



FACT SHEET



The mission of the Older Americans Act is to help older people maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities and to promote a continuum of care for vulnerable older adults. The Act was due to be reauthorized in 2012.

TITLE I
Declaration of Objectives;
Definitions

TITLE II
Administration on Aging

TITLE III
Grants for State and Community
Programs on Aging

TITLE IV
Activities for Health, Independence
and Longevity

TITLE V
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Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection

January 2019

Older Americans Act

The **Older Americans Act** of 1965 (Pub.L. 89-73, 79 Stat. 218, July 14, 1965) was the first federal level initiative aimed at providing long term services and supports for older adults. It established a national Aging Network, which is comprised of the Administration on Aging (AoA), State Units on Aging, and Area Agencies on Aging at the local level. In 2006, Congress reauthorized the Act. In April 2012, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services created the Administration for Community Living (ACL), which includes AoA, the Office on Disability, and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

Background and Funding

All programs are administered at the federal level by the Administration on Aging (now part of the Administration on Community Living, except for the Title V community service employment program, which is administered by the Department of Labor.

Except for family caregiver support services, each state receives Title III allotments for services proportionate to its 60-plus population compared with the total 60-plus population. Family caregiver support program funds are allotted based on a state's proportionate population age 70 and over.

States allocate Title III funds to area agencies on aging based on a state-determined distribution formula.

Title III services are available to all people age 60 and over, but they are targeted to those with the greatest economic or social need.

Title I: Declaration of Objectives

Title I sets out broad social policy objectives oriented toward improving the lives of all older people, including adequate income in retirement, the best possible physical and mental health, opportunity for employment, and comprehensive long term services and supports.

Title II: Establishment of the AoA

Title II establishes AoA within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as the chief federal agency advocate for older people and sets out the responsibilities of AoA and the Assistant Secretary for Aging. Among other things, Title II requires AoA to create the National Eldercare Locator Service to provide nationwide information through a toll-free telephone number so that users can identify community resources for older people. It also establishes national resource centers for long-term care ombudsman services and elder abuse prevention activities.

Title III: Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging

Title III formula grants support the activities of 56 state units on aging (SUAs) and 629 area agencies on aging (AAAs), which can be nonprofit or public agencies. AAAs act as advocates on behalf of, and coordinate social service programs for, older people. Title III authorizes funds for supportive and nutrition services, family caregiver support, and disease prevention and health promotion activities. State agencies are required to pass all Title III funds to area agencies to administer within their state-defined planning and service areas.

Supportive services (Title III-B). Funds a wide range of social services aimed at helping older people remain independent in their own homes and communities, transportation and information and assistance, home care, and legal assistance.

Nutrition services (Title III C). The elderly nutrition program provides meals and socialization to older people in congregate settings (Title III C-1), such as senior centers and churches and home delivered meals to frail older people in their own homes (Title III C-2).

Family caregiver support (Title III E). The National Family Caregiver Support Program provides grants to states to develop a variety of services to assist family caregivers. These include information and assistance about available services, individual counseling, organization of support groups and caregiver training, respite services to provide families temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities.

Disease prevention and health promotion (Title III D). Seed money for programs are proven to prevent or delay chronic conditions and promote health among older people.

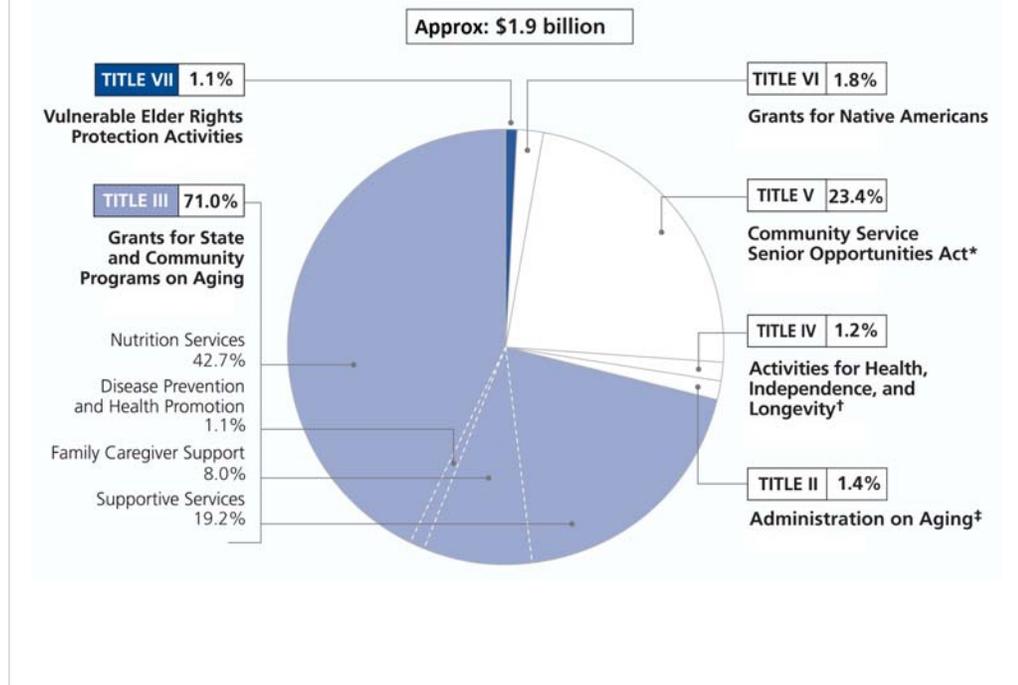
Title IV: Activities for Health, Independence, and Longevity

Title IV provides authority for training, research, and demonstration projects in the field of aging. Funds are to be used to expand knowledge about aging and to test innovative ideas on services and programs. Title IV has supported a wide range of projects related to income, health, housing and long-term care.

Title V: Community Service Senior Opportunities Act

Title V provides part-time jobs for unemployed low-income people age 55

Older Americans Act Funds for all States



and older who have poor employment prospects. The U.S. Department of Labor contracts with states and national organizations that recruit and enroll workers who are then placed in community service jobs, for example, in hospitals, schools, and senior nutrition sites.

Title VI: Grants for Services for Native Americans

AoA awards Title VI grants to Indian tribal organizations, Native Alaskan organizations, and nonprofit groups for representing Native Hawaiians. Grants are used to fund supportive and nutrition services older Native Americans.

Title VII: Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities

Title VII authorizes the long-term care ombudsman program as well as a program to prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Long-term care ombudsman program (Chapter 2).

This program investigates and resolves complaints of residents of nursing facilities and other adult care homes. It is the only OAA program that focuses solely on the needs of institutionalized persons. Complaints may relate to action, inaction, or decisions of long-term care providers that adversely affect the health, safety, welfare, or rights of residents. Ombudsmen represent the interests of residents before governmental agencies and also seek administrative and legal remedies to protect their rights.

Prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation (Chapter 3).

States are required to carry out activities to make the public aware of ways to identify and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to coordinate activities of AAAs with state adult protective services programs.

Source: *National Health Policy Forum, February 2012, "The Basics, Older Americans Act of 1965" by Carol O'Shaughnessy.*