

Unmet Needs of Older Adults in Region 1-B

A report of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B Advisory Council Unmet Needs Study Committee

Area Agency on Aging 1-B

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Study Purpose

Michigan's Aging Network of service providers, area agencies on aging and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) is becoming increasingly data driven in its effort to demonstrate its impact on older adults and family caregivers, and advocate for policies and resources to support successful programs. This emphasis is evident in the Area Agency on Aging 1-B's (AAA 1-B) emphasis on measuring program outcomes, and the Governor's Senior Dashboard.

The sentinel indicator of unmet needs has historically been the presence of older adults on wait lists for services because public resources were inadequate to meet the demand for assistance among individuals who cannot afford to purchase needed services from private sector alternatives. In the 2015 state budget the Governor and Legislature have stated their support for the elimination of wait lists for key in-home services by providing a \$5 million increase for OSA in-home services. While this meaningful action puts Michigan on a path to address the needs of those currently waiting for services, it overlooks the fact that there are many significant unmet needs among older adults for services that are not measured or reported by Aging Network organizations. There is concern that public officials will perceive that the needs of the state's older adult population will be fully met if and when in-home service wait lists are eliminated. That conclusion would be far from the truth because there are many individuals, including some who currently are receiving services, whose needs are still not adequately being met. This may occur for reasons such as there are no wait lists kept for their service, they receive an amount of service that is less than they really need, no service may exist in their area to address their need, or significant barriers to accessing needed services exist.

For these reasons, the AAA 1-B Advisory Council has undertaken the study described in this report to initiate identification and documentation of the extent and impact of unmet needs among participants in selected Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) programs,

develop a strategy to quantify the level of unmet needs, and recommend methods for capturing unmet need information that will be useful for program management, accountability and advocacy. This report is intended to spur greater awareness and activity in the Aging Network to identify, measure and report on both the obvious and the sometimes hidden unmet needs of older adults that can lead to more successful program management and advocacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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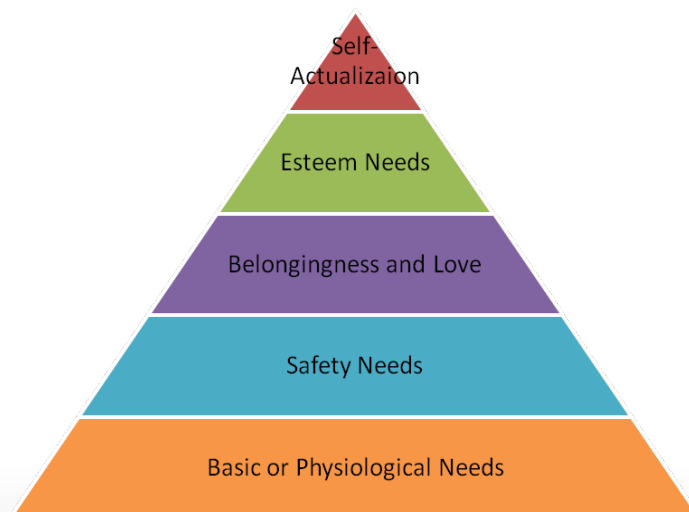
Nsuhdeidem Okon, Nurse Match Solutions

UNMET NEED DEFINITION

The Committee struggled with the question of what exactly constitutes an unmet need, and how is it differentiated from a want or desire. These questions were clouded by the sometimes competing philosophies of person centeredness and personal responsibility. The resolution of these questions stemmed from the principles of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with an emphasis on Basic or Physiological Needs, and Safety, while respecting individuals' need to strive to reach their fullest potential for self-actualization. The final working definition of unmet needs developed by the Committee was described this way:

Unmet needs may be defined as unfulfilled necessities of program participants that are important to achieving independence, safety, quality of life, and access to participation in normal community life. Participant unmet needs may include supports and services that:

- *Are delivered but not in the quantity that is deemed necessary;*
- *Are delivered but not with the quality that is deemed necessary;*
- *Are available but not accessible due to barriers that relate to populations with social or economic disadvantages; and*
- *Are directly related to the service category or industry but not provided due to factors such as a limiting service definition, low prioritization relating to cost, or service provider capacity.*



ASPECTS OF UNMET NEEDS

The Committee identified a variety of personal, social, environmental and political factors that conspire to produce unmet needs among older adults. Beyond the obvious factors of limited financial and social resources, the Committee also identified the following unique impediments to need fulfillment:

- Health literacy
- Cultural barriers
- Access to existing alternative resources
- Lack of prevention education and services

Matrix of Unmet Need Causal Factors

To assist the Committee in identifying and evaluating unmet needs for various AAA 1-B programs, a tool was developed to provide a systematic approach to unmet need identification. This Matrix of Unmet Need Causal Factors was tested and refined through its application with three AAA 1-B services; a simulation with home delivered meals, and actual implementation with Chore and Legal Services provider organizations. The Matrix (see Appendix A) was found to be an effective tool in guiding an analysis of both presenting and hidden unmet needs for the various programs. It embodies root cause reasons for unmet needs, provides for the measurement of underserving and identified unmet needs, and fosters the monetization of unmet needs so program managers and policy makers can assess the cost and resources needed to fully alleviate the unmet needs. Key unmet need causal factors are:

Rationing

Providing service but delivering fewer amounts or units than are needed. Example: Personal

Rationing Legal Services

According to the report, "Documenting the Justice Gap in Michigan Update," nationally, for every person Legal Services Corporation (LSC) helped, one was turned away because the LSC lacked the staff and resources to assist them. The study finds that in 2012, there was one legal aid lawyer for every 8,337 low income Michigan residents.

"In Michigan legal services organizations were able to provide some level of legal assistance to almost two-thirds of all persons that asked for help, the organizations had to turn away more than a third of all persons that asked for legal help in 2009.

Of the two-thirds of clients that were provided with some level of legal assistance by legal services organizations, almost half of those clients did not receive the level of legal assistance that was needed to resolve the case because legal services organizations did not have the necessary resources to do so."

Care offering bathing assistance one time per week when two baths are needed.

Prioritizing

Not addressing all of the aspects of a need that are within the scope of a service definition, and focusing on only the most important activities at the expense of activities that are of lesser importance. Example: Chore service offering snow removal and lawn cutting but not gutter cleaning or leaf removal.

Suitability

The service content, methodology, or delivery protocol is incompatible with the participant characteristics or capabilities. Example: not making kosher meals available to the Orthodox Jewish population.

Deferral

Causing the Initiation of service delivery to be delayed. Example: placing an individual on a MI Choice wait list.

Denial

Denying access to a service without the intent or ability to address the presenting need directly. Example: turning down a request for transportation on a specific time and date, or for a specific trip purpose or destination.

Deprivation

The inability to provide required goods, supplies or resources that are necessary to address the presenting need. Example: Legal Aid unable to offer in-court representation due to client's inability to afford paying court fees or secure a waiver of fees.

Misaligned Incentives

Policies that impose expectations or incentives for programs to give preference to certain service components at the expense of others that may be higher priority. Example: pressure to serve a greater number of

individuals causes legal service providers to deny legal representation to complex cases in order to provide less time intensive legal will assistance due to limited resources.

Prohibition

Program policies that prohibit a service from being delivered in a manner that is needed. Example: personal care limiting payments for only one aid in the home for participants who require a two-person transfer for their safety and the safety of the worker.

The Matrix need identification tool was found to be valuable in assessing the unmet needs and underserving of populations that are targeted by specific service programs. However it is recognized that there are other bureaucratic and systemic factors that foster unmet needs in a population or community. This occurs when there is a service that does not exist in a specific area. Examples in Region 1-B were identified for:

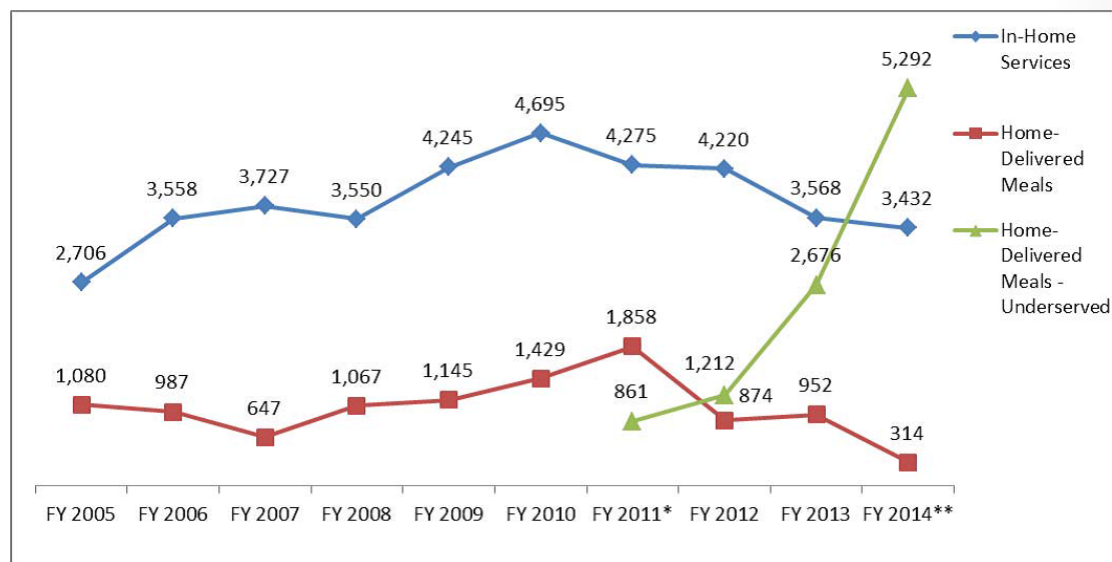
- Services like adult day care which are not accessible because of the travel distance for assisting people living in remote areas
- Companionship services to support socially isolated individuals
- Minor home repair
- Heavy house cleaning
- Heavy landscaping such as tree and shrub removal

Under-Serving

The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging has initiated the collection of unmet need information for the home delivered meal program and reports this data as part of its NAPIS (National Aging Program Information System) annual report. Senior Nutrition providers are required to report the number of home delivered meal program participants who are receiving meals at “levels less than the client’s identified need (i.e., under-served)”. The following chart demonstrates how under-serving information, coupled with the historic tracking of wait lists, produces a more complete picture of the true nature and extent of unmet needs, and could serve as a model for additional measurement of unmet needs for additional services.

The Matrix tool defines unmet needs as the unfulfilled need for supports and services that address the individual’s physiological and safety need, as defined by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Waiting List Trends 2005-2014 (6/30/2014)



From the (6/30/2014) OSA Analysis Report: Area Agency on Aging Waiting Lists – 3rd Quarter FY 2014 (6/30/2014)

Systemic Change

Policy makers and advocates often focus on creating new public programs or policies when considering systems change options to address unmet needs. The Committee urges consideration also be given to alternative strategies that address participant unmet needs, such as by connecting them with other volunteer or philanthropic based resources that can meet their needs. The future outlook for Older Americans Act funded programs reflects level or reduced federal funding. With inflationary operating costs and escalating demand due to the older adult population growth, it is uncertain whether these programs will be able to keep up with demand. There are a few successful examples of publicly funded Aging Network services routinely linking participants with supplemental supports. Two examples reviewed by the Committee include the pro bono programs of Legal Services providers, and the organization of one-time-only Chore yard work efforts like The Great Rake and Christmas in April.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee has learned that most AAA 1-B supported programs experience a diverse and often obscured array of unmet needs among its service recipient population, typically attributed to limited resources, restrictive program policies or incentives, gaps in the service continuum, and/or other access barriers. With the exception of wait lists, these unmet needs are rarely documented, measured or reported. This failure has contributed to a service delivery system that too often settles for making the best use of existing resources and allowable services. A preferred strategy is striving to fully meet the complex needs of vulnerable older adults, and adults with a disability with a robust range of public, private, and personal solutions. It is imperative that the Aging Network diversify its response to unmet needs and the scope of unmet need data it measures. This information must be used to raise public awareness and educate decision makers about the obstacles that must be overcome to support the continued independence and dignity of vulnerable populations.

Society is becoming increasingly data driven, with “big data” analysis driving an increasing amount of corporate and public policy decisions. The Aging Network has access to significant information about older adult needs, and is in a position to turn this information into data that will influence public policies and resource allocations. The Silver Key Coalition’s effort to secure the Governor and Legislature’s support for a \$5 million increase for FY 2015 and a “no wait state” policy has demonstrated how powerful and successful this approach can be. Aging Network services are preventive in nature, and produce many positive outcomes for older adults, family caregivers, and taxpayers. More and better data on the work of Aging Network, and the challenges that still remain, will likely bolster efforts to advocate for a more comprehensive and effective public response to the needs of vulnerable older adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Aging Network programs should increase the number and scope of unmet need indicators that are tracked and reported.
2. The recommended increase in unmet need indicator reporting requirements should be done concurrently with an analysis of existing reporting requirements, with the goal of reducing the overall number of measures reported and/or reducing the frequency at which measures must be reported.
3. The AAA 1-B departments of Community and Business Development and Research, Policy Development and Advocacy should collaborate in developing a unified set of programmatic performance, outcome, and need/unmet need requirements and guidelines for the FY 2016 – 2018 multi-year planning and contracting cycle.
4. The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging should further refine its definition of under-serving, and extend the reporting requirement for this indicator to other in-home and community services.
5. The AAA 1-B should offer training to promote the use of the AAA 1-B Matrix of Unmet Need Causal Factors in identifying unmet needs for aging programs, establishing indicators of unmet needs for data collection and reporting purposes, presenting unmet needs for program management and advocacy purposes, and calculating a price for eliminating selected unmet needs.

APPENDICES

- Matrix of Unmet Needs
- Legal Services Unmet Needs Infographic
- Chore Service Unmet Need Infographic

Appendix A: Unmet Need Causal Factor Identification Tool

A tool for the systematic identification, quantification, and monetization of unmet needs among participants in older adult programs

Reasons for Unmet Need	Definition of Factor	Description of Unmet Need Metrics	Definition of Service Unit Measurement	Amount/ Volume of Units	Per Unit Cost	Annual Cost to Alleviate
Rationing	Providing service but delivering fewer units than are needed					
Underserving	Not providing units of service or addressing problem when unique aspects of unmet need are present					
Prioritizing	Not addressing needs that are within the scope of the service definition, but are low priority due to limited resources or other barriers					
Suitability	The service content, methodology, or delivery protocol is incompatible with the participant characteristics or capabilities					
Deferral	Causing the delivery of service to be delayed, typically includes a wait period and wait list					
Denial	Denying access to service without intent or ability to address presenting need					
Deprivation of goods, supplies or resources	Purchased items or financial payments that are needed in order to receive service effectively					
Prohibition	Ineligible due to program policies that prohibit service delivery under existing circumstances of participant					



Unmet Needs are defined as unfulfilled necessities of program participants for supports and services that address the individual's physiological and safety needs, as defined by Maslow's Hierarchy of needs.

The Legal Service Unmet Needs of Older Adults



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B Advisory Council Ad-Hoc Unmet Study Committee extends our gratitude to Lakeshore Legal Aid, Legal Services of South Central Michigan and Monroe County Senior Legal Services for their work to defend the legal rights of older adults.



What is Legal Assistance?

Legal advice and representation by an attorney and counseling or representation by a non-lawyer where permitted by law to older individuals. Services include; intake, advice and council, referral, representation, legal research, preparation of legal documents, negotiation and legal education.

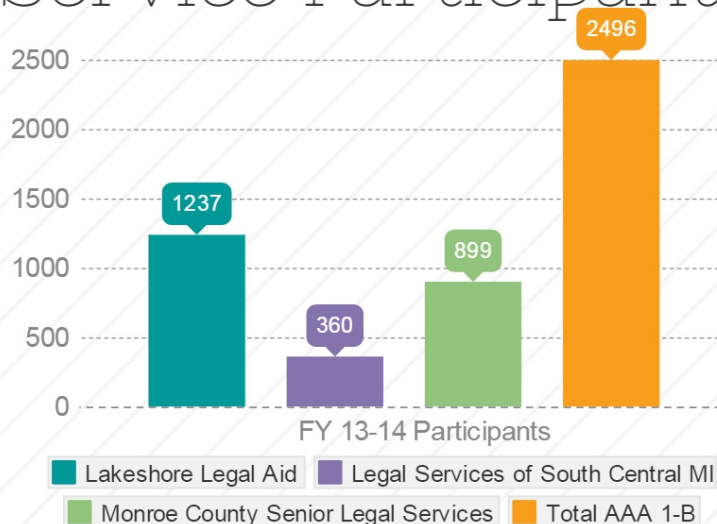
The report, "Documenting the Justice Gap in Michigan" prepared by the State Bar of Michigan found that in general, Michigan's legal services organizations were able to provide some level of legal assistance to almost two-thirds of those who asked for help, however in 2009 more than one-third had to be turned away because organizations did not have the necessary resources to assist.



With demand for the AAA 1-B supported Legal Assistance service exceeding program capacity, many program participants are left with unmet needs.

Unmet needs can be defined as unfulfilled necessities of program participants that are important to achieving independence, safety, quality of life, and access to participation in normal community life.

Service Participants

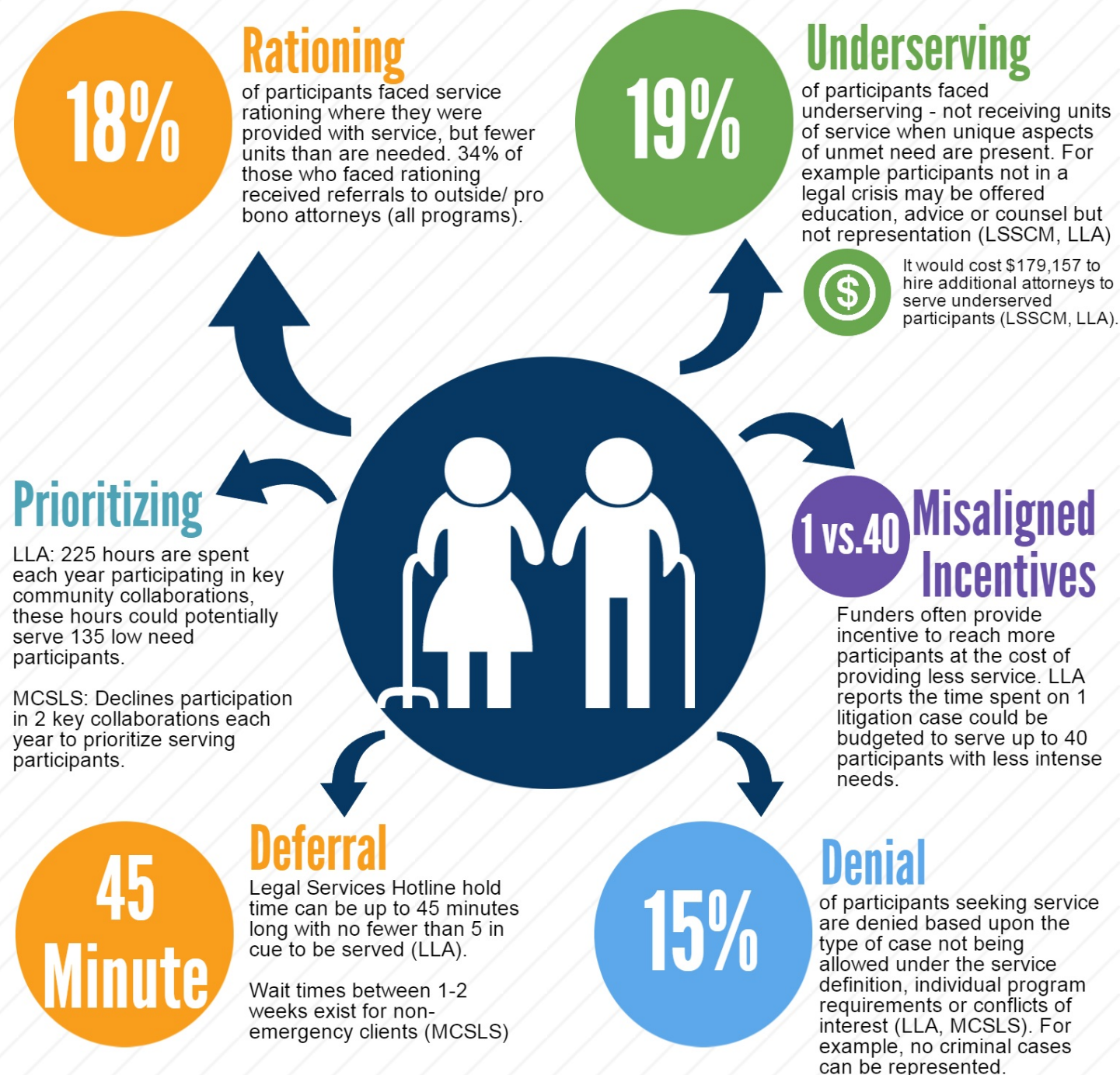


Types of Legal Assistance Unmet Need Experienced by Participants

1. Rationing: providing service but fewer units than needed
2. Underserving: not providing service when unique unmet needs are present
3. Prioritizing: not addressing low priority needs due to limited resources
4. Misaligned Incentives: Funder preference for types and amounts of service provided
5. Deferral: waiting periods or delay of services
6. Denial: denying service without intent or ability to address presenting needs

Legal Service Participant Unmet Need

Program Key: LSSCM: Legal Services of South Central Michigan
LLA: Lakeshore Legal Aid
MCSLS: Monroe County Senior Legal Services



Full details regarding the unmet needs of participants in the Legal Assistance Service can be found in the Area Agency on Aging 1-B report, "Unmet Needs of Older Adults in Region 1-B: A report of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B Advisory Council Unmet Needs Study Committee."

<http://www.aaa1b.org/news-events/publications/>



Older Adult Chore Service Unmet Needs

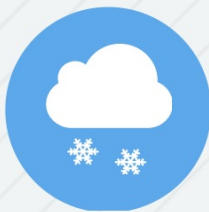


The Area Agency on Aging 1-B Advisory Council Ad-Hoc Unmet Need Study Committee extends our gratitude to Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, the Macomb County Community Services Agency Office of Senior Services, the Monroe County Opportunity Program, the Oakland/ Livingston Human Services Agency and the St. Clair County Commission on Aging for their work in helping older adults to stay independent in their own homes.



What are Chore Services?

Chore services help to support the safety, ability and independence of older adults by providing assistance with basic household tasks such as snow removal, lawn cutting, and minor home repairs including plumbing, carpentry, electrical or heavy cleaning.

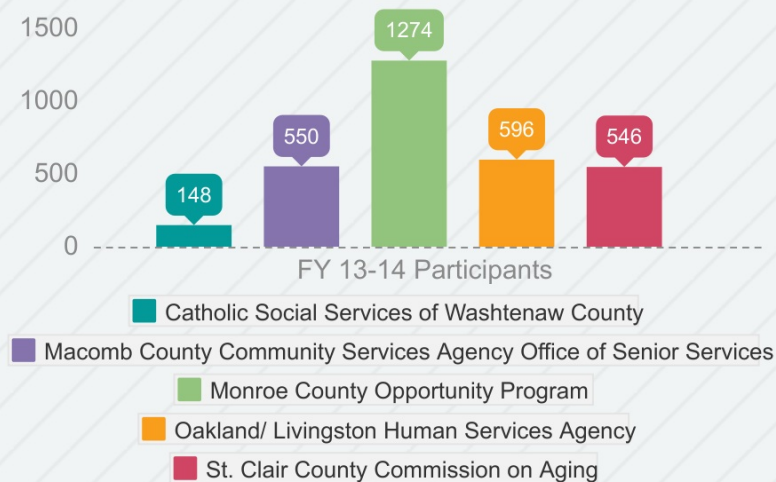


As a significant portion of chore services provides outdoor help, factors outside of a programs control such as precipitation in the form of rain in the summer, or snow in the winter can greatly impact a programs ability to meet participants needs.

With demand for the AAA 1-B supported chore service program exceeding program capacity, many program participants are left with unmet needs.

Unmet needs can be defined as unfulfilled necessities of program participants that are important to achieving independence, safety, quality of life, and access to participation in normal community life.

Service Participants



Types of Chore Service Unmet Need

Rationing: providing service but fewer units than needed

Prioritizing: not addressing low priority needs due to limited resources

Deferral: waiting periods or wait lists

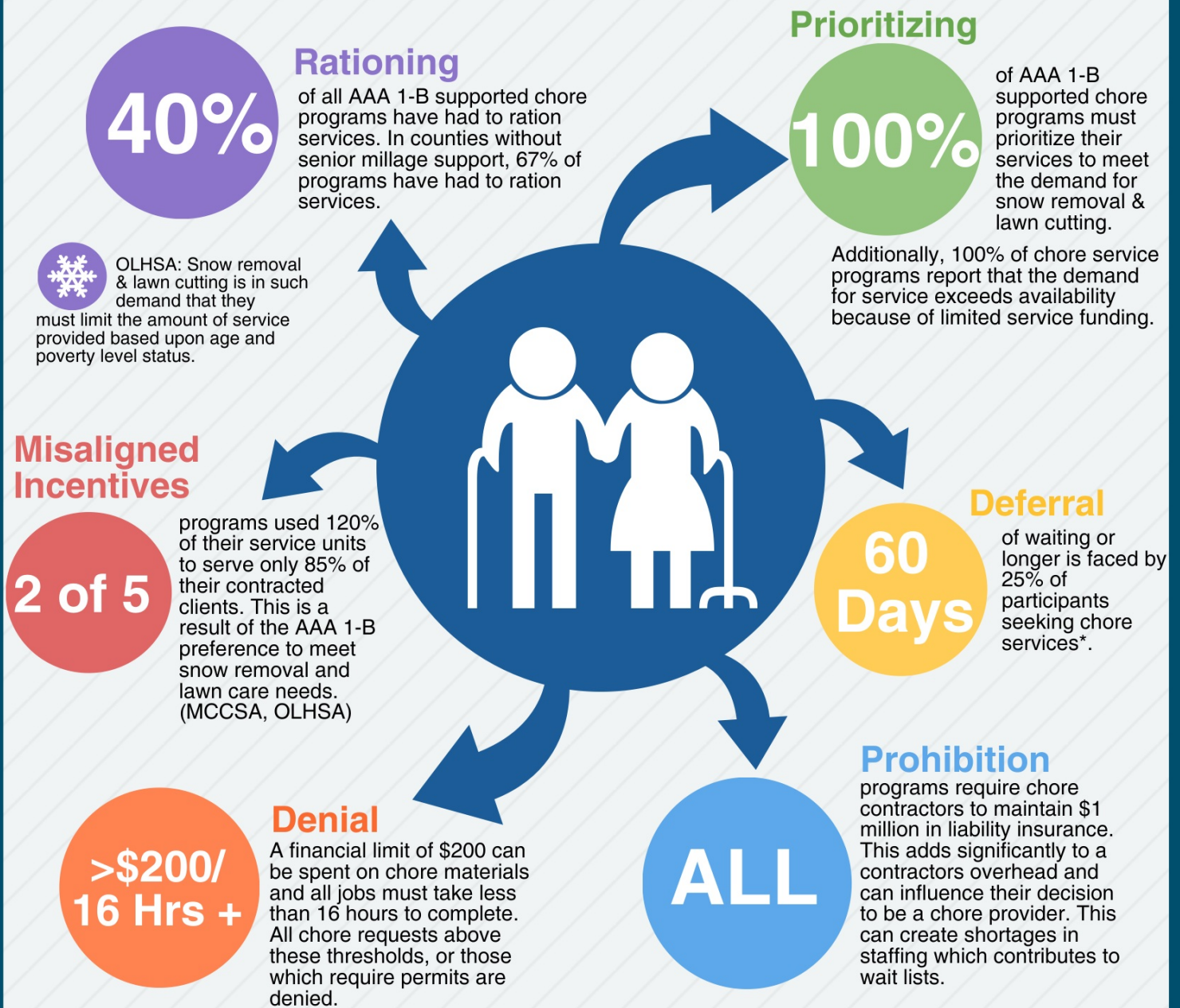
Denial: denying service without the intent or ability to address presenting needs

Prohibition: program policies which prohibit a service from being delivered in a manner that is needed

Misaligned Incentives: policies that incentivize some services at the expense of others

Participant Chore Service Unmet Needs

Program Key: CSSW: Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County
MCCSA: Macomb County Community Service Agency Office of Senior Services
MCOP: Monroe County Opportunity Program
OLHSA: Oakland/Livingston Human Service Agency
COA: St. Clair Commission on Aging



* Some of those waiting for service have requested chores at specific times of year, for example carpet cleaning in the spring time. This may impact the length of time some participants wait before getting service.

Full details regarding the unmet needs of participants can be found in the Area Agency on Aging 1-B report, "Unmet Needs of Older Adults in Region 1-B: A Report of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B Advisory Council Ad-Hoc Study Committee."