



# Department of Aging and Disability Services

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## State Unit on Aging Update

March 14, 2023

# Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) Overview

- **Mission:** Maximize opportunities for the independence and well-being of persons with disabilities and older adults in Connecticut
- **Our programs, policies and practices are designed to:**
  - Deliver aging and disability services responsive to the needs of Connecticut citizens;
  - Provide leadership on aging and disability issues statewide;
  - Provide and coordinate aging and disability programs and services in the areas of employment, education, independent living, accessibility and advocacy;
  - Advocate for the rights of Connecticut residents with disabilities and older adults; and
  - Serve as a resource on aging and disability issues at the state level.
- **Website:** <https://portal.ct.gov/aginganddisability>
- **Bureaus:**
  - Bureau of Disability Determination Services
  - Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind
  - Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
  - Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
  - State Unit on Aging

## State Unit on Aging (SUA)

- ...is responsible for planning, developing, and administering a comprehensive and integrated service delivery system for older persons in Connecticut.
- ...is primarily funded by federal Older Americans Act (OAA) through the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) to administer programs and services that support older adults as they stay at home longer.
- ...funds programs for supportive services, in-home services, congregate and home-delivered meals, caregiver support, senior community employment, health insurance counseling, and health and wellness.
- ...works closely with aging network partners to provide these services. Under the OAA, the five Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are key contractors.

# State Plan on Aging

- Extended through 9/30/2024
- Planning for new State Plan begins 7/1/2023
- Goals:
  1. **Long-Term Services and Supports:** Empower older adults to reside in the community setting of their choice
  2. **Healthy Aging:** Provide older adults with prevention and wellness opportunities.
  3. **Elder Rights:** Protect elder rights and well-being and prevent elder abuse, fraud, neglect and exploitation.

Connecticut's  
**STATE PLAN ON AGING**  
BUILDING BRIDGES AND CREATING CONNECTIONS  
OCTOBER 1, 2020-SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

Submitted by: Connecticut's State Unit on Aging  
Department of Aging and Disability Services



# ARPA Respite

ADS received a \$873,000 allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in 2021 through the state to support family caregivers.

This was the first source of ARPA funding that ADS received. This is already being implemented, ending in December 2024.

These funds:

- Provide additional funding to the existing state support for staffing at adult day centers, through the Area Agencies on Aging.
- Provide a new outreach approach through the CT Caregiver Respite Outreach Project to increase referrals of diverse and underserved populations to the SUA caregiver programs.

This project:

- is a collaboration of the State Unit on Aging, the five AAAs and CT Community Care
- targets LGBTQ and faith-based communities
- Provide additional funding to the existing CT Statewide Respite Care Program for more Respite services, in the amount of \$500,000.

# ARPA Older Americans Act Title III

ADS received \$15.6 million in funding through ACL and allocated to the Area Agencies on Aging through 9/30/2024 to:

- Expand current service levels under Title III which includes nutrition services such as home delivered meals and caregiver respite services
- Provide service navigation for older adults and family caregivers – time intensive services to assist consumers with complex case needs.
  - Each AAA has hired a Service Navigator to provide services including application assistance, benefits counseling, options counseling and case management
- Provide services under other special projects within the Title III guidelines

## PA 22-146: American Rescue Plan Act funding for ADS: \$18.5 million

- \$3M for meals on wheels
- \$10M for senior centers
- \$4M to Area Agencies on Aging
- \$1M respite care for Alzheimer's
- \$100k each to five senior centers: Avon, Dixwell (New Haven), Eisenhower (Bridgeport), Orange, Sullivan (Torrington), and \$57k to Ellington

# ARPA Public Health Workforce funds

- *ACL's Expanding the Public Health Workforce within the Aging and Disability Networks* program provides funding to help cover the costs of staff to conduct public health activities, including activities that address social isolation.
- ADS received five Public Health Workforce (PHW) grants through the federal Administration for Community Living totaling \$826,595, through 2024:
  - State Unit on Aging PHW funds
  - State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) PHW funds – supports the CHOICES program
  - No Wrong Door (NWD)/Aging & Disability Resource Center PHW funds
  - ADS Assistive Technology (AT) PHW funds
  - ADS Center for Independent Living (CIL) PHW funds
- Coordination of these PHW grants:
  - Coordination of the SUA, NWD and AT PHW funds to develop Bridging the Digital Divide pilot program and connect with CIL tech support efforts with PHW funds
  - Coordination of SHIP and SUA PHW funds to add CHOICES support from CILs





A collaboration between the State Unit on Aging, CT Tech Act Project and two community AT Partners. We created two full time Digital Divide Coordinators (DDC) to serve CT.

[www.CTtechact.com/bridging-divide](http://www.CTtechact.com/bridging-divide)

# DDC Services to Individuals

- If an individual has technology but struggles to use it and would benefit from training to
  - Connect to their Wi Fi
  - Learn to use social media to connect to family and friends
  - Learn to use virtual platforms like Zoom, Teams or virtual community services and/or for Telehealth
  - Learn how to use built in accessibility features in their devices
  - Connect with other community supports and resources
  - Technology Bundles – tablet and 1 year of Wi-Fi

# DDC Services to Entities & Organizations

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- If organization serves adults with disabilities or individuals 60 and older and staff can benefit from training to be able to support clients:
  - Learn how to set up built in accessibility features on their organization's technology or their clients technology;
  - Learn how to connect client to virtual platforms, virtual services or telehealth;
  - Help clients use social media or other internet activities (i.e.: online grocery shopping, accessing free eBooks, etc).

# Who has been served since October 2022

## Individuals:

### 77 Individuals Receiving Services

- 85% = 60 or older
- 76% = Female
- 77% = Live alone
- 48% = At or below FPL

## Groups and Organizations:

### 17 entities served

- Public libraries, senior centers, Veterans group, Visiting Nurse Association & elderly housing
- 89% Want to learn how to support clients (with Accessibility features, tech support, virtual platforms, telehealth.)



# Some of our more recent collaborations

- Other state agencies
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Centers for Independent Living
- CT Tech Act
- CT Age Well Collaborative
- CT Healthy Living Collective
- Bridging Developmental Disabilities and Aging group
- Senior centers
- AARP and Southern CT State University (Dr. Lauren Tucker)

# Contact Information



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State Unit on Aging

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