

American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Program

What Programs and Services are Available for older American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians?

The AoA Office for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Programs is charged with serving as an advocate on behalf of Native American elders with all departments and agencies of the Federal Government on all Federal policies affecting elders and an advocate with the States to promote the enhanced delivery of services and implementation of programs to older Native Americans. Other functions of the Office include administering and evaluating grants to Tribes, chairing the Interagency Task Force on Older Indians, developing research plans and conducting research on Native American aging, and collect and disseminating information on problems experienced by Native American elders. This includes elder abuse, long-term care, health, and other issues unique to Native Americans.

Under Title VI of the OAA, AoA awards grants directly to Tribes and Tribal organizations and native organizations for nutrition services (including congregate and home delivered meals), information and assistance, transportation, and in-home supportive services. Most sites provide hot congregate meals four to five times a week. Home-delivered meals are available for elders who are in poorer health, are more functionally impaired, are more apt to be homebound and in need of transportation services, or in need of in-home supportive services. Additionally, Title VI programs are important sources for social interaction and supportive services. Many programs provide traditional craft activities and health promotion activities, including aerobic exercise classes, fitness walking, and line dancing.

In 2000, as part of an amendment to the Older Americans Act, the Native American Caregiver Support Program was established to assist caregivers of Native American elders who are chronically ill or have disabilities.

National Resource Centers

The AoA is currently funding two Resource Centers for Older Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. These centers provide culturally competent health care, community-based long-term care, and related services. They serve as the focal points for developing and sharing technical information and expertise for Native American organizations, Native American communities, educational institutions, and professionals working with elders.

Since 1994 the AoA has funded the National Resource Center on Native American Aging, University of North Dakota. A culturally sensitive staff and national steering committee govern the Resource Center. The resource center provides education, training, technical assistance, and research. It also assists in developing community-based solutions to improve the quality of life and the delivery of related support services to the Native elderly population. A major project of this Resource Center has been the development of an elderly needs assessment tool to assist Tribes in planning for elder care services. More information about the Center is available on the web at: www.med.und.nodak.edu/depts/rural//nrcnaa/.

AoA funded a new National Resource Center on Native American Aging at the University of Alaska Anchorage this year. Initially, this Center will:

1. empower Native communities to incorporate traditional and contemporary health practices that have the potential to effectively support and treat elders within community health care systems;
2. provide technical information to promote culturally sensitive and functionally appropriate services to maintain social well-being; and
3. provide an arena for discussions about the increasing problems of elder abuse to help Native communities in developing their own plans to reduce and control occurrences.

For More Information:

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging Washington, DC 20201; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax (202) 357-3560; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov; or contact our website at: www.aoa.gov

