

**OFFICE OF AGING**  
**(September 5, 2002)**

**Organization and Responsibilities:**

The Office of Aging is responsible for assessing older persons' needs, developing programs to meet those needs, and representing the interests of older persons to public officials and public and private agencies. The Office of Aging maintains data on the profile and needs of older persons in the county and makes the information available to other organizations and the public.

The Office of Aging goals are: 1) to improve the accessibility of services to those older persons who have the greatest social or economic need, or who are severely disabled; 2) to enable older persons to live at home as long as possible by maintaining an effective network of community based support services; 3) to improve the quality of services by developing training and assistance programs for caregivers; 4) to develop and maintain services aimed at protecting older persons' rights; 5) to improve the Office of Aging capacity to serve as an effective area agency on aging; and 6) to serve as a leader and advocate on behalf of older persons in Hawai'i County, especially in the areas of planning, long-term care, and resource development.

To accomplish its goals, the Office of Aging assess levels of services needed, develop programs to address those needs, award contracts to qualified service providers, provide technical assistance, evaluate provider performance, coordinate the administration of services, represent older persons' interests in the public and private sectors, coordinate provider training programs, and assures convenient access to information and assistance programs. Planning is the Office of Aging's major role.

Non-contracted services and services funded through the Office of Aging but provided by various state, county, and private agencies include, but are not limited to: adult day care; assisted transportation; transportation; caregiver support; case management; community planning; congregate meals; education and training; employment; home-delivered meals; homemaker/housekeeping; home modification; legal assistance; long-term care access; nutrition education; personal care; and respite.

The Office of Aging has nine positions, two of which are federally funded. All but one position is filled. The Administration section (one position) directs all Office of Aging functions, programs, and activities. The Planning, Evaluation and Program Development section (five positions) performs the activities specified in the above paragraph, and the Staff Support section (three positions) carries out the accounting, data processing and clerical functions. A Committee on Aging, appointed by the Mayor, provides advisory planning assistance to the Mayor and the Office of Aging.

**Findings**

Following its review of documents, including organization charts, the 2002-2003 Budget Proposal, the August 30, 2002 Annual Report, and the Office of Aging Functional

Statements, and testimony furnished by the Executive Director and Program Planner, the Cost of Government Commission finds:

1. The Office of Aging operates efficiently, with minimum staff, by contracting with service providers to perform most functions, thereby avoiding duplication of effort.
2. The Office of Aging's grant-writing has been successful, in that grant revenue of \$1,111,000 accounts for more than two-thirds of the Office of Aging budget, with the balance coming from the County's general fund and other sources.
3. The County Council's approval response time for grant acceptance limits the Office of Aging ability to seek short-view grants.
4. The Office of Aging is inhibited from seeking grants that require matching funds.
5. The County's procurement process can be unnecessarily burdensome and time-consuming.
6. The County's hiring procedure for filling short-term, grant-related positions is unduly time-consuming.

### **Recommendations**

Having considered and reviewed the documents and testimony provided by the Office of Aging, the Commission recommends as follows:

1. The Office of Aging should work with the Corporation Counsel and County Council to develop a streamlined procedure for obtaining approval for short-view grants.

*Rationale:* Although careful deliberation by the Council is necessary, the process, which requires two-readings, inhibits and often prevents the Office of Aging from seeking short-view grants.

2. The Office of Aging should work with the County Council to set aside funds for use with grants requiring cash matching.

*Rationale:* Artificial limits on grant revenue projections unnecessarily prevent the Office of Aging from seeking grants requiring cash matching.

3. The Office of Aging should work with the Corporation Counsel and County Council to streamline the procurement process and permit the use of a Memorandum of Agreement when contracting with a qualified organization for performance of services in certain, well-defined, circumstances.

*Rationale:* Although the formal procurement process is designed to assure that public funds are expended properly, its application to relatively small procurements from certain established and responsible organizations in the community is time-consuming and needlessly difficult.

4. The Office of Aging should work with the Department of Civil Service to develop a streamlined hiring procedure for filling short-term, grant-related positions.

*Rationale:* The Civil Service Department procedures are time-consuming and burdensome when the position to be filled is short-term, whether the work is to be done by an employee or by an independent contractor.

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