



Elder News

Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs (GOEA)

Winter 2025

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From the Director's Chair...

As we are winding down another year, I want to thank all of you for your patience and persistence in the face of all challenges thrown your way.

This quarter, we've all weathered the shutdown of the federal government.

It is an uncertain world, and all of you make the mission of serving the state's seniors your first priority.

GOEA would like to wish Jane Thomas a very happy, relaxing retirement, and thank her for her many years of service as our Legal Services Developer, and on the Elder Law Task Force. She has been a tireless advocate and an invaluable source of information, and we will miss her expertise and guidance.

Reminder: our new Practices & Procedures are now in effect, and can be found on our website: <https://goea.louisiana.gov/resources/goea-policy-procedure-manual/>

Thank you to all of you for your important work, and have a wonderful holiday season!

Amanda Smith, Executive Director

*Happy
Holidays*



HCBS

As 2025 comes to a close, the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) team extends gratitude to the aging network for your commitment to serving Louisiana's older adults. The progress achieved this year reflects the strength of our collaborative efforts to expand access and enhance service delivery to the senior community. Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue conducting annual program assessments to ensure the effectiveness of service delivery. These assessments not only reinforce accountability but also provide valuable insights that strengthen program performance and guide innovative approaches. By doing so, we remain aligned with GOEA's mission to serve as Louisiana's focal point for the development, implementation, and administration of public policy addressing the needs of the state's elderly citizens. We encourage you to stay abreast of correspondence from the HCBS team regarding your upcoming program assessment visit, as your partnership is vital to advancing our shared mission.

Happy Holidays,

Lakeisha Robertson, HCBS Program Manager



Accounting and Finance

With the new year approaching, the Accounting and Finance team extends our heartfelt appreciation to the members of the Aging Network for your unwavering dedication to improving the lives of older adults across Louisiana. Your commitment, compassion, and ongoing dedication ensure that seniors in our communities receive the care, support, and resources they need to thrive.

As we chart the course for 2026, we remain committed to conducting Field Audits to identify areas where processes can be enhanced and to ensure program expenditures, cash balances, and compliance with applicable policies and regulations are properly reviewed. These audits provide critical insights that support sound financial management, reinforce internal controls, and guide improvements in stewardship of resources.

We encourage you to review all communications regarding upcoming audit assignments to ensure timely preparation. Your efforts are essential in upholding GOEA's mission to safeguard public funds and support the effective administration of programs serving Louisiana's older adult population.

From all of us on the Accounting and Finance team, we wish you a safe and joyful holiday season.



Compliance and Planning

Looking back to the beginning of 2025 we started a project with WellSky. We had many ups and downs but everyone worked through the struggles and hurdles. Compliance and Planning wants to thank everyone for being patient during the transition, despite all of the growing pains. We appreciate all of the hard work that you do, day in and day, out for the citizens of Louisiana.

With the consolidated database, we have implemented some changes to assist you. Compliance and Planning will be pulling your FY26 2nd Quarter Agency Summary (Totals Only) Report for the period of July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. This means you no longer need to submit your quarterly report. You can still run the report for your internal process if you choose to but you don't have to submit it to GOEA. It is extremely important that you have all units entered in and do not surpass the January 15th deadline as the report will be ran on January 16th.

The missing data report will no longer be generated quarterly for your review and revisions. We will now be running the report at the end of the second quarter and the 4th quarter. Compliance and Planning encourages you all to run your own missing data reports and check for missing data quarterly to avoid having large amounts of data to fix all at one time.

If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Gautier at 225-342-6672 or email her at Lauren.Gautier2@la.gov.

We hope you all have a wonderful holiday season,

Cheri Crain

Compliance and Planning Program Manager and staff.

Elderly Protective Services

As the year comes to a close, take the time to give thanks for all of the wonderful things that have occurred throughout the year. I want to say thank you to each of you for all of the hard work you have done. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our program but mostly to the elderly population of the state of Louisiana. Take a moment to do something nice for one elderly individual you come in contact with. Our Elders have paved the way for so many of us, let us not forget about them during this holiday season. Some are alone while others are surrounded by loved ones, a simple hello or small token of appreciation could add a smile to their hearts and faces.

Everyone have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Ebony Thomas-Philips, Elderly Protective Services Program Manager


2025 Annual Elderly Protective Services All Staff Training




Louisiana's MIPPA FY2025 Performance


FY2025 marked the strongest MIPPA Program Performance Louisiana has seen in more than half a decade. Compared to the previous five years, every major performance measure increased dramatically—many with triple-digit gains. These improvements coincided with a shift to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) management and a complete reorganization of how our MIPPA Program operates statewide.


Louisiana's 2024-2025 Program Performance earned it the "Most Statewide Improvement (MIPPA: SHIP/AAA/ADRC)" as we are in the Top 5 States for 3 of 5 Performance Measures (we are Top 12 for the other 2).

 **511% increase** in Beneficiary Contacts (Excellent Rating, Top 5 State)

 **85% growth** in Outreach



 **284 disabled beneficiaries served** (after years near zero)

 **943% increase** in Hard-to-Reach Contacts — earning a national "Excellent" rating (Top 5 State)

 **454% increase** in Enrollment Contacts (Excellent Rating, Top 5 State)

Thanks to a new contract model under our Department of Home and Community-Based Services, streamlined reporting, hands-on training, and greater flexibility for our agencies, contractors were able to focus their time where it mattered most: **helping Louisiana's seniors and Medicare beneficiaries get the assistance they need.**

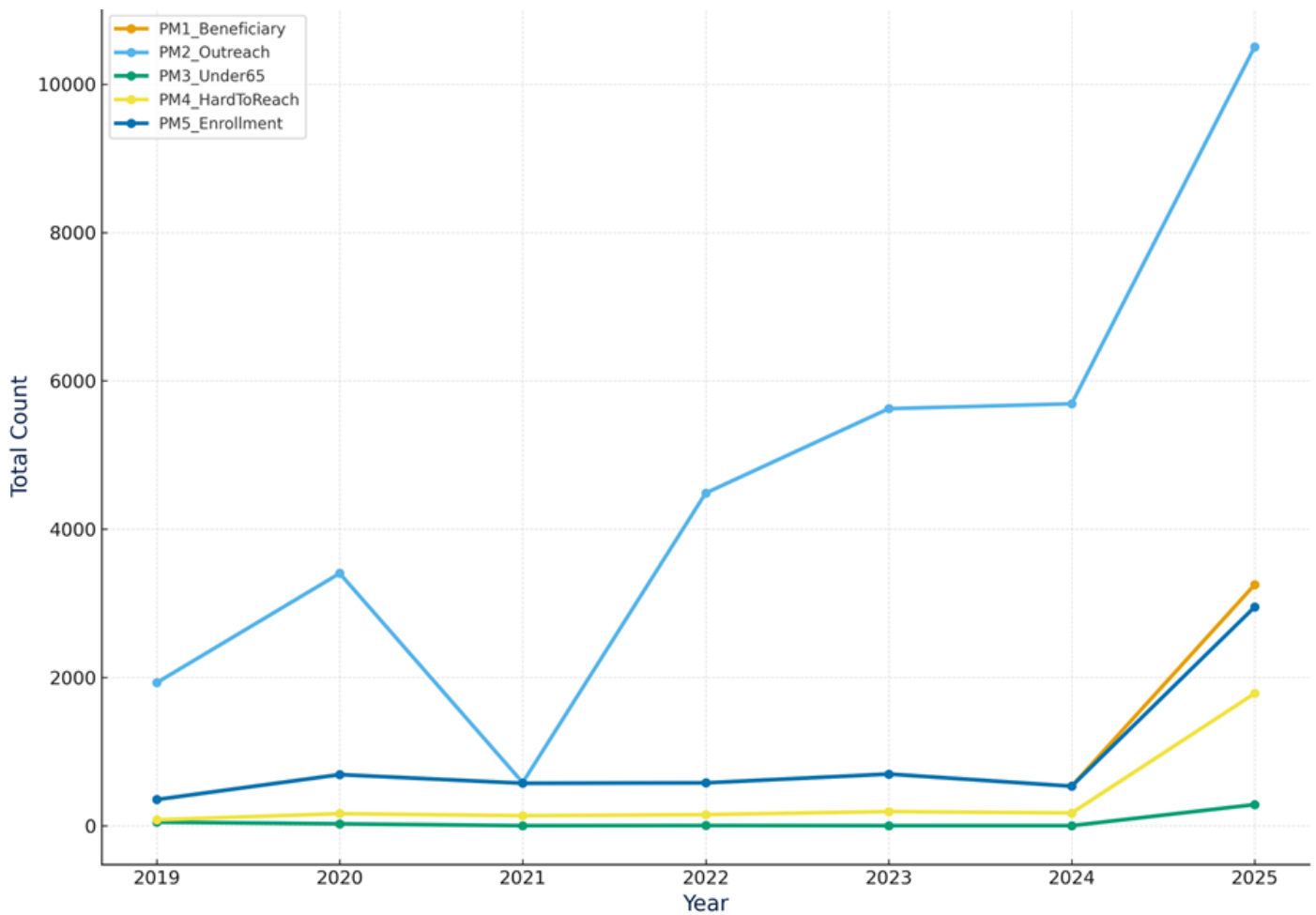
Louisiana is proud of our Program growth and wear our "Most Improved" banner with pride as we continue to grow our program — and we're just getting started.

  #GOEA #Medicare #LouisianaSeniors #HCBS

MIPPA Performance Trends (2019–2025)

- **PM1: Beneficiary Contacts** increased from 532 in FY2024 to 3,250 in FY2025 — a 511% increase.
- **PM2: Group Outreach** rose 85% in FY2025, reaching over 10,500 beneficiaries.
- **PM3: Under-65 Disability Contacts** restored from years of zero activity to 284 contacts.
- **PM4: Hard-to-Reach Populations** increased from 171 to 1,783 — a 943% increase, earning an “Excellent” national rating.
- **PM5: Enrollment Contacts** climbed from 532 to 2,949 — a 454% increase.

• *These trends and the improvement can be seen in the 6 year chart below:*



Deepest Regret

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of LEBA Board Member Willie Lewis. Willie D. Lewis, affectionately known as “W.D.,” was born on November 7, 1938, and peacefully passed away of natural causes on November 4, 2025, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at the age of 86. After a life of dedication, service, and love, he has now entered into eternal rest, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire all who knew him.



Willie’s commitment to civic engagement and community leadership was evident throughout his life. He became deeply involved in politics and community activism, holding numerous leadership roles. He served as President of the Scotlandville Jaycees from 1975–1976. On the state level, he was elected Regional Vice President from 1976–1977, earning numerous awards on the local, state, and national levels for his outstanding service.

A devoted Republican, Willie was passionate about community involvement and the political process. Over the years, he actively served in numerous political campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels, offering his time, insight, and organizational skills to help elect candidates who shared his values and vision for a stronger Louisiana. Known for his sharp political acumen and dedication to public service, Willie built strong relationships with elected officials and community leaders across the state.

Willie was appointed to the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging in 1997 by former State Senate President Randy Ewing. He remained on the Board for over 28 years. Willie championed initiatives that enhanced the quality of life, expanded access to vital resources, and upheld the dignity of older adults across the state.

His lifelong dedication to service and community leadership earned him numerous honors throughout the years. He received the Kiwanian of the Year Award from the Kiwanis Club of Denham Springs –West Livingston in 2001, and in 2012, he was recognized by Project R.I.D.E. and the Louisiana Business and Community Alliance for more than 40 years of outstanding contributions to the Greater Baton Rouge community. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

In the Spotlight

Cameron Council on Aging: Received donations of food and funding to help seniors who did not receive their Food Stamps due to the Government shutdown. Over 30 people were helped on the first day and many more since then. Community leaders held food drives throughout the parish and local LNG plants donated funds. The pantry was full, and the recipients were very appreciative. The agency has elaborated on their disaster plan in the section of Government Shutdown! The local sheriff also brought out his "cook trailer" and he and the District Attorney, Clerk of Court and Tax Assessor cooked for the seniors in Cameron, Hackberry, and Grand Lake. Shelf-stable meals were stored for any other need that arises.

Franklin Council on Aging: Happy Birthday to Mrs. Evelyn Womack, she turned 93 years old!



Happy Birthday

Ascension Council on Aging: Sure knows how to have a good time!

Western Party!



1960's Party!



Halloween Party!



Tangipahoa Council on Aging: On October 3, 2025, Ms. Thelma Barlow from Hammond was crowned the 2025 Tangipahoa Parish Fair Senior Citizens Queen by State Senators Bill Wheat and Beth Mizell. During this joyous event, we also celebrated Ms. Clara Fultz's 100th birthday. Ms. Clara continues to drive herself to the Kentwood Senior Center almost every day. Both ladies represent the Tangipahoa Council on Aging with grace, gratitude and patience and we love them both!



Vermilion Council on Aging: We are celebrating 50 years of positive community impact for the elders of Vermilion Parish in December!

A poster for the Vermilion Council on Aging 50th Birthday Bash. The background is black with gold and white polka-dot patterns. The text is in gold and white.

Vermilion Council on Aging
50th Birthday Bash

Join us for a night of fun to raise funds and awareness of our Mission to serve the elderly of Vermilion Parish. Food, music, and a live auction for a worthy cause

SAVE THE DATE
Thursday, December 11th, 2025
6-9 p.m.
Magdalen Place
Abbeville, LA

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE
vermilioncoa.org

SPONSORSHIP END DATE: NOV 25, 2025
Call (337)893-2563 for Sponsorship Opportunities

Lafourche Council on Aging: Held a Halloween costume party to celebrate! The seniors dressed up and played games, it was a great time! The pictures below are from the party.

Winner of guessing how many candies were in the container!



Winner of witch ring hat toss!



Lafourche costume contest!



Top 3 best dressed clients!



Jefferson Davis Council on Aging: In October we had our Annual Fall Fest Gumbo that the Sheriff sponsors. In November we hosted LSU AgCenter for a presentation on eating better during the holidays and she also had a food demo, which was very enjoyed! We also had an anonymous Thanksgiving basket donor that we help to distribute 40 Thanksgiving meal fixings to some of our lower income participants.



Rapides Senior Citizens' Centers: Happy Birthday to our Team Lead and Sieper Center Coordinator Becky Walters! Thank you for your dedication to our seniors in not just your community but across the parish! You are a hardworking and dedicated woman of faith! Thank you as well for your service with this company for 25 years!



Thank you so much, Mrs. Shirley Johnson for all the help you do at the Sieper Senior Citizen Center and Happy Birthday to you!

Happy 96th Birthday to Mrs. Dolores Morrison from Sieper!

Happy 94th Birthday to Mrs. Marjorie Wiemers from Wilda!

Happy Birthday, Mrs. Melba Warren from Wilda!

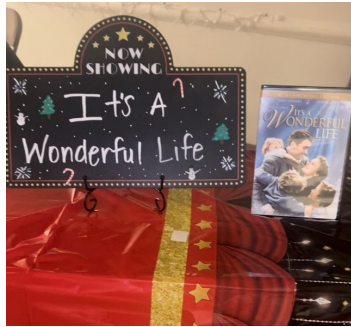
Happy Birthday Mrs. Pam Rudisill from Wilda turning 65 and she is fabulous!



Happy 95th Birthday Mrs. Cotton! Mary Louise Cotton was born on October 16, 1930, in a small town in the Blue Ridge mountains in North Carolina. Louise (as known by her friends) has had many life experiences, living through historic events such as WWII, the moon landing, President Kennedy's assassination as well as personal events such as falling in love at the age of 21 and moving with her new husband to Ohio. They raised 4 children on a dairy farm. She was and is very active in her children's lives. Some of her favorite pastimes are reading and spending time at the senior center with her friends. She is a blessing to everyone who knows her!



Jefferson Council on Aging: Metairie Senior Center Movie Day, the Coordinator Brittany Johnson rolled out the red carpet for our members and treated them to popcorn and treats. It was like a real movie experience!



Happy birthday to Mr. Alexander Hymes. He celebrated his 102nd birthday at our Marrero Senior Center and is our oldest veteran!

Judy and Donald Scioneaux of our Lafitte Senior Center celebrating Thanksgiving



Veteran celebration at Lafitte Senior Center!



Sabine Council on Aging: Our seniors always look forward to our Annual Senior Day held the fourth Thursday in September. During this event, we always honor an older worker and this year's recipient was Mr. Ned G. Robinson, employed 50 years at Boise



Tamale Fiesta Senior Day in Zwolle, La. The second picture is of our client Carolyn Jones with her granddaughter Kennedy, Miss Zwolle Tamale Fiesta Queen!

Happy 91st birthday Ms. Betty Skinner!



Annual trip to Lil Eva Plantation/Lunch is always a fun trip for our seniors!

Our first year participating in the town's trick or treating!



We were welcomed at The Life Church for the annual pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon. Our seniors always enjoy this gathering!



Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs: GOEA staff participated in the Breast Cancer Walk on October 14, 2025 to increase awareness and show support for those affected!



Happy Holidays!



Winter Storm Preparedness



Be **Red Cross Ready**
Prepare so you can protect.

Winter Storm

Preparedness Checklist

Winter storms can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, sleet, heavy snowfall, ice, and high winds. These storms can cause transportation, heat, power, and communication disruptions. They also can close schools, stores, and workplaces. Winters are getting warmer and shorter because of climate change. But, because a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, heavier snowfalls are more likely to occur. We can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home.



What to Do: Before



Plan to Stay Warm

- Stay warm indoors to prevent frostbite and hypothermia.
- Before the winter season begins, make sure you can heat your home safely. Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping.
- Consider using an indoor thermometer or thermostat to monitor the temperature inside.
- Plan to check on loved ones and neighbors to make sure they are staying warm. This is especially important for older adults and babies.
- Drink plenty of warm fluids but avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid travel if you can.
- If you must go outside, plan to dress properly. Keep your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes covered in warm, dry clothing. These areas are the first to be at risk for frostbite.
 - Wear layers of loose clothing, a coat, hat, mittens, and water-resistant boots. Use a scarf to cover your face and mouth.
- Know where you will go if your home becomes too cold. You could go to a friend's house, a public library, or a warming center.



Learn Emergency Skills

- Learn first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Emergency services may be delayed.
- Learn how to spot and treat frostbite and hypothermia.
- Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-ups.
- Be ready to live without power, gas, and water.
- Learn how to keep pipes from freezing.



Plan to Stay Connected

- Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.
- Plan to monitor local weather and news.
- Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.
- Have a battery-powered radio to use during a power outage.
- Understand the alerts you may receive.
 - A WATCH means **Be Prepared!**
 - A WARNING means **Take Action!**
- Create a support team to help everyone stay safe in a disaster. Plan how you can help each other.



Gather Emergency Supplies

- Gather food, water, and medicine before a winter storm. Stores might be closed, and it may be unsafe to travel.
- Organize supplies into a Go-Kit and a Stay-at-Home Kit.
 - Go-Kit: at least three days of supplies you can carry with you if you need to go somewhere else to stay warm. Include critical backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.)
 - Stay-at-Home Kit: at least two weeks of supplies.
- Ensure you have enough warm clothing, such as hats, mittens, and blankets, for everyone in your household.
- You may lose access to drinking water. Set aside at least one gallon of drinking water per person per day.
- Consider having emergency supplies in your vehicle, such as a blanket, warm clothing, a first aid kit, and boots.
- Have a 1-month supply of needed medications and medical supplies. Consider keeping a list of your medications and dosages on a small card to carry with you.
- Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe and easy to access (hard copies or securely backed up).
- Have a snow shovel and ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.

What to Do: During



Stay Safe

- Use care with space heaters and fireplaces to prevent fires. Keep anything that could catch fire **at least 3 feet (1 meter) from the heat!**
- Avoid using candles because of the fire risk. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning is common during power outages when people use other means to heat and cook. You can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - Only use generators, grills, and camp stoves outdoors and away from windows.
 - Carbon monoxide kills. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak, **get to fresh air right away – do not delay.**
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and home fires, never heat your home with a cooking oven or stove.



Act Fast if You See Signs of Frostbite or Hypothermia

- **Frostbite** is when a part of your body freezes. Your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes often are the first affected. People may experience pain, numbness, and a change of skin color.
 - What to do for frostbite: Move to a warm place. Warm the affected area gently by soaking in warm water (NOT hot) until the skin appears normal and feels warm. Seek emergency medical care.
- **Hypothermia** can kill you. It occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce heat. This causes a dangerously low body temperature. Older adults, babies, children, and people with certain health conditions are more at risk.
 - Shivering is one of the first signs of hypothermia; other signs include confusion, drowsiness, and slurred speech.
 - What to do for hypothermia: Seek emergency medical care right away. Move to a warm place. Remove any wet clothing and warm the body slowly.

What to Do: After



Stay Safe

- If you need to go outside, use extreme caution when driving or walking on ice.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines. They can electrocute you.
- Be aware of branches, trees, and ice that may fall.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Take frequent breaks and, if possible, work with a partner.
- Use ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.
- Go to a public library, shopping mall, or warming center if your home becomes too cold.



Take Care of Yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text **1-800-985-5990**.

Prepare so you can protect. | For more information, visit redcross.org/prepare | Download the Emergency App



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Hazard and Protective Actions icons are used courtesy of FEMA and are available at community.fema.gov/ProtectiveActions/w/protective-actions-icons

The Louisiana Executive Board on Aging

The next scheduled quarterly LEBA meeting will be held on

January 21, 2026 @ 11:00AM

The Board members are listed below:

Leslie Keen—Chairwoman

Huey Beverly

Ann Keene

Donald Mallet

Heather Prejean



Charles “Buddy” Pugh

Rene Thibodeaux

Ricco Thomas

Blanche Wilks



WELCOME

***Join us in welcoming our new
team members!***

Sharlie Flowers ~ Elderly Protective Services

Rebecca Phillips ~ Elderly Protective Services

Latisha Lewis ~ Accounting & Finance

Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs

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