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MINNESOTA BOARD ON AGING

STRATEGIC PLAN

1996 - 2000

December 1995

During the past 40 years, the Minnesota Board on Aging has been a catalyst for aging programs, working with and on behalf of older persons and communities across Minnesota, developing opportunities for older people to contribute to society, and advocating for those older persons who need assistance.

This strategic planning process has served to define the vision of the Board for the future, and reaffirm its tradition of leadership in aging.

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BACKGROUND

- The Minnesota Board on Aging was established in 1956 under an executive order by then Governor Freeman. Minnesota was among the first states to have a state level board appointed by the Governor to deal with issues of aging. First known as the Governor's Citizens Council on Aging, it began its work with a focus on raising awareness of the needs of the elderly and holding town meetings to hear from older persons themselves. The name was changed to the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) in 1977.
- With the advent of the federal Older Americans Act in 1965, the MBA was designated by the Governor as the State Unit on Aging, responsible for the implementation of a growing list of mandates under the Act. The Board's state statute also included a list of duties and responsibilities defining its role in state government.
- During its long history, the Board has launched hundreds of aging programs and services that are now valued components of Minnesota's aging service system.
- Because of the tremendous growth projected in the older population, and the many changes now occurring in the health, social and economic sectors, the Board initiated a strategic planning process to better define its role in the face of these future challenges.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- In 1994, the Board began a process to develop a strategic plan for 1996 - 2000. A two-day working session was held for Board members where they began discussing the mission, vision, and future strategies of the Board. The Strategic Planning Committee followed up with a series of meetings to obtain input from key stakeholders.
- The Committee met with six state departments and held six regional meetings with Area Agency on Aging advisory councils and other local aging leaders. After reviewing the information gathered at these meetings, the Committee identified and proposed changes in the Board's mission, and developed a vision statement and strategies that the Board should pursue over the next five years.
- The full Board held a two-day session to finalize the plan's contents, and adopted the plan in December 1995.
- The MBA strategic plan includes a new mission statement, a vision statement for the future, seven key strategies for Board activities, and action plans to make the vision a reality.
- The Board would like to thank the many individuals throughout Minnesota who took time to meet and discuss these issues with the Strategic Planning Committee.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- An important part of this strategic planning process was an examination of the trends and issues that affect older people and aging programs in Minnesota. The following trends and issues were discussed at the meetings with state departments and the regional cluster meetings.

MAJOR TRENDS

- **Rapidly Growing Senior Population**
 - The populations over 60 and over 85 are now growing at the fastest rates ever experienced in Minnesota. (See Chart 1.)
- **Unique Problems in Rural Minnesota**
 - Between 1990 and 2020, many parts of Minnesota will experience huge increases in their senior population. Other parts--primarily those with already high proportions of seniors--will see a decrease. These shifts have both demographic and economic implications in rural areas because of the already delicate balance of the economy.
- **Change in Family Support Structures**
 - Since aging happens in the context of families, any changes such as increased numbers of women working, higher divorce rates, fewer children per family, and more single households all affect older persons.

• Increasing Diversity

- Minnesota is more diverse than ever before, and this is true of the senior population. Some of the fastest growing groups within the older population in the state are the Asian American, African American, Hispanic and American Indian elders. These increases are especially prominent in the Metro Area.

• Health Care Reform

- While the details are not yet final, it is clear that levels of benefits and eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid services will be changed and/or reduced in the future.

• Growing Value of Volunteers

- As government reduces its role as the funder of social programs, the importance of local community involvement and the need for volunteers will grow.

• Complexity of Aging Services

- While Minnesota has a relatively good base of services available for older persons, finding help when it's needed is often a confusing and complex task for persons and their families.

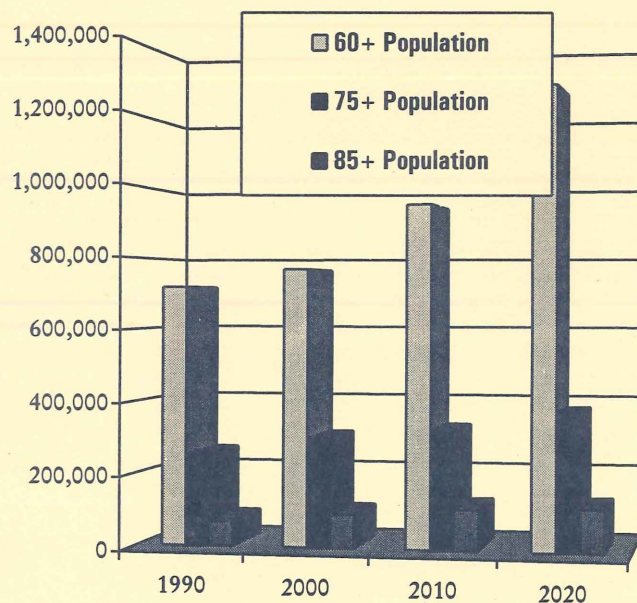
• Budgetary Constraints

- Government budgets are squeezed tighter than ever before, and the available public and private resources must be efficiently utilized.

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Chart 1
Current and Projected Older Population
by Age Groups in Minnesota
1990 - 2020



- ▶ Minnesota's older population will grow steadily from 718,154 in 1990 to 1,267,710 in 2020. This represents a 76% increase.
- ▶ The 75+ population will grow from 252,412 in 1990 to 376,520 in 2020. This represents a 49.2% increase.
- ▶ The 85+ population will grow from 68,835 in 1990 to 118,200 in 2020. This represents a 71.7% increase.
- ▶ The number and proportion of the population over 85 will rise fastest between 1990 and 2000 (from 68,835 to 91,880) and then rise more slowly until 2020 when the proportion of the 60+ population over 85 will actually be lower (9.3%) than in 1990 (9.6%).

Source: 1990 Census and State Demographer's Office

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INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

The Strategic Planning Committee met with six state departments and held six regional cluster meetings around the state. Each group was asked the same questions regarding the future role of the MBA:

- What major trends do you see regarding the senior population in the state or in your local communities?
- From your point of view, what are the most critical issues, problems, and/or opportunities related to the aging of Minnesota?
- Does the current mission statement of the MBA adequately convey the purpose of the Board and is it appropriate for the future?
- What important values should be reflected in the MBA vision statement?
- In thinking about a vision for the future, what important strategies should the MBA adopt for the next five years?

The recurring themes from these meetings are summarized below.

MISSION

Stakeholders said:

- Reflect the unique role of the Board in the mission.
- Shorten the statement and update the "language."
- Rewrite the mission to incorporate the concept of seniors as a resource.
- Strengthen the leadership and advocacy focus of the Board's mission statement.

VISION STATEMENT

Stakeholders said:

- The Board's leadership on critical aging issues will be essential as these issues become more visible and challenging.
- The Board should return to its original charge, take a more policy level approach in its advocacy, and get out of the details of program management.
- Improving supply, access to, affordability and quality of low-tech, low-cost services that help older persons remain in their homes should be a priority of the Board.

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT VISION

Stakeholders said:

- Provide leadership with state government and local communities to help them address the problems and challenges of a rapidly aging population.
- Advocate for the rights of consumers and promote more personal and family responsibility.
- Actively encourage intergenerational and cross-cultural initiatives.
- Help local communities carry out their responsibility to support their older residents and utilize their talents.
- Enhance and simplify access to accurate, appropriate information needed by older persons and their families to make choices as they grow older.
- Promote stewardship of available resources to purchase services in an efficient manner.

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NEW MISSION STATEMENT

*"The Minnesota Board on Aging
is the foremost leader and policy advisor
to the Governor, the Legislature,
and state agencies
regarding issues affecting
older persons and their families."*

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VISION STATEMENT

- ▶ *"The Minnesota Board on Aging will be the foremost leader in the formulation of public policy on aging, and the primary vehicle for gathering input on the status and needs of older Minnesotans.*
- ▶ *We will have strong partnerships with the Area Agencies on Aging, the Senior Service Corps, other providers, and community leaders throughout the state to expand options and opportunities that support the independence and dignity of older persons.*
- ▶ *We will celebrate all older persons as valued members of society and recognize them as one of Minnesota's greatest human resources. Older people will be full participants in their communities, contributing energy and experience in a variety of paid and volunteer positions.*
- ▶ *We will be a catalyst for new and affordable ways that families, friends and neighbors can assist and care for older people who need help. There will be easy access to helpful information and assistance, and advocacy services.*
- ▶ *We will support and participate in efforts to reach out to older persons who are disabled, isolated, low-income, minority, and any others who face barriers to full participation in programs and services.*
- ▶ *We will strengthen the ties between all generations by supporting mutual efforts to ensure the care, safety and education of our children.*
- ▶ *We will promote the effective use of all resources. We will seek out and participate in public/private partnerships to respond to the challenges of our rapidly aging society.*
- ▶ *We will be accountable for the federal and state funds we administer by clearly articulating the outcomes we expect and reporting the results to all Minnesotans."*

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STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

- ▶ The seven strategies and related action plans presented on the following pages were developed by the full Board at its strategic planning session in October 1995.
- ▶ The Strategic Planning Committee organized the ideas and prepared the final document for Board adoption.
- ▶ The strategies and action plans will be reviewed annually by the Board to monitor progress on implementing the strategies and making the plan a reality.

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➔ 1. Strengthen MBA leadership at the state and local level.

- ◆ 1.1. Promote statewide advocacy.
 - ◆ Meet regularly with the Governor, key staff and legislators.
 - ◆ Prepare annual legislative program, and maintain high visibility during the legislative session.
 - ◆ Shape existing programs to meet changing consumer needs.
 - ◆ Strengthen the ombudsman program to expand advocacy available to older people within the health care system.
- ◆ 1.2. Explore administrative cost efficiencies.
 - ◆ Emphasize service coordination to avoid duplication and strengthen programs.
 - ◆ Continually review administrative costs and encourage competition.
 - ◆ Consolidate Area Agencies on Aging.
- ◆ 1.3. Enhance leadership in aging at all levels.
 - ◆ Encourage a culture where positive leadership is expected and rewarded.
 - ◆ Establish a "Leadership Institute on Aging" to train community leaders.
 - ◆ Sponsor forums for sharing successful programs and initiatives.

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➡ 2. Simplify access to information and assistance.

- 2.1. Assign a work group to review Senior Linkage Line as it is currently provided.
 - Evaluate current services in terms of effectiveness, cost and potential impact.
 - Suggest improvements and set standards if necessary.
- 2.2. Investigate collaborative activities between Senior Linkage Line and the Internet.
 - Consult with I&R services (in addition to Senior Linkage Line) regarding their plans for access on Internet.
 - Gather other information and assess potential benefits.
- 2.3. Promote the Senior Linkage Line widely and aggressively.
 - Develop marketing materials, trademark usage policies and common logo.
 - Train staff and volunteers in effective marketing practices.

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➔ 3. Promote older persons as a resource.

- ◆ 3.1. Develop and promote initiatives that recognize seniors as a resource.
 - ◆ Encourage all businesses, public and private agencies to recognize the contributions made by older workers.
 - ◆ Support expansion of proven volunteer programs and initiate new ways to utilize older volunteers.
- ◆ 3.2. Publicize seniors as a resource in both paid and volunteer roles.
 - ◆ Demonstrate the skills and experience of older persons.
 - ◆ Promote older workers as valued employees, emphasizing their skills and experience.
 - ◆ Use television, PSAs, radio and newspapers to showcase the contributions of older persons.
- ◆ 3.3. Remove barriers to employment and volunteering for older persons.
 - ◆ Support legislation that removes the Social Security earnings test.
 - ◆ Explore additional funding sources for reimbursement of volunteer expenses.
 - ◆ Advocate for relaxation in the regulatory environment.

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➡ 4. Increase efficiency of aging service delivery.

- ◆ 4.1. Ensure accountability for public funds administered by the Board.
 - ◆ Carefully review budgets and expenditures.
 - ◆ Enhance management skills of Area Agencies on Aging and other grantees.
 - ◆ Communicate the expectation that grantees be more self-supporting and seek other long-term funding resources.
 - ◆ Identify and use incentives that reduce duplication and fragmentation of services.
- ◆ 4.2. Encourage innovation and flexibility in service delivery.
 - ◆ Identify and establish public/private partnerships to carry out high priority activities of the Board.
 - ◆ Disseminate the results of successful innovations in aging.
 - ◆ Promote the greater use of volunteers in service delivery.
 - ◆ Work to reduce regulation in aging services where it inhibits needed flexibility in program operations.

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➔ 5. Support community-building and development.

- 5.1. Actively support and promote the values of a caring community.
 - Support local decision-making in the development of community.
 - Emphasize the need for communities to set goals for the future.
 - Disseminate information on ways that communities have made themselves "age-friendly" and good places in which to grow old.
- 5.2. Acknowledge and celebrate the plurality of community life.
 - Recognize and reward different approaches to community-building in different communities.
 - Target funds to help communities shape their own future.
 - Enhance the ability of every community to provide options for independent living for its older residents.
 - Support the availability of adequate levels of health care, housing, transportation and other supports for older persons, particularly in the rural areas of Minnesota.

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➔ 6. Improve communication and relations with the media.

- ◆ 6.1. Regularly distribute information on aging to the print, radio and video media.
 - ◆ Assign a Board committee or task force to advise the Board on media activities.
 - ◆ Utilize the connections Board members have with the media in their local communities to improve communication and distribution of the Board's message.
 - ◆ Consider repositioning Board events to gain greater media coverage.
- ◆ 6.2. Plan at least one major media event each year.
 - ◆ Showcase the programs of the Board and its role in making such programs available.
 - ◆ Publicize the event widely among policymakers, service providers and older persons.
 - ◆ Involve the Governor's office appropriately in the event.

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➔ 7. Initiate Board development activities.

- ◆ 7.1. Expand Board understanding of and communication with Area Agencies on Aging, other grantees and organizations.
 - ◆ Maintain regular contact and involvement with Area Agencies, other grantees and organizations.
 - ◆ Schedule regular grantee reports at Board meetings.
 - ◆ Profile grantee expenditures, activities and accomplishments annually.
- ◆ 7.2. Regularly brief the Governor's Office and state agency heads.
 - ◆ Assist the Governor, state agencies and legislators to understand aging issues and their implications for state policies.
 - ◆ Complete and distribute in-depth policy studies on critical aging issues.
 - ◆ Increase Board visibility with all senior organizations and work cooperatively with them on issues of mutual interest.
 - ◆ Recommend new Board member candidates to the Governor, and improve Board member selection.
- ◆ 7.3. Schedule regular training and information sessions for MBA members.
 - ◆ Hold briefings on federal and state requirements.
 - ◆ Continue annual strategic planning events, and review the accomplishments of the Board and staff.
 - ◆ Hold sensitivity training on important topics, e.g., cultural diversity.
 - ◆ Provide support to Board members asked to speak at local events.
 - ◆ Meet outside of the Metropolitan Area at least twice a year.