

Older Americans Act: The Basics

Enacted in 1965 alongside Social Security and Medicare, the Older Americans Act (OAA) outlines funding for services, training, and research aimed at improving the lives of older Americans. As the most comprehensive legislation serving older adults, the OAA protects the well-being of seniors through the following program areas:

- **Elderly Nutrition:** Provides meals and socialization to older adults in group and home-based settings
- **Family Caregiver Support:** Assists family caregivers with respite services, counseling, and caregiver training
- **Disease Prevention and Health Promotion:** Focuses on the prevention and delay of chronic conditions and other health risks
- **Native American Services:** Awards grants to fund supportive and nutritional services for older Native Americans
- **Long-term Care Ombudsman:** Ensures safety and well-being of nursing home and adult care home residents
- **Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation:** Raises public awareness and identifies ways to prevent abuse and neglect in coordination with state adult protective services

The following program and service areas of the OAA relate specifically to workforce, civic engagement, and lifelong learning:

- **WORKFORCE:** Title V, SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)
 - Provides part-time work for individuals 55+ whose income does not exceed 125% of the Federal Poverty Level
 - The Department of Labor works with 18 national organizations to place older workers in community service jobs
- **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Title IV, Section 417
 - Grants will provide opportunities for older individuals to participate in multigenerational and civic engagement activities designed to meet critical community needs. Projects may include:
 - Support for grandparents and other older individuals who are relative caregivers raising children
 - Older volunteers who provide assistance to families who have a child with a disability or chronic illness
- **LIFELONG LEARNING:** Title III, Section 311
 - Supportive Services and Senior Centers should promote activities and distribute information about life-long learning programs, including opportunities for distance learning