

THE AGING NETWORK AND OLDER AMERICANS ACT

DESCRIPTION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA)

The purpose of the OAA is to *give* older Americans increased opportunities for participating in the benefits of American society. The OAA is important because:

1. It establishes a nation-wide infrastructure with national, state and area *level* responsibilities.
2. The "aging network" established by the Older Americans Act is the only social service *delivery* system *devoted* to older persons and their caregivers.
3. Individuals at a local level, not by state or federal bureaucrats, make decisions on services to be provided and by whom.
4. The OAA services are a unique partnership between federal, state and local governments and private agencies and organizations and seniors themselves.
5. A small amount offederal Older Americans Act dollars leverages many other dollars from a *variety* of sources.
6. **Older Americans Act programs served 17% of Illinois' 2.9 million OAs age 60+.**
7. **In addition to 13 AAAs, 309 service providers are funded by the Act (FY23).**

The objectives of the Older Americans Act are:

1. An adequate income in retirement in accordance with the American standard of living.
2. The best possible physical and mental health which science can make available and without regard to economic status.
3. Obtaining and maintaining suitable housing, independently selected, designed and located with reference to special needs and available at costs which older citizens can afford.
4. Full restorative services for those who require institutional care, and a comprehensive array of community-based, long-term care services adequate to appropriately sustain older people in their communities and in their homes, including support to family members and other persons providing voluntary care to older individuals needing long-term care services.
5. Opportunity for employment with no discriminatory personnel practices because of age.
6. Retirement in health, honor, dignity after years of contribution to the economy.
7. Participating in and contributing to meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, educational and training and recreational opportunities.
8. Efficient community services, including access to low-cost transportation, which provide a choice in supported living arrangements and social assistance in a coordinated manner and which are readily available when needed, with emphasis on maintaining a continuum of care for vulnerable older individuals.
9. Immediate benefit from proven research knowledge, which can sustain and improve health and happiness.
10. Freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives, full participation in the planning and operation of community-based services and programs provided for their benefit, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

HISTORY OF OLDER AMERICANS ACT FUNDING

The Older Americans Act was enacted in 1965 and has been amended and reauthorized many times. The Administration on Community Living (ACL) released new regulations for the Older Americans Act Amendments.

1965 - The Act was established to improve the lives of older persons. Older Americans Act was signed into law on July 14, 1965. It established the Administration on Aging within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and called for the creation of State Units on Aging. Medicare, Title XVIII, a health insurance program for the elderly, was established as part of the Social Security Act. Medicaid, Title XIX, a health insurance program for low-income persons, was added to the Social Security Act.

1973 - State Units on Aging (SUAs) were required to divide their states into planning and service areas (PSAs) and to designate Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to administer programs for the elderly in those PSAs. AAAs were assigned the chief responsibility for planning, coordinating, developing programs and pooling resources to assure the availability and provision of a comprehensive range of services in the PSA.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT TITLES

Title III establishes the aging network at the state and local levels including regional area agencies for planning and service areas within each state. This Title is the principle source of funds for the state and local planning and service areas for older persons.

Title III-B - Supportive Services

The purpose of **Title III-B** is to foster the development of a comprehensive and coordinated service system. Social services provided under Title III-B are intended to (1) secure and maintain maximum independence and dignity for older individuals, (2) remove individual and social barriers to economic and personal independence, and (3) provide a continuum of care for the vulnerable elderly.

Title III-C • Nutrition Service

The purpose of **Title III-C1** is to assist in meeting the nutritional and social needs of people 60 and over who do not eat adequately due to limitations of income, mobility, lack of food preparation skills and equipment, or lack of incentive to prepare and eat meals alone. The goal of Title III-C1 is to encourage people to meet and eat in group settings where they can find companionship, nutritious meals and information about other services.

The purpose of **Title III-C2** is to provide home delivered meals to person's aged 60 and over who are homebound by reason of illness, incapacitating disability, or are otherwise isolated.

Title III-D - Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

The purpose of **Title III-D** funds is to provide disease prevention and health promotion services and information at senior centers, congregate meal sites, through home delivered meal programs or at other appropriate sites.

Title III-E - National Family Caregiver Support Program

The purpose of Title III-E is the development and implementation of a Caregiver Support Program. Services include information about and assistance in gaining access to available services, training, education and group support, respite care and supplemental (gap) services. To be eligible for respite and gap services, caregivers must be providing in-home and community based care to older adults who are frail (unable to perform at least 2 activities of daily living without substantial human assistance or due to a cognitive or other mental impairment, requires substantial supervision because the individual behaves in a manner that poses a serious health or safety hazard); 2) grandparents, step-grandparents, or other relatives 60 years older and are primary caregivers or legal guardians of a relative child.

Title VII- Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

The purpose of Title VII of the OAA is to foster activities to protect the rights of vulnerable older persons. Title VII incorporates ombudsman programs, programs for prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation and a state elder rights and legal assistance development program.

ILLINOIS ACT ON AGING

Just as the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, affirms the dignity and independence of older persons at the federal level, the Illinois Act on Aging, which became effective in November 1973, establishes these same priorities at the state level.

The Illinois Act on Aging declares:

"The ability of the constantly increasing number of aged in the State to maintain self-sufficiency and personal well-being with the dignity to which their years of labor entitle them and to realize their maximum potential as creative and productive individuals are matters of profound import and concern for all of the people in this State."

Originally passed in 1973, the Illinois Act on Aging creates the Illinois Department on Aging and the Illinois Council on Aging, who advise the Department on the level and quality of all programs, services, and facilities provided to older persons by State agencies.

The Act provides for:

A comprehensive and coordinated service system for older persons in Illinois, giving high priority to those persons with greatest need;

Studies and research into the needs and problems of the aging;

Participation by the aging in the planning and operation of all phases of the system.

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT AND AGING NETWORK

The National Network on Aging

The national network on aging is a highly complex system of federal, state and local government agencies and institutions, and private non-profit and for-profit organizations responsible for serving and/or representing the needs of older persons. The network is involved in service system development, advocacy, planning, research, coordination, policy development, program development, training and education, administration and direct services.

The core structures in the network include the Administration on Aging, 56 state or territory units on aging, 614 area agencies on aging, and more than 27,000 local service agencies that provide a wide variety of social and supportive services for older Americans. The national network on aging carries out the goals, objectives and philosophies of the Older Americans Act by stressing maximum opportunities for all older persons to live independent and meaningful lives in their homes and communities.

Administration on Community Living (ACL) - Administration on Aging (AoA)

The Administration on Aging (located within the Administration on Community Living) is the principal agency within the federal government with the responsibility to administer the provisions of the Older Americans Act. It advocates at the federal level for programs and actions responding to the needs, concerns and interests of older Americans. The AoA allocates OAA funding to states and tribal organizations to administer and provide services and programs through the national network on aging.

Administration on Aging Federal Regional Offices

These offices disseminate information about initiatives in aging and provide training, consultation and technical assistance to states and area agencies on aging. AgeGuide is located within Region V of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Regional Office is located in Chicago.

State Units on Aging

The State Unit on Aging (SUA) is the agency in state government designated by the governor and state legislature as the focal point for the needs of older persons within the state. There are currently 56 units on aging located within 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. The SUA is responsible for administering a complex service system designed to complement and support other human service systems in meeting the needs of older persons. The organization is the unifying force through which the broad policy objectives of the OAA ultimately come to pass. The SUA plays an important role as advocate for older persons, working with both public and private sectors. Functions of a SUA include management and administration, service system development, services development and advocacy. In Illinois, the SUA is the Illinois Department on Aging located in Springfield with field offices in Chicago.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

An Area Agency on Aging is the agency, in a planning and service area, designated by the State Unit on Aging to develop and administer the area plan for a comprehensive and coordinated system of aging services. AAAs address concerns for older Adults at the regional level. They play an important role in identifying community and social service needs and assuring that social and supportive services are made available to older persons and their caregivers. In most cases, Area Agencies contract with other organizations to provide services for older people and their caregivers.

Area Agencies on Aging vary from place to place depending on the local needs. The Area Agency might be a public agency located within county or city government, a regional planning council or economic development district, or a private non-profit organization. A major challenge of the AAA is to help communities provide the necessary supports to ensure that older persons live independently and with dignity in their homes and communities. Currently there are 612 AAAs. AgeGuide has been designated as the AAA to serve DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties.

Local Community-Based Services

Local providers are those agencies offering one or more services for older persons and their caregivers at the community level. They generally receive funding from a variety of sources in addition to the Older Americans Act. The range of services provided includes congregate and home-delivered meals, transportation, employment and volunteer services, information and assistance, benefits assistance, legal services, health promotion and other supportive services. These agencies may be public, private or non-profit.

Federal Entities

There are many federal agencies that have either a direct or indirect impact on the aging network. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services not only includes the Administration on Aging, but also the Social Security Administration, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the Public Health Service. Among the HHS programs, which serve older persons, are Supplemental Security Income, Old Age Survivors and Disability Income, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Services Block Grants and Community Services Block Grants.

Other federal departments relating to the needs and concerns of older persons include: Department of Agriculture, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation, Department of Veteran Affairs and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

National Aging Organizations

Usually non-profit, these organizations provide representation in the nation's capital for protecting and promoting the interests of older Americans as well as the major institutions and professions having responsibility for serving older people. Examples of these organizations include the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), National Council on the Aging (NCOA), American Association of Homes for the Aging, American Society on Aging (ASA), Gray Panthers, USAging (National Association of Area Agencies on Aging), National Indian Council on Aging, and ADvancing States (National Association of State Units on Aging).