

1 Getting the Help You Need

This guide is produced by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and is updated periodically to provide the public with accurate information for use by Florida's elders and their families, and caregivers. This section provides brief descriptions of organizations and types of programs and services available.

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STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Thanks to advances in medical technology and public health, Americans are now living longer. In fact, people age 85 and older make up the fastest growing segment of the population. At age 65, we can now expect to live 16-19 years longer. By 2030, seniors in the U.S. are expected to number 72 million, double the number in 2000.

The third most populous state in the nation, Florida – where almost one of every four residents is age 60 or older – is especially impacted by this trend. The Department of Elder Affairs serves Florida's more than 4.8 million residents age 60 and older, and is continually planning to meet the needs of the state's elder population.

The federal government, through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging,

works in partnership with a national network of 57 State Units on Aging and 618 Area Agencies on Aging to assist in planning programs for the elderly. In Florida, the State Unit on Aging is the Department of Elder Affairs.

The Administration for Community Living is the official federal agency dedicated to implement programs that provide supportive home and community-based services to older persons and their caregivers. These programs help a growing number of older persons maintain their independence and allow them to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Information Sources

- Federal agencies,
- State agencies,
- DOEA,
- Area Agencies on Aging,
- Elder Helpline, and
- County and community service agencies.

FLORIDA'S AGING SERVICES NETWORK:

Over 14,095 volunteers assist the Florida's Aging Services Network each quarter.

Each year, DOEA receives millions of dollars in federal funds from the Administration on Aging to contract with the Area Agencies on Aging. The Area Agencies, in turn, deliver services to elders with the help of more than 1,100 local service providers.

Since the aging process affects each of us differently, the vitality level of one person at age 85 could be the same as another at age 60. For this reason, the need for assistance can vary substantially from one elder to another. Needed services may be as simple as help with chores and house cleaning, or as demanding as 24-hour skilled nursing service. The more extensive the needs for care, the greater the costs of providing that care. The longer we stay healthy and independent, the greater our quality of life will be.

We can expect to lose some level of independence as we advance in age, even with the best of health. However, a minor loss of independence should not automatically force an elder into a nursing home. Today, through various federal and state assistance programs, millions of seniors are able to remain in their homes and still receive a level of care that allows them to age in a more family- and community-oriented environment.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

The Department of Elder Affairs administers a wide variety of assistance programs sponsored by both the federal government and the State of Florida.

Major program initiatives sponsored by the Department include in-home and community-based services, Medicare and Medicaid counseling, Communities for a Lifetime, information, advocacy and caregiver support,

volunteer training, health and wellness promotion, and elder abuse prevention and outreach. In addition, the Department, through its local CARES (Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-term Care Services) offices, provides assessment services and level of care determinations for individuals seeking Medicaid long-term care services. An overview of each program is provided in this section for each major DOEA program initiative. These programs include:

Adult Care Food Program

A program funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide reimbursement to eligible adult care centers, helping them provide nutritious meals to adult day care participants. Centers use this program to help maintain participants' nutritional status while keeping food costs down. Eligible facilities include licensed adult day care centers, mental health day

treatment centers, rehabilitation programs, and respite centers.

Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI)

A program that provides services for the special needs of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related memory disorders. Respite care (caregiver relief) services are provided in all 67 Florida counties. There are 15 memory disorder clinics in Florida providing medical diagnosis and treatment for patients. The clinics also provide training and education to caregivers.

AmeriCorps

A network of national service programs that uses volunteers to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Current programs provide caregiver relief and companionship to homebound elders. Program members receive extensive service training, health insurance, a living allowance, and, upon

successful completion of the program, an education award.

Community Care for the Elderly (CCE)

A program that provides community-based services to enable elders with functional impairments to live dignified and reasonably independent lives in their own homes, or in the homes of relatives or caregivers, for as long as possible. The CCE program prevents inappropriate or premature nursing-home placement by providing ongoing case management and other services, such as adult day care, respite, home-delivered meals, personal care, consumable medical supplies, emergency alert response, light housekeeping, minor home repair, and yard clean-up.

Communities for a Lifetime

A program that helps Florida's communities plan and implement improvements that benefit the lives of all their residents, young and old. This initiative

recognizes the diverse needs of residents and the unique contributions each individual can make to his or her community. Participating communities use existing resources and state technical assistance to make crucial civic improvements in areas such as housing, health care, transportation, accessibility, business partnerships, and education, and to make efficient use of natural resources, volunteer opportunities, and recreation.

CARES (Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-term Care Services)

Performs pre-admission screening for nursing facility or alternative placement. CARES staff assesses clients for medical eligibility in Medicaid-funded nursing facilities or community alternatives. Services of the CARES Program include:

- Medical eligibility for the Medicaid Institutional Care Program (ICP),

- Medical eligibility for Medicaid waivers that provide community-based services,
- Medical eligibility for all mentally ill individuals requesting ICP, and
- Medical eligibility for individuals with intellectual disabilities requesting ICP services.

Elder Helpline

A statewide toll-free telephone information and referral assistance service that links callers to local resources. The Elder Helpline is a starting point for anyone seeking information about aging issues, looking for an aging services provider, or wanting to volunteer. Helpline information and referral specialists not only answer general inquiries but also direct callers to the appropriate source to address their needs. The Elder Helpline can be reached by calling toll free 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

Elder Update Newspaper

A bi-monthly newspaper published by DOEA. The paper features topics and issues of special interest to elders and includes guest articles from health experts, case managers, and consumers. A subscription to Elder Update is available free of charge to Florida residents by calling the Elder Helpline and providing your name and address.

Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program (EHEAP)

A program that provides vendor payments to assist low-income households. At least one person in the residence must be age 60 or older and experiencing a home energy emergency, such as difficulty keeping the utilities on. The energy emergency could be the receipt of a pending shut-off notice, lack of fuel or wood, or an unusually high utility bill resulting from a severely hot summer or harsh winter.

Employ Florida Marketplace Silver Edition

Silver Edition was created to address the mutual needs of Florida businesses, organizations, and the state's job seekers age 50 and older. The idea behind Silver Edition's goal is to make it easier for older workers and older worker-friendly employers to find one another. The website silver.employflorida.com was created to provide useful information to older, retirement-age job seekers who wish to remain in, or return to, the workforce. Silver Edition is sponsored by Career Source, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, and other members of the Silver Edition Task Force.

Home Care for the Elderly (HCE)

A program that provides subsidy payments to help caregivers maintain low-income elders in

their own homes or in the home of the caregiver. The monthly basic subsidy payment is made to the caregiver for support and health maintenance, and to assist with specialized health care needs. An eligible HCE participant must be at risk for nursing home placement.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

A statewide system of local councils that uses specially trained volunteers to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, individuals living in nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and adult family care homes. In addition, the Ombudsman Program performs the following services and activities:

- Aiding the development of resident and family councils,
- Conducting annual assessments of long-term care facilities, and
- Monitoring and commenting on the development of federal, state, and local regulations

and policies regarding the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents in long-term care facilities.

Older Americans Act Programs

These programs are probably the ones most familiar to you. They provide social activities for seniors, such as meals and recreational activities at senior centers and other congregate sites. Also, through these programs, local agencies deliver in-home services to frail elders, such as Meals on Wheels, personal care, homemaking help, and caregiver support. Local agencies also use Older Americans Act money to fund advocacy and health promotion activities that benefit all elders. The health and wellness activities include a combination of health education, disease prevention, and screening and nutrition programs for elders. The Senior Community Service Employment Program, another Older Americans Act

program, provides part-time employment and job training for workers age 55 and older.

Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

PACE targets individuals who would otherwise qualify for Medicaid nursing home placement. It provides recipients with a comprehensive service package that permits them to continue living at home while receiving services, rather than being placed in a nursing home. PACE is unique, however, in several respects. It includes both Medicare and Medicaid services and features comprehensive social services that can be provided at an adult day health center, at home, or at an inpatient facility. A team of doctors, nurses and other health professionals assess participant needs, develop care plans, and deliver all services that are integrated into a complete health care plan.

Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families (RELIEF)

A program that provides in-home respite for the caregivers of homebound elders. Respite services allow the caregiver to leave the premises of homebound elders for a brief period of time. Carefully selected, screened, and trained volunteers provide respite services.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

A program that fosters and promotes useful part-time employment in community service activities for unemployed, low-income persons who are 55 and older and who have poor employment prospects. The program also fosters individual economic self-sufficiency and increases the number of older persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in either the public or private sector. Program participants may

receive up to 20 hours a week of part-time employment in a community service assignment, job training, and related educational opportunities.

Senior Companion Program

A national service peer volunteer program that provides services to elders at risk of institutionalization due to chronic illnesses, disabilities, or isolation. Senior Companion volunteers provide:

- Companionship and advocacy,
- Respite to caregivers of frail elders,
- Transportation to medical appointments, and
- Shopping assistance and meal preparation.

Senior companion volunteers who meet certain income restrictions may receive free annual medical examinations, along with a stipend to help defray expenses.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

A program that supports good nutrition by providing low-income seniors with coupons to purchase fresh produce from participating farmers' markets in 14 Florida counties: Alachua, Bay, Dixie, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Hernando, Jackson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Sumter, Suwannee, Union, and Washington. This program is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a state vitamin settlement grant and operates from April 1 through July 31 of each year.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

A fraud awareness program that teaches Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers how to become smarter health care consumers. The program utilizes retired professionals as volunteers to help combat Medicare/Medicaid fraud, errors, and abuse by teaching beneficiaries how to

identify and report health care fraud. SMP operates a toll-free fraud hotline, 1-866-357-6677, for the public to ask questions and report suspected fraudulent activity in their health care accounts.

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders)

A program providing free, unbiased insurance counseling and information about Medicare, Medicaid, other health insurance, long-term care planning, and prescription assistance. SHINE uses a statewide network of trained volunteer counselors. Elders and their caregivers can contact a SHINE counselor in each of Florida's 67 counties by calling the Florida Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) or visiting floridashine.org.

Silver Alert

A program designed to help authorities quickly find missing elders who suffer from dementia or other cognitive impairments. Created through an executive

order by Governor Charlie Crist in October 2008, and made Florida law in 2011 by Governor Rick Scott, Florida's Silver Alert system allows important information to be quickly distributed to citizens so they can help local law enforcement rescue affected elders, both walking and driving, and return them home safely. Several state agencies, including the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Transportation, and Florida Highway Patrol, partnered with the state's aging services network, local law enforcement agencies, and the news media to implement the Silver Alert system through a standardized and coordinated response. Now that individuals with dementia who drive automobiles have been recognized statewide as an at-risk population, the State has begun to focus on individuals with dementia who become lost and wander on foot. The number of incidents are many more than originally believed, as too many individuals are severely injured or fatally impacted by

weather exposure and other conditions. For additional information or to receive email alerts visit floridasilveralert.com.

Office of Public and Professional Guardians

A program responsible for the registration and education of professional guardians in Florida and for appointing the public guardians in the state. Current lists of both professional and public guardians can be found at elderaffairs.org/doea/spgo.php.

INTER-AGENCY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Because of the size and structure of Florida state government, finding the right agency to help you with your specific needs can sometimes be a challenge. Like many states, Florida has a multifaceted social service system. This system often requires people seeking services to deal with one or more agencies within the state's human services network. Our helpline information and referral specialists can put you in

touch with the right department or agency and can also advise you about what information that agency will need from you in order to respond to your request.

The Department of Elder Affairs works with various state agencies that impact the delivery of services to elders. The Department works with four state agencies on a routine basis: the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the Florida Department of Health (DOH), and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The following is an overview of these departments and their functions.

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

While serving as the principal advocacy and protection agency for Florida's children, DCF also administers the state's financial assistance programs. Programs that provide assistance to elders include determining the eligibility of individuals who apply for

Medicaid, food assistance (SNAP), and OSS (Optional State Supplementation). DCF also administers the Adult Protective Services Program, which provides state-mandated investigation of all allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. To apply for Medicaid or food assistance, call the Department of Children and Families at 1-866-762-2237. To report suspected abuse or neglect of an elder or adult with disabilities, call 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)

As the state's designated agency for regulating and licensing health care and skilled nursing facilities, AHCA is responsible for the administration of the state Medicaid program. Call AHCA at 1-888-419-3456 if you have questions about Medicaid. The agency also receives complaints about hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies, adult day care

facilities, or other specialized health care providers.

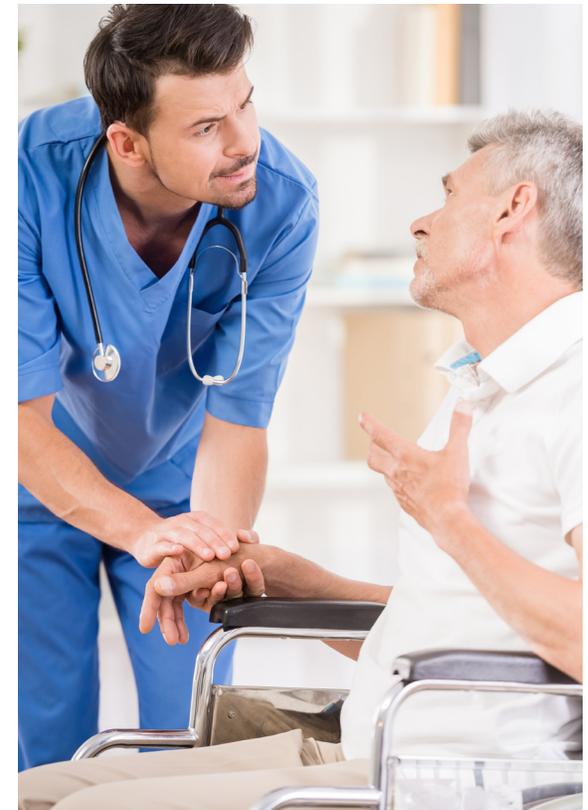
Department of Health (DOH)

The Florida Department of Health has oversight responsibility for the state's public health system, which includes immunizations and disease control. DOH also licenses and regulates doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, and other medical professionals. The telephone number for your local county health clinic can be found in the resource directory section of this guide under County Resources. To report a complaint about a doctor or licensed health professional, call 1-850-245-4339

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has no jurisdiction over the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (the federal agency that operates VA hospitals and nursing homes). However, this Department's

service officers are able, in some cases, to assist Floridians in obtaining veterans' benefits. DVA is responsible for administering the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services, which realigns medical facilities and services to meet veterans' needs and provide high quality care. If you have questions about benefits or the program, call 727-518-3202.



OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

In addition to the information provided in this *Consumer Resource Guide*, many other information sources can assist you in getting the help you need. If you cannot find the information you need in this guide, we suggest calling the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) or your local Area Agency on Aging. The numbers for the Area Agencies on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Centers serving each county are listed in the Resource Directory section of this guide.

Also, most organizations list additional information about their programs and services on the Internet. If you have access to the Internet, visit the website of the agency or organization from which you seek assistance. Website addresses are included in the Resource Directory section of this guide.

