



**FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY ACTION DIVISION**

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May 30, 2025

Mr. James Auffant, Chairperson
Orange County Membership and Mission Review Board
Agenda Development Office
201 South Rosalind Avenue
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Mr. Auffant:

Thank you for your letter dated March 3, 2025, and for the opportunity to provide input regarding the reauthorization of the Commission on Aging as an official Orange County advisory board.

As Chair of the Commission on Aging, I can affirm the board's continued relevance and impact in the community. The Commission on Aging Board serves as a vital connector between older residents, service providers, and County leadership, ensuring that local policies and programs remain inclusive, responsive, and informed by lived experience.

From increasing access to aging-related resources to elevating awareness about senior issues, the Commission on Aging Board remains a key player in advancing Orange County's efforts to promote dignity, engagement, and independence for older adults.

Please find below my responses to the questions posed in your letter. I've kept them brief and am happy to provide additional context if needed.

- 1. Please state the purpose and/or mission of the advisory board. Is the advisory board serving the purpose for which it was created?** Vision - To promote an elder-friendly community that empowers older adults through choices that allow them to support and maintain their independence within their home community
Purpose - To identify the needs of the senior population and find ways to help by working cooperatively.
The Commission on Aging focuses on "creating positive aging". With this motto, vision and purpose, the Commission continually works to identify community needs and build programming and partnerships that address these needs.
In this capacity, the Commission on Aging advisory board is serving the purpose for which it was created.
Mission - The Orange County Commission on Aging is the link between Orange County Government, its Mayor and Board of Commissioners, citizens and local agencies providing services to seniors. The Commission educates and informs Orange

County Government regarding aging issues and trends to facilitate policy development and foster the County's vision of an elder-friendly community.

2. What is the current need(s) of the county being served by the advisory board?

As of 2025, Orange County, Florida, is home to approximately 228,000 residents aged 60 and older, reflecting a significant increase from the 152,863 older adults recorded in 2000. This growth trend is expected to continue, driven by the aging Baby Boomer generation, with about 10,000 individuals turning 65 each day across the United States. The older adult population in Orange County reflects a wide range of needs, spanning from safe housing and reliable transportation to job opportunities, caregiving assistance, health care, and meaningful ways to stay socially connected. For many seniors and those who support them, one of the greatest challenges is simply knowing where to turn. That's where the Commission on Aging steps in not only by offering vital programs and resources, but also by bringing together community leaders to spotlight the pressing issues facing our aging residents.

3. What are the accomplishments of the advisory board?

The Orange County Commission on Aging continues to address the evolving needs of older adults and caregivers through a variety of innovative and impactful initiatives:

- **Commission on Aging E-Newsletter**

Each month, this digital newsletter delivers timely updates on aging-related programs, services, and research at the local, state, and national levels. With a growing readership of over 1,000, the newsletter is a vital tool for keeping residents informed and connected.

- **LIFE Information for Elders Seminar Series**

This ongoing monthly seminar series empowers older adults and their caregivers with practical information about available resources, healthy living, and ways to stay actively involved in the community. The sessions are now available both in-person and online, expanding accessibility and impact.

- **Senior Sensitivity Training (Th'EYES)**

This experiential training continues to offer a powerful perspective by simulating the physical and sensory challenges of aging. Participants gain insight on how to better communicate and serve older adults with hidden limitations.

- **Orange TV – Vital Living Block**

In collaboration with Orange TV, the Vital Living Block continues to spotlight important aging topics through programming such as *Active Lifestyles Magazine*, *Vital Living Forum*, and community-focused field segments. These broadcasts help raise awareness and celebrate the contributions of older residents.

- **Community Partnership Meetings**

These bi-monthly meetings bring together service providers, advocates, and

community leaders to exchange resources, foster collaboration, and address pressing aging-related challenges across Orange County.

- **Fraud Protection Resource Guide**

Updated regularly, this comprehensive guide helps residents safeguard themselves from scams and fraud. It also provides contact information for reporting suspicious activity at the local, state, and national levels.

- **Orange County Guide to Senior Services**

This user-friendly publication is a go-to reference for services frequently used by seniors in Orange County, including transportation, housing, food assistance, and health support.

- **50+FYI Expos** – Each year, we participate in the 50+FYI Expos, hosted by the 50+ Resource Network in partnership with the Commission on Aging, reaching more than 1,000 people annually with aging-related information and resources.

- **Active Aging Resources Brochure**

This guide outlines key programs at local senior centers and community clubs, encouraging older adults to stay socially and physically active throughout the year.

- **The City of Orlando's Mayor's Committee on Livability & Healthy Aging**

The Mayor's Committee on Livability and Healthy Aging serves our community through advocacy and education. The committee makes recommendations to the Mayor on City of Orlando policies, programs and initiatives to benefit older adults. Members also work to promote city programs and initiatives to residents

- **Community Engagement & Special Projects**

The Commission on Aging remains an active partner in key initiatives such as:

- The Dementia Care and Cure Initiative by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- Annual events like the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Symposium
- Educational forums on healthcare policy changes impacting older adults
- Training sessions to equip community volunteers and citizens with essential knowledge about aging resources and support systems

The Commission on Aging continues to adapt and grow with the community, offering trusted leadership, sharing vital information, and bringing people together to ensure Orange County remains a vibrant, age-friendly place to live.

4. **Is there another public or private board that would better serve the function of the advisory board? If so, please list the board and explain why to would better serve the function.** There is no other public or private board that would better serve the function of the Orange County Commission on Aging Advisory Board. This board is uniquely positioned due to its deep connections with both government and community-based organizations, allowing it to serve as a central hub for collaboration, advocacy, and the dissemination of aging-related resources. Its diverse membership, comprised of professionals from healthcare, housing, transportation,

caregiving, and senior services, ensures that the board reflects the multifaceted needs of the older adult population. While other boards or councils may touch on overlapping issues (such as the Health Services Board or Housing for All Task Force), none have the same focused mission, long-standing expertise, or community trust in addressing the comprehensive needs of older adults and their caregivers in Orange County. Therefore, the current advisory board remains the most effective and appropriate body to fulfill this function.

5. **Should the resolution creating the advisory board be amended to enable the advisory board to better serve the purpose for which it was created? If so, how should the resolution be amended?** The language in the Commission on Aging resolution remains appropriate and does not require revision. However, several updates are being proposed regarding the membership criteria.
6. **Should the advisory board's membership requirements be modified? If so, how should the requirements be modified?** The advisory board has voted to approve modifications to its bylaws to better align with the needs of the community and to encourage more effective representation. The updated language has been submitted to the appropriate parties for final review and approval through the established channels.
7. **What are the direct and indirect costs of maintaining the advisory board?**

The Office on Aging was established in 2001 to support the initiatives and operations of the Commission on Aging. As of the current fiscal year, the Office operates with a budget of approximately \$140,000, which includes the salary for a dedicated program manager overseeing day-to-day functions and community engagement efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of the dedication, hard work and commitment of the Commission on Aging Advisory Board.

Sincerely,



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C: Jonathan Kohn, Manager, Community Action Division
Nicole Brown, Orange County Office on Aging
James Auffant, Orange County Membership and Mission Review Board