

# Older Americans Act

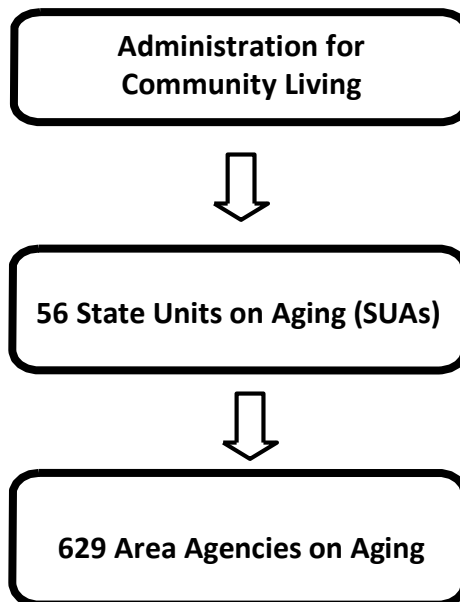
## National Aging Network

Congress passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965 in response to concern by policymakers about a lack of community social services for older persons. Although older individuals may receive services under many other Federal programs, today the OAA is considered to be the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to this group and their caregivers.

The OAA legislation established the Federal Administration on Aging to implement and oversee the components of the OAA. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created a new organization, the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The ACL brings together the efforts and achievements of the Administration on Aging, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the HHS Office on Disability to serve as the Federal agency responsible for increasing access to community supports, while focusing attention and resources on the unique needs of older Americans and people with disabilities across the lifespan.

OAA funding for programs is allocated to each State Unit on Aging (SUA) based primarily on the number of persons 60 years of age and over in the state. Most states are divided into planning and service areas (PSAs), so that programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs of older persons residing in those areas. The SUA grants funds to the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) designated for each PSA. The AAA determines the needs of older persons in the PSA and works to address those needs through the funding of local services and through advocacy.

### OAA funds are awarded:



# Older Americans Act

## Title 1: Declaration of Objectives

The Congress hereby finds and declares that, in keeping with the traditional American concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society, **the older people of our Nation are entitled to, and it is the joint and several duty and responsibility of the governments of the United States**, of the several States and their political subdivisions, and of Indian tribes **to assist our older people to secure equal opportunity to the full and free enjoyment of the following objectives**

- (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**.

## **Title II**

established the Federal Administration on Aging to implement and oversee the OAA.

## **Title IV**

supports training, research and demonstration projects in the field of aging.

## **Title V**

established and supports the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

## **Title VI**

provides grants to organizations serving older Native Americans.

## **Title VII**

established the long-term care ombudsman program, which protects the rights of individuals residing in nursing homes and supports programs that work to prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

# **Older Americans Act**

## **Title III**

### **Funds programs providing in-home and community-based long-term care services\*, including:**

- Supportive Services (Title IIIB): examples include: transportation, information & assistance, outreach, case management, homemaker or chore services, legal service, adult day centers
- Nutrition Services (Title IIIC): congregate & home-delivered meals
- Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (Title IIID)
- Family Caregiver Support (Title IIIE)

### **\*Priority Areas**

A fixed percentage of funding must be used to support priority areas that are established through the OAA, the Connecticut's State Plan on Aging and the local AAA's Area Plan.

The Administration on Aging (AoA) Strategic Action Plan has five strategic priority areas:

1. Empower older people, their families, and other consumers to make informed decisions, about, and to be able to easily access, existing health and long-term care options;
2. Enable seniors to remain in their own homes with high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services, including supports for family caregivers;
3. Empower older adults to stay active and healthy through Older Americans Act services and the new preventive benefits under Medicare;
4. Ensure the rights of older people and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation; and,
5. Maintain effective and responsive management.

### **Target Population**

Services provided through Title III funding are available to all individuals over 60 years of age. However, the OAA prioritizes services to older adults with the greatest economic and social needs, with particular attention to:

- low income older individuals
- low-income minority older individuals
- older individuals with limited English proficiency
- older individuals residing in rural areas
- older adults with Alzheimer's or related disorders
- older adults with severe disabilities
- individuals at risk for institutional placement