



# Introduction to the Older Americans Act

Thank you for helping ensure older Americans get the services they need to stay healthy. The included fact sheets serve as an introduction to the Older Americans Act and are designed to help you in your role.

Use these sheets in whatever way you see fit – whether it's printing them out and hanging them in your office or using them as a training resource for your staff. They're a good reminder of available older adult health services, funding, and more.

If you'd like more information, please consult the [Overview of Older Americans Act Title III Programs: 2018 Summary of Highlights and Accomplishments](#).

**Again, thank you for all you do!**



*This project was supported in part by grant number 90PPNU0002 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.*

[Source: Overview of Older Americans Act Title III Programs: 2018 Summary of Highlights and Accomplishments](#)



# Older Americans Act

## Title III of the Older Americans Act

This section provides grants to states, tribes, and territories to advocate on behalf of older persons and their family caregivers, and to coordinate programs for them. It covers supportive services, such as case management, community services, in-home services, transportation, information and referral, and legal assistance.

This section also covers nutrition programs, such as home-delivered meals and congregate meals; family caregiver support; and health promotion and disease prevention services.

The Older Americans Act (OAA), enacted in 1965, was the first federal-level initiative aimed at comprehensively addressing the need for community social services for older adults. The act supports a range of essential home- and community-based services. This is done to help as many older adults live as independently as possible in their homes and communities.

States must target “older individuals with the greatest social need, with particular attention to low-income minority individuals, older individuals residing in rural areas, low-income individuals, and frail individuals.”

The Older Americans Act has created an infrastructure, known as the national aging services network, that coordinates the delivery of comprehensive home- and community-based supportive services in every state.

### AT PRESENT, THE NETWORK CONSISTS OF:

- 56 State Units on Aging
- 244 tribal organizations, two native Hawaiian organizations representing 400 tribes
- 629 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
- 20,000 local service providers



# Older Americans Act : Title III

## The Older Americans Act: Title III

provides grants to states, tribes, and territories to advocate on behalf of older persons and their family caregivers, and to coordinate programs for them by providing the following services below:

### • SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Case Management, Community Services, In-Home Services, Transportation, Information and Referral, Legal Assistance

### • NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Congregate Meals and Home-Delivered Meals

### • FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT

### • HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION SERVICES





# History of Title III of the Older Americans Act

## 1950s

- President Truman initiated the first National Conference on Aging, sponsored by the Federal Security Agency (1950).
- Federal funds were first appropriated for social service programs for older persons under the Social Security Act (1952).
- Special Staff on Aging was established within the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to coordinate responsibilities for aging (1956).

## 1960s

- First White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. (1961).
- 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 (1965).
- Older Americans Act Amendments provided grants for model demonstration projects, Foster Grandparents Program, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (1969).

## 1970s

- Second White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. (1971).
- A new Title VII was created under the Older Americans Act, authorizing funds for a national nutrition program for older adults (1972).
- Older Americans Act Comprehensive Services Amendments established Area Agencies on Aging. The amendments

## 1970s (continued)

- added a new Title V, which authorized grants to local community agencies for multipurpose senior centers and created the Community Services Employment grant program for low-income persons age 55 and older, administered by the Department of Labor (1973).
- Older Americans Act Amendments authorized grants under Title III to Indian tribal organizations. Transportation, home care, legal services, and home renovation/repair were mandated as priority services (1975).
- Older Americans Act Amendments required changes in Title VII nutrition program, primarily related to the availability of surplus commodities through the Department of Agriculture (1977).

## 1980s

- Third White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. (1981).
- Older Americans Act was reauthorized; it emphasized supportive services to help older persons remain independent in the community (1981).
- The reauthorization of the Older Americans Act authorized appropriations for six additional services; in-home services for older adults; long-term care ombudsman; assistance for special needs; health education and promotion; prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and outreach activities for persons who may be eligible for benefits under supplemental security income, Medicaid, and food stamps. Additional emphasis was given to those in the greatest economic and social need, including low-income minorities (1987).

# History of Title III of the Older Americans Act — Continued

## 1990s

- Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act placed increased focus on caregivers, intergenerational programs, protection of elder rights, and calls for a 1995 White House Conference on Aging (1992).
- White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. (1995).
- Older Americans Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Foster Grandparent Program observed 30th anniversaries (1995).

## 2000s

- HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson released \$113 million for First National Family Caregiver Support Programs grants to states on February 15 (2001).
- Kickoff of 30th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program took place in March (2002).
- The fifth White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. (2005).
- Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 was signed into law (P.L. 109-365) reaffirming the principles of consumer information for long-term care planning, evidence-based prevention programs, and self-directed community-based services to older individuals at risk of institutionalization (2006).

## 2010s

- The Affordable Care Act was enacted (2010).
- The Administration for Community Living was established on April 18, bringing together the Administration on Aging, the Office of Disability, and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (2012).

## 2010s (continued)

- On April 19, President Obama signed the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016 into law to further improve access and quality of comprehensive services to older adults in our country. The 2016 Older Americans Act reauthorized programs for Fiscal Year 2017 through Fiscal Year 2019. It included provisions to protect vulnerable elders by strengthening the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program and elder abuse screening and prevention efforts. It also promoted the delivery of evidence-based programs such as falls prevention and chronic disease self-management programs (2016).

## 2020s

- On March 25, President Trump signed H.R. 4334, the Supporting Older Americans Act (SOAA) into law. The SOAA reauthorizes the Older Americans Act for five years and includes a seven percent increase in funding in the initial year and a six percent increase annually for the remainder through Fiscal Year 2024. Along with these increases, the SOAA establishes a new Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network within the Administration on Aging, requires additional research into the impact of social isolation on senior health, and affirms the importance of local control and flexibility in the administration of Older Americans Act programs (2020).
- Kickoff of 50th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program took place in March (2022).

# Older Americans Act: Title III Network

The Older Americans Act established a national network of federal, state, and local agencies to provide services that maximize the independence and well-being of older adults in their homes and communities.

## Federal

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:** HHS has designated ACL to carry out the provisions of the OAA and to administer the OAA programs. HHS also provides funding for the OAA programs.

**Administration for Community Living:** ACL is the primary federal agency responsible for administering the OAA programs and authorizes grants to SUAs and AAAs to act as advocates on behalf of older persons and to coordinate programs and services for older persons.

## State

**State Units on Aging:** SUAs are designated state-level agencies that are responsible for the planning and policy development as well as the administration of OAA activities. SUAs also coordinate with AAAs to collect and report state performance data to ACL on Title III program performance.

It is the responsibility of the SUA to develop regulations, policies, procedures, guidance, and technical assistance to address program accountability. The OAA requires that SUA/AAA consult with local service providers to develop the best method of program administration.

## Area Agencies on Aging

**AAAs** are overseen and work closely with their State Unit on Aging while providing services to their local area. AAAs serve as local entities that, either directly or through contract with local service providers, oversee a comprehensive and coordinated service system for the delivery of home- and community-based services.

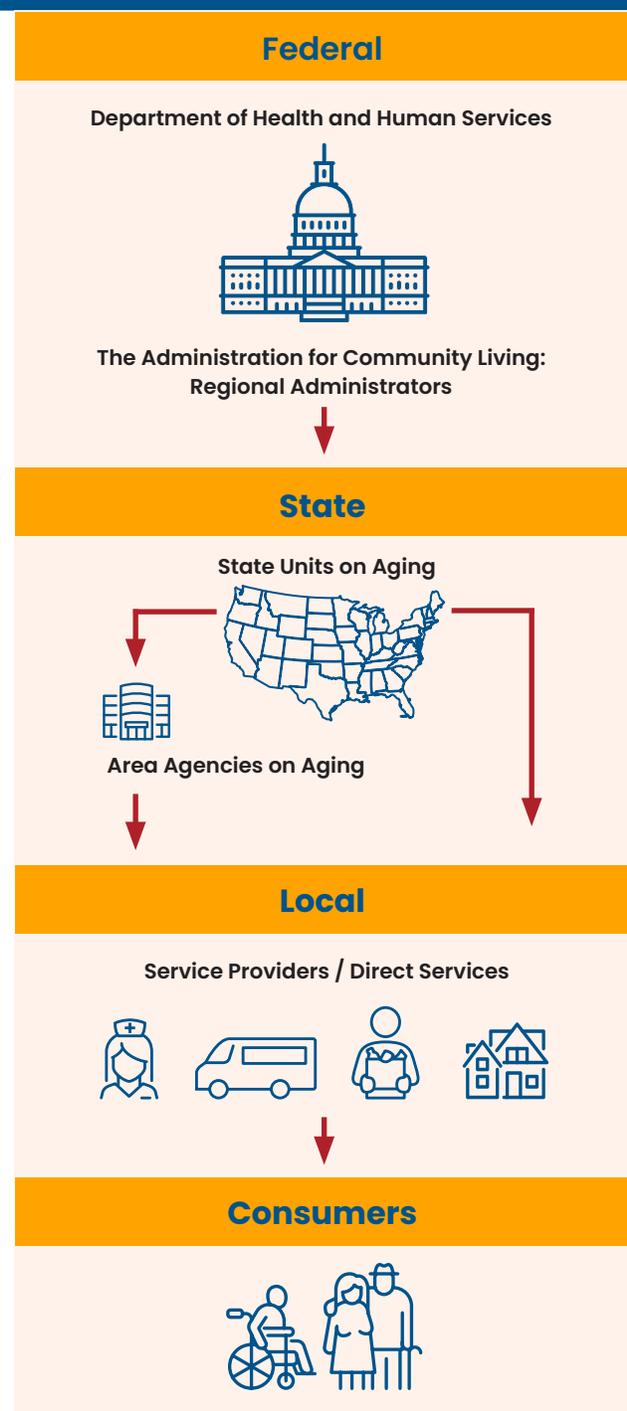
## Local

**Local Service Providers** or contractors deliver aging services, such as meals, transportation, and in-home services.

## Consumers

Individuals receive the Older Americans Act services within their states and communities.

Source: [Overview of Older Americans Act Title III Programs: 2018 Summary of Highlights and Accomplishments](#)



# Older Americans Act : Title III Distribution of Funding

The majority of funding for OAA Title III programs flows from the federal to the state level and from there to the local level. Funding for Title III programs is also provided by other sources. Since OAA funding is neither available nor intended to serve every eligible person, programs also secure funding from sources such as Medicare and Medicaid, state and local sources, private donations, and voluntary contributions from those receiving services.

## Federal

Funding is distributed to each state (as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories) and its aging network according to a formula based on the state's share of the U.S. population age 60 or older. The formula considers the geographic distribution of older individuals with the greatest economic and social need.

## State

The states and territories award funds to the regional programs known as Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).

## Local

AAAs contract with local service providers to deliver aging services, or in some cases, deliver services directly.

### Federal

Department of Health and Human Services



The Administration for Community Living:  
Regional Administrators



### State

State Units on Aging



Area Agencies on Aging

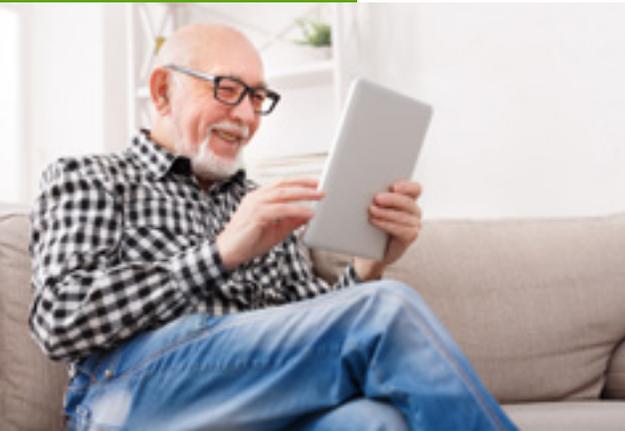


### Local

Service Providers / Direct Services



# Older Americans Act : Title III Services



## TITLE III – B

Supportive services and programs are designed to ensure that communities can meet the individual needs of older adults and caregivers and to help older adults remain independent.

## TITLE III – C NUTRITION SERVICES AIM:

1. To reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition;
2. To promote socialization of older individuals; and
3. To promote the health and well-being of older individuals by assisting such individuals to gain access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.



## TITLE III – D

Provides grants to states and territories for programs that support healthy lifestyles and promote healthy behaviors; to improve the health and well-being of older adults and reduce disease and injury through the implementation of evidence-based programs.

## TITLE III – E

Provides family caregivers with a flexible base of services and supports to assist them in keeping their loved ones in the settings of their choice for as long as possible.





# Older Americans Act: Title III – B

## ADULT DAY CARE

Personal care for dependent older adults in a supervised, protective, and congregate setting during a portion of a day.

## ASSISTED TRANSPORTATION

Assistance and transportation for a person who has difficulties using regular transportation.

## CASE MANAGEMENT

Assistance with access or care coordination for an older person who has diminished functioning capacities, personal conditions, or other characteristics and so needs to receive services.

## CHORE SERVICES

Assistance with activities such as heavy housework, yard work, or sidewalk maintenance.

## HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Services that include health screenings and assessments; organized fitness activities; evidence-based health promotion programs; medication management; home injury control services; and/or information, education, and prevention strategies for chronic disease and other health conditions.

## HOMEMAKER

Assisting a consumer with routine tasks to achieve and maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment.

## INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

A service providing individuals with information on services available within communities; links individuals to services and opportunities available; and, as much as possible, establishes adequate follow-up procedures.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Legal advice, counseling, and representation by an attorney or other person acting under the supervision of an attorney.

## OUTREACH

Intervention with individuals initiated by an agency or organization for the purpose of identifying potential clients and encouraging them to use existing services and benefits.

## PERSONAL CARE

Service that helps a consumer to achieve optimal functioning with Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL).

## SELF-DIRECTED CARE

An approach to providing services (including programs, benefits, supports, and technology) under this act intended to assist an individual with activities of daily living in which services are provided under the direction and control of the person served.

## OTHER SERVICES

A service provided using Older Americans Act funds that does not fall into the listed service categories.

# Older Americans Act : Title III – C



## HOME-DELIVERED MEALS

A meal provided by a qualified nutrition project provider to an eligible individual and is consumed in their place of residence. Meals may be provided via home delivery, pickup, carryout, or drive through.

## CONGREGATE MEALS

Meals provided to an eligible individual in a group setting (e.g., senior center, senior housing sites, restaurant programs, faith-based locations) and/or virtual interaction arranged by the nutrition provider.



## NUTRITION COUNSELING

A standardized service as defined by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that provides individualized guidance to individuals who are at nutritional risk because of their health or nutrition history, dietary intake, chronic illness, or medication use, or to caregivers. Counseling is provided one-on-one by a registered dietitian and addresses the options and methods for improving nutrition status with a measurable goal.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

An intervention targeting Older Americans Act participants and caregivers that uses information dissemination, instruction, or training with the intent to support food, nutrition, and physical activity choices and behaviors in order to maintain or improve health and address nutrition-related conditions. Content is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans; is accurate, culturally sensitive, regionally appropriate, and considers personal preferences; and is overseen by a registered dietitian or individual of comparable expertise as defined in the OAA.



# Older Americans Act: Title III – D

Funds are provided for evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion services including programs related to physical fitness, medication management, chronic disease self-management education, psychosocial behavioral health intervention, HIV, arthritis, brain health, diabetes, falls prevention, depression, mental health supports, chronic pain, etc.



## Evidence-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services

- Physical Fitness
- Medication Management
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Education
- HIV
- Arthritis
- Brain Health
- Diabetes
- Psychosocial Behavioral Health Intervention
- Falls Prevention
- Depression
- Mental Health Supports
- Chronic Pain



For more information, visit [acl.gov](https://www.acl.gov).

Source: Overview of Older Americans Act Title III Programs: 2018 Summary of Highlights and Accomplishments



# Older Americans Act: Title III – E

## INFORMATION FOR CAREGIVERS ABOUT AVAILABLE SERVICES

A service for caregivers that provides them with information on resources and services available within their communities.

## ASSISTANCE TO CAREGIVERS IN GAINING ACCESS TO SERVICES

A service for caregivers that assists in obtaining access to the services and resources available to them within their communities. Ensures that the individuals receive the services needed by establishing adequate follow-up procedures.

## CAREGIVER TRAINING AND EDUCATION, INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING, SUPPORT GROUPS

Counseling to caregivers to assist them in making decisions and solving problems related to their caregiver roles. This includes counseling to individuals, support groups, and caregiver training (of individual caregivers and families). These services help caregivers better manage their responsibilities and cope with the stress of caregiving.

## RESPITE CARE

Services that offer temporary, substitute supports or living arrangements for care recipients in order to provide a brief period of relief or rest for caregivers. Respite care includes:

- In-home respite (personal care, homemaker, and other in-home respite)
- Respite provided as the care recipient attends a senior center or other nonresidential program
- Institutional respite provided by placing the care recipient in an institutional setting such as a nursing home for a short period of time as a respite service to the caregiver.
- For grandparents caring for children, summer camps

## SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Services provided on a limited basis to complement the care provided by caregivers (e.g., transportation, home modifications, medical equipment, assistive technologies, and emergency response systems).

[For more information, visit acl.gov.](https://www.acl.gov)

# Older Americans Act : Title III Data

OAA Title III Program data and information are key for monitoring progress toward achieving strategic goals, objectives, and priorities. The data can also help answer key questions about OAA Title III programs such as:

- How much funding is allocated to the individual service types?
- How do expenditures differ by service type?
- What are the characteristics of Title III service recipients?
- How many individuals receive Title III services?
- What is the health status of service recipients?
- How helpful are the services?

**Title III Data Collection and Access:** ACL collects information and reports on the performance of Title III programs through two primary data collection systems.

## State Performance Report (SPR)

- Includes demographic and descriptive data, performance data on programs and services, and data on the infrastructure of home- and community-based services.
- **Older Americans Act Performance System:** A reporting tool the Administration for Community Living (ACL)/Administration on Aging (AOA) uses to monitor performance and collect information on Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III, VI, and VII programs.
- **Aging, Independence, and Disability:** Features links to Administration on Disabilities (AOD) programs, as well as new data products from the Administration on Aging's (AOA) programs and reporting systems. AGID is an online query system that enables data users to access and analyze data in a centralized location.

## National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (NSOAAP)

- National survey to assess the effectiveness of the Title III programs, maintain accountability, and demonstrate the program's success in achieving legislative goals.
- Comprised of six annual surveys that focus on the consumers' assessment of service quality and outcomes as well as measure client characteristics such as demographics and physical and social functioning.
- Data include information for the six Title III service areas.
  - Caregiver, Homemaker, Transportation, Home-Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, and Case Management.
- Data from the [2021 National Survey of OAA Participants](#) help to illustrate how the Congregate Nutrition Programs and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services are effectively targeting their services.
- **Eldercare locator:** A public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting you to services for older adults and their families.