

Older Americans Act (OAA) Programs



History: The Older Americans Act was enacted by Congress in 1965, requiring each state to establish a State Unit on Aging. In 1973 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were established. The purpose of the Act is to enable older adults to live their lives to the fullest, with access to all available resources and benefits to which they are entitled. OAA programs are intended to provide innovative services that empower older people and contribute to their independence, safety, and dignity.

Services Provided: The Department of Human Services, Seniors and People with Disabilities is the federally recognized State Unit on Aging (SUA) for Older Americans Act services in Oregon. The SUA is responsible for establishing and maintaining a network of Area Agencies on Aging across the State. The SUA is responsible for ensuring that services are provided in accordance with the Older Americans Act. The Act requires states to have programs for support services, family caregiver supports, medication management, nutrition services, senior employment, legal services, elder abuse prevention and long-term care ombudsman services. States may also provide senior center assistance and wellness/prevention activities. Area Agencies on Aging work with local communities to develop a menu of services that meet the needs of older individuals in their area.

Eligibility Requirements: To qualify for OAA services, an individual must:

- ◆ General Services - be 60 years of age or older;
- ◆ Family Caregiver Supports - be a caregiver of someone 60 years of age or older or an older individual caring for a child 18 years of age or younger;
- ◆ Older Worker Employment Services - be 55 years of age or older and have an adjusted income at or below 125% of Federal Poverty Level;
- ◆ Services are targeted to older individuals with the greatest social or economical need, with a special focus on low-income minority individuals and individuals living in rural areas;
- ◆ There are no income or asset/resource criteria for eligibility, except for older worker employment services.

Populations Served:

- ◆ Approximately 130,000 older adults receive OAA support services annually.
- ◆ Another 1,250 individuals, 55 years of age and older, receive employment and training supports each year.
- ◆ Approximately 35% of OAA clients have incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Level.
- ◆ Approximately 65% of clients live in rural communities.
- ◆ SPD uses the Oregon ACCESS client database system to gather client information for the National Aging Program Information System, as required by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging. Area Agencies on Aging report fiscal information monthly to SPD.

Funding: The State distributes federal funds to the Area Agencies on Aging using a federally-approved intra-state funding formula based on the demographics and square mileage of each area. Sources of funding:

- ◆ Older Americans Act planning allocation (federal): \$26,582,216 for 2003-2005 Biennium. \$24,877,651 must be distributed to the Area Agencies on Aging, \$409,544 must be allocated to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program and \$11,958 must be allocated to the Elder Abuse Prevention program.
- ◆ Local match (in-kind and cash match from local communities): approximately \$8.3 million for the biennium.
- ◆ General Fund match for State administration: approximately \$3 million for the biennium. The Department has used Oregon Project Independence as the State's required match for OAA programs. Any reductions in the State match could result in a reduced OAA allocation from the Administration on Aging, as a penalty for not maintaining State effort.