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## Help When You Need It: Area Agencies on Aging

### Virginia Area Agencies on Aging

Thousands of public and private programs, in Virginia alone, exist to serve older people. The local Area Agencies on Aging were designed to be the hub of senior services in each community. Not only do Area Agencies on Aging provide multiple services; they are also an affordable resource for the caregiver or senior faced with a crisis and in need of knowledge and expertise. Area Agencies on Aging receive federal funds, through the Older Americans Act, to provide services to adults over the age of 60. There are 629 local Area Agencies on Aging in the United States. In Virginia, there are 25 Area Agencies on Aging. All Area Agencies on Aging receive their federal funding through a state agency, or unit, on aging. The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is Virginia's state unit on aging that administers Older American Act funding. Many Area Agencies on Aging rely on additional public or private funds to supplement their core services.

⇒ The [Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging \(VAAAA\)](#) can help you find your local AAA - follow this [link](#).

### Activities and Services

Programs and services vary from agency to agency. The Virginia Division for Aging describes the following as typical services provided at local Area Agencies on Aging in Virginia:

- **Information and referral** services assist older people and their families with identifying and locating services and programs which can help people remain independent and in their own homes;
- **Meal programs and nutrition** services provide hot and cold meals, as well as nutrition education, to older adults. These meals may be served at a community center or other central locations or delivered to the homes of those individuals who cannot leave their homes;

- **Homemaker services** provide assistance with household tasks, essential shopping, meal preparation, and other household activities which enable an older person to remain at home;
- **Adult day care programs** provide supervised activities in a community center or other location for older persons who cannot remain alone at home during the day;
- **Legal assistance** activities provide legal advice, assistance, and representation in areas of public benefits, wills, and estate planning,
- **Residential repair and renovation programs** assist older persons to maintain their homes or to adapt their homes to accommodate a wheelchair or walker
- **Transportation** services transport older persons to and from needed community facilities and resources;
- **Socialization, education, and recreation programs** allow older persons the opportunity to get out of the house and participate in a variety of activities which help them stay mentally alert and physically active;
- **Insurance counseling and assistance** services assist older persons to evaluate their insurance needs, choose a Medicare supplemental policy if needed, review long-term care insurance policies, and generally sort and track medical bills;
- **Case management** services assist older persons with locating, applying for, receiving, and coordinating needed community services;
- **Disease prevention and health promotion** services provide older persons with counseling and educational materials which help them adjust their lifestyles and physical activities in order to prevent many of the physical losses commonly experienced in old age.

In addition to these, Area Agencies on Aging may operate other programs such as volunteering, money management, tax assistance, ombudsman services, home health, medication assistance, or abuse prevention services.

## **Cost**

Services provided by Area Agencies on Aging are usually offered on a sliding scale based on income. Scholarships and subsidies may also be available for certain services for individuals meeting the financial guidelines.

## Eligibility

In general, you must be at least 60 years old to receive services through an Area Agency on Aging. However, in cases such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, the age requirement may only be 55 years old. Likewise, the age requirement for adult day services might be 18 years old, even though the program is operated by the Area Agency on Aging. Additional eligibility criteria depend upon the nature of the service being provided. For example, in order to receive meals delivered at home, the local Area Agency on Aging may ask to certify that the recipient of services is 'homebound.' Or, if a person wishes to receive short-term care, the Area Agency on Aging staff may complete a home visit to confirm that assistance is needed for certain activities of daily living. Other services such as legal assistance or insurance counseling may use age as the only requirement for service.

## Finding an Area Agency on Aging

The [Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging \(VAAAA\)](#) can help you find your local AAA - follow this [link](#).

Also, the National [Eldercare Locator](#), 1-800-677-1116, can help you find a local Area Agency on Aging anywhere in the United States.

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