



## Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Erin Dalton, Director



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alleghenycounty.us/dhs/aaa

Established in 2000  
Formerly, Allegheny County  
Department of Aging

### Administration

Dr. Shannah Tharp-Gilliam  
DHS DEPUTY / ADMINISTRATOR AAA

Advisory Council to the  
Area Agency on Aging (15 members)

State oversight: Pennsylvania  
Department of Aging

### Mission

To help Allegheny County residents;  
primarily those 60 years of age and  
older, live independent lives.

### Legal Mandates

AAA is required through the following  
agencies and legislation to deliver  
services to the elderly in a coordinated  
manner, utilizing all community  
resources in an effort to avoid  
duplication and ensure comprehensive  
county-wide coverage:

- Federal Administration on Aging
- Pennsylvania Department of Aging
- Older Americans Act
- Pennsylvania Act 70

## Background

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is the county's public office responsible for providing coordinated, participant-centered services to Allegheny County residents, primarily those 60 years of age and older, to help them remain as independent as possible. It provides services, regardless of income, as mandated and required by state and federal agencies and laws.

The AAA offers a range of resources for older adults, caregivers, and the general public. These services address a continuum of care that begins with services for individuals who are active and independent to services for individuals who are frail and vulnerable.

Most programs are delivered in the community through a network of about 100 community-based service organizations and local municipal governments throughout the county. The AAA office is on the South Side of Pittsburgh.

Office Overview	
Persons served* – CY 2021	~36,179
AAA filled positions (a/o 01/2021)	105 (county)
Contract Providers † (FY 2020–2021)	71
Total Budget (FY 2022–2023) <i>Of the total budget</i> Federal: 18.5%    County: 0.0% State: 79.1%    Other: 2.4%	\$42.9 million
<p>Approximately 70% comes from lottery in the Aging Block Grant.</p> <p>Contracted agencies account for 63.2% of the AAA budget.</p> <p>Three-year accreditation status achieved in October 2017 from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for service and quality that demonstrates strong performance of NCQA's rigorous Case Management for Long Term Services and Supports.</p> <p>*The approximate count of consumers served by the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging includes an unduplicated count of consumers served in the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) mandated Information System. The count also reflects a small number of consumers served in other Information Systems and may or may not be unduplicated. The count does not include people that received services in the following categories: transportation, employment services, outreach, and anonymous callers for information and referral.</p> <p>†At least 46% (17,519) of AAA clients were served by contracted providers.</p>	

## **Area Plan**

The AAA's four-year Area Plan is approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging for 2020-24. It is posted on the DHS website at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/plansbudgets.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/plansbudgets.aspx)

**The SeniorLine is the first place to go for help and information.**

## **SeniorLine**

412-350-5460

Toll Free: 1-800-344-4319

E-mail: [SeniorLine@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:SeniorLine@alleghenycounty.us)

The AAA SeniorLine is the definitive resource for information about and access to services provided by the AAA and its community-based providers. It provides referrals and assistance in connecting with other community organizations serving older adults. Professional, certified, care managers staff the SeniorLine on weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

## **Services for older adults and their loved ones**

### **Health Care and Insurance questions answered**

The PA MEDI program provides free access to highly-trained volunteer insurance counselors to help older adults make decisions about Medicare, Medicaid benefits, prescription drug coverage, health maintenance organizations, long-term care insurance, and supplemental health insurance. APPRISE is operated by Wesley Family Services under contract with the AAA.

### ***Protecting older adults who are abused, neglected, abandoned or exploited***

#### **Elder Abuse Hotline**

**412-350-6905; Toll Free 1-800-344-4319** accepts calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anyone who believes that an older adult has been abandoned or is being abused, neglected (including self-neglect), or exploited (including financially). Older Adult Protective Services investigates every report of elder abuse or neglect. Callers can remain anonymous and are not obligated to be involved in any case. Cases are kept confidential.

#### **Caregiving**

The Caregiver Support Program reduces the stress caregivers experience by reimbursing the cost of approved services or out-of-pocket caregiving expenses. Classes teach coping skills to avoid caregiver burn-out. Older adults who are raising grandchildren or other relatives under the age of 18 may also benefit from this program.

***Pittsburgh Senior News*** includes informative feature articles about aging services and senior center event calendars in each quarterly issue for 2019.

***Allegheny County Senior Resource Guide*** is a comprehensive annual guide to older adult services in the community.

## Services for independent and active seniors

The AAA offers health and wellness programs, lifelong learning, information and assistance, and opportunities to volunteer.

**Senior Community Centers** provide older adults with programming and services oriented to their needs and interests right in their neighborhood. Participating in activities at local senior centers is a great way for older adults to stay mentally and physically active, to socialize and meet new people, to learn new things, to go on community outings, or have a nutritious and healthy meal.

### ***Volunteer Opportunities***

Several programs train and deploy volunteers for unique opportunities to directly provide assistance to other older adults. The Ombudsman Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the APPRISE Program all provide direct services through the use of volunteers. Senior Community Centers offer many volunteer opportunities. These opportunities include clerical support; meal preparation and service; distributing home-delivered meals; leading classes and workshops; and serving on center advisory councils.

### ***Transportation Services***

Older adults living in Allegheny County who are eligible have several shared-ride transportation options for services through the AAA, Office of Behavioral Health, ACCESS Transportation Systems, and the Port Authority of Allegheny. Services include:

**Older Persons Transportation (OPT)** is an AAA-sponsored shared-ride service for older adults, 60 years of age and older, that provides transportation for specific purposes, including medical and other health-related appointments, senior center visits, grocery shopping and adult day care.

**Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)** is a free service for non-emergency medical transportation available to Medical Assistance consumers.

**ACCESS 65 Plus** is a shared-ride service that persons, 65 years of age and older, may utilize for any purpose.

**The Port Authority Senior Citizen Free Fare Program** allows persons 65 years of age and older to ride Port Authority fixed-route service for free with proper Identification.

### ***Assistance with obtaining additional services in the community***

The AAA assists with obtaining information on a variety of community resources such as

**LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)** offers financial help with home heating bills.

**PACE (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly)** provides discounted prices on prescription drugs.

**Property Tax Abatements and Exemptions** offered by Allegheny County that may reduce an older adult's county tax bill.

**Rent Rebates** provided through the Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for income-qualified older adults and permanently disabled citizens.

**SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)** vouchers help pay for qualifying groceries.

## **Services for older adults who face challenges but want to remain in their homes**

The AAA offers a variety of services that enable older adults to live independently in the community, as well as intensive services delivered in the home for frail older adults.

**Care Management** assesses and identifies needs and coordinates services, both traditional and non-traditional.

### ***In-home services***

Based on an assessment of need, the AAA provides a variety of services to vulnerable seniors to stay at home. Services include personal care, medical equipment, assistance with light housekeeping, access to nutritious meals and when appropriate, home modifications for safety. A combination of services may include:

**Home-delivered Meals** Nutritious meals delivered to the home of older adults who are at nutritional risk and are unable to safely prepare meals, have difficulty leaving home to purchase groceries or have no other means to acquire meals on a regular basis.

**Home Health and Personal Care** services provided to older adults who need help with personal health and hygiene, daily living activities (bathing, dressing, grooming, etc.), and taking medications on schedule.

**Light housekeeping and home maintenance services** provided to ensure that your home environment is healthy and livable. Assistive devices (e.g., handrails for stairs and bathtubs) can be installed if needed.

**Senior Companion Program** assists older adults 60 years and older who may have various health issues or are lonely and could benefit from a friendly visitor. In most cases, these individuals have difficulty with daily living tasks, and senior companions help them retain their dignity and independence by providing regular, helpful visits.

**Checks and Balance Volunteer Bill Pay Program** helps low income or disabled older adults with their personal finances. Trained volunteers provide assistance with personal budgeting, preparing checks to pay bills, and maintaining a check register. In some cases, a Representative Payee can be appointed by a government agency to manage the benefits of an older adult who is unable to manage their finances.

**Carrier Alert Program** allows U.S. Postal Service mail carriers to provide daily checkups on the well-being of older adults living alone. Carriers alert the AAA if they notice an accumulation of uncollected mail, indicating a reduction in mobility, which may indicate that an illness or accident is making it difficult for the resident to call for help.

**Seasonal emergency supplies** Heaters, fans, food, resource coordination, and well-being and safety checks can be provided for seniors involved in emergency circumstances.

### ***Domiciliary Care Supplement***

Domiciliary Care provides family homes for adults who are not able to live independently. Dom Care provides individual attention and assistance with daily living activities in a safe and caring setting.

### ***Care Transitions Program***

Through partnerships with area hospitals, the AAA provides follow-up care in the form of health monitoring and counseling to adults age 21 and older who are at risk of re-admission within 30 days of discharge. The program promotes consumers being proactive in their own health and provides assistance with personal health record development, medication management, and community referrals to enable consumers to reduce avoidable readmissions

## **Services for older adults who need skilled care**

The AAA provides advocacy for the rights of long-term care residents, including returning to the community.

**Ombudsman Program** provides long-term care residents with advocacy assistance to resolve their concerns and complaints. They assist consumers in nursing facilities, personal care homes, adult day care centers, Domiciliary Care Homes, and those who receive care and services. Ombudsmen assist in resolving consumer complaints about the quality of care they receive, billing and charges, transfers, discharges, and changes in service, including when a facility closes.

## **Administration**

The AAA is an agent of the PA Department of Aging and the DHS AAA administrator directs its operations. Service implementation is supervised by division chiefs, supervisory and administrative staff, and contracting agencies.