

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE THAT ALLOW FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING



AGING TEXAS WELL MEANS THAT TEXANS PREPARE FOR AGING IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE AND THAT STATE AND LOCAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITATES AGING WELL THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN.

TRENDS

- Community supports are essential in helping people obtain services consistent with their community living preferences.
- People often are overwhelmed when trying to obtain information and arrange for services through a wide variety of state and local agencies.
- Texas' aging network comprises 28 area agencies on aging (AAAs) that plan, coordinate, and advocate for comprehensive service-delivery systems addressing older Texans' short and long-term needs.
- The Older American Act (OAA), passed in 1965, created aging networks in all 50 states that encourage innovative approaches to service delivery.
- As a result of the 1999 *Olmstead v. L.C.* Supreme Court decision, there is a renewed focus on providing resources to support independent living in the community.

Older Texans repeatedly cite the need for a source of comprehensive information, assistance, and referral.

POLICIES, PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- The Texas Information Referral Network (TIRN), including 2-1-1, is promoted as the first place to go for immediate information about appropriate community health and human services.
- Clients receive the information and resources they need through access and assistance services, the heart of the AAA service network. AAAs provide a wide variety of services to their regions including:
 - Information, Referral and Assistance - Assessing people's needs, locating organizations capable of meeting the needs, evaluating resources, providing information to help customers make informed choices, and helping find alternative resources.
 - Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance - Service to people who need assistance with benefits or who are trying to resolve financial problems.
 - Care Coordination - Assessment, effective planning, arranging coordination, and follow-up services that best meet the needs defined by AAA access and assessment staff.
 - Ombudsman Program - Advocates for the rights of long-term care facilities' residents and their families so they receive the highest quality of care.

More training and program development has become necessary to assure that benefits counselors are able to explain available options under the revised health care system.

GET INVOLVED!

Create outreach and awareness of the information and referral services such as 2-1-1.

- Help support development of TIRN and implementation of 2-1-1.
- Work within the community system (the aging network) to improve regional access to services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Contact your local **area agency on aging** at: **800.252.9240** for Aging Texas Well resources and services in your community. Or, visit TDoA at **www.tdoa.state.tx.us** for this and other Aging Texas Well publications.