

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were established through the Older Americans Act amendments of 1972 in order to provide a local structure for planning and developing programs for older persons. The goal of an Area Agency on Aging is to enable older people to maintain maximum independence and dignity within their own homes and communities as long as possible by developing a system of coordinated, comprehensive services to meet their needs. Nationwide there are 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 57 State Units on Aging and innumerable local service providers which together with the federal Administration on Aging constitute the National Aging Network. An Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Serving as an effective and visible advocate for all older persons within the region.
- Creating three-year plans for the development of comprehensive community based services that meet those needs, with the input of an advisory council on aging
- Administering Older Americans Act (OAA) funding to implement those three-year Area Plans on Aging
- Procuring and funding qualified agencies to provide services identified in the plan, because AAAs may only provide services directly, if there is no other cost effective alternative.

The SEAGO AAA in addition to OAA funding administers both state and federal funding that provide services to both elders and functionally impaired adults who are under age 60. The State Unit on Aging which is the Department of Economic Security, Aging and Adult Administration contracts with the AAA to administer all direct service funding for adults and elders in the SEAGO region.

PRIMARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The SEAGO Area Agency on Aging provides information and referral services directly to older persons or their families. The SEAGO AAA also operates the Ombudsman or Long-Term Care Advocacy program directly in the Bisbee, Douglas and Sierra Vista areas.

In addition, the AAA provides assistance to its service providers to enhance existing programs and to develop new ones. The Area Agency on Aging issues approximately \$2 million in contracts each year to public, private non-profit and for profit agencies for the provision of services to persons aged 60 or older and to younger persons who are functionally disabled. These agencies are selected competitively through a Request for Proposal process. There are currently 13 different contracts for the following services:

HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES - This term refers to the array of services that are provided to functionally impaired individuals in order to maintain them at their highest functioning level, and includes the following services in the SEAGO AAA system:

Case Management - This service assists individuals to identify their functional needs and the appropriate services that are available to meet these needs. Case management assists individuals in

gaining access to any service by providing information, by making referrals to other agencies, by being an advocate, or by assisting in the application process. If an individual needs any Home and Community Based Service (HCBS), case managers are the gatekeepers charged with determining eligibility and authorizing services. After arranging for the appropriate services, the case manager continues to stay in contact with the client to ensure that services are meeting needs and that the clients are satisfied.

Home Care Program - This term refers to four different services when they are provided in a coordinated fashion to individuals in their place of residence, i.e. Housekeeping, Personal Care, Home Health Aid, or Home Nursing. The case manager must evaluate an individual's need for any of the four service components and authorize the provider to initiate service.

Home Delivered Meals - This service provides a nutritionally balanced noon meal at least five days a week, which is delivered to the individual's place of residence. The case manager must evaluate an individual's need for home delivered meals and authorize the provider to initiate services.

In-Home Respite - This service provides short-term care and supervision of care receivers, to relieve the client's caregivers and help prevent caregivers' burnout. This service is provided in the client's own home for a short amount of time. The case manager must evaluate an individual's need for respite and authorize the provider to initiate services.

NON-HCBS SERVICES - Many of these services are provided in a group setting at senior centers in various communities. The following services are open to individuals aged sixty or over, and in some cases to younger disabled individuals subject to the availability of funding:

Congregate Meals - This service provides a nutritionally balanced noon meal, five days per week, in a social setting.

Transportation - This service provides transportation to and from the congregate meal site, as well as to medical services, shopping areas, etc. It is generally on a demand responsive basis during specific times of day. Transportation between communities is very limited.

Legal Assistance - This service provides legal advice, or representation by an attorney, or by an individual under the supervision of an attorney.

State Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (SHIP) – A SHIP coordinator and volunteer counselors visit selected sites on a scheduled basis to assist individuals with their Medicare Explanation of Benefits, other insurance claims, and medical bills. Individuals are also given assistance to apply for health benefits such as Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low Income Beneficiary (SLMB), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), or Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). Home visits and telephone consultations are also provided.

Ombudsman - This service provides volunteer visitors to residents in long-term care facilities, to socialize, advocate for the residents, and attempt to resolve any problems the residents may have.

CAREGIVER SERVICES - Although many of the above services also provide assistance to unpaid and family caregivers, in SFY 2001-02 a new program that specifically addresses the needs of unpaid

caregivers was initiated. The new services are being integrated into the existing service delivery system, and in-home respite, which had previously been available, has become an integral part of the new program.