

Agency Snapshot: Department of Elder Affairs

by Sarah Catherine Spillers

Constitutionally designated by Florida voters to “serve as the primary state agency responsible for administering human services programs for the elderly,” the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) works to promote the health and well-being of elders and create an environment that enables them to live independently in their own homes and communities.

Through partnerships with 11 Area Agencies on Aging, DOEA provides community-based care to help seniors safely age with dignity, purpose, and independence. Working with community-based organizations across the state, DOEA provides information to elders and their caregivers on how to live healthy lives. DOEA, in partnership with Florida’s aging services network, offers many services – such as adult day care or help with transportation – to elders based on various criteria, including income level and health status. During the most recent state fiscal year, DOEA provided services to nearly 1.2 million elder Floridians.

With approximately 4.8 million residents age 60 and older, Florida currently ranks first in the nation in the percentage of its citizens who are elders and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The elder population is expected to nearly double in the next 15 years. Currently, more than 1.7 million Floridians are age 75 and older. The population age 85 and older is currently the fastest-growing age group by percentage.

Florida’s future is linked to the financial health and physical security of its elder population.

In furtherance of its mission, DOEA partners with public and private organizations and agencies to combat ageism, create public awareness, promote volunteerism, and advocate on behalf of elders and their needs. DOEA also acts as a clearinghouse for Florida’s elders and their families seeking information and assistance on issues particular to this population, such as determining the need and appropriate level for long-term care.

Contact Information:

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Agency Secretary: Samuel P. Verghese

Governor Scott appointed Samuel Verghese as Secretary of DOEA on December 11, 2014. Secretary Verghese manages DOEA’s activities, serves as an advocate for the issues and programs that affect Florida’s 4.8 million seniors, and charts DOEA’s overall direction. Secretary Verghese also represents the Governor on matters relating to Florida’s elder population.

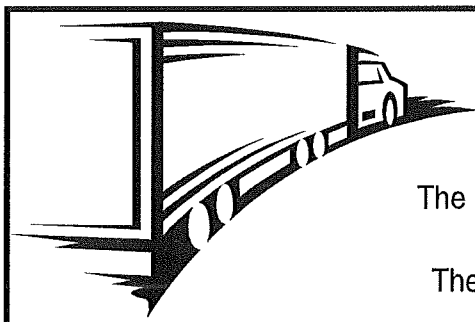
Deputy Secretary/Chief of Staff: Richard Prudom

Richard Prudom joined DOEA in July 2011 as the Chief Financial Officer, and he has served as the Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff since October 2011. As Deputy Secretary, Mr. Prudom performs Chief of Staff functions for DOEA and oversees the Office of Strategic Initiatives, the Division of State-wide Community-Based Services, the Division of Internal & External Affairs, and the Division of Financial Administration.

Agency Clerk: Jason Nelson

Jason Nelson has been DOEA’s Clerk since June 2013. Documents can be filed with the Agency Clerk from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. via facsimile (850-414-2004), email (nelsonj@elderaffairs.org), and U.S. Mail.

General Counsel’s Office: Attorneys in DOEA’s Office of the General Counsel have a variety of responsibilities, including litigating cases involving DOEA, assisting with drafting and interpreting proposed legislation, providing statutory interpretation and legal counsel to DOEA employees, and coordinating all DOEA rule-making endeavors. DOEA’s attorneys also draft and review contracts that channel federal and state funds to Area Agencies on Aging in 11 planning and service areas (PSAs) around the state.



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The online form can be found on the website under “Member Profile.”