

# Social Care Services Evidence Summary: Navigation Access Functions

This evidence summary includes a broad range of research/resources on navigation access functions and is primarily focused on health care impact. It is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation of research/resources on this topic. The information presented in this summary can inform the value proposition of partnering with a community-based organization (CBO) or a network of CBOs to offer these services and supports as part of a strategy to address social determinants of health (SDOH).

Aging and disability networks are well equipped to support individuals and families in navigating long term services and supports (LTSS) and, increasingly, social care services that address SDOH such as housing, transportation, and food insecurity. As community-based providers, aging and disability networks are trusted experts on the resources within their respective communities. A key way in which aging and disability networks support individuals, families, and caregivers is by assisting with the navigation of social services, eligibility, and resources in order to provide community members with the information they need to make informed decisions. This navigation support can take several forms, including:

- **Information and Referral (I&R):** The art, science, and practice of bringing people and services together. As part of a [No Wrong Door](#) system, aging and disability providers follow policies and procedures for the delivery of I&R services using person-centered practices that promote informed decision-making about the services and supports available to them<sup>1</sup>.
- **Options Counseling:** The assistance in identifying goals and needs through person-centered counseling and coordinating access to publicly and privately-funded long-term services and supports in the community<sup>2</sup>.
- **Benefits Access:** The identification of public and private benefit programs for which older adults and individuals with disabilities may qualify so that they can remain healthy, secure, and live independently within their communities.

While aging and disability providers may use different terms to describe these functions, the core values around navigation support remain the same. Navigation functions connect community members with a range of services that help them to independently live safely in their communities. This range of services that the aging and disability network supports navigation to, such as housing, transportation and meal services, as demonstrated in other social care services evidence tables, have the potential to reduce hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and other high-cost services, as well as caregiver burnout and stress. In turn, navigation services have the potential to support cost saving efforts of health plans and health systems. The aging and disability network is well primed for partnership with health plans and systems interested in supporting their members with greater access to community resources and social care services through person-centered navigation access functions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.airs.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3500>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.aging.ca.gov/Programs\\_and\\_Services/Aging\\_and\\_Disability\\_Resource\\_Connection/](https://www.aging.ca.gov/Programs_and_Services/Aging_and_Disability_Resource_Connection/)

Research and resources related to navigation functions provided by aging and disability networks are included below. Exploration of the impacts and outcomes associated with navigation access supports provides an area of opportunity for future research and investigation.

## Navigation Functions Research

| Study  | Population Studied                                   | Objective of Study   | Type of Analysis            | Findings / Results  |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|---|
| <a href="#">Oregon Department of Human Services (2018)</a> | Oregon Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) | To make the business case that the benefits of ADRC services, including options counseling/person-centered counseling, exceed the cost to run ADRC programs. | Social return on investment | The analysis concluded that there is a strong business case for Oregon’s ADRCs. The estimated social return on investment of the ADRCs in Oregon is 11.1 to 1. The benefits in Oregon totaled \$39.8 million at a cost of \$3.6 million in 2016-2017. |

## Navigation Functions Resources

| Resource Author   | Description of Content  | Target Audience   |
|---|---|---|
| <a href="#">Kaiser Permanente Community Health (2018)</a> | This article provides a detailed overview of San Diego’s 2-1-1 program and a description of their Community Information Exchange (CIE) tool and its demonstrated success, along with lessons learned.               | Health systems and organizations interested in learning more about CIE tool and its demonstrated success across different hospitals.            |
| <a href="#">National Council on Aging (NCOA)</a>          | This webpage provides an overview of the number of benefits available to Americans aged 65+, details the value of these benefits, and highlights NCOA’s Center for Benefits Access and their Benefits CheckUp tool. | Older adults and family members unsure of the benefits available to them or in need of assistance connecting to a range of services.            |
| <a href="#">NCCARE360</a>                                 | This website provides information on North Carolina’s 2-1-1 network and how many counties, organizations, and users   | Individuals and organizations in North Carolina interested in being connected with services within the state or becoming a part of the network. |

| Resource Author                         | Description of Content   | Target Audience   |
|---|--|---|
|   | they have reached through this effort and hosts a 2-1-1 tool to find resources in the state.   |   |
| <a href="#">Topi &amp; Auger (2018)</a> | This slide deck presents an overview of the MassOptions tool and details the technology platform, features and benefits, social media strategy, reporting and analytics, the referral exchange portal, and more. | Those interested in a comprehensive overview of the MassOptions tool or are interested in designing their own platform. |