

Background

The Older Americans Act was signed into law July 14, 1965, for the purpose of improving the lives of older individuals in relation to income, housing, employment, long-term care, retirement, and community services. In addition to creating the Administration on Aging (AoA), the Act authorized grants to states for community planning, programs and services, and research, demonstration, and training projects in the field of aging.

The Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division serves as the single planning and service agency for older persons in North Dakota, as designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, AoA.

Eligibility

The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for services for individuals age 60 and older. Services are not tied to income. Individuals must have an opportunity to contribute to the cost of the service, but no one can be denied service due to inability or unwillingness to contribute toward the cost.

Priority is given to serve older individuals who:

- Reside in rural areas
- Have low incomes/greatest economic and social needs
- Are considered to be of a minority
- Have limited English proficiency
- Have severe disabilities
- Are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (*as well as, the caretakers of such individuals*)
- Are at risk of institutional placement

Individuals Served

- During Federal Fiscal Year 2009, a total of **27,479 older individuals** in North Dakota received services funded under the Older Americans Act.
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OAA Requirements

Under this federal law, states are required to develop a comprehensive and coordinated system of home and community-based services that allows older individuals to lead independent, meaningful, and dignified lives in their own homes and communities.

To accomplish this, Older Americans Act funds, state funds, and local funds are coordinated to avoid duplication and maximize service. The Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division contracts with local providers for services.

OAA Services Provided

Assistive Safety Devices – A service that provides adaptive and preventive health aids that will assist individuals in their activities of safe daily living.

Senior Center/Congregate Meals – A service that provides meals consisting of at least one-third of the daily dietary needs for an older individual eating in a group setting.

Home-Delivered Meals – A service that provides meals consisting of at least one-third of the daily dietary needs for an older individual who is homebound and unable to prepare an adequate meal.

Health Maintenance Services – Services provided to assess and maintain the health and well being of older individuals. Services include blood pressure/pulse/rapid inspection, foot care, home visits, and medication set-up.

Outreach Services – Efforts to seek out older individuals and identify their needs and to then make appropriate referral and linkage to available services.

Senior Companion Services – A service that offers periodic companionship and non-medical support by volunteers (who receive a stipend) to older individuals that require assistance.

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OAA Services (*Continued*)

Legal Assistance Services - Legal advice and representation are provided by an attorney to older individuals with economic or social needs and includes: 1) to the extent feasible, counseling or other appropriate assistance by a paralegal or law student under the direct supervision of an attorney; and 2) counseling or representation by a non-lawyer where permitted by law.

Information and Assistance - A service provided by the Department's **Aging and Disability Resource-LINK**, a nationwide toll-free number (**1-800-451-8693**), that provides information on a wide range of home and community-based and long term care and support services, volunteer opportunities, and benefits. Information can also be accessed on-line at <http://www.carechoice.nd.gov/>.

Senior Community Service Employment Program - Provides part-time employment opportunities in community service activities for unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years or older and who have fewer employment prospects.

Older Americans Act funds are also used to provide services through the:

- North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Program

Separate fact sheets are available for each of the programs.

The Division also administers an **Aging and Disability Resource Center** demonstration grant funded by the Administration on Aging.

Federal Fiscal Year 2009 Older Americans Act Services			
Number of Individuals Served/Units of Service Provided			
Service	Individuals Served	Units of Service	
Assistive Safety Devices	1,397	2,168 devices	1 unit = 1 device
Congregate Meals	13,910	690,570 meals	1 unit = 1 meal
Home-Delivered Meals	5,364	508,155 meals	1 unit = 1 meal
Health Maintenance	4,579	139,688 units	Set billing units per service
Information & Assistance	1,655	1,655 units	1 unit = 1 contact
Legal Assistance	955	3,984 units	1 unit = 1 hour
Outreach	12,501	86,145 units	Set billing units per activity
Senior Companion	210	4,534 units	1 unit = 1 contact