



Options for Independent Living

**As Required by
Human Resources Code,
Section 101A.158**

Health and Human Services

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Executive Summary

The *Options for Independent Living Report* is submitted per Human Resources Code, Section 101A.158.

Although the Options for Independent Living (Options) program is no longer in place, it was a catalyst for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) directly providing short-term support services similar to the Options model.

This report provides a brief history of the Options program implementation and its impact on the AAA service delivery system.

1. Introduction

Texas Human Resources Code, Section 101A.158 requires the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to submit a report annually, by November 1, to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives on services provided under the Options program.

The Options program was a statewide program to help older individuals remain at home despite limited self-care capacities and prevent institutionalization. The program was directed to serve priority populations, including older individuals who:

- recently experienced a major illness or hospitalization;
- live in rural areas;
- have a mild to moderate impairment or a temporary severe impairment; and
- have a great economic or social need.

On September 1, 2016, Texas Governor Greg Abbott designated HHSC as the state agency on aging in compliance with the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965, Public Law 89–73 (as amended through Public Law 114–144, enacted April 19, 2016).

Although the Options program is no longer in place, AAAs are providing programs and services similar to Options using federal funds and serving the above priority populations.

2. Background

The former state agency on aging, the legacy Texas Department on Aging (TDoA), implemented the Options program as directed by the 71st Legislature. TDoA competitively selected three AAAs to pilot the Options program, each representing varied populations from small rural areas to major metropolitan areas.

AAA case managers authorized services to older individuals based on a comprehensive assessment and care planning process, with services provided on a sliding fee scale. Services included:

- Case management
- Homemaker assistance
- Personal care
- Home modification
- Benefits counseling
- Respite care
- Emergency response
- Education and training for caregivers
- Home-delivered meals
- Transportation
- Other appropriate services¹

The successful pilot allowed TDoA to work with AAAs to implement the Options program statewide, later adapting the program to comply with federal funding requirements. This change was necessary, as state general revenue has not been appropriated for the Options program since the mid-1990s.

To adapt to federal funding requirements,² services are now provided on a voluntary contribution basis instead of on a sliding fee scale. Federal funding requirements prohibit cost sharing for case management, benefits counseling, congregate, and home-delivered meals and allow AAAs and providers to tell individuals receiving services that voluntary contributions are accepted. Each year,

¹ As required by Texas Human Resource Code, Section 101.0222(d).

² Federal funding requirements are established in OAA, Section 315 (a)(2)(A).

over \$3 million in voluntary contributions are generated through all OAA programs in Texas.

Options significantly expanded AAA's scope of work through direct provision of short-term support services. Today, every AAA in Texas offers case management, benefits counseling, caregiver supports, and information and referral as core services. Through case management, a wide array of services are authorized by AAAs to help individuals age 60 or older and their caregivers on a short-term basis. These services can include any appropriate service to address an individual's needs.

AAAs not only provide short-term support services to older individuals and their caregivers, but also serve a broader population and target services to people with the greatest economic or social need.

Appendix A includes a list of OAA programs and services representing a compilation of all services provided by AAAs in Texas.

3. Conclusion

In Texas, all AAAs provide support services similar to the Options program. Based on the level of funding an AAA receives through the OAA and the greatest needs identified for its region, each AAA provides the majority of the services specified in the Options program.

All AAAs must provide benefits counseling and case management, under which supportive services are authorized. These core programs often serve as a safety net for individuals with short-term needs during a time of crisis or while assessing options for long-term care.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
AAA	Area Agency on Aging
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
OAA	Older Americans Act of 1965
Options	Options for Independent Living Program
ToDA	Texas Department on Aging

Appendix A. List of OAA Programs and Services

Access and Assistance Services

- Care Coordination
- Caregiver Support Coordination
- Information, Referral and Assistance
- Legal Assistance Under 60
- Legal Assistance 60 & Over
- Legal Awareness
- Participant Assessment-Access & Assistance

Nutrition Services

- Congregate Meals
- Home Delivered Meals
- Nutrition Education
- Nutrition Counseling
- Nutrition Consultation
- Participant Assessment-Nutrition Services

Services to Assist Independence

- Adult Day Care
- Assisted Transportation
- Caregiver Respite Care-In Home
- Caregiver Respite Care-Institutional
- Caregiver Respite Care-Non Residential
- Caregiver Education & Training
- Caregiver Information Services
- Chore Maintenance
- Emergency Response
- Evidence Based Intervention
- Health Maintenance
- Health Screening
- Homemaker
- Income Support
- Instruction & Training
- Mental Health Services

- Personal Assistance
- Physical Fitness
- Residential Repair-Title III
- Telephone Reassurance
- Transportation Demand Response
- Visiting
- Volunteer Placement
- Voucher-Caregiver Respite Care
- Voucher-Homemaker
- Voucher-Transportation