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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION

B-202937

APRIL 27, 1981

The Honorable Lawton Chiles
Ranking Minority Member
Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate

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Dear Senator Chiles:

Subject: [Information On Persons 60 Years or Older
Employed By Area Agencies On Aging]
(HRD-81-81)

This letter responds to your request for information about the number of people, by age groups, that the area agencies on aging employ. We understand that your primary concern is to determine what proportion of people that area agencies on aging employ are 60 years old and older.

First, it might be useful to recap how we became involved in an area agency survey from which we could obtain the information that your staff requested. In the conference report on the 1978 amendments to the Comprehensive Older Americans Act, the conferees expressed interest in determining whether the many Federal programs providing assistance to older Americans are being effectively managed and coordinated. On March 7, 1979, Senator Eagleton, as Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Aging, asked the GAO to determine how well area agencies on aging have carried out their 1973 legislative mandate to develop a comprehensive, coordinated system for services for the elderly. About a year later, on April 15, 1980, you requested that GAO assess the differing capacities of area agencies as an adjunct to the study underway in response to Senator Eagleton's request.

Responding to these requests, we recently surveyed a sample of 139 area agencies on aging. Included in our survey instrument was a request for certain types of staffing information. From the 133 area agencies that responded to our survey instrument, we obtained the total number of professional staff they paid from all funding sources, classified by age group, as of January 1, 1980. We specifically asked survey respondents to exclude volunteers from the staffing figures. Also, our survey instrument did not ask for similar information for nonprofessional staff.

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Since our sample was randomly selected, we can project the number of professional staff to the total population of 504 area agencies from which we drew the sample. The following table shows our sample results projected to these 504 area agencies as of January 1, 1980. The projection is made at a 97 percent level of confidence.

<u>Age category</u>	<u>Number of professional staff</u>	<u>Percent</u>
29 years old and younger	769	23
30-39 years old	1,019	31
40-49 years old	542	17
50-59 years old	553	17
60 years old and older	<u>379</u>	<u>12</u>
Total staff	3,262 =====	100 ===

Because State units on aging have continued to designate new area agencies, there are more area agencies on aging now than when we drew our sample. Each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five territories have a State unit on aging. Most States further divide themselves into planning and service areas and designate an area agency on aging to service each area. At the time we selected our area agency study sample, States had designated 577 area agencies on aging. Because we judged 73 area agencies to be atypical, however, we excluded them from our universe. The area agencies in our sample universe consist of 143 counties, 169 private, nonprofit organizations, and 192 councils of governments. Currently, the State units on aging have designated about 650 area agencies.

We trust the above information will be helpful to you.

Sincerely yours,



Gregory J. Amatt
Director