

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF AGING AND ADULT SERVICES

Policy: 217.00

Information and Assistance

Effective: July 1, 1996

Policy Statement:

Area Agencies on Aging shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of information and assistance services to older individuals in their planning and service areas as required by the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended. These priority services shall be available in sufficient numbers and provided in an accessible manner to ensure that all older individuals in the planning and service area, including disabled and non-English speaking, socially and economically disadvantaged older persons, especially minorities, will have reasonably convenient access to such services. Emphasis shall be on linking available services to isolated older individuals and older individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction (and the care takers of such individuals). All informational material will be made available in alternative format upon request.

Purpose:

To implement requirements of the Older Americans Act that all older persons, particularly the socially and economically disadvantaged, have reasonably convenient access to information about the programs, services and benefits for which they are eligible and assistance with referral to those services where necessary or requested.

Scope:

This procedure applies to all area agencies on aging (AAAs) and to their local service providers with whom they have contracted for Information and Assistance services under the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended and/or other funding sources covered by area plans.

General Authority:

Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended.

45 CFR Part 1321.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Arkansas Code Annotated Section 25-10-101 et seq.

DEFINITIONS:

- I. **Access Services** - those services associated with access to services, i.e., transportation, outreach, information and assistance, and case management/client representation.
- II. **Direct Services** - services to older persons performed by the area agency rather than contracted to a local service provider.
- III. **Priority Services** - Access, In-Home, and Legal Assistance.
- IV. **Information and Assistance (I & A)** - (formerly Information & Referral) a service for older individuals that:
 - a. provides older individuals (and their care takers) with current information about opportunities, benefits and services available to the individuals within their communities, including information relating to assistive technology;
 - b. assesses the problems and capacities of the individuals;
 - c. links the individuals to the opportunities, benefits and services that are available;
 - d. to the maximum extent practicable, ensures that the individuals receive the benefits and services they need and are aware of the opportunities available to them by establishing adequate follow-up procedures;
 - e. serves the entire community of older individuals, particularly (1) older individuals with greatest social need and (2) older individuals with greatest economic need; and
 - f. is part of a continuum of services.
- V. **Unit of I & A Services** - a one-to-one contact provided in verbal or written form.
- VI. **Information Contact** - the provision of specific information in response to an inquiry.
- VII. **Referral** - contact with a service or benefit provider on behalf of a client to ensure service/benefit delivery.
- VIII. **Follow-up** - contact with client, family member or provider to determine if service/benefit was provided as requested. It is an integral part of client referral.
- IX. **Assistive Technology** - technology, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles appropriate to meet the needs of, and address the barriers confronted by, older individuals with functional limitations.

III. Access Service

In order to ensure the provision of services in sufficient numbers and with reasonably convenient access by older persons, the AAA must:

1. Establish and maintain a centrally located I & A telephone service which has:
 - a. widely advertised toll-free and TDD (Telephone Devices for the Deaf) telephone number(s);
 - b. a staff of employees and/or volunteers trained to give accurate information about services, benefits, and available resources through response to telephone, mail and walk-in inquiries;
 - c. a continually up-dated resource file of services, benefits and other resources available to older persons in AAA planning and service area, including the eligibility requirements for such benefits and services;
 - d. a list of translators and interpreters available to assist non-English-speaking and deaf clients in obtaining information about and referral to services, benefits and other resources for which they are eligible;
 - e. procedures to protect the confidentiality of information about I & A clients, which include the provision of locked files for client information; or
 - f. the option to contract with a local service provider to provide I & A services, However, the AAA must provide widely advertised telephone and TDD access numbers for complaints and case management, a list of translators and interpreters to assist the non- English speaking client and a regularly up-dated resource directory. Please refer to Sec. IV below for contract requirements.
2. Publish during the first year of the area plan cycle, an up-dated resource directory that is available upon request to any interested party. A copy of the current resource directory will be placed in each senior center. The resource directory must contain:
 - a. the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the agencies and satellite offices providing services and/or benefits for the elderly in the planning and service area. The directory should indicate where potential charges may be involved in the provision of a service.
 - b. category sections for the most frequently requested types of services: housing, Social Security, employment, home health, Medicaid, etc.
3. Ensure access to Information and Assistance services by older persons in the planning and service area through the requirement that senior centers and provider agencies will:
 - a. have available a copy of the most recent AAA resource directory and Public Benefits for Arkansas Seniors for use by program participants;

- b. display current information regarding available programs and benefits, preferably; on a bulletin board.
 - c. prominently display the AAA toll-free and TDD telephone numbers, identifying these numbers as the place to call for information about services and benefits not available at the center or agency; and
 - d. maintain a tally of information calls and a telephone log of referrals provided to center participants and other persons by center & agency staff.
4. Document the provision of required annual training for I & A staff and AAA providers.
 5. Participate in regional inter-agency councils, Unified Community Resource councils and other information sharing organizations and coordinate with other agencies providing services, benefits and opportunities for seniors in the planning and service area.
 6. Disseminate current information on the availability of services, benefits and opportunities for older persons to AAA staff and service providers.
 7. Advertise services through local news articles, radio and TV shows, public service announcements, flyers, speeches to local civic and church groups, and county information fairs.
 8. Maintain records of requests for information (by telephone, letter or in person) and a telephone log of referrals and follow-ups to referrals. A tally sheet of calls and telephone log of referrals and of follow-ups done is the minimum requirement. It is recommended, but not required, that the service maintain a record of the type calls received and of gaps in services. Sample records are provided in Attachment B.
 9. Develop written policies and procedures for the service.
 10. Develop and maintain coordinative agreements for inter-agency referrals with organizations and agencies providing services, opportunities and benefits for older persons in the planning and service area.
 11. Meet DAAS service reporting requirements.
 12. Staff the Information and Assistance service with trained personnel, preferably a full-time specialist who will be responsible for :
 - a. provision of accurate information in verbal or written form;
 - b. the maintenance of the up-dated resource file;
 - c. the revision of the area resource directory;
 - d. assistance in liaison with other agencies providing services and benefits to older persons;
 - e. assistance with the orientation and training of front line telephone workers and

AAA service providers in the provision of I & A;

- f. assistance with the development of AAA policy and procedures for I & A; and
- g. if possible, participation in local and statewide professional associations for professional development and training.

13. Each AAA is encouraged to meet the National Standards for Older Americans Act Information and Referral developed from the Alliance of Information and Referral Services and the United Way of America Standards. See Attachment C.

14. Each AAA is requested to integrate the I & A service into its other services to provide a continuum of access to services for all older persons as they move from self-sufficiency to assisted life in the community.

15. Each AAA is requested to develop and utilize a uniform procedure to meet out-of-state requests for information and assistance from long-distance care givers. If at all possible, the out-of-state caller should not be asked to call another agency. Follow-up on these referrals is especially critical for clients whose families live out-of-state.

IV. Contracted Services

An AAA may contract with local service providers to provide I & A services at senior centers or other sites following the requirements outlined in Section III. The AAA must assess the contracted service annually and must require that:

1. the I & A service provider will publicize and coordinate the service as required of the area agency in Section III.
2. the provider will meet DHS and DAAS reporting and record keeping requirements.
3. the provider shall develop and maintain written policies and procedures for the operation of the service, especially for the referral of clients to the AAA for targeted case management, client representation, legal assistance and advocacy services.
4. provider staff will participate in the required annual training provided by the AAA. This training should include subjects such as cultural awareness, communication with sensorially deprived older persons, interviewing techniques as well as services and benefits available to older persons and the eligibility requirements for the services and benefits. Documentation of training provided must be on file.
5. the provider who also provides senior center services in addition to I & A services shall be subject to the standards for access by older persons found in Section III.3(a. - d.).

Each RFP and contract for I & A services will contain the above requirements as part of the description and scope of work and minimum standards required.

AAAs contracting for I & A services shall develop written policies and procedures for the coordination of I & A by its case management, client representation and advocacy staff with its contracted providers of I & A. The multi-tiered Information and Assistance system should be carefully monitored for the possibility of barriers to reasonably convenient access to the services by older persons in the planning and service area. If possible, the AAA should respond to a simple request for information rather than referring the caller to the provider of I & A services.

V. Assessments

The Division of Aging and Adult Services will assess the Information and Assistance service of each area agency on aging at least once during an area plan cycle for compliance with the standards listed in this procedure. See the assessment guide. (Attachment A)

Division of Aging and Adult Services
Information and Assistance Area Agency Assessment

ATTACHMENT A
Page One of Three
Assessment Date: _____

Area Agency on Aging _____

Name and Title of Assessor

STANDARDS/CRITERIA	Y	N	COMMENTS AND/OR CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED
(1) a. The AAA funds Information & Assistance (I & A) Services under the Older Americans Act (OAA) or b. has an approved waiver from DAAS to not provide this priority service.			
(2) a. The AAA provides the service directly or b. contracts with local service providers to provide the service. (Go to questions 19-23)			
(3) The AAA has a centrally located I & A telephone service which has (Review documentation): a. widely advertised toll-free and TDD telephone; b. a staff of employees and/or volunteers trained to give accurate information about services, benefits and opportunities in response to telephone, mail or walk-in inquiries; c. a continually up-dated resource file of services, benefits and resources available to older persons in the AAA's planning and service area, including the eligibility requirements for such benefits, etc d. a list of translators and interpreters available to assist non-English speaking and deaf clients in obtaining information about and referral to services and benefits and other resources; and e. procedures to protect the confidentiality of information about I & A clients, which include the provision of locked files for client information.			
(4) The AAA publishes an up-dated resource directory that is available upon request to any interested individual that is (obtain a copy of the Directory): a. updated during the first year of the area plan cycle; b. placed in each senior center and provider agency office; c. contains the names, address and telephone numbers of the agencies & satellite offices providing services and/or benefits for the elderly in the PSA; d. contains category sections for the most frequently requested types of services (e.g.; housing, Social Security, employment, Medicaid, etc.) and e. is available in alternative form upon request.			
(5) The AAA requires senior centers and provider agencies to (Review recent assessments): a. have available a copy of the most recent AAA resource directory and Public Benefits for AR Seniors; b. display, preferably on a bulletin board, current information regarding programs and benefits; c. prominently display the AAA toll-free and TDD telephone numbers, identifying these numbers as the the place to call for information about services and benefits not available at the center or agency; and d. maintain a tally of information calls and a telephone log of referrals provided by staff to participants, etc.			
(6) The AAA documents the provision of required annual training for (Review documentation): a. I & A staff and b. Provider staff			
(7) AAA staff (document who): a. participate in inter-agency councils, UCRCs & other information sharing organizations and b. () inate with other agencies providing services, benefits and opportunities seniors.			

Division of Aging and Adult Services
Information and Assistance Area Agency Assessment

ATTACHMENT A

Page Two of Three

Assessment Date _____

Area Agency on Aging _____	Name and Title of Assessor _____		Name and Title of Assessor _____
STANDARDS/CRITERIA	Y	N	COMMENTS AND/OR CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED
(8) I & A staff disseminate current information on the availability of services, benefits and opportunities for older persons to (document method & frequency): a. other AAA staff; b. service providers; and c. the general public.			
(9) AAA advertises its services through (document type and frequency): a. news paper articles; b. radio shows; c. TV shows; d. public service announcements; e. flyers; f. speeches to local groups, churches and organizations; and g. participation in regional and county health or information fairs.			
(10) AAA maintains records of requests for information by phone, letter & in person by (review records and record most recent numbers reported): a. tally sheet or other record of information contacts; b. log of referrals and follow-ups and c. record of types of calls received and gaps in services (optional).			
(11) AAA has written policies and procedures for the service. (Review the policy)			
(12) AAA has written coordinative agreements with other agencies providing services, benefits and opportunities for seniors in the area. (Review agreements)			
(13) AAA meets DAAS service reporting requirements. (Review reports)			
(14) AAA staffs the I & A services (review job descriptions & training records): a. Full-time I & A Specialist; b. other trained staff (indicate number); and/or c. trained volunteers (indicate number).			
(15) I & A job descriptions indicate that staff duties include (document position): a. provision of accurate information in verbal or written form; b. maintenance of up-dated resource files; c. revision of resource directory; d. assistance in liaison with other agencies; e. assistance with orientation & training of i. AAA front line telephone workers and ii. providers staff, including senior center directors; f. assistance with development of I & A policy & procedures; g. participation in local & statewide professional associations.			
(16) The AAA service strives to meet the National Standards for Older Americans Act Information & Referral.			

Division of Aging and Adult Services
Information and Assistance Area Agency Assessment

ATTACHMENT A
Page Three of Three
Assessment Date _____

Area Agency on Aging _____

Name and Title of Assessor _____

STANDARDS/CRITERIA	Y	N	COMMENTS AND/OR CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED
(17) AAA integrates the I & A service into its other services. (Document method)			
(18) AAA has a uniform procedure to meet out-of-state requests for I & A from long-distance care givers.			
(19) AAA contracts with local service provider(s) for I & A Services (Review contracts and document the names, address, telephone #s of the providers)			
(20) AAA requires I & A providers to (review contract & assessments):			
a. publicize the service through:			
i. newspaper articles/ads,			
ii. radio and TV spots and presentations,			
iii. flyers, and			
iv. participate in county information and health fairs;			
b. meet DHS and DAAS reporting and record keeping requirements;			
c. have written policies and procedures for:			
i. record keeping,			
ii. reporting,			
iii. information giving,			
iv. referral to AAA client representation, legal assistance, case management, and			
v. follow-up of referrals;			
d. participate in training provided through AAA (specify how often provided);			
e. meet standards to:			
i. have available the most recent AAA resource directory for participant use,			
ii. display current information regarding available services & benefits,			
iii. prominently display AAA toll-free and TDD telephone numbers which identify the AAA as the place to call about additional services and for complaints;			
f. participate in UCRCs and local inter-agency councils; and			
g. coordinate with other local agencies in referral for services, benefits, etc.			
(21) AAA maintains access to I & A by providers and participants through (review documentation):			
a. maintenance of a well-advertised area wide toll-free telephone and TDD telephone for referral and complaints;			
b. maintenance of a current resource file;			
c. maintenance of a current list of translators available to assist the non-English and deaf clients to understand benefits and access services; and			
d. the provision of current copies of the agency resource directory for use by provider staff and participants.			
(22) AAA has written policies and procedures for the I & A service and its integration into the AAA service system.			
(23) AAA assesses the I & A provider annually for compliance with the terms of the contract. (Review Assessments)			

Other Comments:

CATEGORY

TOTALS

Adult Day Care (Nearest Day Care # _____)

Adult Protective Services/Phone: 1-800-482-8049 _____

Alzheimer's Support Group (Nearest group Contact # _____)

Benefits Information: (Local AAA # _____)

Complaints (Service Provider # _____ or AAA 1-800- -) _____

Commodities (Local # _____)

DHS County Office (Cty ofc # _____)
(for Medicaid/Nursing home, Food Stamps, QMB, SLMB, ElderChoices applications)

ElderChoices/Services refer to DHS County Office _____

Employment/AR ABLE: 1-800-545-ABLE (or Local ESD ofc # _____)

Financial Assistance (Local # _____)

Home Health: AAA 1-800- - or _____
In-home/Personal Care/Hospice See Above _____

Housing: (Local Housing Authority # _____)

Housing Assistance (Local Sec. 8 Ofc # _____)

Legal Services/ Legal Services 1-800- - _____

Medicaid (see DHS county ofc or Application 65+ call Social Security
Medicare Supplement Insurance/Senior Ins. Network 1-800-852-5494 _____)

Medicare Claims: AR Blue Cross 1-800-482-5525) _____

Medicare Question: Soc.Sec 1-800-772-1213) _____

Nursing Home General Information/ Ofc of Long Term Care 1-682-8487 _____
or AAA LongTerm Care Ombudsman 1-783-4500 _____

Nursing Home Problems/Complaints Ombudsman Referrals/ AAA _____

Nursing Home/Adult Day Care/Residential Care Licenses 1-682-8464 _____

Nursing Home Lists/Regulations 682-8424 (Ofc LTC, Sophie Fraser) _____
(OLTC charges for lists, regulations)

Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB)/Phone DHS County Office _____

Residential Care/Adult Foster Care/see Adult Day Care 682-8468 _____

Social Security/SSI/Phone: 1-800-772-1213 (or Local # _____)

Taxes: Homestead 682-7250 (due Aug. 15) _____

Taxpayer Assistance: 682-1100 _____

Transportation/call (Local # _____)

Utility Assistance (Local # _____)

Veterans Information (Local VA # _____)

Voter Registration (Local # _____)

Referrals _____ # + Information Calls (above total) _____ = Monthly Total _____

NOTE: RECORD ALL REFERRALS (Your call to an agency) ON SEPARATE LOG FORM _____

INFORMATION & REFERRAL DAILY TELEPHONE LOG

[illegible]

National Standards for Older Americans Act Information and Referral Services

Prepared By:

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INTRODUCTION

These *Standards for Older Americans Act Information and Referral Services* are designed to serve as a benchmark and guide against which Older Americans Act I&R services are measured. These standards represent the ideal which I&R providers should strive to achieve. They are not, therefore, to be viewed as minimum standards. Accordingly, these were not designed for use by auditors in financial and compliance audits of Information and Referral providers.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The primary purpose of the Older Americans Act Information and Referral System and its component state and local information and referral systems and services is to support all older persons and their caregivers in assessing their needs, identifying the most appropriate services to meet their needs and linking the older person and caregiver to the agencies providing these services. In addition, this information and referral system will collect and make available data to support community needs assessment and community planning activities.

DEFINITION OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

A service designed to link people in need with the appropriate service(s) designed to eliminate or alleviate that need.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

Each standard is listed below for your reference.

I. FUNCTIONS OF THE I&R SERVICE

The standards in Section I describe the functions that shall be performed by the I&R service.

STANDARD 1: CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The I&R service shall use a classification system based on standard service terminology to facilitate retrieval of service information, to increase the reliability of planning data, to make comparison and evaluation processes consistent and reliable, and to facilitate national comparisons of data.

STANDARD 2: RESOURCE FILE

The I&R service shall develop, maintain, and use an accurate, up-to-date resource file that contains information on available community resources and that produces detailed data on service providers in the area that are responsive to the needs of older persons and their caregivers.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

Procedures for checking accuracy of referral sources shall be developed to avoid liability.

STANDARD 3: INQUIRER DATA COLLECTION

The I&R service shall establish and use a system of collecting and organizing inquirer data for appropriate referral and to identify gaps in services.

STANDARD 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The I&R service shall establish and use a systematic method of collecting and organizing data that provides support for community planning activities and advocacy. This support shall consist of statistics, data analysis, and relevant documentation on service use, client characteristics, unmet needs, gaps, and duplications in services.

STANDARD 5: TRAINING

The I&R service shall provide training to paid and volunteer staff.

STANDARD 6: PROMOTION

The I&R service shall help establish and maintain a planned program of activities to increase community awareness of I&R services and their objectives.

STANDARD 7: ACCESS TO SERVICE

Each I&R service shall continually try to help all persons reach the information and referral services they need as easily as possible.

II. CLIENT SERVICE DELIVERY FUNCTIONS

The standards in Section II describe the delivery functions essential for providing information and referral including brief individual assessment of need and a blend of information, referral and advocate support in order to link the older person and caregiver to the appropriate service.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

STANDARD 8: INFORMATION GIVING

The I&R service shall provide information about human services to inquirers. This information can range from a limited response (such as an organization's name, telephone number and address) to detailed data about community service systems (such as explaining how a group intake system works for a particular agency), agency policies, and procedures for application.

STANDARD 9: REFERRAL GIVING

The I&R service shall provide referral services for inquirers. These consist of assessing the needs of the inquirer, evaluating appropriate resources, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, helping callers for whom services are unavailable by locating alternative resources, and actively participating in linking the inquirer to needed services.

STANDARD 10: FOLLOW-UP

I&R service shall follow-up referral cases to determine the outcome. Additional assistance in locating or using services may be necessary.

STANDARD 11: ADVOCACY/INTERVENTION

The I&R service shall offer advocacy on behalf of an individual or a group of individuals when needed services are not being adequately provided by an organization within the service delivery system.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The standards in Section III describe the organizational structure under which an I&R service must operate.

STANDARD 12: AUSPICES

The auspices under which the I&R service operates shall ensure the achievement of I&R goals.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

STANDARD 13: STAFF

I&R staff shall be competent, ethical, qualified, and sufficient in number to deliver service.

STANDARD 14: VOLUNTEERS

The I&R service shall involve volunteers to enhance the program's service delivery.

STANDARD 15: FINANCING

Financing shall be sufficient to provide adequate service and maintaining these standards and criteria.

STANDARD 16: FACILITIES

I&R providers shall provide facilities which allow the service to operate effectively and efficiently.

IV. COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The standards included in Section IV focus on the responsibilities of the State Agency on Aging, Area Agency on Aging and I&R service to the I&R system.

STANDARD 17A: COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – STATES AND AREA AGENCIES

States and Area Agencies on Aging have responsibility to facilitate coordination of aging I&R efforts with those of the broader I&R system.

STANDARD 17B: COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – INDIVIDUAL PROVIDERS

An I&R service is a part of an I&R system. It shall continually develop I&R service programs related to community needs, existing resources, and the activities of other I&R services with Area Agencies on Aging.

STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

STANDARD 18: COOPERATIVE DECISION MAKING

The I&R service shall participate in cooperative planning, implementation of policies, and sustained development of funding sources with the State Unit on Aging/Area Agency on Aging.

STANDARD 19: COOPERATIVE FUNCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The I&R service shall establish and maintain formal and informal cooperative arrangements with other I&R services to minimize duplication and improve service delivery.

STANDARD 20: COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The I&R service shall use appropriate administrative procedures to implement cooperative arrangements.

REFERRAL PATHS IN INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE SPECTRUM OF SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE Unit is one to one information contact or referral with follow up.

1. Information giving:
 - a. By phone/in person - concrete information given verbally.
 - b. By letter or verbal request for written materials - information mailed.
2. Referral to an agency/in-house service:
 - a. Information about eligibility, etc and agency to call is given to client/care giver to make calls on their own.
 - b. I & A calls on behalf of client after obtaining needed information from client.
3. Follow-up of Referrals:
 - a. Client /Care Giver is asked to call I & A about success or problems or
 - b. I & A checks with client and/or referral agency RE referral.
4. Referral of I & A call/letter to Client Representation or Targeted Case Management when:
 - a. Multiple referrals are needed - Client Representation
 - b. Advocacy/legal assistance through AAA needed - Client Rep.
 - c. Medicaid clients with multiple needs Targeted Case Management
 - d. Recently Disabled client applies for SSD, needs on-going assist - CR

CLIENT REPRESENTATION Unit is one client per annual report period.
CR should be defined by need for care plan.

1. Referral received; make telephone call to client to set up appointment.
2. Visit with client to
 - a. determine economic and social support resources;
 - b. determine assistance needed;
 - c. discuss services available and eligibility requirements;
 - d. set up case plan with client; and
 - e. get consent form signed.
3. Make referrals on client's behalf or go with client to apply for services/benefits.
4. Coordinate and monitor services and benefits to see that they are satisfactory.
5. Check with client periodically (at least every 3 months) to see if additional needs.
6. Revise Care Plan as needed.
7. Make referral for legal assistance and/or act as advocate for client at fair hearings.

TARGETED CASE MANAGEMENT Follow TCM Guidelines for Medicaid clients.