

Connecticut State Department on Aging



At a Glance

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Established - January 1, 2013

Statutory authority – CGS Section 17a-301a

Central office - 55 Farmington Ave, Hartford, CT 06105

Number of employees – 17 in the State Unit on Aging; 14 in the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

Program Budget: \$31,593,033 (29% State funds / 71% Federal funds)

Organizational structure - Commissioner's Office; State Unit on Aging, Long Term Care Ombudsman's Office with Regional Ombudsman Program Offices

Mission

The mission of the State Department on Aging is to empower older adults to live full independent lives and to provide leadership on aging issues on behalf of older adults, families, caregivers, and advocates.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department administers Older Americans Act programs for supportive services, in-home services, and congregate and home-delivered meals. It also administers programs that provide senior community employment, health insurance counseling, and respite care for caregivers.

The Connecticut State Department on Aging, as the designated State Unit on Aging, ensures that Connecticut's elders have access to the supportive services necessary to live with dignity, security, and independence. The Department is responsible for planning, developing, and administering a comprehensive and integrated service delivery system for older persons in Connecticut.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, administratively housed in the State Department on Aging, provides individual advocacy to residents of skilled nursing facilities, residential care homes and assisted living facilities. The State Ombudsman also advocates for systemic changes in policy and legislation in order to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals who reside in those settings.

The Department works closely with the aging network partners to provide these services. Partners include Connecticut's five area agencies on aging, municipal agents for the elderly, senior centers, and many others who provide services to older adults.

Statutory Responsibility

The State Department on Aging, and its programs and responsibilities as the State Unit on Aging, are found in sections 17a-300 – 17a-316a of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) including:

Sec. 17a-301a (Establishment of the State Department on Aging); Sec. 17a-303a (Fall Prevention Program); Sec. 17a-314 (CHOICES, the federally funded health insurance assistance program); Sec. 17a-302 (Nutrition programs for elderly persons); Sec 17b-349e (Respite care services for caretakers of Alzheimer's patients) Sec. 17a-316a (Aging and Disability Resource Centers); The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and associated statutes relative to the State Department's responsibilities appear in Sec. 17a-405 – 422; Sec. 17b-252 (Connecticut Partnership for Long-Term Care outreach program; Sec. 7-127b (Municipal Agent for the Elderly)

PUBLIC CONTACT POINTS

Websites and web pages:

- State Department on Aging: www.ct.gov/aging
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman: www.ct.gov/lcop
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers: www.myplacect.org
- Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: www.ctpartnership.org
- Facebook Triads: <https://www.facebook.com/CTriads?ref=hl>;
- Consumer Law Project for Elders: <http://ctlawhelp.org/self-help-guides/elder-law>
- [Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut: http://www.elderjusticect.org](http://www.elderjusticect.org)

Toll-free information:

- General public information: 1-866-218-6631
- TDD/TTY for persons with hearing impairment: 1-800-842-4524
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman: 1-866-388-1888
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers: 1-800-994-9422
- CHOICES (Connecticut's programs for Health Insurance Assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening): 1-800-994-9422
- Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: 1-800-547-3443

State Department on Aging Programs

Advance Directives: Developed by the Legal Assistance Developer, in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General, “Advance Directives: Planning for Future Health Care Decisions” empower residents to make informed decisions about their own health care needs. Advance Directives are available in both English and Spanish either by calling the Department or on the Department website. The Legal Assistance Developer also makes public presentations concerning Advance Directives upon request.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC): Aging and Disability Resource Centers, previously known as Community Choices are available statewide and currently serve older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers through a coordinated No Wrong Door system of information and access. Using extensive knowledge and resources people are connected to a myriad of services and supports including but not limited to benefits screening, information and assistance, decision support, follow-up and person centered options counseling. Aging and Disability Resource Centers are now part of the CHOICES umbrella to help people explore their choices and preferences for a better way of life. Program partners include the state’s five (5) Area Agencies on Aging, five (5) Centers for Independent Living, Connecticut Community Care, Inc., and UConn Center on Aging. In FFY 2014 the competitive federal grant funding is \$821,391. In FFY 2014, 586 unduplicated consumers were served through the ADRC.

CHOICES: Connecticut’s programs for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening (CHOICES) program is the Department’s State Health Insurance Assistance Program, a national volunteer based program that provides older persons and their families information and assistance about current Medicare benefits and options. Free counseling and assistance is provided via telephone and face-to-face interactive sessions, public education presentations and programs and media activities.

A total of 35,578 Medicare beneficiaries received CHOICES assistance in FY 2015. Volunteer and in-kind professional counselors spent 14,892 hours counseling Medicare beneficiaries throughout the year.

CHOICES is a cooperative effort with the five Area Agencies on Aging and the Center for Medicare Advocacy. In FY2015, \$616,521 was received in federal funding. In SFY 2015 \$715,296 was received in state funding.

Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care: The Partnership provides education and outreach and through private insurers, offers special long-term care insurance to help individuals increase their options and avoid impoverishing themselves when paying for their long-term care. Coordinated by the Office of Policy and Management, the Partnership has an information and education program managed by the Department. The SDA also provides one-on-one counseling, distributes educational materials and conducts regional public forums and other community presentations. In SFY 2015, \$9,000 in state funds was received by the SUA.

During state fiscal year 2015 the Partnership:

- Responded to 87 requests for information
- Counseled 153 people
- Reached 293 people through public forums

Human Resources Agency - Las Perlas Hispanas Senior Center: Las Perlas Hispanas Senior Center received funding in the amount of \$19,000 for SFY 2015. The funding is used for outreach to low-income seniors in need of case management, socialization and information and referral services. 62 older adults received services in 2015.

Alzheimer's Aide funding: This state funding is designated to assist in subsidizing the cost of Alzheimer's Aides in Adult Day Care Centers. It is administered by the five Area Agencies on Aging. In SFY 2015, \$173,323 was received in state funds, and 254 aides provided 20,869 hours of service to individuals with Alzheimer's disease in adult daycare settings.

Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP): With \$362,085 in federal funding for FFY 2014 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and \$134,230 in state funding for SFY 2015 CHSP provides opportunities for socialization through congregate meals and supportive services to frail elders and persons with temporary or permanent disabilities in rural areas who would otherwise be vulnerable to premature institutionalization. This program serves 298 participants in nine (9) of the most vulnerable housing communities located in the eastern and western areas of the state.

Connecticut Statewide Respite Program: In partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging and the CT Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, the Statewide Respite Care Program offers short-term respite care for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The program provides in-home assessments, the development of care plans and the purchase of necessary respite services. Respite services may include, but are not limited to adult day care, homemaker, and companion, transportation, personal emergency response system, or short-term inpatient care in a nursing facility, residential care home or assisted living community.

In SFY 2015, \$2,179,669 was received in state funds for this program and 828 individuals received respite services.

Grandparents as Parents Support Network: The State Department on Aging, with support from agencies throughout Connecticut, developed the Grandparents as Parents Support network (GAPS). Utilizing its Listserve, information is shared among the network of over 150 agencies, individuals and community organizations regarding advocacy, legislative updates and the 75 known support groups in Connecticut that provide assistance to grandparents and relative caregivers.

National Family Caregiver Support Program/OAA Title III-E (NFCSP): In partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging, this program considers caregivers' unique values and needs and offers a range of services that enable caregivers to easily access the right services at the appropriate times. The major components of the program include information about available services, access to supportive services, individual counseling, support groups, caregiver training, respite care and supplemental services. Priority consideration is given to those with the greatest social and economic need and to older individuals who provide care to children ages 18 and younger with severe disabilities.

In FFY 2014 \$1,728,760 was allocated to Area Agencies on Aging who work with local community providers to provide these services. 523 outreach related activities were delivered, reaching 138,751 people; 17,378 contacts with caregivers were made to help resolve caregiving related issues and there were 1,373 unduplicated caregivers who received 40,565 units of service for respite and other caregiver services.

Reverse Annuity Mortgage: Reverse Mortgages are a type of home loan which allow older homeowners in need of extra income to convert some of the equity in their homes to cash. It allows

older adults aged 70 and older to use the equity in their homes to collect tax-free payments as income. This income allows homeowners to stay in their homes and to help avoid institutionalization. The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) provides the funds and determines eligibility. The State Department on Aging forwards reviewed applications to CHFA for processing. In SFY2015, six applications were forward to the CHFA.

Supportive Services/Older Americans Act Title III-B: Funding provides home and community based care, most supportive services fall under three broad categories:

- Access services i.e. case management, information and referrals, outreach and transportation;
- In-home services such as homemakers services, chore maintenance, and supportive services for family members of older individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; and
- Community Services including adult day care and legal assistance.

In FFY 2014, \$4,359,272 was received in Title III B funds.

The Veteran's Directed Home and Community Services Program: Through funding from the federal Veterans Administration (VA) and in partnership with the Administration for Community Living, the Department facilitated the implementation of the Veteran's Directed Home and Community-based Services program in the south central region of the state in 2008. The program is designed to keep veterans in the community by self-directing their own care, managing an individualized budget and receiving services in their home by the caregiver of their choice. The program has now expanded statewide, in partnership with the five Area Agencies on Aging. Funding passes directly from the VA CT Healthcare System to the AAAs to provide services. While the State partners with these agencies to streamline program operations, it does not receive any state or federal funding to act in this capacity.

Number of Veterans served statewide:

- 63 Veterans served in FFY14

\$1,066,768 Total statewide dollars received in FFY14

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program: The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), or Live Well as branded in Connecticut, is a six week lay-led participant education program developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University for adults who are experiencing chronic conditions. The program provides information and teaches practical skills on managing and living with chronic health problems.

The State Unit on Aging, in partnership with the CT Department of Public Health has received competitive grants from the Administration for Community Living to disseminate and embed Live Well and the Spanish Tomando version within Connecticut's health and community service systems. The current grant builds upon previous efforts to integrate chronic disease self-management education programs (CDSME) on the state and local level in supportive partnership with the Medicaid Access Agencies, ADRC's, the Area Agencies on Aging and community health systems and to now allow for the development of the Stanford Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP).

To date 2265 participants have attended CDSMP, Tomando and DSMP workshops. This competitive grant funding from the Prevention and Public Health Care Fund Grant is \$488,248 for the three (3) year period ending August 31, 2015.

Connecticut Statewide Fall Prevention Initiative: The overall objective of the Connecticut Collaboration for Fall Prevention (CCFP) is to decrease the rate of falls among community dwelling older adults. By recruiting, developing and supporting a variety of local initiatives the initiative aims to embed an evidence-based, multidisciplinary, multifactorial fall risk assessment and intervention strategy throughout Connecticut. The intervention consists of changing prevailing knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors related to fall risk factor assessment and prevention among older persons and relevant care providers.

Through the Statewide Initiative funds have allowed research that has demonstrated that fall related 9-1-1 calls, rates of admission to the emergency departments and acute care hospitals can be reduced.

In SFY 2015, \$475,000 was received in state funds for fall prevention initiatives.

Elderly Health Screening: This state funded program provides health screening services, follow-up care and programs related to health promotion and wellness to persons age 60 and over at various sites throughout the state. Services are provided by Community Health Centers, Public Health and Social Services Departments. Services include, but are not limited to, breast and prostate cancer screenings, cholesterol, diabetes checks, obesity screening, oral health, cardiovascular, vision and glaucoma. Follow up referral services are also provided.

In State Fiscal Year 2015, 820 older adults benefitted from this program, receiving 2,500 units of service. In SFY 2015, \$146,343 was received in state funds and services were provided for the first six months of SFY 2015 only (July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014).

Elderly Nutrition Program: Using Federal OAA Title III C-1, C-2 and NSIP as well as state funding, the Elderly Nutrition Program serves nutritionally balanced home delivered and congregate meals and provides other nutrition services such as nutrition education or nutrition counseling to individuals age 60 and older and their spouses.

The Elderly Nutrition Program is supported by federal, state, and local funds as well as voluntary client contributions. Funds are distributed to the five (5) Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) who contract with nine (9) Elderly Nutrition Projects (ENPs). In 2014, \$12,011,262 was received in funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program.

In 2014:

- 16,467 participants were served 748,042 congregate meals
- 6,194 participants were served 1,279,961 home delivered meals

Health Promotion Services and Disease Prevention/OAA Title III-D: Through the Area Agencies on Aging, the Department supports education and implementation activities that support healthy lifestyles and promotes healthy behaviors. Additionally, evidence-based health promotion programs are supported to reduce the need for more costly medical interventions. In FFY 2014, \$245,103 was received in federal funds. In FFY 2014, 1,733 consumers were provided with Health Promotion Services.

New England Cognitive Center-Brain GYMM: The NECC designs and provides targeted exercises to stimulate identified parts of the brain that are affected by Alzheimer's disease. Individuals are tested to determine their level of cognitive function and then work with a trainer to

complete exercises that seek to address cognitive deficits. In SFY 2015, \$50,909 was received in state funds and 69 individuals with Alzheimer's disease received services through this project.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): Using Older Americans Act Title V funds, SCSEP is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Labor designed to assist older workers age 55 years and older prepare for today's job market and re-enter the workforce. The State Unit on Aging, as the State Grantee, received \$944,193 in funding for SFY 2015 to administer the program. There are six (6) contractors in Fairfield, Litchfield, New London and New Haven counties providing SCSEP services. There are two national grantees that provide services in the other counties of Connecticut.

SCSEP provides job skills training and job development services to low-income residents. Services are delivered through on-the-job training at local non-profit agencies and classroom training. Supportive services are often provided including, but not limited to, Dress for Success, assistive technology and transportation.

During State Fiscal Year 2015, SCSEP

- provided services to 113 low-income older workers;
- met 143% of its expected service level; and
- 36.4% of enrollees secured unsubsidized employment (U.S. Department of Labor's Goal: 35.7%)

Elder Rights/Elder Abuse Programming/Title III and Title VII: Through the Legal Assistance Developer the Department monitors and advocates to improve the quality and quantity of legal and advocacy services available to the state's vulnerable older residents and serves as a resource to provide technical assistance to and with legal assistance providers within the aging network. The Older Americans Act, Title IIIB funding is provided to the five Area Agencies on Aging which are required to expend a portion of their Title IIIB allotment in contracting with the legal services organizations in Connecticut to provide free counseling and representation on many civil elder law issues – CT Legal Services Inc. (CLS), Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA), and New Haven Legal Assistance (NHLA). Due to limited funding, the following categories have priority for representation: access to health care; federal and state benefit and support programs; rights of nursing home residents; and legal issues which are a direct result of a client's poverty. During FFY 2014, both numbers of consumers and units of service increased from the prior year to 1,025 consumers receiving a total of 6,955 'units' of legal services.

The Department, through the Legal Assistance Developer, assists in the development of elder abuse programming and resources throughout the state. The Developer also collaborates with the aging network and law enforcement to support community initiatives such as Triads which work to reduce criminal victimization of older persons. In FFY 2014, the Department received \$59,907 in federal funds. Funds were distributed to the area agencies on aging to provide programming throughout each region to, among other initiatives, develop and support multidisciplinary teams, support shelters and raise awareness of elder abuse issues in the community. The remainder of the funding supported End of Life Coalition efforts, the development of a Law Enforcement handbook and best practice research.

SMP: Formerly known as the Senior Medicare Patrol, this program empowers seniors to prevent becoming victims of health care fraud. SMP helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, family members and caregivers avoid, detect and prevent health care fraud. The primary goal is to teach Medicare beneficiaries how to protect their personal identity, report errors on their health care bills, and identify deceptive health care practices (i.e. charging for services that were never provided). In

FFY 2014, \$282,955 was received in federal funds. In FFY 2014, 88 group education presentations and 111 community outreach events were conducted. These sessions resulted in 29 one-on-one counseling sessions, resolution of 191 simple inquiries and referral for 29 complex inquiries as reported by Medicare beneficiaries for further action



Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTOCP) works to improve the quality of life and quality of care of Connecticut citizens residing in nursing homes, residential care homes and assisted living communities.

The Mission of the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of long term care residents by:

- Investigating complaints and concerns made by residents, or on behalf of residents, in a timely and prompt manner;
- Bringing residents to the forefront to voice their concerns directly to public officials on issues affecting their lives;
- Supporting residents in their quest to shape their own legislative agenda and to represent the residents' interests before governmental agencies; and
- Working with other stakeholders, policy makers and legislators to improve residents quality of life and services

The LTCOP responds to, and investigates complaints brought forward by residents, family members and/or other individuals acting on their behalf. Ombudsmen offer information and consultation to consumers and providers, monitor state and federal laws and regulations, and make recommendations for improvement. All Ombudsman activity is performed on behalf of, and at the direction of, the residents and all communication with the residents, their family members or legal guardians, as applicable, is held in strict confidentiality.

Volunteer Resident Advocates

One of the most successful ways the Ombudsman program has of helping residents is its Volunteer Resident Advocate Program. Community volunteers are trained by Ombudsman staff in residents' rights problem solving, interviewing skills, negotiating, working with nursing home staff, and the health care system. After training, Volunteer Advocates are asked to spend four (4) hours per week in one assigned nursing home and help residents solve problems or concerns. Volunteer Resident Advocates meet monthly and participate in ongoing training.

Resident Councils

The Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils is an organization of residents of long term care facilities who work together on the enhancement of the quality of their care and the quality of lives. The LTCOP supports the Coalition in their efforts to effect positive change in larger systems such as local and state governments. The Executive Board of Presidents of Resident Councils is formed to represent the interests of the Coalition and to develop legislative initiatives on behalf of all Connecticut residents of skilled nursing facilities.

Programs

The VOICES forum is an annual event jointly convened by the LTCOP, with the State Department on Aging and the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils. It is an opportunity for Presidents of Resident Councils from around the state to gather and discuss issues and concerns in their homes. The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is the sponsor and partner of the Statewide Coalitions of Presidents of Resident Councils.

STATE DEPARTMENT ON AGING

Improvements/Achievements FY 2014-2015

1. State Department on Aging Mission, Vision and State Plan on Aging Development: During FFY'14, the State Department on Aging (SDA) developed its mission and vision and gathered input for the submission of its new State Plan on Aging. The mission and vision were developed in collaboration with SDA staff as well as the community. *The mission of the State Department on Aging is to empower older adults to live full independent lives, and to provide leadership on aging issues on behalf of older adults, families, caregivers, and advocates.* The vision includes four areas: **Knowledge:** *We envision older adults, families, and caregivers who are well-informed about available resources.* **Advocacy:** *We envision older adults, families and caregivers who are educated self-advocates. We envision a community of compassionate aging professionals who advocate on behalf of those who cannot.* **Respect:** *We envision older adults who are valued in our communities and treated with deference and compassion.* **Collaboration:** *We envision a collaborative network of service providers who work together to use resources for the maximum benefit of older adults.*

In preparation for the submission of its new State Plan on Aging, the SDA staff held community forums in each of the five regions of the state during the spring of 2014. Sites included the Granby Senior Center, Meriden Senior Center, Norwalk Senior Center, Rose City Senior Center and Waterbury Senior center. These forums were an opportunity to share the new mission and vision of the department as well as gather input from aging network professionals and consumers regarding a plan for the next three years. The SDA submitted its State Plan on Aging to ACL and this plan was accepted and approved by ACL. The new, three-year State Plan on Aging began October 1, 2014.

2. The Department continues to lead the Coordinating Council of the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut [CEJC] as the central focus of the state's Elder Rights / Elder Justices initiatives. CEJC is a public / private collaborative including aging /disability / elder rights / law enforcement / financial institutions / state agencies / educational institutions / victims services, etc. The mission is to prevent elder abuse and protect the rights, independence, security, and well- being of vulnerable elders through communication and collaboration with Public and Private Stakeholders addressing elder justice issues in Connecticut. The second conference, in November 2014, brought together the stakeholders from the public and private sectors to identify and address the needs of older adults in a collective forum. One Coalition Action Team has been operating a Fraud Watch Awareness campaign; a second team spearheaded the development of Financial Organization training for banks and credit unions concerning ways to combat financial exploitation of seniors and has begun conducting prototype training sessions in the western part of the state.

3. CHOICES Program: Connecticut's State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) has had two major accomplishments in 2014: fostering Federal and State working relationships on behalf of new Medicare beneficiaries and intervening on behalf of 3,759 Medicare Savings Program (MSP) beneficiaries to maintain benefits.

CHOICES recruited 160 new volunteers across the state who were trained as CHOICES counselors in SFY 15. Volunteer and in-kind professional counselors spent 14,892 hours counseling Medicare beneficiaries throughout the year. A total of 35,578 Medicare beneficiaries received CHOICES assistance.

4. Connecticut Collaboration for Fall Prevention (CCFP): On the state level, 2014 marked the sixth year the State of CT Legislature has committed to the reduction of falls among community dwelling older adults through support of the Yale CT Collaboration for Fall Prevention (CCFP). CCFP uses an evidence-based multi-factorial approach to achieve their goals and has worked extensively with regional home care agencies, emergency responders, the UCONN School of Pharmacy, and clinicians in various disciplines, such as traumatic brain injury and has been responsible for the statewide coordination of the Tai Chi, Moving for Better Balance fall prevention program.

5. In FFY 2013 CT received the Part A: ADRC Enhanced Options Counseling grant. A 3 year grant totaling \$2.5M to construct a state of the art enhanced options counseling program in CT as a key component to the Sate's "No Wrong Door system" development. As an important first step the ADRC signed an MOU with the State Medicaid Agency pledging to work together on the development of a statewide Medicaid Application Assistance project. Additionally, in order to measure the costs and benefits of an ADRC and options counseling program the state contracted with UCONN Health Center to begin the development of a "Cost Calculator" that can be used as a measurement tool. The work started in 2012 has continued throughout 2014. In FFY 2015, the ADRC launched an ADRC database that has been in use since June 2015.

Unduplicated number of ADRC consumers Served 586 (10/1/13-9/30/14)

Total Consumers Served by ADRC 8155

6. With the passage of Public Act 14-73, the State Department on Aging convened the first of the Elderly Nutrition meetings in September 2014. In collaboration with the Department of Social Services, Area Agencies on Aging, access agencies, the Legislative Commission on Aging, Nutrition providers, representatives from food security program and nutrition host site representatives, the SDA convenes regular quarterly meetings to discuss the programs and services which address Elderly Nutrition. The purpose of these meetings is to address complexities in the administrative process of nutrition services in efforts to move toward greater quality, efficiency and transparency in the elderly nutrition program.