



Area Agency on Aging AREA PLAN – *A 4-year area plan, approved by the State Unit (Iowa Health and Human Services Division of Aging and Disability Services), is required to maintain standing as an area agency on aging under the Older Americans Act:*

SEC. 306. (a) Each area agency on aging designated under section 305(a)(2)(A) shall, in order to be approved by the State agency, prepare and develop an area plan for a planning and service area for a two-, three-, or four-year period determined by the State agency, with such annual adjustments as may be necessary.

Definitions:

Goals – *Provided by the State, these reflect state goals as found in the Older Americans Act. For each goal, OBJECTIVES are identified.*

Objectives – *Identified areas to address in order to move closer to reaching the stated idealized goal.*

Strategy – *Overview of actions to be taken to reach the objective.*

Activities- *Actions involved in carrying out the strategy.*



*Amendments/changes to the plan are identified in this summary by appearing in **red** font.*

Goal 1: Maximize Independence

People with disabilities and older adults have access to high quality, equitable, and person-centered services that maximizes their independence, community integration, and self-sufficiency.

Objective #1: Increase the number of diverse and underserved older adults receiving care coordination to maximize independence in their community of choice.

- a. **Why it Matters:** To better connect with those living in the identified counties (Jefferson, Monroe, Wapello); increase partnerships with other agencies that add value will improve accessibility to Milestones' services.
Changed to: To better connect with those living counties in where data suggests high priority of meeting criteria for greatest need; increase partnerships with other agencies—particularly Public Health departments providing services to promote independence—that will improve accessibility to Milestones' services.
- b. **Strategy:** Provide Options Counseling and Case Management to increase the capacity of individuals to live independently within their community of choice.
- c. **Activities:** Will work to partner with other agencies to assist in identifying individuals who may need support or services within their own communities. ~~One project involves partnership with RSVP and Samaritan's Feet Seniors program.~~
Change: sentence removed

Objective #2: Develop a high quality, equitable, comprehensive, and coordinated system of long-term care that enables people with disabilities and older adults to receive long-term care in community-based settings.

- a. **Why it Matters:** ~~77% of adults 50 and older~~ **Studies indicate a high percentage of older adults** want to stay in their homes as they age for multiple reasons, including financial security, attachment to home/neighborhood, and having support.
- b. **Strategy:** Provide MAC (Medicaid Administrative Claiming) allowable assistance to persons who are applying for State benefits, specifically individuals 60+ and are at-risk for institutional placement.



- c. **Activities:** Options Counselors, Case Managers and other program specialists (Family Caregiver, Elder Abuse and Prevention) will participate in continuous quality improvement to increase knowledge and to better learn the benefits available to the targeted individuals.

Changed to: Options Counselors, Case Managers and other program specialists (Family Caregiver, Elder Abuse and Prevention) will increase training to improve knowledge and better learn the benefits available to the prioritized populations.

Objective #3: Expand Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) / No Wrong Door (NWD) partnerships to improve coordination of services for older adults and people with disabilities.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Milestones will develop and strengthen partnerships within our PSA to make available services better known to older adults of minority status.
- b. **Strategy:** Develop and/or strengthen partnerships with other agencies to increase referrals of populations/areas in greatest need of OAA services.
- c. **Activities:** The Social Services team at Milestones will reach out to agencies that are identified as working or socializing with those of minority status to offer and present information about services available to them.



Goal 2: Improve Health and Wellness

Older adults and people with disabilities are empowered to utilize programs that improve their health and wellness.

Objective #1 - Increase older adults' access to high quality and person-centered nutrition services.

- a. **Why it matters:** Senior nutrition programs lower risks of institutionalization, provide social connection, and balanced nutrition.
- b. **Strategy:** Adjust service offerings to address barriers and/or meet consumer needs, including restaurant.
- c. **Activities:** Expand access to nutrition services through Iowa Cafe restaurant partnerships, focusing on areas with lower attendance at current traditional sites.

Changes: No material changes were made to Objective #1. Language in the plan narrative edited to show connection with needs assessment findings and how lessons learned from the initial Iowa Café program in FY23 were used to determine strategy.

Objective #2 - Connect older adults who are at risk for malnutrition and/or have high nutrition risk scores with meaningful interventions.

- a. **Why it matters:** Older adults are at higher risk of malnutrition which puts them at higher risk of hospitalization, frailty, and loss of independence. Identifying those who are at risk of malnutrition is the first step in connecting them with resources that can reduce these risks.
- b. **Strategy:** Implement a workflow process to identify consumers whose intake or assessment responses indicate high nutrition risk and/or risk of malnutrition to refer them to additional service interventions, such as nutrition counseling or options counseling.
- c. **Activities:** Develop screening tools in partnership with a registered dietician and train staff to use these tools to make nutrition counseling referrals.

Changes: No material changes were made to Objective #2. More detail on the risks of malnutrition and citation added.



Objective #3 – Reduce the risk of falls among older adults through education, awareness, and prevention.

- a. **Why it matters:** Falls are the leading cause of injury, and the second leading cause of injury deaths in Iowa for older adults.
- b. **Strategy:** Provide evidence-based falls prevention programs to older adults who are at-risk of falls to change knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors.
- c. **Activities:** Offer licensed, effective, small-group class series approved for OAA funding, facilitated by trained/certified leaders in the Milestones areas that can meet minimum enrollment requirements. In remote and rural areas where group series are not feasible, contract to provide HARP, a personalized in-home falls prevention and home modification evidence-based program. ~~Also furnish nutrition services consumers (congregate and home-delivered) with monthly health promotion information to increase awareness and prevention on topics relevant to older adults.~~ **Changes: These activities removed**



Goal 3: Improve Safety and Quality of Life

Older adults and people with disabilities are safe from all forms of mistreatment and are empowered to improve their quality of life.

Objective #1 - Increase awareness, prevention, and reporting of elder abuse and dependent adult abuse.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Reach the number of individuals experiencing abuse in areas that have not previously had reports where abuse can be expected to have occurred and in the most populated areas to support more individuals
Changed to: Studies indicate abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by about 1 in 10 older adults who live at home. Abuse can have several physical and emotional effects on an older adult including physical injuries, premature mortality, depression, cognitive decline, financial devastation and increased risk for long-term care placement.
- b. **Strategy:** Provide training to increase external referrals from key community partners to Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness program.
- c. **Activities:** Educational information and presentations will be provided in coordination with partners, such as local community action agencies, churches, nutrition sites, housing coalitions, etc.

Objective #2 - Provide access to high-quality legal assistance for older adults.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Legal aid is important to older adults in Iowa for various reasons, including shelter (questions about where to live), food (questions about adequate food), services available to them, public benefits, independence (questions about how to maintain their independence), incapacity (questions about how to exercise legal rights if they become incapacitated), abuse (how to respond to abuse), eligibility (for long term care or Medicare) and property (tax credits or powers of attorney) for example (State Library of Iowa).
Changed to: Legal aid services are important to help older adults navigate unique legal matters and ensure their rights and welfare are protected, especially for those without financial means to afford an attorney when facing eviction and/or landlord issues that result in homelessness.
- b. **Strategy:** Develop or strengthen partnerships with other agencies to increase referrals of populations/areas in greatest need of OAA legal assistance.
Changed to: Strengthen partnership with the Rural Justice Project for Older Adults to increase older adults' awareness of resources for assistance and contract with Iowa Legal Aid to provide direct assistance to those in greatest need of representation.



- c. **Activities:** A representative from Iowa Legal Aid will be asked to present information and strategies to Milestones Care Managers to assist in their understanding of legal issues faced by persons served on an annual basis. Care Managers will review issues with persons served and make referrals to Iowa Legal Aid or other legal representatives as appropriate.
Changed to: Educate Milestones Care Managers to increase their understanding of legal issues appropriate for referrals to Iowa Legal Aid or other legal representatives, and provide access to representation for older adults.

Objective #3 - Strengthen emergency preparedness among care recipients, caregivers, and providers.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Many individuals that we serve have limited means, often live alone and may have cognitive issues or be susceptible to anxious concern when confronted with emergency situations
Changed to: Iowa has experienced a notable increase in natural disasters over the years, with a significant rise in the frequency and severity of events. Many individuals we serve may have limited means and supports to adequately prepare for household emergencies. Also, they may live alone; may have cognitive issues or be caregiver for someone who does; or live with chronic health conditions that complicate preparedness regarding emergency situations.
- b. **Strategy:** Refer Options Counseling consumers to resources where they can create their own individual emergency plan.
Changed to: Assist consumers with connection to resources where they can create an individual emergency plan; educate Milestones Care Managers on aid programs for disaster assistance.
- c. **Activities:** Milestones will continue in partnership with the Disaster PrepWise program and ensure that Options Counselors are trained on the materials and know-how process to make referrals as needed to program representatives.



Goal 4: Stay Engaged and Supported

People with disabilities and older adults are supported by formal and informal caregivers of their choice and have social connections within their communities.

Objective #1 - Identify informal caregivers are experiencing or at risk for stress, depression, and financial cost burden due to their caregiver role.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Caregivers' own health notwithstanding it is important for a caregiver to manage their own mental, emotional and physical health so they can provide better care to the recipient for a longer amount of time.
Changed to: Caregiver isolation, responsibility, exhaustion, and potential burnout can compromise the health of the caregiver and diminish the quality of care they can provide. Supportive services and networks are vital to maintain caregiver well-being.
- b. **Strategy:** Develop community-level workgroups to address stress, depression, and financial cost burden for caregivers.
Changed to: Implement validated screening tools to screen and intervene for caregivers at greatest risk.
- c. **Activities:** Milestones staff will initiate and develop collaboration and partnerships with identified community members and organizations to establish workgroups to specifically address stress, depression and financial cost burden to caregivers.
Changed to: Utilizing the Modified Caregiver Strain Index assessment and personal goals, Milestones Caregiver Specialists and Care Managers will develop individualized plans to provide or refer to supports to help caregivers address the stress and financial burdens of their role. To address isolation, ongoing support groups that focus on information and relevant topics to caregiver strain will be offered in various communities.

Objective #2 - Increase social engagement opportunities for persons at risk for social isolation.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Loneliness and social isolation are documented contributors to serious health problems, including increased risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, cognitive impairment, and premature death.
- b. **Strategy:** Pilot a new or emerging program that will address social isolation within evidence-based health programs and/or congregate nutrition services.
Changed to: Develop a menu of interventions for those who screen at risk for social isolation to refer to.
- c. **Activities:** Offer CircleTalk, a multi-week program that will address social isolation at appropriate host sites in the Milestones service area, and apply for status under the newly created process for State Approved Evidence Based Program. Also participate and invite community partners (libraries, senior housing facilities) in a Virtual Singing



program developed at Iowa State University, using music activity to improve brain health and motor symptoms for those living with Parkinson's Disease, now being tested for effectiveness in the general aging population.

Changed to: Discover programs offered by libraries, cultural entities, churches, residence communities, etc. to create resources for referrals to localized social opportunities for engagement.

Objective #3 - Ensure services and supports are available to informal caregivers in underserved areas.

- a. **Why it Matters:** Limited awareness, geographic barriers, language barriers, cultural considerations and financial constraints can all make it difficult for caregivers to find support in underserved communities.
- b. **Strategy:** Train external key community partners to increase referrals of populations/areas in greatest need to Caregiver/ORC services.
- c. **Activities:** Milestones will increase the number of Dementia Friends Champions to at least three- one in each office location who will be expected to provide Dementia Friends training in underserved communities at least quarterly.