

Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Statement of Organization and Operation

General Information

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) strives to help Florida’s elders remain healthy, safe, and independent. DOEA was constitutionally designated by Florida voters to “serve as the primary state agency responsible for administering human services programs for the elderly” (Section 430.03, Florida Statutes).

DOEA is responsible for developing policy recommendations for long-term care, combating ageism, creating public awareness of aging issues, understanding the contributions and needs of elders, advocating on behalf of elders, serving as an information clearinghouse, and promoting the maintenance and improvement of the physical well-being and mental health of elderly persons.

DOEA is the designated State Unit on Aging, in accordance with the federal Older Americans Act and Chapter 430, Florida Statutes. The Department works in concert with federal, state, local, and community-based public and private agencies and organizations to represent the interests of older Floridians, their caregivers, and elder advocates. Through partnerships with other members of the Aging Network, DOEA works to provide community-based care to promote the well-being, safety, and independence of Florida’s seniors, their families, and caregivers. DOEA’s vision is for all Floridians to live well and age well.

Mission: *To promote the well-being, safety, and independence of Florida’s seniors, their families, and caregivers.*

Vision: *For all Floridians to live well and age well.*

Agency Responsibilities

The Department shall plan and administer its programs and services through planning and service areas as designated by the Department. §20.41(2), F.S.

The Department shall designate and contract with area agencies on aging in each of the Department’s planning and service areas. §20.41(6), F.S.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are the designated private, non-profit entities that advocate, plan, coordinate, and fund a system of elder support services in their respective Planning and Service Areas (PSAs). Each of the 11 Area Agencies on Aging also operates as an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). ADRCs function as a single, coordinated system for information and access to services for all Floridians seeking long-term care resources. The ADRCs provide information and assistance about state and federal benefits, as well as available local programs and services. Each AAA in turn contracts with one or more Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) Lead Agencies that provide and coordinate services for elders throughout the state. Individuals and community agencies seeking accurate, unbiased information about federal, state, or local health & social services can access Florida's Elder Helpline by calling toll-free 1-800-96-Elder (1-800-963-5337).

The Department shall administer the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program...and shall ensure that the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program operates in compliance with the Older American Act. §20.41(4), F.S.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is a statewide, volunteer-based program that works to improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents by advocating for and protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights. Program staff and volunteers receive specialized training to become state-certified ombudsmen who identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family care homes, or continuing care retirement communities.

Ombudsmen are community members from all walks of life who are passionate about improving the lives of residents living in long-term care facilities. They are trained to work with residents and their family members to communicate concerns and resolve problems by providing advocacy, support, education, and empowerment. These volunteers dedicate their time and talents to make a difference in improving the lives of people who may be elderly and/or disabled.

The LTCOP operates through the **Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman** and 14 local offices that coordinate and support the service of nearly 200 certified volunteer ombudsmen and ombudsman trainees.

The Department shall be the state unit on aging as defined in the federal Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, and shall exercise all responsibilities pursuant to that act. See §20.41(5), F.S.

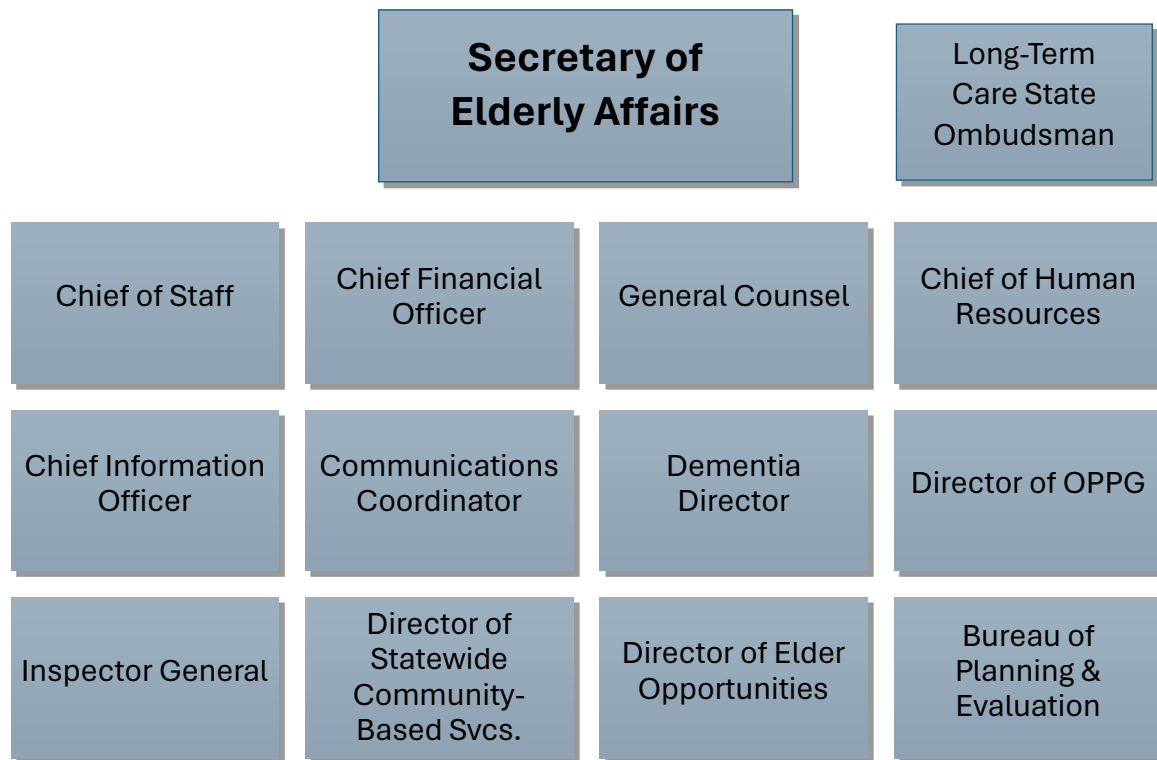
The Department is the designated State Unit on Aging (SUA), in accordance with the federal Older American Act and Chapter 430, Florida Statutes. DOEA works in concert with other federal, state, local, and community-based public and private agencies and organizations to represent the interests of older Floridians, their caregivers, and elder advocates. The organizations and providers that help create a better life for Florida's elders make up Florida's aging network.

Agency Head & Agency Organization

The head of the Department is the Secretary of Elderly Affairs, who is responsible for administering the affairs of the Department and charting the overall direction of the Department. The Secretary must be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The Secretary serves at

the pleasure of the Governor. §20.41(1), F.S. The Secretary represents the Governor on matters relating to Florida’s elder population and serves as an advocate regarding issues and programs that affect the Department and the elders it serves.

The Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff is the focal point for management and overall coordination of the Department’s activities. The office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff includes:



- **Office of Inspector General** – The Office of the Inspector General serves as a central point for coordination of and responsibility for activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government. The Office provides independent, objective assurance and consulting activities designed to add value and improve the Department’s operations. The Office of the Inspector General helps the Department accomplish its objectives by providing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating risk management, internal controls, and Department performance.

- **Office of the General Counsel** – The Office of the General Counsel provides legal services for the Department including: legal advice and review of contracts, grants, interagency, and other Department agreements, policies, and procurement documents; drafts specific Departmental policies; drafts and promulgates the Department’s administrative rules; acts as lead on the fulfillment of public records requests; represents the Department in litigation and other legal matters; and assists in the review of legal aspects of proposed legislation and Level II background screening issues.

• **Office of Public and Professional Guardians** – Originally called the Statewide Public Guardianship Office and Established in 1999, the Office of Public & Professional Guardians (OPPG) appoints local public guardians to provide guardianship services to persons who do not have adequate income or assets to afford a private guardian and when there are no willing family or friends to serve in this vital role. The OPPG, which contracts with 16 local Offices of Public Guardianship throughout Florida, is also responsible for the registration and education of professional guardians. Since 2016, the OPPG has expanded its responsibilities to include oversight and regulation of approximately 550 or more professional guardians statewide, which includes investigating, and if appropriate, disciplining guardians operating in violation of the law. The Office is responsible for the creation and administration of the 40-hour professional guardian training course and the professional guardian competency exam. The OPPG is also responsible for the regulatory oversight and education of professional guardians and the education of examining committee members.

• **Dementia Director and Dementia Unit** – The role of the statewide Dementia Director is to work with the Alzheimer’s Disease Advisory Committee, Florida’s 17 Memory Disorder Clinics and Florida Brain Bank, the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI), the 16 Dementia Care and Cure Initiatives around the state of Florida, and to lead Florida Alzheimer’s Centers of Excellence (FACE). ADI utilizes state funds to provide caregiver training and support; including counseling, consumable medical supplies, and respite for caregiver relief; and Model Day Care programs to test new care alternatives. FACE, which is a first-of-its-kind program to be administered by a state agency, pairs Care Navigators with individuals, families, and caregivers to bridge connections to local resources and services for Alzheimer’s disease. FACE achieves a holistic care model for clients and caregivers to address two primary goals: to allow Floridians living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias to age-in-place, and to empower family caregivers with increased capacity and stamina.

• **Division of Elder Opportunities** – This division coordinates and administers programs that do not fall strictly into Older American Act, state-funded, or Medicaid categories. These programs are largely funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or other federal sources. Some Elder Opportunities’ programs, however, do receive state general revenue matching funds. The common thread that ties together the programs that fall under the Division of Elder Opportunities umbrella is that each serve to help improve, empower, or protect the quality of life of Florida’s elders.

• **Office of Communications** – The Office is responsible for implementing a strategic communications program for the Department of Elder Affairs and is the primary resource for promotion and publication of Department issues, programs, functions and special initiatives. The Communications Coordinator and External Affairs Manager serve as the Department’s spokespeople. This office is also responsible for the Department’s correspondence and main switchboard information line which is staffed by four operators.

• **Bureau of Human Resources** – The Bureau of Human Resources is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Department’s policies and procedures, processing personnel actions, and coordinating professional development and employee training. Human Resources manages and tracks all training data to ensure that the Department meets all statutory training requirements.

• **Information Technology** – Led by the Department’s Chief Information Officer, the Office of Information Technology (IT) provides the Department with enterprise-wide integrated system solutions and high-quality customer service to ensure the efficient utilization of technology

resources and investments. The office provides customer-focused, responsive technical support services to Department staff located at the Tallahassee headquarters and at field offices throughout the state. IT also assists the Department's Aging Network partners at the AAA level in utilizing the Department's enhanced client information and referral tracking system. IT successfully maintains the privacy, security, and integrity of client, employee, and citizen data, while using industry-standard methodologies to deliver projects and services on time and within budget.

- **Bureau of Planning & Evaluation** – The Bureau's function is to maintain a global view of the Department of Elder Affairs and its various programs, thus ensuring no conflict or unnecessary duplication between areas in plans, grants, or reports. This office leads and manages strategic project initiatives, including the development of strategic plans and is also responsible for evaluating programs administered by the Department. The office provides internal consulting services on policy development and performance measurement and is responsible for analyzing organization data and key departmental measures to evaluate and improve organization performance, accountability, and sustainability.

- **Division of Financial Administration** – Manages and directs all financial and budget-related activities for the Department. The Division coordinates the organization, direction, and support activities of all Department programs. This includes contract administration, accounting, budgeting, revenue management, monitoring and quality assurance, and development of the Department's Legislative Budget Requests.

- **Division of Statewide Community Based Services** – The Division is responsible for coordinating the provision of services covered by the federal Older American Act (OAA). OAA provides assistance in the development of new or improved programs to help older persons by awarding grants to the states for community planning and services. Programs covered run the gamut of service delivery, from home delivered and congregate nutrition, the National Family Caregiver Support Program, to disease prevention and health promotion.

- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** – Please see "Agency Responsibilities," above.

Obtaining Other Information

- Contact Information:

Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-700
Phone: 850-414-2000
TDD: 850-414-2001
Email: Information@elderaffairs.org

- To apply for services or obtain information about our program and services, please call the statewide, toll-free Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)
- For media inquiries, please email Communications@elderaffairs.org for the Office of Communications.
- For public records requests, please contact the Office of the General Counsel:
 - Written requests:
Office of the General Counsel
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000
 - Email requests:
doeapublicrecords@elderaffairs.org
 - Public Records Coordinator Contact:
Phone: 850-414-2151
Email: doeapublicrecords@elderaffairs.org
- For free and confidential health insurance counseling for Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers through the SHINE (**S**erving **H**ealth **I**nsurance **N**eeds of **E**lders) program, please call the statewide, toll-free Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) or visit <https://www.floridashine.org/>
- To contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program or file a complaint, please call toll-free 1-888-831-0404, or email LTCOPInformer@elderaffairs.org
 - Additional information can be found at <https://ombudsman.elderaffairs.org/file-a-complaint/>

All voice telephone numbers may be reached by person using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

Agency Clerk

The duties and responsibilities of the Agency Clerk include, but are not limited to:

- filing and recording the filing date of any Final Order issued by the Department;
- maintaining records of all pleadings and other legal documents filed with the Department;
- certifying the index and the record on appeal of any Final Order; and
- serving as the contact person for obtaining information about variances or waivers of Department rules.

All notices, petitions, and other documents required to be filed with the Agency Clerk may be submitted by hand delivery, regular mail, or electronic mail. The Agency Clerk no longer accepts filings by facsimile transmission. Filings should be sent to the Agency Clerk at the following mailing address:

For filing by electronic mail:

agencyclerk@elderaffairs.org

For filing by hand delivery or mail:

Agency Clerk
Office of the General Counsel
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way, Ste. 315
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000

For telephone inquiries:

850-414-2114

The Agency Clerk's office is open from 8:00 a.m. EST to 5:00 p.m. EST each business day. The Agency Clerk's office is not open and does not accept filings after these hours, on weekends, or on state holidays.

***Any document received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be deemed filed as of 8:00 a.m. on the next regular business day.*

Electronic Transmission of Documents

A party who files a document by electronic transmission shall represent that the original, physically signed document, will be retained by that party for the duration of the proceeding and of any subsequent appeal or subsequent proceeding in that cause, and that the party will produce the original upon the request of the other parties.

A party who elects to file a document by electronic transmission shall be responsible for any delay, disruption, or interruption of the electronic signals and accepts the full risk that the document may not be properly filed with the Department as a result.

The filing date for a document transmitted by electronic mail shall be the date the Department receives the complete document. Any document received by the Agency Clerk after 5:00 p.m. EST shall be deemed filed as of 8:00 a.m. EST on the next regular business day.

Requests for Variances or Waivers

A petition for variance from or waiver of a Department rule should be submitted for filing to the Agency Clerk at the address or email address listed above. Requests must be submitted according to the guidelines outlined in Section 120.542, Florida Statutes, and Florida Administrative Code Rule Chapter 28-104.

Index of Final Orders

The Department's Index of Final Orders is maintained in the Office of General Counsel and can be accessed by contacting the Agency Clerk at the address, telephone number, or email address listed above. All Department final orders required to be indexed pursuant to Section 120.53, Florida Statutes, rendered on or after July 1, 2015, shall be reported on the website of the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings at [http://www. Doah.state.fl.us](http://www.Doah.state.fl.us).

Declaratory Statements

Any substantially affected person may seek a declaratory statement regarding an agency's opinion as to the applicability of a statutory provision, or of any rule or order of the agency, as it applies to the petitioner's particular set of circumstances. This statutory provision is found in section 120.565, Florida Statutes.

This statement of agency organization and operation has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Rule 28-101.001, Florida Administrative Code, and is available to any person upon request.