

Chicago Department on Aging

Illinois Department on Aging



The General Assembly passed the Illinois Act on Aging, which created the Illinois Department on Aging in 1973. Illinois now has a comprehensive system of services spearheaded by the Department on Aging working in close partnership with 13 Area Agencies on Aging and thousands of provider agencies. Seniors are assisted with meals, in-home care, transportation, legal advice, employment, and more. The mission of the Illinois Department on Aging is to serve and advocate for older Illinois's and their caregivers by administering programs and promoting partnerships that encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life.

The Illinois Department on Aging serves 2 million persons over the age of sixty, through Long Term Care, Older American Services, Communications and Education, and general services. The Illinois Council on Aging has 23 citizen members and eight legislative members, and serves as an advisory body to the Dept. on Aging.

One of the best resources in the State is the Senior HelpLine 1-800-252-8966 (voice and TTY).



**Anna Willis, Director
Chicago Department on Aging**

The Chicago Department on Aging (CDOA) is the City of Chicago's lead agency for older persons and the Area Agency on Aging for Chicago under the Older Americans Act. CDOA began in 1956 as the Mayor's Commission for Senior Citizens, the nation's first municipal office on aging. Since January 1972, it has been a separate city agency established by the Mayor to recognize the expressed wishes of the elderly and insure their effective representation in City government. The Chicago Department on Aging's mission is creating options for an aging society. We do this by

- Supporting older persons to live independently in their own communities and homes for as long as possible.
- Ensuring that those who reside in institutions are treated with dignity and care.
- Ensuring that older persons have access to full and accurate information to participate in public policy.

The Chicago Department on Aging offers a wide variety of programs and services that address the diverse needs

and interests of older Chicagoans, from those who are healthy and active to those who are frail and homebound. The Department has an Information and Assistance Unit which annually responds to 13 9,000 requests for information, assistance, and advocacy citywide through phone calls and in-person contacts. Through its contracted Case Management Units, CDOA conducts comprehensive assessments of clients' needs for in-home supportive services such as home delivered meals and assistance with laundry and shopping. Each day, CDOA also provides more than 3,200 seniors with opportunities for nutritious meals, socialization, recreation, education and volunteer activities through its 73 co-sponsored congregate dining sites and provides over 5,000 frail homebound elderly persons with two Home Delivered meals per day, five days a week.

In addition, the Chicago Department on Aging operates five Regional Senior Centers which are community focal points for senior recreational and educational activities. Each Center offers Information and Assistance which provides older Chicagoans a direct link to the wide array of services and programs available. The Chicago Department on Aging operates Renaissance Court, located in the Chicago Cultural Center, which presents unique cultural enrichment opportunities, such as literature seminars, music and dance, health and fitness well as intergenerational programs for older persons.

The Chicago Department on Aging's programs and services are open to all elderly Chicagoans, age 60 and over, with an emphasis on those elderly who are in greatest economic or social need, with a special emphasis on low-income and minority older persons.

Defining Aging in the 21st Century

by Robert B. Blancato

Chicago Department on Aging

A Profile of the Director

Commissioner Willis has worked in the field of social services for 35 years. She has served the city of Chicago for nine years as deputy commissioner in the Department on Aging. In 1998, she was appointed Commissioner of the Chicago Department on Aging. She holds a baccalaureate degree in Sociology and History, a Master of Science in Management, and a Certificate in Gerontology. In addition, she has completed two years of graduate study in social work.

“Seniors are treasured resources in this country. They have made a tremendous contribution and impact on the lives of Chicagoans. Entering the new millennium is an exciting time for the elderly. Just imagine, some senior will have the experience of living in three centuries.”

Heroes

My parents were the heroes in my life. They perhaps served as role models for many children residing in our small community. They were adamant about all children receiving a quality education and establishing positive goals. They taught us to dream and to make those dreams become a reality.

Other individuals whom I met during my college years and who made an impression on my life were heroes were Dr. Martin Luther King, President Kennedy, and a Political Science Instructor, Dr. John Cheney. They taught me that all members in a society will not have the ability to effect change in their lives. Consequently, some of us must step up and be willing to accept the challenge by advocating for those who are less fortunate.

As we gaze into the future we realize that one thing is certain. We will be redefining some basic terms. Lets begin with aging. Five years ago, as the Executive Director of the White House Conference on Aging we worked toward a new definition of aging. Instead of aging being focused primarily on the problems of the aged, this Conference felt it was time to define aging as a challenge and an opportunity confronting all generations.

Retirement will certainly be redefined in the next century. With life expectancy having increased by some 20 years just in this century, the so-called retirement period may be a 25-30 year period of a person's life. The traditional rules of retirement will have to change. A poll commissioned for Civic Ventures, a California non-profit organization, concluded that 40 percent of those older Americans they surveyed were working for pay in retirement or planned to after they retired. An equal percentage indicated they do volunteer work in retirement.

From the policy perspective, the future is now. The future of both Medicare and Social Security are top issues. One thing is certain—the group most impacted by future changes to these programs are boomers not seniors. Why? The Medicare trust funds are scheduled to go bankrupt in the year 2014. The first wave of boomers to turn 65 will begin in 2011. Social Security while fiscally solvent through 2034 faces the need for change to ensure it remains strong through the lifetime of the boomer generation and those younger. Yet here again whether the issue is raising the eligibility age, revising benefits or perhaps even privatizing the system, the group that stands to be impacted the most are boomers.

Yet, boomers as a group, remain a political enigma. They have shown no



Robert Blancato
Executive Director
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signs of being the effective force that senior citizens have been on the policy and political scene these past 30-40 years. That will have to change in the future if they expect to have public policy help them as they age. One clear area where boomers need to improve is their voter participation rates. Today the group that votes in the highest percentage are those 65-74 who vote at a 70 percent rate. Boomers by contrast vote at a rate closer to 55 percent.

A final thought comes from an elderly woman who wrote a letter for the UN Internat'l Year of the Older Person.

*“No one gets old by living a certain number of years.
One gets old only if one abandons one's ideals
The years wrinkle the skin, but only the loss of one's beliefs wrinkles the heart.”*

*Whether one is 16 or 70 in every heart dwells a creative spirit, the sweetness of discovering the stars,
the challenge of rising to the occasion and the joy of life.”*



JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Coordination and Collaboration are Fundamental Underpinnings

The Joint Education Committee serves as the primary forum for collaboration between the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Workforce Investment Board. The Joint Education Committee is being asked to set the immediate state-level P-16 agenda and coordinate strategies among the various boards and agencies for its implementation. This P-16 agreement is Illinois' formal vehicle for providing a seamless education and workforce development system for all learners.

In our increasingly global society, the Joint Education Committee seeks to remove the barriers between and



Hazel Loucks
Deputy Governor for Education
and Co-Chair
Joint Education Committee

among our educational and workforce development systems. If Illinois is to have a bright economic future, we must have a literate populace. Coordination and collaboration are the fundamental underpinnings of all activities pursued by the Committee. From helping to ensure the prepara-

tion of classroom-ready teachers to providing a student population with postsecondary opportunities and workplace skills, the Joint Education Committee is buttressed by a strong belief amongst all members in excellence through education.

The goal of Illinois' education and workforce development system under the collaboration provided by the Joint Education Committee is as equally simple as it is essential: not one person who has the desire to learn shall go without the opportunity to do so. We recognize that learners come in a variety of ages and abilities, but it is our fundamental belief that a learner's opportunities should be limited solely by his or her dreams.

“not one person who has the desire to learn shall go without the opportunity to do so. “

Boards Work Together through the Joint Education Committee

The three education boards under the leadership of the Deputy Governor for Education discuss how they can prepare College-Ready Kids, Class-Room Ready Teachers, and Log-On Learning

First Meeting Sets Priorities

The new board met for the first time on September 20th. They reviewed the P-16 agreement and heard brief updates on the status of key issues.

The statute assigns the Joint Education Committee responsibility for “developing policy on matters of mutual

concern to elementary, secondary, and higher education such as Occupational and Career Education, Teacher Preparation and Certification, Educational Finance, Articulation between Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education; and Research and Planning.” The Joint Education Committee has not met

since fall 1996 for a variety of reasons, although statute requires that it meet “at least quarterly.”

The new board discussed the P-16 agreement, college-ready kids, classroom ready-teachers, and log-on learning and identified five priorities.

Five Priorities

College-Ready Kids



1. Involvement of higher education in the development of the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) in order to assure its usefulness in the college admission and/or course placement process

Classroom-Ready Teachers



2. Presentation of draft plans and formats for an annual teacher supply and demand report and the

institutional and state report cards on teacher preparation programs that are required by the 1998 amendments to the federal Higher Education Cooperation Act.

3. Preparation of an inventory of organizations and groups involved in reforming some aspect of teacher preparation and/or continuing professional development in order to begin to coordinate these disparate efforts.

4. Presentation of a report on minimum essentials for establishing

programs that provide alternative routes to teacher certification.

Log-On Learning

5. Preparation of a plan for coordinating P-16 programming to be offered via the Illinois Century Network.

For further information, contact Tim Spreitzer, Illinois Board of Higher Education, 431 East Adams, Springfield, IL 62701, 217.557.7347 or Spreitzer@ibhe.state.il.us