

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, 51st Floor
206-684-0706 • TTY 206-684-0274 • FAX 206-684-0689
Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

August 21, 2026. 2:00–3:30pm
Grace United Methodist Church, 722 30th Ave

Attending

Members: Chair - Pamela Williams, Vice Chair - Tiffany Toms, Claudette Thomas, Debroah O'Neal, Paul Mitchel, Dr. Benjamin Abe, Cindy Herndon

Members Absent: Brady Rainy, Calvin Lassiter, Cole Kiser, Deborah Hughes

Staff: Eldad Mekuria, Dinah Stephens, Hawi Samuel, Michael Adusha, Jacqueline Cobbs, Elisa Barnett, Erika Henry, Kamaria Hightower

Guests: Councilmember Dionne Foster, Sharon Hargraves, Peggy Pahl, AyeNay Abye

Welcome

Chair Pam Williamson welcomed attendees and briefly introduced herself and the council's role in policy support and community advocacy.

GUEST AND PRESENTATION

Councilmember Dionne Foster presented on housing initiatives, including the upcoming "Do Not Solicit" registry to reduce predatory real estate outreach, statewide rent increase limits, Seattle's junk fee ban, and strategies to help legacy homeowners preserve properties and generate income. She discussed senior property tax exemptions and the need for better outreach so residents can access existing benefits. Foster expressed interest in continued collaboration and plans to return for the November Caregivers Forum.

Presentation: WA Cares Overview, by Elisa Barnett

MCAAE Business

Minutes: Motion to approve July minutes passed.

Task Force Updates:

Housing Task Force reported progress in dividing work between homeowners and renters, beginning with identifying needs and barriers for homeowners. They plan to gather information, share findings with the council, and later develop renter-focused research.

Social Connectivity Task Force discussed efforts to secure laptops and technology for elders, supporting connection with family and reducing isolation. Members shared past successes and

ideas for expanding social engagement, including examples from similar programs in other cities.

Caregiving Task Force focused on the disproportionate burden faced by African American caregivers, limited support hours, and gaps in assistance for caregivers supporting elders who wish to remain at home. Councilmember Foster and ADS staff highlighted current initiatives and opportunities to expand caregiver support, including employer-based programs and stronger city collaboration. Several members shared personal caregiving experiences illustrating systemic challenges.

Nutrition Task Force; No formal report this meeting.

ADS Staff Update:

Staffing Updates

ADS staff introduced Erika Henry as the new Policy Strategic Advisor supporting leadership and program transitions. The Tubman Center's African American Elders Program transition is nearly complete, and future site visits may be arranged.

ADS Director Update

Jacqueline Cobbs confirmed continued leadership support through staffing transitions and encouraged members to connect with Erika for questions concerning long-term care programs.

Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

Michael Adusah encouraged members to follow M4A action alerts, particularly regarding Senate Bill 2120. He noted the closure of the area plan comment period and highlighted the council's role in the successful transition of the African American Elders Program to Tubman.

Other Announcements

Members shared community updates including a senior center event on proposed Head Start rules and details about a December trip to Ghana. Pam announced that Mayor Wilson will attend the next meeting and asked members to arrive on time and review upcoming protocols.

Review of Action Items and Closing

Review of Action Items:

- Preview priorities and be ready to engage with Mayor Wilson at the next meeting.
- Members encouraged to create a WA Cares account and share program details with community.
- Housing team to continue research and prepare report.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved.

Next Meeting; September 18, 2026
Mayor Katie Wilson will be attending!