

Commonwealth Council on Aging

DRAFT MINUTES

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
5620 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060

March 18, 2026
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Quarterly Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: In-Person: Carla Hesseltine, Josh Myers, Ellen Nau, Paige Wilson, Roland Winston, Tracey Gendron, Donna Smith, Dr. Nedra Moncrief-Craig (Ex-Officio), Courtney Richter (Ex-Officio); Via Zoom: Jo-Ann Chase, Yolanda Stevens, Vickie Runk, and Ron Boyd (Ex-Officio), Toni Blue, designee of Secretary of Health and Human Resources (Ex-Officio)

Members Absent: Senator Christopher Head, Delegate Patrick Hope, Tara Ragland (Ex-Officio),

Guests & Presenters: In-Person: Dr. Gigi Amateau; Via Zoom: Carol Paquette, Michael Perel, Teebee Negasi, William Way, Tina Presley, Jordan Still

Staff Present: In-Person: Sara Stowe, Charlotte Arbogast, Jodi Winship; Via Zoom: George Worthington, Catherine Harrison

Welcome and Member Introductions

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Chair Carla Hesseltine called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and welcomed members, guests, staff, and presenters. Two new ex-officio members were recognized: Dr. Nedra Moncrief-Craig, DARS' new Commissioner and Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Marvin Figueroa. Secretary Figueroa designated for Deputy Secretary Toni Blue to join this meeting.

Sara Stowe shared that several council members joined the meeting via Zoom as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): Jo-Ann Chase joined electronically via the caregiving provision, and Vickie Runk and Yolanda Stevens joined electronically due to the 60+ miles distance provision.

Andrea Buck who has served on the Council since 2022 has recently resigned due to personal and professional reasons. Carla thanked Andrea for her service particularly her contributions to the Legislative Committee during her time as Chair and will be sending a certificate of appreciation. Andrea's resignation creates a vacancy on the Legislative Committee. Chair Carla Hesseltine, appointed Donna Smith, who had previously expressed interest in joining the committee. Donna Smith accepted the appointment.

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

Carla Hesseltine called for a Roll Call for attendance and for members to introduce themselves. Sara Stowe confirmed that a quorum was present. DARS staff, guests, and the presenters for the meeting also introduced themselves.

Review Proposed Agenda

Chair Carla Hesseltine

Proposed Action: Approve Proposed Agenda

Chair Carla Hesseltine presented the proposed agenda and suggested swapping the *Regulatory Update* and the *CCOA Committee Assignments* items on the agenda to ensure we maintain quorum for items that required votes. Roland Winston made a motion, Josh Myers seconded and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Sara Stowe, Secretary

Proposed Action: Approve Meeting Minutes

Sara Stowe presented the December 18, 2025 meeting minutes for approval. No changes were needed and the minutes were approved by unanimous consensus.

Public Comment Period

Carla Hesseltine

Sara Stowe reported that there were no public comments.

DARS Division for Aging Services Update

Kiersten Ware, Deputy Commissioner for Aging Services

Deputy Commissioner for Aging Services, Kiersten Ware shared an update on DARS and the Division for Aging Services to include:

- Introducing Dr. Nedra Moncreif-Craig, DARS' new Commissioner who began her role March 10th. Dr. Moncreif-Craig briefly introduced herself.
- DARS' newly redesigned website.
- National Council on Aging (NCOA) recently awarded 90 Benefits Enrollment Centers three of which have been awarded to Virginia organizations.
- Governor Spanberger's \$14 million initiative to help Virginians find housing in which two AAAs: Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSSEVA) and Bay Aging have received some of this funding.
- HR344 has been introduced by Delegate Keith Hodges to commend Bay Aging
- March is National Senior Nutrition Program Month
- Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation has released its 2026 Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan outlining how the Commonwealth will improve transportation access for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and low-income residents
- 211 Virginia is celebrating 20 years of providing access to vital resources for all residents. No Wrong Door's Felencia McGee attended their recent celebration ceremony and reinforced the agency's commitment to coordinated access and community support
- On March 3, 2026, Peninsula Agency on Aging (PAA) hosted its Annual Community Forum on Aging which drew over 1,000 attendees and was a vital event for residents of that area.

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

- The Virginia Commission for the Arts received a \$77,500 Creative Aging grant and a new partnership with DARS will strengthen creative aging efforts by leveraging statewide aging data and connecting with AAAs.
- March 24, 2026 the Virginia Governor’s Conference on Aging will be hosting its monthly webinar on the topic of social respite programs with DARS’ Dementia Services Director, George Worthington.
- May 5-7 is No Wrong Door’s Summit- Reimagine. Reconnect. Reignite held in Lynchburg, VA
- September 21-24 is Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A) Conference hosted in Williamsburg, VA.

CCOA Committee Assignments

Carla Hesselstine

(Handout)

Chair Carla Hesselstine proceeded with the next order of business of CCOA Committee Assignments. Before jumping into CCOA Committee Assignments, Carla recognized members whose appointments expire on 6/30/2026. The members are: Carla Hesselstine, Josh Myers, Jo-Ann Chase, Paige Wilson, and Andrea Buck, who was recognized earlier in the agenda. All members received a certificate of appreciation. Sara Stowe also recognized Carla Hesselstine and her contributions as Chair and service on the Legislative Committee.

Shifting back to the Committee Membership due to the high number of member’s appointments expiring, Chair Carla Hesselstine suggested shifting the committee assignments to the July 15th meeting. Ellen Nau made a motion to shift the committee assignments to July 15th and Josh Myers seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Presentation: Elder Justice Shelter and Older Adult Homelessness

Dr. Gigi Amateau, Assistant Professor, VCU Department of Gerontology

(Handout)

Chair Carla Hesselstine introduced Dr. Gigi Amateau and thanked her for joining today. Dr. Amateau thanked the Council for inviting her and shared that she would cover two initiatives: The Greater Richmond Elder Justice Shelter and Virginia D.I.N.E.R:

The Greater Richmond Elder Justice Shelter portion covered:

- Continuum of Care improvements and focus on older adults risks of being homeless
- Escalating trend of elder homelessness
 - More than 1,500 adults over 55 experience homelessness
 - Older adults spend more time homeless than younger adults
- Elder Justice Shelter Model focuses on fixing the services related to homelessness, but is not a brick and mortar shelter.
 - This model is focused on PSA 15
- The objectives of this model are to:
 - Establish a person-centered trauma-informed housing strategy with a continuum of partners

Commonwealth Council on Aging

DRAFT MINUTES

- Develop a service coordination protocol for elders experiencing mistreatment and homelessness.
- Develop an electronic referral method between homeless and aging services providers using the NWD platform.
- Develop a volunteer care team model to provide social and practical supports.
- Boost workforce support and training to decrease moral injury and moral distress.
- Develop a replicable blueprint of a decentralized elder justice shelter model and protocols.
- The biggest barrier to this initiative is that housing options are extremely limited and unaffordable. Oftentimes, older adults who are homeless receive more restrictive housing options such as nursing homes due to the availability. The goal of this initiative is to focus on the least restrictive housing with support services.
- A number of stories from participants of this initiative were shared. VCU conducted interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness, their families, and caregivers.
- The progress of this initiative are as follows:
 - 12 older adults supported into affordable, safe housing
 - Elder Justice care conference has moved to community case conferencing for older adults
 - Electronic referral launched
 - First UU church becoming trained as the first volunteer care team
 - Cross-sector training: elder abuse, ethical decision making, community mapping, PCTI care
 - National dissemination efforts underway

Virginia D.I.N.E.R portion covered:

- Virginia Delivering Integrated Nutrition Engagement, & Resilience (D.I.N.E.R)
- This initiative is a \$1.1 million award for a 3-year project focused on person-centered, trauma-informed care practices integrated into congregate meals and impacts tribal elders and elders experiencing homelessness.
- Partners of this project include: CARITAS; Center for Aging ,Trauma, and Holocaust Survivor Care at Jewish Federations of North America; Chickahominy Indian Tribe; Homeward; Pamunkey Indian Tribe; The Span Center; Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe; Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.
- Four pilot sites have been selected, but sharing specifically about CARITAS and The Span Center.
 - Using a Food is Medicine approach focused on nutritional health and homelessness. Scarcity of food is a strong theme and lack of nutritional value.
 - Interviews were conducted and many interviewees share about the impact of food beyond sustenance, but nutrition, health, and connection.

Following the presentation a number of members asked questions related to:

- Tribal involvement in both projects
- Clarification on the diversity of older adults in homelessness
- Additional discussion on the power of social connection and meals

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

Budget & Legislative Updates (Handout)

Josh Myers, Legislative Committee Chair

Josh Myers, Legislative Committee Chair shared an update on the 2026 General Assembly Session. He shared about the budget process still to come when the General Assembly reconvenes on April 23rd. The sticking point on the budget is related to data centers.

Josh Myers also shared updates on the CCOA Legislative Priorities from 2026 and their progress outlines below:

- Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services Through AAAs
 - \$1.9 Million ([319 #1s](#)) + \$100,000 for Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia ([319 #2s](#)) in Senate Budget and \$3 Million ([319 #1h](#)) in House Budget
- Increase Funding for the Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process
 - [Item 279 #2s](#): Nursing Home Complaint Backlog (2 FTEs)
 - [Item 279 #3s](#): Nursing Home Operator License for SB 247
- Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Review Board
 - [HB483/SB271](#): Prescription Drug Affordability Board established; drug cost affordability review.
- Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight- Related Legislation
 - [SB 429](#) - Health, Department of, and State Health Commissioner; nursing home oversight and accountability. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [HB 1116](#) - Publicly accessible nursing home info. portal; reporting of incident involving emerg. med. services. **Outcome: Failed**
 - [SB 808](#) - Nursing facilities; related party rent disclosures, incentive payment reduction, penalty **Outcome: Continued to 2027**
 - [HB 605](#) - Nursing facilities; Joint Commission on Health Care shall evaluate workforce. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [HB 1104](#) - Inspection of certified nursing facilities; compliance with federal reporting requirements. **Outcome: Failed**
 - [HB 1357](#) - Nursing facilities; comprehensive study of quality of care, etc., and operational practices. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [SB 535](#) - Nursing homes and certified nursing facilities; required liability insurance coverage. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [HB 1522](#) - Nursing homes and assisted living facilities; licensure, automated external defibrillators. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [SB 247](#) - Nursing homes; application to Commissioner of Health for change of operator license, civil penalty. **Outcome: Passed**
 - [SB 555](#) - Nursing homes; periodic medical visits and resident assessments. **Outcome: Incorporated into SB 429**
- Increase Funding of the Statewide Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

- Outcome: Governor’s Introduced Budget to add \$375,000 in annual funding; no changes to this in the Senate or House Budgets
- Increase Funding for Public Guardianship Program Slots
 - [Item 319 #4h](#): Budget Amendment : **Outcome: Introduced, but not in Senate or House Budget versions**
- Provide State General Funds for the Ongoing Operations of the Virginia Memory Project
 - [Item 197 #2h](#): Budget Amendment: **Outcome: In House Budget**
- Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Commission
 - [HB431/ SB682](#): **Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission; extension of expiration date.** Extends the expiration date of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2029.
Outcome: Passed the House/Senate
- Increasing Funding for No Wrong Door’s Statewide Resource Database
 - [Item 319 #7h](#): Budget Amendment: **Outcome: Introduced, but not in House or Senate Budget**

Sara Stowe shared about legislation that was introduced that would impact the CCOA. Senate Bill 260 was introduced by Senator Bill Stanley as a Social Isolation Prevention Task Force and focused on strategies to reduce social isolation and loneliness among seniors and promoting volunteer engagement.

As SB260 made its way through the General Assembly, there were concerns around the fiscal impacts and landed on a substitute, which adds a duty to the Commonwealth Council on Aging and reads that “The Commonwealth Council on Aging shall *Advise the Department on Strategies for reducing social isolation and loneliness among seniors and promoting volunteer engagement.*” The Council will continue to have additional discussion on how to tackle this new duty.

Sara Stowe then shared updates for aging-related legislation:

- HB 1/ SB1: Minimum wage; increases incrementally to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2028.
- HB 5: Employment; paid sick leave, civil penalties.
- HB 297: Assisted living facilities; resident referral agencies, required disclosures.
- HB 413: High School Certified Nurse Aide Training/Certification Program; established, requirements, report.
- HB 431/SB682: Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission; extension of expiration date.
- HB 435: Palliative Care Info. & Ed. Prog. & Palliative Care & Quality of Life Advisory Council; established.
- HB 476/SB358: Continuing care providers; meeting requirements.
- HB 483: Prescription Drug Affordability Board; established.

Commonwealth Council on Aging

DRAFT MINUTES

- HB 602/ SB722: Motion picture theaters; definitions, establishes requirements for open captioning.
- HB 605: Nursing facilities; Joint Commission on Health Care shall evaluate workforce.
- HB 674: Department of Health; collection and publication of food insecurity information.
- HB 717/SB247: Nursing homes; application to Commissioner of Health for change of operator license, civil penalty.
- HB 815/ SB405: Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority; administration of nursing scholarships.
- HB 866: Food insecurity/hunger; Department of Social Services, et al., to develop statewide survey, report.
- HB 884/ SB253: Electric utilities; Percentage of Income Payment Program, eligibility, delayed effective date.
- HB 1021: Affordable housing; development of an assisted living facility.
- HB 1104: Inspection of certified nursing facilities; compliance with federal reporting requirements.
- HB 1116: Publicly accessible nursing home info. portal; reporting of incident involving emerg. med. services.
- HB 1207: Paid family & med. leave insurance program; definitions, notice requirements, civil action, report.
- HB 1263: Public employees; repeals existing prohibition on collective bargaining, etc.
- HB 1297/ SB243: Adult protective services; creates adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation central registry.
- HB 1357: Nursing facilities; comprehensive study of quality of care, etc., and operational practices.
- HB 1366: Local boards & departments; DSS to create corrective action plans & assumption of temporary control.
- HB 1405: Social services, local dept. of social services allowed to pay reasonable funeral expense.
- HB 1458: Health care facilities; SHHR to study impact of private equity on health care.
- HB 1522: Nursing homes and assisted living facilities; licensure, automated external defibrillators
- SB 2: Paid family and medical leave insurance program; definitions, notice requirements, civil action.
- SB 199: Employment; paid sick leave, civil penalties.
- SB 216: Guardianship; copy of appointment, termination, or modification order.
- SB 260: Aging, Commonwealth Council on; advising strategies for reducing social isolation among seniors.
- SB 409: Assisted living facilities; electronic monitoring in resident rooms
- SB 429: Health, Department of, and State Health Commissioner; nursing home oversight and accountability.
- SB 535: Nursing homes and certified nursing facilities; required liability insurance coverage.
- SB 555: Nursing homes; periodic medical visits and resident assessments.
- SB 564: Unlicensed care homes; homes to register with Department of Social Services.

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

- SB 791: Assisted living facilities; requirements for resident referral agencies, required disclosures, etc.
- SB 808: Nursing facilities; related party rent disclosures, incentive payment reduction, penalty

Josh Myers then shared about the meeting schedule for Legislative Committee. Last year in 2025, the Legislative Committee hosted its first Legislative Partners Meeting and share that from a partner perspective, the meeting was very valuable. It was proposed to host that meeting again, but in May or June to ensure time for the budget to be worked out. It was also proposed to move the Legislative Committee meeting where legislative recommendations are selected back to July or August to ensure we have time to hear from partners about their legislative priorities and take an approach of helping to elevate the aging network.

Roland Winston made the motion to schedule both Legislative Committee meetings. Josh seconded the motion and all were in favor. Sara Stowe will follow up with getting the Legislative Committee meetings scheduled.

Presentation: Kinship Navigator Program

Tina Presley, Jordan Still, Dickinson County Department of Social Services- (Handout)

Chair Carla Hesseltine introduced Tina Presley and Jordan Still from the Dickinson County Department of Social Services. Tina began by sharing about the Kinship Navigator Program as a primary prevention program that assists kinship caregivers on a voluntary basis in finding, learning about and using programs and services to meet the needs of the children they are raising as well as themselves. The Kinship Navigator program is helpful in walking a family through processes such as filing for custody or power of attorney.

The Family First Prevention Services Act was signed into law in 2018 with the main goal of enhancing support services for families to help children remain at home, reduce unnecessary use of congregate care, and build capacity of communities to support children and families. In 2018, Virginia piloted 6 Kinship Navigator Program: Arlington, Bedford, Dickinson, James City, Smyth counties, and Virginia Beach. In October of 2025, 5 additional sites were added: Henrico, Petersburg, Lynchburg, Fairfax, and Carroll Counties.

The types of services Kinship Navigators provide are in 5 main focus areas. information, education, referral to resources, advocacy, and urgent funding. Kinship Navigators provide access to financial supports such as TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, Childcare, SSI, Heating and Cooling Assistance just to name a few. They can assist with legal services, access to community services, medical access, educational access, and urgent funding for needs related to caregiving.

Members asked a few follow up questions around parental involvement and supporting families who have parents in and out of the child's life, number of families worked with, and funding for urgent needs.

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

Best Practices Committee Update: 2026 Winners

Dr. Tracey Gendron, Committee Chair- (Handout)

Committee Chair Dr. Tracey Gendron provided an update on the 2026 Best Practices Awards. The Council received 23 nominations, the most nominations to have been received. Submissions and winning programs reflected creative, innovative, and effective efforts in addressing the pressing issues of community engagement, social isolation and social connectedness, person-centered care, food insecurity, and more.

She reminded the Council that Dominion Energy provides financial support of \$10,000 for the winning programs. Last year and this year, the Council was pleased to also have financial support from AARP Virginia for \$1,500 for the winners.

She then provided summaries of the winning programs and honorable mentions:

- FIRST PLACE AWARD (\$5,500): CareMobile of ServiceSource in Fairfax, VA
- SECOND PLACE AWARD (\$3,500): FREE Foundation of Virginia, a statewide initiative
- THIRD PLACE AWARD (\$2,500): Purple Flower Program from the Riverside Martha W. Goodson Center in Williamsburg, VA.
- The following programs also received honorable mentions:
 - Rapp at Home's Regional Transportation Collaborative
 - Community Connection Model, a program of Senior Services of Alexandria
 - Bay Aging's Caregiver Support Program

Dr. Gendron noted:

- DARS staff have also updated the Council's website to highlight these programs.

In terms of next steps, Dr. Gendron shared that the Committee and DARS staff are working now to:

- Prepared and issue a press release to highlight the 2026 awards.
- Issue the award winners their monetary awards.
- Mail out certificates for the honorable mentions.
- Plan & attend Best Practices Awards Ceremonies for the three winning programs.
- Coordinate with the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging ("V4A") for recognition of these programs during the Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging Webinar Series.

She encouraged Council members to be on the lookout for the upcoming webinar date. Members interested in attending on-site ceremonies were encouraged to reach out to Sara Stowe.

Announcements

Carla Hesseltine

Chair Carla Hesseltine asked for a V4A update from Ron Boyd. Ron had to leave the meeting early, but shared his updates with Sara Stowe. Sara noted that the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A) is also being hosted in Colonial Williamsburg in September 2026 as Kiersten Ware, Deputy Commissioner had noted earlier in the meeting and added that Requests for Presenters is now open.

Commonwealth Council on Aging
DRAFT MINUTES

Carla Hesseltine reminded members that the next Council meeting is scheduled for July 15th.
Carla Hesseltine review the expected agenda items for the next meeting:

- Welcome new members to the Council
- Bylaws revisions for approval
- Confirming Committee Assignments
- A Legislative/General Assembly update
- Update on the 2026 Best Practices Awards ceremonies and webinar
- Virginia State Plan for Aging Services

Carla Hesseltine asked members to please let her or Sara Stowe know if they have any suggestions or questions.

Public Comment Period

Carla Hesseltine

Sara Stowe reported that there were no public comments.

Meeting Adjournment

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Chair Hesseltine adjourned the meeting at 1:14p.m.

Members Participating Electronically:

- Jo-Ann Chase: Caregiving provision, Brambleton, VA
- Vickie Runk: 60+ miles provision, Forest, VA
- Yolanda Stevens: 60+ miles provision, Ashburn, VA

Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2025
3. CCOA Regulation Update
4. Elder Justice Shelter Initiative Presentation
5. SB260
6. CCOS Legislative Update
7. Aging Legislation
8. Proposed 2026 CCOA Meeting Timeline
9. Kinship Navigator Presentation
10. 2026 Best Practices Awards Summary of Winners and Honorable Mentions
11. CCOA Committee List