



# Just the Facts:

## Area Agencies on Aging

### What are the Area Agencies on Aging?

Ohio's 12 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) assist communities and individuals regarding issues of Ohio's aging population. This regionalized system of AAAs provides a statewide network attuned to the needs as well as the resources of Ohio's local communities.

### How many AAAs are in Ohio?

Ohio has 12 AAAs that cumulatively represent all 88 counties. There are 670 AAAs nationwide. Ohio AAAs are designated by the Ohio Department of Aging. The entire area covered by an AAA, usually several counties, is called a Planning Service Area (PSA).

### How long have the AAAs been working on behalf of older adults?

AAAs were established by the Older Americans Act of 1965. Ohio's AAAs have more than 30 years of care management experience administering and coordinating services for older adults. As the population has changed over time—with older adults living longer and facing more chronic illness and frailty—AAA services have evolved and continue to evolve to meet these new and more challenging needs. AAAs coordinate the provision of low cost, comprehensive, quality care to thousands of older adults by helping them navigate a complex system of services. For years, AAAs have maximized private and public resources to ensure that essential services are available to older adults in need of comprehensive long-term care.

### What types of services are available at AAAs?

AAAs are the primary vehicles for organizing, coordinating, and providing community-based services and opportunities for older adults. The services typically available include:

- Assisting in Accessing Services—directing older adults to appropriate resources through information and referral, consultations, etc.;
- Linking to Community-Based Services—promoting independence by linking older adults with specialized health and social programs; and
- Administering In-Home Services—providing case management and administration for PASSPORT homecare.

AAAs are planners, funders and educators, as well as providers of information and referral services. AAAs actively advocate for systemic changes and policy reform as it relates to the needs of the thousands of consumers we serve.

### What is the AAA role in PASSPORT (Pre-Admission Screening System Providing Options and Resources Today)?

AAAs perform the screening, assessment, quality assurance, provider relations and case management functions. PASSPORT is the front door for Ohioans seeking long-term care assistance. The pre-admission screening and assessment process often diverts older adults from more expensive and more institutionalized long-term care. Older adults who appear to be Medicaid eligible or have extensive care needs will receive a thorough in-home assessment by a nurse or social worker after an initial telephone screening. Care plans are developed by combining services the caregiver provides with publicly funded services. Older adults who qualify for PASSPORT homecare will receive appropriate homecare services.



### How similar are the AAAs?

Ohio's 12 AAAs each serve a multi-county planning and service area. AAAs create local area plans based on population, resources and the needs of the elderly in the individual communities they serve. While many state and federally funded programs operate the same way across the state, AAAs often have great latitude in customizing their service delivery to provide the most appropriate system of care for their communities. The largest program AAAs operate locally is PASSPORT and its design is the same statewide.

### Do the AAAs provide direct services?

AAAs maintain an independent role. AAAs do not directly provide in-home and community-based services. After carefully assessing prospective community-based care consumers, AAAs arrange necessary services for the consumer.

### How do AAAs arrange for services and assure quality care?

AAAs distribute federal, state and, in some cases, local funds. Each AAA has a thorough contract selection process monitored by the Ohio Department of Aging. Contractors must meet service specifications designed to ensure quality. AAAs secure many providers to maximize cost effectiveness, respond to client needs and address geographic concerns. AAAs monitor providers through site visits, audits, reports, client surveys and evaluations. Each AAA also has an ombudsman program to address concerns.

### Who monitors the work of the AAAs?

The Ohio Department of Aging and other funders monitor the AAAs. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services monitor administration of the PASSPORT program. In addition, of the 12 AAAs, ten are private, non-profit organizations with a board of directors from the community responsible for the operations of the AAA. The remaining two AAAs are operated by governmental units vested with the same responsibilities to the public as a community board of directors.

### How do AAAs advocate on behalf of older adults?

AAA staff work with local groups, organizations and policymakers on issues that affect older adults. Staff plan events and activities to educate the public. AAAs hold public hearings to learn about community needs. AAAs provide the media with current research and data on demographic and other trends. AAAs provide a wide array of trainings for professionals who work with older adults. Newsletters, annual reports and special events keep the community informed about AAAs and issues that affect older adults.

### What is the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging?

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (OAAAA) is a statewide network of agencies that provide services and advocate on behalf of Ohio's older adults. The Association addresses issues that affect the aging network; provides training, education, and advocacy services to members; and serves as a collective voice for the AAAs.

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