

Lori Vrolson, Director of Central Minnesota Council on Aging, asks you to provide your comments during the Minnesota Board on Aging's (MBA) public comment period.

"Hello, I am Lori Vrolson, Executive Director of the Central MN Council on Aging, which is designated to serve as the Area Agency on Aging for the 14 counties in Central MN.

I am here today to share information on the Intrastate Funding Formula

What is the Intrastate Funding Formula? The Intrastate Funding Formula (IFF) is used by the Minnesota Board on Aging to allocate more than \$20 Million Dollars annually of Federal Older Americans Act and State Nutrition funding among the six regional and one tribal Area Agency on Aging's in Minnesota. The funding is used to provide supportive services to older adults and family caregivers in local communities, including services such as grocery shopping assistance, transportation, chore, homemaker, Meals on Wheels, congregate dining, health promotion programs, caregiver supports, and more.

The IFF is critical because it determines how much funding each Area Agency on Aging will receive to provide supportive services to older adults in their communities. The formula takes into account various factors such as the total population of older adults, low-income older adults, minority older adults, older adults in rural areas, and population density of older adults.

The current IFF was last updated nearly 20 years ago in 2004. The proposed IFF will be first used with the 2025 allocations and will include new factors such as Living Alone and Living with Disability, as well as adjusted weighting of existing factors. What factors are used and the weights assigned, are the determining factors on the allocations amongst the Area Agencies on Aging. These changes are intended to create a more equitable funding formula that considers the unique needs of older adults in different parts of the state.

The proposed changes to the IFF will have a significant impact on older adults in Greater MN. The current formula factors and weights already puts older adults in Greater MN at a disadvantage and the proposed changes may exacerbate this disadvantage. This could result in a loss of funding for essential services such as rides to medical appointments, home delivered meals, grocery delivery, respite, lawn mowing, and snow removal services. These services are critical to enabling older adults in Greater MN to remain living in their communities and maintain their independence and quality of life.

Despite the growing need for these services as the population ages, it is anticipated that the funding level for these programs at the federal level will remain relatively flat as it have for over a decade. This makes how the \$20 M of funding is redistributed through a revised funding formula is critical.

It is important to advocate for an equitable funding formula that considers the unique needs of older adults in different parts of the state. By working together, we can ensure that all older adults in Minnesota, including those in Greater MN, have access to the support services they need to age in place.”