

Ocean County Office of Senior Services Frequently Asked Questions

Question: *What is the Office of Senior Services also know as an Area Agency on Aging (AAA)?*

It's the local governmental planning agency for matters relating to aging serving as the focal point that older adults and their families can turn to for information regarding services and programs.

There are 21 in New Jersey to coincide with the 21 counties; and we are part of a vast national network established by the Older Americans Act of 1965 with the mission of promoting the dignity and independence of older adults. Since counties are very different; it makes sense for the planning and coordination to begin at the local level.

In 1996, Ocean County brought together related agencies that provided services to seniors, veterans and the disabled at the Ocean County One-Stop Center that is located on the campus of the Ocean County Board of Social Services at 1027 Hooper Avenue, Toms River. Building upon this collaborative model, the Office for Individuals with Disabilities and the Office of Senior Services (AAA) has partnered to provide improved access to information and assistance through trained staff and linking their respective websites.

In May 2012, the State of New Jersey announced a new access system for all 21 counties called the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). This statewide initiative ensures that seniors and adults with disabilities in need of long-term services and supports have information and easy access to community based alternatives.

In May 2013, Ocean County established a full service kitchen and congregate nutrition site at the Ocean County Southern Service Center (OCSSC). The OCSSC is the County One-Stop Center for services in the Southern Ocean County area providing the Ocean County's Surrogate's Office, Ocean County Clerk's office, Ocean County Human Services, Ocean County Fire Marshal, Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau, Federal Veteran's Affairs, Long Beach Island Senior Services, "A Friend's House" Adult Day Care and Community Services, Inc. Nutrition Site.

Question: What type of information and assistance is available at the Office of Senior Services?

We keep a large inventory of information regarding transportation, housing, entitlements such as PAAD (Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled), Senior Gold, Medicare, Medicaid, Energy Assistance, Senior Centers, Outreach, and Property Tax Relief programs, etc. We also provide a Resource Directory for Older Adults that contains a comprehensive listing of services available. A Resource Directory is always offered to a caller or visitor.

Question: Is any of this information on the Internet?

Yes, we have comprehensive resources and important links available through our Ocean County web page: www.co.ocean.nj.us

Question: Is there a special telephone number to call?

Yes, 1-800-668-4899, which is a county toll free number. The state also has a toll free number 1-877-222-3737. If you call this number in Ocean County you will reach the Ocean County Office of Senior Services. This statewide number will access you to your local Senior Services office anywhere in the state. If you call this number from out of the state, the NJ Division of Aging Services will connect you to your local office. This is especially helpful to out of state caregivers. Another important feature is that when you call Senior Services you get a real live person at the end of the line.

Senior Services staff are available to speak to groups throughout the county just call our office to request a speaker.

Question: What about the person who cannot make it to the One-Stop Center for assistance?

We have **access sites** throughout the county at all of our Information and Assistance and Outreach centers.

Additionally, Outreach workers visit older adults within their home setting and help them to plan for those programs and services that will help them to meet their specific needs.

Ocean County operates a satellite at the Ocean County Mall: **The County Connection** and the **County Connection Express**.

Question: How are services delivered?

The beauty of the Older Americans Act (OAA) is that it provides the opportunity for a county to deliver services in a way that fits the county's unique

structure/capacity; however the OAA does mandate that each county provide certain key areas of support.

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services has **44** Area Plan Contracts with **23** service providers throughout the county to deliver, **access services, home support, community support, nutrition support and caregiver support.**

Access services include: Information and Assistance, Options Counseling, Care Management, Transportation and Assisted Transportation.

Home support includes: Volunteer Friendly Visitors, Telephone Reassurance, Residential Maintenance and Certified Home Health Aide.

Community support includes: Emergency Services, Adult Day Services, Adult Protective Services, Legal Assistance, Physical Health, Mental Health, Physical Fitness, Education, Language Translation and Socialization/Recreation.

Nutrition support includes: Congregate Meals, Home Delivered Meals, Nutrition Education and Counseling.

Caregiver support includes: Information and Assistance, Residential Maintenance, Respite, Caregiver Support, Physical Health, Mental Health, Counseling, Education, In-Home Education & Support and Trained Volunteer Assistance.

Question: *What if you have no transportation to a nutrition site or Senior Center?*

Transportation is provided at nutrition sites and senior centers.

Question: *How are these programs funded?*

We receive federal funding through the Older Americans Act, state funds, and a significant contribution from the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Question: *Is there a charge for the service?*

There is no charge; however, individuals must be provided the opportunity to make a voluntary, confidential, donation.

Question: *Is there an age requirement for your programs?*

Yes, according to the Older Americans Act, **60 and over**; however, we do assist caregivers, sons, daughters, relatives, spouses with caregiver supports and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (**ADRC**) is an access point to persons with disabilities. Since the AAA is the county focal point, adding resource

information and community partners for persons with disabilities makes good sense.

Question: All these services sound great; but how do you go about obtaining help when needed?

Help is just a phone call away at **1-800-668-4899** or **732-929-2091** or you may visit our website at: **www.co.ocean.nj.us**