

Governing Boards, Commissions, and Committees

ADRC Operations Manual

I. Introduction

ADRCs are required to have a board that provides input and direction to the ADRC. Since organizational structures vary from county to county in Wisconsin, the requirements contained in this section apply to the body that most closely provides oversight and direction to the ADRC, whether it is called a board, a commission, or an advisory committee.

The commission on aging is the appointed or elected citizen oversight body that represents the interests of the public as a whole and older people specifically in the policies and decisions that govern the aging unit. The aging unit is the organizational entity that carries out activities for older people under the policy and planning oversight of the commission on aging.

Often, ADRCs and county aging units operate as a single entity. Regardless, there is overlap and the potential for coordination between the ADRC board and the commission on aging. An ADRC board and a commission on aging may combine to create a single board where ADRCs and county aging units are integrated.

II. Requirements for the ADRC Board and Commission on Aging

A. ADRC Board Composition

The ADRC board must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The composition of the board must reflect the ethnic and economic diversity of the geographic area served by the ADRC. If the headquarters of a tribal government is located within an ADRC's service area, then that ADRC is expected to have a tribal member on its board. The tribal member does not need to be a formal representative of the tribal government.

2. ADRCs empower customers to make informed choices about options to live with dignity, security, independence, and a high quality of life. In order to achieve this mission in an equitable way, ADRCs must identify and consider disparities that affect each unique customer. ADRCs will represent these marginalized communities through their recruitment of governing board members.
3. At least one-fourth of the membership of the board will be people over the age of 60, adults with disabilities, or their family members, legal representatives, or other advocates, reflecting the ADRC's target populations.
4. To ensure adequate representation statewide, all ADRC boards must include at least one person with a physical disability or an acceptable representative, one person with an intellectual disability or an acceptable representative, and two people age 60 or older or acceptable representative(s).
5. A board member, who may represent more than one ADRC client group, cannot be counted as a representative in more than one client group.
6. Representatives of groups receiving limited ADRC services, such as mental health or substance use disorders, may be included on the board, but these members will not count towards the one-fourth consumer representation.
7. To comply with these requirements, the ADRC may replace board members when positions become vacant, or sooner, at its discretion.

Board Composition Proportionality: ADRC Board NOT Combined with Commission on Aging				
Total Board Membership	Older People or Representative(s)	Adults with Physical Disabilities or Representative(s)	Adults with Intellectual Disabilities or Representative(s)	Non-Client Group
4	2	1	1	0
5-16	2	1	1	1-12
17-20	2-3	1-2	1-2	1-15

B. Commission on Aging Composition

The [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) specifies the composition of the commission on aging. The composition of the commission on aging varies depending upon which aging unit organizational options the county or tribe has chosen.

1. For an aging unit that is described in [Wis. Stat. § 46.82 sub \(1\) \(a\) 1. or 2.](#), organized as a committee of the county board of supervisors, composed of supervisors, and beginning January 1, 1993, advised by an advisory committee, appointed by the county board: Older individuals shall constitute at least 50% of the membership of the advisory committee and individuals who are elected to any office may not constitute 50% or more of the membership of the advisory committee.
2. For an aging unit that is described in [Wis. Stat. § 46.82 sub. \(1\)\(a\)1. or 2.](#), composed of individuals of recognized ability and demonstrated interest in services for older individuals: Older individuals shall constitute at least 50% of the membership of this commission and individuals who are elected to any office may not constitute 50% or more of the membership of this commission.
3. For an aging unit that is described in [Wis. Stat. § 46.82 sub. \(1\)\(a\) 3.](#), the board of directors of the private, non-profit corporation: Older individuals shall constitute at least 50% of the membership of this commission and individuals who are elected to any office may not constitute 50% or more of the membership of this commission.

Where the aging unit consists of two or more counties or tribes, each county or tribe must appoint a commission on aging composed of individuals of recognized ability and demonstrated interest in services for older individuals. Older individuals will constitute at least 50% of the membership of these commissions. Individuals who are elected to any office may not constitute 50% or more of the membership of the commission.

The [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) places limits on the terms of office for members of commissions on aging. This ensures that the aging network continues to develop new leadership and benefits from new ideas. The term limit is two three-year terms or three two-year terms for elected officials.

C. Options for ADRCs Integrated with County Aging Units

The ADRC board may combine with the commission on aging (policymaking) or aging advisory committee (advisory) where the ADRC and the county aging unit are integrated. The composition of a combined board must meet the membership requirements for both the ADRC board and the commission on aging or aging advisory committee.

Integrated agencies have three options to fulfill the requirements for their ADRC board and commission on aging:

1. Maintain two separate and distinct groups: an ADRC board that meets the requirements described above in section A and a commission on aging or aging advisory committee that meets the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements described above in section B.
2. Combine the ADRC board and the commission on aging into one group. The combined board must meet the ADRC board requirements and the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements. It is a policymaking entity.
3. Combine the ADRC board and the aging advisory committee into one group. The combined board must meet the ADRC board requirements and the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements. It is advisory to a separate policymaking board, such as a human services board or county board designated as the commission on aging.

Combined boards described in options 2 and 3 must meet these three statutory requirements:

1. At least 50% of the combined board must consist of older adult representatives.
2. Elected officials must make up less than 50% of the combined board.
3. Combined boards are required to have term limits that comply with the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#). Generally, the term limits are two three-year terms. If the member is an elected official, their term limit may be three two-year terms.

Board Composition Proportionality: ADRC Board Combined with Commission on Aging or Aging Advisory Committee				
Total Board Membership	Older People or Representative(s)	Adults with Physical Disabilities or Representative(s)	Adults with Intellectual Disabilities or Representative(s)	Non-Client Group
6	3	1	1	1
7	4	1	1	1
8	4	1	1	2
9	5	1	1	2
10	5	1-2	1-2	1-3
11-12	6	1-2	1-2	1-4
13-14	7	2	2	1-3
15-16	8	2	2	1-4
17-18	9	2-3	2-3	1-5
19-20	10	2-4	2-3	1-6

D. Combined Boards for Regional ADRCs

Regional ADRCs that are integrated with aging units, either at a local or regional level, have the following options for fulfilling the requirements for the ADRC board and [Wisconsin Elders Act](#):

1. Regional ADRC plus single county, integrated aging offices. Maintain two separate and distinct groups: a regional ADRC board that meets the requirements described above in section A and a commission on aging or aging advisory committee for each county in the service area that meets the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements described above in section B.
2. Regional ADRC plus regional aging office: Combine the regional ADRC board and the regional commission on aging into one group. The combined board must meet the ADRC board requirements and the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements. It is a policymaking entity.

3. Regional ADRC plus regional aging office: Combine the regional ADRC board and the regional aging advisory committee into one group. The combined board must meet the ADRC board requirements and the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements. It is advisory to a separate policymaking board, such as a human services board or county board of the leading county agency for the region that is designated as the commission on aging.
4. Regional ADRC plus regional aging office: Combine the regional ADRC board and the regional commission on aging into one group. The combined board must meet the ADRC board requirements and the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#) requirements. It is a policymaking entity. Elect to have an aging advisory committee for each county in the service area act as optional advisory committees to the combined board.

E. Role of an ADRC Board

The ADRC board is responsible for performing the following roles for the ADRC:

- a. Provide strategic direction to the ADRC to ensure fidelity to the ADRC mission.
- b. Advocate for older people, adults with disabilities, and caregivers in the ADRC's service area.
- c. Represent and promote the ADRC and the services it provides to the community at large.

F. Role of a Commission on Aging

The duties of the commission on aging are quite broad. Interpreted in the context of the overall duties for the aging unit, the commission on aging plans and develops the policies and procedures that govern the operation of the aging unit as it carries out all required and optional responsibilities indicated in the [Wisconsin Elders Act](#). Furthermore, the commission on aging has oversight responsibilities over the activities of the aging unit.

G. Responsibilities of an ADRC Board

The specific duties of the ADRC board are to:

- a. Provide guidance and feedback on the ADRC's services, priorities, and future direction.
- b. Oversee the operations of the ADRC, including its policies, procedures, contracts, and other agreements.
- c. Provide input on the ADRC budget and review spending relative to the budget.
- d. Identify, monitor, and recommend ways to avoid or mitigate potential conflicts of interest in the ADRC's operations, consistent with the [Conflict of Interest policy \(P-02923-03\)](#).
- e. Review ADRC customer feedback and other sources of information to determine if there is a need to change the ADRC's policies or otherwise improve performance.
- f. Gather information about and identify unmet needs of the ADRC's target populations for long-term care and other services. Provide well-advertised opportunities for public participation in the board's information gathering activities.
- g. Identify potential strategies and resources for building local capacity to serve ADRC customers.
- h. Report findings and recommendations to the ADRC director, local officials, DHS, and other interested parties as appropriate.
- i. Provide input on and approve any proposed changes in the organizational structure of the ADRC.
- j. Provide input on the hiring of the ADRC director.
- k. Analyze information regarding unmet needs and guide the ADRC's outreach, education, prevention, and advocacy efforts. Share this analysis with the county board and local organizations that fund or operate service programs.

H. Conflicts of Interest and ADRC Board Members

ADRC board members are considered representatives of the ADRC and therefore subject to ADRC policies, including conflict of interest. Mitigation plans are required for any person who serves on the ADRC board if he or she also:

- a. Is employed by, has a financial interest in, or serves on the governing board of an organization that is a service provider under contract with a managed care organization.
- b. Is employed by, has financial interest in, or serves on the governing board of an organization that provides long-term care services for older adults or people with disabilities and competes with other organizations providing the same services in the ADRC service area.

Individuals prohibited from serving on the ADRC board include:

1. An individual who is, or has a family member who is, employed by, has a financial interest in, or serves on the governing board of any of the following organizations:
 - a. A Family Care, PACE, Family Care Partnership, or SSI managed care plan.
 - b. An IRIS consultant agency or IRIS fiscal employer agency.
2. County or tribal employees, except with approval from DHS. Exceptions may be granted for situations covered by an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 66.0301 or when the appointee's employment is not in an area that may affect or be affected by policies of the ADRC. Requests for exceptions should be made to DHS in writing and submitted to dhsrcteam@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Board members that are placed on the county or tribe's payroll solely for the purpose of receiving a per diem or mileage reimbursement for their board activity are not considered county or tribal employees.

III. Operational Policies and Procedures

A. Statutory References

Wis. Stat. § [46.283 Resource Centers](#)

Wis. Stat. § [46.82\(4\) Aging Unit](#)

B. Agency Requirements

Newly configured ADRCs are required to provide information about their boards to DHS prior to beginning operations. Boards should be operational, preferably, when the ADRC starts operations but no later than six months after start-up.

The ADRC will submit information to DHS annually about board members. DHS will review ADRC board membership with respect to the client group requirements. Upon request, ADRCs will submit information to DHS regarding diversity requirements or conflicts of interest. DHS reserves the right to require that an ADRC add or remove members in order to ensure that client groups and the diversity of the service area are represented and to request replacement of members when there are conflicts of interest.

The ADRC should also send their ADRC board agendas and minutes to their assigned regional quality specialist as these become available.

C. Policy Requirements

[Confidentiality \(P-02923-06\)](#)

[Conflict of Interest \(P-02923-03\)](#)

[Complaints Regarding ADRC Services \(P-02923-02\)](#)

D. Training and Certification Requirements

The ADRC will provide the board with information to enable its members to have an effective voice on the board and to fulfill their duties. This includes:

1. Orientation to the requirements for ADRCs, the activities and staff of the ADRC, and the role and responsibilities of the board.
2. Annual review of the [Conflict of Interest \(P-02923-03\)](#) and [Confidentiality \(P-02923-06\)](#) policies. All members must complete an acknowledgment form annually confirming they have reviewed these policies.
3. Access to any information or training for boards provided by DHS.
4. Information about customer needs, customer feedback, and grievances and appeals related to the ADRC and long-term care services.
5. Assistance with the board's information gathering activities.

ADRC board members should be given access to the ADRC orientation modules within the [learning management system](#). If a board member does not have access to a computer to complete these modules, the ADRC will provide them with temporary equipment to complete the orientation. This could be done at the ADRC office.