fund-raising, which interferes with their ability to serve clients. (two comments total)

Periodic State Plan Evaluation

The State shall conduct periodic evaluations of, and public hearings on, goals, objectives, strategies and timelines of activities and projects supported by Title III and VII funds and/or noted within this Plan, including evaluations of the effectiveness of services provided to older Oregonians with greatest economic need, greatest social need, or disabilities, with particular attention to low-income and low-income minority older Oregonians residing in rural areas.

Periodic community forums will be conducted in ADA accessible locations with older Oregonians, their families, the aging network, Tribes and Title VI grantees to bring forth input regarding quality and availability of services. AAA's are required to conduct public hearings for all Area Plan goals and objectives and each time their Area Plan is updated. The State Unit on Aging regularly monitors and provides necessary technical assistance as well as conducts Outreach Workshops and discussions on effective fundraising to increase services.