



Allegheny County Department of Human Services Helpful Resources

FAQ's - Frequently Asked Questions About Services for Older Adults

What is the Area Agency on Aging (AAA)?

As part of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, the [Area Agency on Aging](#) (AAA) helps older adults aged 60 years and older to live quality lives.

The AAA works with agencies in the community to provide programs and needed services for over 43,000 older adults each year.

What services are available through the AAA?

The AAA provides services in the community and in your home, many without regard to your income or activity level.

You can enjoy a painting class, improve your health through exercise and wellness programs, enrich your life at cultural events or meet friends for lunch, get support when you are caring for a loved one, get to your medical and non-medical appointments.

You can receive a meal delivered to your home, get help with bathing and medications, a friendly visitor, bill-paying (check-writing) help and more.

How can I contact the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for assistance?

From senior community centers, to in-home services, to finding alternatives to nursing home care, all of these services can be discussed by calling the AAA SeniorLine at 412-350-5460 or sending an email to the [Senior Line](#).

Who will I be talking to when I contact the SeniorLine?

Your call will be answered by a certified information and assistance care manager who will answer questions about services for older adults and offer assistance in finding local providers of needed services.

How do I qualify for services?

A person must be a resident of Allegheny County, age 60 years or older and become registered into the system.

How does the registration process begin?

Registration begins in either of two ways: If a person simply wants to join a senior community center, then all a person needs to do is visit one of more than 40 county-funded senior community centers and register for services. For a list of centers: [Senior Centers](#)

For any of the other services, such as home-delivered meals or in-home services, it starts with a call to SeniorLine at 412-350-5460. The care manager who answers the telephone will discuss your situation with you and if needed, start the application process for an in-home assessment of your need for services.

What happens next?

A care manager or service coordinator will come to your home or place of residence to do an in-home interview where you are an active partner in deciding what services are best for you, such as care management, services in the home such as help with bathing or personal care, transportation, adult day service or health care counseling.

I don't really need any services, just some help to make my money stretch to pay all my bills. Can you do anything for me?

SeniorLine staff can provide information or help to complete applications for benefit programs you may qualify for based on income, such as rent rebates, the cost of utility bills, or programs to help with the cost of prescription medications.

Can someone make a referral on my behalf?

Yes! AAA can begin the process by taking a call from your family member, friend, doctor's office or others.

It is important that you are aware if someone is calling on your behalf as the information and assistance care manager will follow-up with you to make sure you are interested in services.

How can I request services for an older adult who resides in Allegheny County when I live in another state/area?

Call the SeniorLine. The toll-free number is 1-800-344-4319. The care manager who answers the phone will either direct you to the appropriate program or provide information. When the

need is for in-home services, they will begin the application process over the phone. With the consent of the older adult, a care manager will visit the older adult in his or her home to do an assessment.

My family member lives in another state. Who do I call?

Information about Area Agencies on Aging across the United States can be obtained by calling the toll-free Eldercare Locator number at 1-800-677-1116 between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm eastern time or visiting the [Eldercare Locator website](#).

Is there a fee for services provided through the Area Agency on Aging?

Older adults may be asked for a co-pay based on a sliding scale, depending on the program and the income of the individual and their spouse who lives with them.

I know of a neighbor, over the age of 60, who I suspect is being abused or neglected, what do I do?

You can call Older Adult Protective Services to make a report at 412-350-6905, 1-800-344-4319 or the statewide Older Adult Protective Services hotline 1-800-490-8505, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A trained staff person will investigate the need for help. Help can include providing access to services necessary to protect their health, safety and welfare. Find out more about [Older Adult Protective Services](#).

How do I know if an older adult is in need of and eligible for Older Adults Protective Services?

The older adult must:

- be a resident of Pennsylvania.
- be at least 60 years old.
- be at imminent risk of danger to his/her person or property.
- be unable to perform or obtain, without help, services necessary to maintain physical or mental health.
- have no responsible caregiver at the time of the report.

Does the Area Agency on Aging ever provide services to people under the age of 60?

Yes, for instance:

- Assessments are completed for Medicaid applicants applying to nursing facilities and for persons ages 18 to 59 years applying to Medicaid home- and community-based programs.
- Assessments are completed for people under age 60 applying for the State Supplement in personal care and domiciliary care homes.
- [Senior Companions](#) matches adults 55 years and older to be companions for adults 60

years of age and older.

- [Adult Protective Services](#) takes reports for adults with a disability 18 through 59 years of age.
- Assistance is available to caregivers ages 55 years and older caring for grandchildren or other relatives with disabilities when the parents are not able to do so.
- [Ombudsmen](#) respond to concerns of individuals 18 years of age or older who have questions/concerns about the licensed long-term-care services they receive.

I have questions on my health insurance, Medicare, and/or Medicaid. Where can I get help to understand my benefits?

Contact an [PA MEDI](#) counselor at AAA's partner agency, Wesley Family Services, at 412-661-1438 or by [e-mail](#). For more information and videos explaining Medicare options, please see the [PA MEDI services page](#) of the WFS website.

I am over 60 and I want to stay in my own home. How can I learn about my options?

A call to the SeniorLine at 412-350-5460 helps individuals identify and connect with both personal and community resources.

My home is too big and too expensive for me to continue living in. Where can I find a place that I can afford to live on my fixed income?

The Allegheny County Housing Information Guide for Older Adults provides information on senior subsidized housing options in Allegheny County and how to go about finding and applying for an apartment. For the guide and tools for locating suitable, affordable housing, go to The [Housing Resources](#) page of the DHS website.

I have difficulty managing my finances. Are there any programs available to help me?

The Checks and Balances Program, a volunteer bill-paying money-management program co-sponsored by AAA and Ursuline Support Services, provides volunteers that are available to assist low-income older adults in paying their bills. Each volunteer is required to have a clear criminal record background check. For more information, visit the [Money Management page](#) of the Ursuline Support Services website.

I am caring for an older adult and am finding it difficult to manage everything. Is there any help out there for me?

Learn more about [Caregiver Support programs](#) that assist families who care for an older relative or friend.

The goal is to support – not replace – the care provided.

What is long-term care?

Long-term care is a range of services which includes services to residents of nursing facilities, personal care homes, domiciliary and in-home services for individuals who need assistance and reside in private homes in the community.

Who do I talk to about the problems with the care that a loved one is receiving through long-term care services?

An ombudsman makes regular visits to all of the licensed long-term care facilities in Allegheny County. They will also look into any complaints that they receive in regard to the rights of residents in these facilities and also work with anyone who receives long-term care services in the community.

What type of transportation is available for seniors?

[Older Persons Transportation](#) (OPT) is a shared-ride system that enables people to go back and forth to a AAA-funded senior center, to schedule group grocery shopping trips, and to limited medical appointments. Proof-of-age and health insurance information is required to register for OPT.

Older adults having Medicaid insurance must use the [Medical Assistance Transportation](#) program (MATP) at 1-888-547-6287 for non-emergency medical appointments.

[Access 65+](#) is a shared-ride service in which riders pay a fee. There are no limits on location (within 1.5 miles of Allegheny County) or usage. To apply, visit a senior community center to sign up or call 412-562-5353 to get an application.

I don't eat so well these days as I am having a hard time shopping and cooking. Is there any help for me?

You can enjoy a healthy, balanced, mid-day meal during the week at one of the many AAA sponsored [senior community centers](#) throughout the county. A small voluntary donation is suggested.

Home-delivered meals provide a healthy meal and friendly smile to home-bound older adults who are unable to shop or prepare their own meals.

Where can I get help paying for my prescriptions?

Many senior citizens with low incomes are eligible for assistance with payment for their prescription medications. Applications for [PACE/PACENET](#) can be obtained from the [Area Agency on Aging](#), pharmacies, [senior community centers](#), state senator's or representative's office or by calling PACE at 1-800-225-7223.