

Professional Development Leader - National Harroll “Hop” Backus, BA-SW

Harroll “Hop” Backus, executive vice president of SNG States & Communities, oversees multiple AARP departments and offices. They include a field structure of seven regions, 53 state offices, Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) and the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA).

He has more than 40 years of experience in strategic executive management, community mobilization and lobbying, and human service delivery. Following graduation from the University of Oklahoma, he embarked on a 20 year career with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS). He held several key leadership roles while at DHS- state director of Volunteer Services, director of the State Unit on Aging to deputy director for the Aging Services Division, and director of Community Services for the MRDD population. He was a founding member of the Oklahoma Center on Aging at the Oklahoma School of Medicine and was a primary architect of Oklahoma’s Advantage waiver program.

He joined AARP in 1995, first as state legislative representative with the Southwest Regional Office, then as manager of Advocacy and State & Community Operations in the West Regional Office. He served on the national team that created the plan for opening 50 state offices and offices in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. After serving as Midwest regional director, he became the national director of State Operations, where he launched new departments and processes to support AARP’s work. He has received a Community Achievement and National Leadership Institute award, the AARP Lyn Bodiford award for leading the campaign to defeat privatization of Social Security, and has served as an adjunct professor of gerontology and codeveloper of intergenerational programs for inner-city youth. He has served as a consultant to a myriad of community agency boards and councils.