

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR DELEGATES OF THE MICHIGAN SENIOR ADVOCATES COUNCIL

MSAC was founded in 1977 by the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan (AAAAM) to actively advocate on behalf of Michigan seniors with the Governor, the Legislature and other elected officials. The plan was to draw advocates from local AAA Advisory Councils to develop a decentralized advocacy network extending into local regions. Even though advocates were drawn from local regions, their charge was to transcend regional differences and the narrow interests of individual agencies---to take a statewide perspective on critical aging issues, and conquer the fear of getting actively involved in "political issues". The following duties and responsibilities outlined below reflect the original charge developed nine years ago, and further clarify what is expected of MSAC Delegates.

Responsibilities:

1. Attending MSAC meetings as scheduled, and participate in special training and other events organized by AAAAM for delegates.
2. Reporting on MSAC activities to the AAA Advisory Council and other organizations in the delegate's home region. In addition to reporting MSAC activities, it is the delegate's responsibility to garner local support for statewide advocacy efforts. This means recommending that AAA Advisory Councils and other local organizations take positions on issues, and communicate those positions in writing or in person to elected officials.
3. Reading materials distributed to MSAC delegates to become informed on aging issues.
4. Writing letters to public officials communicating positions taken by MSAC.
5. Preparing and delivering testimony on aging issues at public hearings conducted by the Legislature, state government agencies and others.
6. Making phone calls and personal contacts with the Governor, legislators, congressmen and women, other elected officials, state department directors and others, to advocate for MSAC positions.

Responsible to:

The Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan. AAAAM, in turn, assumes responsibility for financial and staff support to MSAC and its delegates. Financial support includes travel reimbursements to delegates provided directly by AAAs, and the cost of mailings, phone, and office space, among other expenses.

Qualifications:

1. Delegates must have a strong commitment to the interests and welfare of older adults throughout Michigan. Especially important is a commitment to the needs and concerns of economically and socially needy seniors; this includes low-income, physically and mentally frail, and isolated seniors, among others.
2. Delegates should be able to travel to Lansing one or more times each month, as needed, to attend MSAC meetings, meet with legislators and other public officials, and testify at public hearings.
3. Delegates must have good writing skills, and the ability and willingness to speak effectively in front of small and large groups.
4. An in-depth knowledge of the aging network, Area Agencies on Aging, and the services that they administer is required. A thorough understanding of care management, the Medicaid home care waiver and other long term care services is essential.
5. Previous experience as an advocate is desirable. Relevant experience would include writing letters on issues to public officials, testifying before legislative committees, organizing local groups and individuals on specific issues and personal contacts with legislators and other public officials. This experience does not have to be related to aging.
6. Prior contacts with elected officials is desirable. Preferred are individuals who are on a first name basis with state and federal legislators, and other public officials.
6. No particular political party affiliation is required. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and others are equally welcome.