



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options
The Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County, since 1974



Fiscal Years 2025-2027 Area Plan on Aging Fiscal Year 2025 Public Information Document

At AgeOptions, we believe that:

- Quality of life is essential to everyone.
- Communities that care make a difference.
- Knowledge is powerful.
- Good choices depend on reliable resources.

That is why we connect aging with options for living well.

AgeOptions does not discriminate in admission to programs or activities or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the U.S. Civil Rights Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Age Discrimination Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have a right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information, call 1-800-252-8966, or contact the Area Agency's Civil Rights Coordinator at (800)699-9043



AREA PLAN ON AGING

PUBLIC HEARINGS

AgeOptions will share the proposed FY2025 Area Plan on Aging Public Information Document. The document outlines how state and federal funding will be used to serve and support older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers in suburban Cook County. Your contribution can help influence how services are provided at local, state, and national levels!

We Want to Hear from You!

- LEARN about services
- SHARE your ideas
- HELP us improve

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Refreshments will be provided.

Friday, April 26, 2024, 9:30 am - 11:00 am
Bremen Township Senior Center, Building A
15350 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452

Monday, April 29, 2024, 9:30 am - 11:00 am
AgeOptions
1048 Lake St., 2nd Floor
Oak Park, IL 60301

Monday, April 29, 2024, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Virtual - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88502806117?pwd=LTQaUzPnFNMF3eFRCB9iYsdtzSjzk3.1>



*For more information or a copy of the Area Plan Public Information Document prior to the public hearing, to request accommodations, or to submit written comments, please contact Peter Byer at (708) 383-0258 or Peter.Byer@ageoptions.org. **Written comments are accepted until May 3, 2024.** AgeOptions is the agency designated by the Illinois Department on Aging to plan, coordinate, advocate, and fund services for people aged 60 and over in suburban Cook County.*

Fiscal Year 2025 Public Information Document

AgeOptions publishes this Public Information Document as the official summary of the proposed **Area Plan** for Fiscal Year 2025. A summary of this document will be presented at Public Hearings (see schedule below). This Public Information Document summarizes the first year of the three-year AgeOptions Area Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2027. This Public Information Document is intended to outline AgeOptions plan for service design, service delivery, and allocating funds so the public can review this plan and provide comments and questions at the Public Hearings.

Comments on the proposed **Area Plan** for Fiscal Year 2025, as referenced in this Public Information Document, may be sent by mail, fax, or e-mail to AgeOptions no later by May 3, 2024, to Peter Byer, Planning and Advocacy Specialist, AgeOptions, 1048 Lake Street, Suite 300, Oak Park, Illinois 60301, Fax: 708.524.0870 or E-mail: Peter.Byer@ageoptions.org.

Public Hearings

AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging for suburban Cook County, is conducting three Public Hearings on the suburban Cook County Area Plan on Aging for Fiscal Year 2025. The public is welcome and encouraged to discuss and comment on the Plan.

If you need special assistance, a translator, sign language, or other accommodation, contact Peter Byer at (708) 383-0258 at least two days before the hearing you plan to attend.

Date	Time	Location
Friday, April 26, 2024	9:30 – 11:00 am	Bremen Township Senior Center, <u>Building A</u> 15350 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452
Monday, April 29, 2024	9:30 - 11 am	AgeOptions, 1048 Lake St., 2 nd Floor. Oak Park, IL 60301
Monday, April 29, 2024	1:00-2:30 pm	On Zoom https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88502806117?pwd=LTQaUzPnFNMF3eFRCB9iYsd tzSjzk3.1

Statement of Purpose of the Public Information Document and the Area Plan Public Hearings

The AgeOptions Area Plan on Aging is a planning, management, and grant award document. It encompasses service delivery plans and priority issues for FY 2025 for Planning and Service Area 13 (suburban Cook County).

This Public Information Document presents an outline of our plan to distribute federal and state funding to deliver services to older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in suburban Cook County. AgeOptions reissues the Public Information Document in the spring of each year to provide detailed information for the upcoming year.

The Area Plan Public Hearings provide an open forum for the public to make recommendations and comments on this Public Information Document. AgeOptions is interested in receiving feedback about our plan, especially from the people we serve. Comments or questions received will be reviewed by AgeOptions Advisory Council and Board who will consider changes to the Area Plan. AgeOptions prepares summaries of public hearing testimonies from all locations and identifies any actions. A full report on the above is available upon request.

AgeOptions The Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County

Who We Are

AgeOptions is a not-for-profit organization committed to improving the quality of life and maintaining the dignity of older adults and those who care about them. Our purpose is to connect older adults, aged 60 and over, with resources and options for care so that they have a range of choices and the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest. AgeOptions is nationally recognized for its innovative programming, strong community partnerships, excellent service provision, and powerful advocacy.

**We are guided by
Our Vision:**
People thriving as they age.

AgeOptions has served older adults and their families throughout suburban Cook County since 1974 as part of a nationwide service network of Area Agencies on Aging. This nationwide network includes the Administration

We are guided by **our Mission** to innovate, partner and advocate to improve systems and services in order to strengthen communities so people thrive as they age.

Our Values:

Commitment
Integrity
Connectedness

AgeOptions Diversity Statement The diversity of our organization and communities is a rich asset that strengthens our mission and guides our decisions and direction

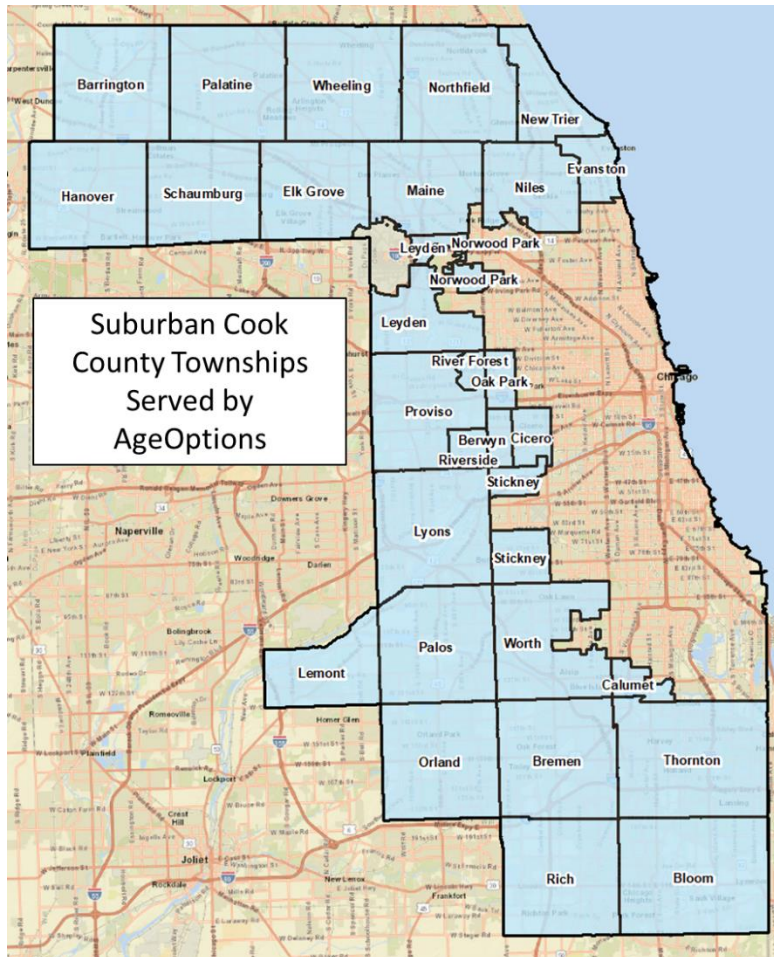
for Community Living¹ at the federal level, the Illinois Department on Aging which is the State Office on Aging at the state level, approximately 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) nationwide at the regional level, and local community service providers. All of us working together to serve older adults.

AgeOptions is governed by a Board of Directors, whose responsibilities include setting direction, establishing policies, and allocating resources. Our Advisory Council is comprised of older adults and other professionals interested in aging from across suburban Cook County. The role of the Advisory Council is to advise AgeOptions on the development and implementation of the Area Plan and to serve as an advocate for older people. A list of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council members can be found at the end of this document

Who We Serve

AgeOptions is designated under the federal Older Americans Act and the Illinois Act on Aging as the Area Agency on Aging for the suburban Cook County Planning and Service Area (PSA)¹³. AgeOptions is one of 13 Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois. This region is home to more than 2.52 million people.

¹ The Administration for Community Living is a part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services



The older adult population in suburban Cook County is rapidly growing and becoming increasingly diverse. Based on the American Community Survey 2018-2022, there are 602,017 older adults in 130 communities. A 2022 AARP survey found that 47% of Illinois voters over the age of 50 have experience as a family caregiver. Services are available to all people over the age of sixty and family caregivers of all ages but are prioritized to low income, minority, and limited English-Speaking individuals. Last year, AgeOptions and our community partners made a difference in the lives of 230,976 individuals.

What We Do

- **Planning:** AgeOptions assesses the needs of older adults and those who care for them, seeks input from the public in establishing service priorities, tests new service models and develops new programs. AgeOptions helps people access services, stay independent in their homes, provide caregiver support, maintain their rights, age well, have proper nutrition, and access to services in their community.

- **Coordination:** AgeOptions coordinates services in working with community partners, many of which receive Older Americans Act grants and contracts from AgeOptions. We receive guidance from the community by listening to our Advisory Council, and our community partners in regularly scheduled meetings designed to assure effective services including Adult Protective Services, Caregiver, Aging and Disability Resource Network, Transportation, Nutrition, and Culturally and Linguistically Accessible Services (CLAS) agency partners. While our programs are concentrated in suburban Cook County, AgeOptions also has direct responsibility for several programs that serve metropolitan Chicago and the entire state of Illinois.
- **Advocacy:** AgeOptions advocates in many ways for older adults, those who care for them, and adults with disabilities. We advocate for benefit programs, services, and funding at the federal and state levels. We inform legislators of the impact of legislation on older adults and our service network. We lead an Advocacy Task Force for people interested in aging issues.
- **Program Development:** AgeOptions creates and sustains a variety of innovative programs that respond to the rich diversity of our communities such as work with libraries, memory cafes and other programs listed in the Appendix.
- **Distribute Funds:** Using proven methods of research and planning, AgeOptions is entrusted with distributing funds to a network of local community service providers and agencies across the state who participate in our broader programming. We administer federal, state, and private funds. AgeOptions support services through grants and contracts to more than 95 community-based organizations such as private not-for-profits, municipalities and townships, libraries, organizations who work with specific Limited English Proficient elders, senior centers, and more.

Suburban Cook County Demographics

Understanding the Growth in the 60+ Population

Based on the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-year estimates there are 602,017 **older adults** in suburban Cook County.

Suburban Cook Facts! Did you know?

- Older adults make up **24.6%** of total suburban Cook County population
- **Sixteen** other states have smaller older adult populations than suburban Cook County
- **40.2%** of suburban Cook older adults are householders that live alone.
- Today, **almost 57,000** of older adults in suburban Cook County are over the age of 85
- **Over 50,000** older adults in suburban Cook County live below the federal poverty level.
- More than **14.8%** of older adults speak English less than very well.

Today, nearly 1 in 4 (24.6%) individuals in suburban Cook County are older adults.



The population in suburban Cook County is racially/ethnically diverse!

Almost 1 in 3 (30.2%) individuals in suburban Cook County identify as non-white.



According to the most recent American Community Survey Data (2018-2022) 5-year estimates, **30.2%** of the 60+ population in suburban Cook County identifies as non-white:

- Hispanic/Latino alone – 9%
- Black/African American alone – 13.6%
- Asian alone – 7.6%

Area Plan Development

Planning Process

To develop the Area Plan on Aging, AgeOptions engages in a variety of activities to assess the needs of older adults. This includes active older adults, older adults with disabilities, caregivers of older adults, and older adult relatives raising children. The steps and activities of AgeOptions' FY2025 planning process are outlined below.

Step 1: Assess Needs of the Priority Population in suburban Cook County

- Consult studies, reports, relevant regulations, and guidelines including (National, State, Regional and local community).
- In 2023, AgeOptions worked with the University of Illinois Chicago Department of Disability and Human Development to produce [Ageing in the Suburbs, A Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Cook County Suburbs 50+ Population.](#) The Comprehensive Needs Assessment included individual surveys of older adults, individual interviews, focus groups with caregivers and community service providers. Minority and limited English-Speaking Communities were over sampled.
- AgeOptions also worked with Rob Paral to produce a Demographic Analysis - [Accompanying demographic analysis website by Rob Paral and Associates.](#)
- AgeOptions is currently working with POLCO to conduct an additional needs assessment which will prioritize reaching non-English speaking and ethnically diverse older adults in suburban Cook County. POLCO is using census tract data to identify households and is sending postcards and surveys to 59,786 households of which 26,000 will be random and the remainder to our priority groups whose primary languages are Spanish, Polish, Hindi, Tagalog, Arabic, Russian, Korean, and Chinese. The survey is quite comprehensive, covering seven (7) pages of questions. AgeOptions will use this data for current and future planning.
- Consult local experts and groups on needs and service gaps including:
 - Adult Protective Services Supervisors
 - AgeOptions Advocacy Task Force
 - AgeOptions Advisery partners
 - AgeOptions Board and Advisory Council
 - AgeOptions Caregiver Specialists agencies
 - AgeOptions Fatality Review Teams
 - AgeOptions Funded Partners including agencies that target Limited English Proficient older adults
 - AgeOptions Information and Assistance Team and funded Aging and Disability Resource Networks (ADRN)
 - AgeOptions Nutrition Partners
 - Alzheimer's Association Greater Illinois Chapter

- Caring Together Living Better Partners
- Chicago Task Force on LGBT Aging and AgeOptions Thrive with Pride Cafes
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- Coalition for Limited English-Speaking Elderly (CLESE)
- Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) of Northeastern Illinois
- Disability Rights organizations and Centers for Independent Living
- Discharge Planners
- Employment organizations
- Health Care and Managed Care Organizations
- Housing assistance and Homelessness prevention organizations
- Illinois Financial Abuse Specialty Teams
- Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging (I4A)
- Illinois Pathways partners
- Local, state, and federal legislators at our annual Legislative Breakfasts
- Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and South Suburban Mayors and Managers
- Mental Health organizations as well as our HOPE staff
- Public Health Partners including Cook County Department of Public Health, Chicago Public Health – Health Alerts, Public Health Institute, and others
- Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) partners
- Gather community and participant input including:
 - Information and Assistance calls
 - Legislative Breakfasts
 - Meetings and discussions with funded partners
 - Focus Groups
 - Needs Assessment
 - Evaluations and surveys
- Examination of Census data and American Community Survey 2018-22 data
- Examination of the latest research and reports from academic journals and local, state, and national organizations and initiatives to identify key factors influencing current conditions and help to determine programmatic considerations.
- Review program data
 - Examination of demographic, unit, and client data by service (National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS))
 - Review Information and Assistance call trends
 - Determine gaps in services to those in greatest social and economic need by comparing NAPIS data demographics of clients served to Census data

Step 2: Evaluate the Existing Service System

- Ongoing processes of conducting unit cost analysis of services and budget rates.

- Routine summaries of collected information to identify strengths and service gaps.
- Analysis of service data and heat mapping
- Needs Assessments.
- Focus Groups and needs hearings
- Input from funded partners

Step 3: Determine Availability of Resources and Alternative Approaches Available to Meet Needs

- Weigh needs versus potential resources and draft a plan
- Obtain input on draft plan from stakeholders
- Review alternate approaches to create efficiencies and improve effectiveness.
- Review the effectiveness of services in reaching the priority populations:
 - Older adults with low incomes,
 - Older adults who are a member of a diverse population, (Black and Brown)
 - Older adults over the age of 75;
 - Older adults with limited English proficiency or have language barriers;
 - Older adults at risk for institutional placement,
 - Older adults who are frail or have a physical or mental disability;
 - Older adults with dementia and related disorders as well as their caregivers;
 - Older adults who are isolated due to racial and ethnic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status or other issues.
- Assess the ability of other partners or systems to meet needs.
- Determine funding levels to mitigate the impact of the loss of American Recovery Program

Step 4: Establish Priorities

- Summarize needs and suggested approaches
- Determine priorities with Advisory Council and Board input

Step 5: Plan Modification and Refinement

- Complete Area Plan on Aging Public Information Document
- Conduct regional Public Hearings
 - Modify the plan as necessary based on public input

What we learned from our Planning Process -

Post COVID Programming: The concept of one-size fits all of service delivery regardless of the type of program and service may be a vestige of the past. Virtual vs. In

person programming for social service and nutrition services is still evolving. AgeOptions and our community partners are continually looking for methods to promote in person programming to combat social isolation.

In response to this finding, AgeOptions will continue encouraging both virtual and in-person programming, continuing “to-go’ meals from Congregate sites, and continued work with Uniper.

Affordability of Housing/Home Preservation

Based on listening sessions, coalition meetings, as well as [reports](#) there is an increase in homelessness of older adults and housing insecurity. Rents have skyrocketed, which is especially difficult for those on a fixed income and there is a lack of more affordable housing.

AgeOptions used American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Funding to support Home Preservation efforts. Preliminary FY 24 data showed that of the older adults served:

- 13% were at risk of being evicted and 3% were in the process of being evicted,
- 5% needed repairs or modifications to their homes so they could age in place.
- 42% had housing that they could no longer afford.

Of those served, referrals were made to the following services:

- 6% to legal assistance
- 4% for case management
- 11% to Homelessness Services
- 3% for home modification, home repair, or intensive cleaning
- 9% to Rental assistances
- 13% to other services like benefits enrollment

When the older adults finished working with the Home Preservation programs:

- 51% were able to stay in their home or apartment
- 4% were on a housing wait list and an additional 4% found new housing

AgeOptions continues to be committed to Home Preservation. In AgeOptions Request for Proposal process, applicants may apply to continue the Home Preservation efforts under the “housing assistance” service and “Home Repair”.

Increased Risk of Scams and Fraud

According to the [Federal Trade Commission](#) report, during 2022, older adults:

- reported losing more than \$1.6 billion to fraud, compared to about \$1 billion the year before – a 60% increase in only one year!

- reported losing big to investment scams: \$404 million in reported losses, with reports often describing fake cryptocurrency investment opportunities that targeted people on social media.
- reported losing more to business impersonation scams (especially scammers pretending to be Amazon) and romance scams than the previous year.
- were more than six times more likely than younger adults to report losing money to a tech support scam.

Through our Needs Assessment, we learned that older adults that have experienced fraud find it confusing on how to protect their credit. In response, AgeOptions regularly shares the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Money Smarts for Older Adults Resource Guide. Additionally, AgeOptions worked with Legal Aid Chicago to develop the [Elder Risk Detector](#) which is user-friendly and enables older adults to screen themselves for common legal issues. We dedicated five meetings of AgeOptions Advocacy Task Force to explore the Financial Exploitation and Scams and vet potential ways to address the problem.

Culturally Competent services:

Through focus groups and the Needs Assessment, AgeOptions heard from Black and Brown communities that minority older people have specific needs and preferences including culturally competent services, information sharing, and trust in service providers. In response, AgeOptions has specific funding through Supportive services to fund Culturally and Linguistically Accessible Services (CLAS). CLAS funding is for Black or Brown and/or culturally aligned owned and operated agencies serving suburban Cook County. In addition, AgeOptions funds 21 nutrition programs each with a different priority population such as Black, Brown, limited English-Speaking, LGBTQ+ older adults and those who prefer a Kosher or Halal diet.

Need for a Central place for Quality information:

Needs Assessment findings highlighted the need for high quality information from a visible central hub. In response, AgeOptions is:

- Funding CLAS agencies who provide culturally competent information to older adults and caregivers
- Funding Aging Disability Resource Network (ADRN) to provide quality information. CLAS agencies will be part of this ADRN network and attend training with other agencies.
- Requiring ADRN agencies will outpost in each municipality in their area.
- Using several strategies to outreach to diverse groups including print materials, social media, word of mouth, and partnerships. Our outreach will be tailored for

preferences of diverse groups, and we will involve older adults in the planning process to gather feedback.

- Sharing information about benefits and services which include eligibility requirements.
- Continuing our “Thrive with Pride” program which provides a central hub for information and programming.
- Working with libraries to empower them with the information to make referrals to the aging network.
- Please see the Initiatives section for more information on our Visibility Initiative and Quality Assurance.

Nutrition:

The needs assessment found that only 5% of older adults met the recommended daily vegetable and fruit intake and over 25% of older adults reported they could not afford to meet their diet requirements. In response to these findings, AgeOptions is continuing:

- The meal kit delivery program provides older adults with 21 meals worth of nutritious food meeting 100% of daily requirements for food.
- The “to-go” meals from Congregate sites
- The Home Delivered Meal program which currently does not have a waiting list
- Outreach and assistance to apply for the SNAP program
- The Senior Farmers Market Coupon Program
- Continued advocacy related to the nutrition program

Social Connectedness:

The most valuable services for older adults aged 60 and caregivers are social meetings or groups, Health and exercise, Emotional support groups, and help with medical insurance

In response to these findings, AgeOptions is continuing our:

- Congregate meals program which provides a meal and socialization.
- [Illinois Pathways to Health](#) which provides evidence-based and self-management of chronic health conditions, prevents falls, and fosters individual well-being. Classes are offered in person as well as virtually.
- Memory cafes, 6 are for limited English-speaking older adults and caregivers

Income:

Our Needs Assessment results showed a high number of older adults with incomes below \$24,999. BIPOC older adults had a higher chance of being low income.

In response, AgeOptions provides:

- The meal kit delivery service which is enough healthy food to feed a person 21 meals in a week.
- Funding Congregate and Home Delivered Meals
- Funding for ADRN and CLAS agencies to assist with benefit applications.
- Funding for the Senior Health Assistance Program which can provide information on Medicare Part D Extra help/Low Income Subsidy (LIS), Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- [Avisery](#) which provides education and technical assistance for professionals who counsel older adults and people with disabilities on health care coverage options, including Medicare and Medicaid.
- The [Chart of Benefits by Income Level tool](#) to professionals and on our website for consumers.
- Funds the [Aging Mastery Program \(AMP\)](#) and prioritizes the BIPOC populations.
- The [Benefits Enrollment Center](#) provides outreach and assist low-income older adults and people with disabilities to find and enroll in all the benefit programs for which they are eligible.
- Advocacy for income related programs such as increasing the Supplemental Security Income benefit.

Healthcare and Health Promotion:

Needs assessment respondents identified the need for:

- Enhanced health and well-being services – respondent's rates for breast cancer screening, prostate cancer screening, and vaccinations were lower for the BIPOC populations.
- Falls prevention programs – 20% of respondents experienced a fall in the last three months.
- Pain management – more than two-thirds of respondents had experienced pain in the last month.

In response, AgeOptions provides:

- [Illinois Pathways to Health](#) which provides evidence-based and self-management of chronic health conditions, prevents falls, provides pain management classes, and fosters individual well-being. Classes are offered in person as well as virtually.
- West Cook Coalition (Healthcare Transformation Grant) – AgeOptions is participating in the West Cook Coalitions goal is to improve life for those on Medicaid across their life span. Housing, Food Security and Behavioral Health are the highest priorities for the Coalition led by Loyola, Pillars, and Care Advisors.
- [Flu & COVID-19 Vaccines and Resources](#)

Caregiver:

Caregivers requested training, specifically on behavioral management and communication techniques. In response, AgeOptions provides an interactive eLearning platform, [Trualta](#) as well as support groups, Evidence Based Training and Education, counseling, and Memory Cafes.

Respondents shared that a significant proportion of caregivers experienced stress, depression, and problems with emotions in the prior 30 days, which impacted their daily activities. In response, AgeOptions promotes the regionwide availability of Tailored Care Assessment and Referral ([TCARE](#)), which is an evidenced based caregiver assessment tool that pinpoints a caregiver's unique areas of stress and develops personalized tools and resources to support the caregiver.

More information on AgeOptions Caregiver work can be found in the Initiatives section.

Health and Wellbeing

Over one in three respondents shared they are lonely. Depression and anxiety were among the top five chronic health conditions in both 50-59 and 60-69 respondents. AgeOptions used ARPA funding to fund CLAS agencies and other community-based agencies to become trained in and conduct evidence-based training and education.

Statewide and Local Area Plan Initiatives

For each Area Plan cycle, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) and area agencies develop "Statewide Initiatives," which are part of each area agency on aging's strategic priorities. For FY (Fiscal Year) 25-27, AgeOptions has three Statewide Initiatives:

1. Increased visibility of the Aging Network
2. Quality Assurance
3. Public Awareness Campaign for Informal Caregivers

AgeOptions approach to these initiatives are described below:

Initiative #1: Increase statewide visibility of the Aging Network to connect Illinoisans with support and services that encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life as we age.

AgeOptions strategy to increase visibility of the Aging Network includes:

1. AgeOptions is in the process of developing a Public Awareness Toolkit which includes customizable Social Media posts, brochures, posters, and messaging.
2. AgeOptions added the following standard to all services: **“Increase Visibility of Service:** As part of AgeOptions and the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Strategic Initiative for FY 25-27, Grantee must work to increase the visibility of the service within their service area, including older adults and caregivers, the community provider network, and other stakeholders.”
3. Through our Needs assessment process, we heard from municipalities and townships that the Aging Network is confusing. To address this concern and increase visibility, AgeOptions will work with our Aging Disability Resource Network (ADRN) agencies to develop and disseminate an “Aging Network” brochure which lists all the older adult services in the area and the agency contact information. In addition, we will include our [Service Search](#) link which allows people to enter their address to find the appropriate agency for the service they seek.
4. AgeOptions will require ADRN’s to outpost staff at strategic government and private business to share the “Aging Network” Brochure. We will require at least annual visits to the following:
 - Municipality and Township offices or mutually agreed-upon locations in their service areas.
 - Congregate meal sites.
 - Public Libraries in their service areas.
5. AgeOptions will work with each ADRN to ensure they have an agency website that specifically references the Information and Assistance services available and phone number and email address such as information@agency.org.
6. AgeOptions will work with each ADRN to ensure services are provided in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner inclusive of ethnicity, race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic status.
7. AgeOptions requires grantees to refer older adults to other Aging Network services such as Congregate meals, senior centers, libraries, Illinois Pathways for Evidence Based Programs, Thrive with Pride, and virtual programming.
8. We plan to develop an “Aging Network Street Outreach Collaborative” as part of our visibility efforts. We will work with our funded partners and invite key community opinion leaders to participate in expanding the outreach and distribution of materials to priority populations throughout suburban Cook County. There are people in almost every

community who are “connectors/influencers,” these are people looked to when neighbors/community members look for information. For example, Reverend Wheeler Parker (the cousin of Emmet Till) is the well-respected unofficial leader for all the Churches in Summit/Argo. He would be one of the key leaders we would invite to help share information about services. As part of the outreach, we will visit places such as grocery stores, laundromats, public transportation hubs and ads on buses, community centers, faith-based organizations, senior housing, barber and beauty salons, local businesses, law enforcement, local government, community health workers, as well as sharing information at health screenings and vaccination events.

9. AgeOptions will participate in local community-based activities such as fairs, meetings and conduct presentations.

10. AgeOptions works with public libraries for recreation services and technology education. As part of the technology training, AgeOptions will request that libraries train patrons including caregivers and older adults on how to access AgeOptions website, how to enter their address to find local services near them, as well as showing them the BenefitsCheckUp website. AgeOptions will have a brochure with the steps so older adults can share the information with others and as reference.

11. AgeOptions outreach team will strive to make 50% of their outreach efforts in communities of color, limited English speaking, low income, LBTQ+, and other marginalized communities.

12. To encourage more local agencies serving under-resourced communities, AgeOptions provided an option for organizations applying in low-income areas to request a waiver for the full 15% match. AgeOptions intent is that organizations in the communities may be more visible to older adults.

13. AgeOptions rebranded our Targeting to Culturally and Linguistically Isolated Persons (TCLIP) to Culturally and Linguistically Accessible services (CLAS), AgeOptions will continue to provide CLAS funding for Black or Brown and/or culturally aligned owned and operated agencies serving suburban Cook County. AgeOptions will share available translated materials with our partners.

14. AgeOptions will continue to gather input from people in marginalized communities to ensure we are hearing from the priority populations. We believe the best decisions are made when the most voices are heard. We hope to learn the trusted advisors and influencers in the communities.

15. AgeOptions will explore expanding the reach of media presence, such as YouTube videos and paid advertisements on social media.

16. AgeOptions will continue to host advocacy events, Legislative Breakfasts, and legislative aide training.

17. AgeOptions will collect and analyze Information and Assistance data to ensure that we are increasing our reach to priority populations.

18. AgeOptions is strengthening our network's commitment to reaching older people who are members of the LGBT+ community. AgeOptions will work with Title III funded partners:

- To complete either AgeOptions "Thrive with Pride" training or SAGE Care's certification process.
- To ensure all staff and volunteers who may be asking questions related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity complete one of the above trainings. Our goal is to include these questions by FY 2028 in AgeOptions.
- To educate and train staff and volunteers to refer clients to Thrive with Pride programs when appropriate.
- As a network, we will work to develop a baseline number of LGBTQ+ older people attending programs or services and as a network work to increase participation in our programs.

19. AgeOptions will continue to participate in coalitions and networks as part of our outreach and to amplify our voice.

20. To reach Baby Boomers, AgeOptions will conduct an Aging Mastery Program (AMP) pilot. AgeOptions will have a Countywide Coordinator for the program which counsels older adults to explore their options for living well and aging well. AMP is evidence informed and helps participants explore their options for managing their health, economic security, and contributing to the community so they may enjoy self-sufficient lives.

Initiative #2: Drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities that emphasize person-centered and trauma informed services while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network.

As the lead agencies in the state and local areas, it is a duty of the State Agency on Aging (IDoA) and the AAAs (Area Agencies on Aging) to ensure the programs and

services provided directly and through the community partner network are delivered utilizing person-centered and trauma informed methods. Over time, Illinois has experienced significant changes in population, including an unprecedented increase in the percentage of older adults in our population. There has also been a significant increase in the number of older adults within racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, and minority religious populations. Access to accurate, comprehensive, and timely data is vital to make informed decisions about community needs and service prioritization at the local, regional, and state levels. A focus on effectiveness and accuracy of information, services and programs will ensure maximization of the return on investment for funding and will ensure we are meeting the directives provided through the Older Americans Act and the Administration for Community Living's priorities.

AgeOptions strategy to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities with an emphasis of person-centered and trauma informed services includes:

1. Utilizing resources [from the Jewish Federation](#), as well as other sources like USAging, AgeOptions will conduct a training for all grantees on "Person Centered, Trauma Informed Care" to ensure grantees:
 - a. Consider everyone's experiences, needs, strengths, preferences, and goals, and
 - b. All staff, volunteers, and levels of an organization have a basic realization about trauma and understand its impacts on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - c. Learn how to integrate person-centered, trauma informed (PCTI) care into the grantee's organization.
2. AgeOptions continuously monitors the productivity and spending of our funded partners through:
 - a. AgeOptions staff review the performance and spending of grantees quarterly to ensure they are meeting quarterly targets and on track to fully expend their grant funding.
 - b. Onsite Programmatic monitoring once every three years and more if there are specific quality concerns or if changes in relevant staffing occur.
 - c. Review of audit reports are completed on an annual basis by AgeOptions staff to ensure sound fiscal practices.
3. AgeOptions convenes quarterly meetings of our funded partners by topic including meetings for: CEOs (Chief Executive Officer) and Social Service

Directors, Adult Protective Services staff (APS), Aging Disability Resource Network staff (ADRN), Caregiver Resource Centers, CLAS attend ADRN, Caregiver Resource Centers, Nutrition Grantees, as well as coordination meetings with other CLAS agencies.

4. AgeOptions staff have created comprehensive training materials and resources for grantees to support their work to ensure accurate reporting and appropriate service delivery.
5. AgeOptions staff work with grantees to ensure client demographics and program performance data are entered into the AgingIS database. On an annual basis, AgeOptions will compare the demographics of those served in a fiscal year compared to the incidence rate of the priority populations from the American Community Survey data to ensure we are serving at those priority populations in at least the same ratio as the Census data.
6. AgeOptions has provided specific training requirements for Adult Protective Services (APS), ADRN and Caregiver Resource Center staff.
7. AgeOptions continues to require an ADRN Staff member to be certified by Inform USA.
8. AgeOptions added the following standard to all services: “Grantee must have procedures for evaluating service delivery to determine the program's effectiveness. In addition, on an annual basis, each ADRN will participate in AgeOptions standardized quality improvement efforts which are part of the required IDOA Statewide Initiative on Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance.”
9. AgeOptions will work with grantees to develop a Quality Assurance tool that will be used by all grantees and will be completed annually.

Initiative #3: Increase public awareness and knowledge of caregiver needs, as well as resources and services available throughout the state of Illinois to promote increased caregiver engagement in person-centered, trauma informed, and evidence-based programs and services.

Throughout 2023, IDoA partnered with the AAA (Area Agencies on Aging) network to facilitate twenty in-person Caregiver Roundtables across the state of Illinois, along with three virtual roundtables to hear from informal family caregivers about the needs and

challenges they face, both met and unmet, and explore additional support that can enhance the caregiving journey. Conversations so far have both articulated the need for these services and the need to increase visibility for these resources. Across sessions, attendees discussed caregiving from a holistic lens cutting across systems including healthcare, transportation, community supportive services, and individual (both caregiver and care receiver) needs, values, and preferences. Training and education across the domains that fall in the scope of caregiving are also needed for family caregivers and paid caregivers, including better understanding of chronic and terminal diseases, navigating healthcare systems including palliative care and hospice, physical caregiving (how to lift, transfer, bathe, groom, etc.), available caregiver resources, available resources for older adults, and caring for the caregiver.

In FY25-FY27, AgeOptions will use this Statewide Initiative as its Local Initiative. This initiative supports AgeOptions caregiver outreach efforts through our Public Information Campaign in FY 2024. IDOA selected increasing public visibility as a Statewide Initiative with a focus on raising awareness and sharing information about the availability of aging services and supports. Due to the impacts of the COVID pandemic, as well as the changing ways that individuals and communities consume media and communicate, it has become increasingly difficult to reach the priority populations that would benefit from the aging network's funded programs. A dedicated statewide initiative to increase the visibility of the available programs and services throughout Illinois will increase both the awareness, as well as the utilization of much needed and sought after services.

AgeOptions strategy includes:

1. AgeOptions was fortunate to receive a \$1 million grant to provide outreach, engagement, and increase awareness of the caregiver role in Caregiver. Our primary audiences are those over the age of sixty and unpaid informal caregivers in suburban Cook County. We will emphasize reaching low-income, limited English speaking, and racial and ethnic as well as other marginalized groups in the West and South suburbs of Cook County. AgeOptions is working with Beaman Public Relations Incorporated to develop the following:

- A Toolkit with a resource guide for outreach to municipalities, townships, park districts, congregate dining sites, libraries, non-profits, community organizations, faith-based organizations, health care providers, and others serving older adults to improve coordination and access to benefits and services. We will also include local businesses such as laundromats, barber shops, hairdressers, and pharmacies in our outreach campaign. Including a Spanish flyer and English flyer that grantees may insert their logos and contact information.
- Caregiver-focused toolkits for community-based organizations including print and social media.

- TV and radio commercials and a Public Service announcement as the budget allows.
- Posters, brochures, social media posts, press releases, ads, and other relevant materials.
- Earned media.
- An event with speakers to engage key informants in the Community.
- A system for tracking and data analytics to help determine the most effective modality.
- Identify influencers to leverage as brand ambassadors to support AgeOptions event.
- Utilize street teams to promote AgeOptions resources at places where older adults work, play, and worship.

AgeOptions will continue to work with our Caregiver Resource Network to utilize these materials and activities.

2. Promote the regionwide availability of Tailored Care Assessment and Referral ([TCARE](#)), which is an evidenced based caregiver assessment tool that pinpoints a caregiver’s unique areas of stress and develops personalized tools and resources to support the caregiver.

3. Promote the regionwide availability of [Trualta](#), an interactive eLearning platform to help support caregivers.

4. AgeOptions Caregiver Resource Centers network will provide the following evidence-based trainings virtually and in-person:

- [The Savvy Caregiver® Program, and Unidos](#) (the Spanish version), for caregivers of persons with dementia.
- [Stress-Busting Programs](#) in English and Spanish for caregivers of persons with dementia or a chronic illness.
- [Powerful Tools For Caregivers](#)

5. AgeOptions will continue participating in the Illinois Caregiver Coalition to develop comprehensive advocacy and awareness of caregiver services across the state.

6. Beginning in FY 2025, all Caregiver Resource Centers will have the option to use agencies that are not on AgeOptions “Respite Registry”. This will allow for a more

person-centered approach for service so a caregiver may request respite from a familiar nursing facility or vendor.

7. AgeOptions added a new standard for Caregiver Resource Centers: “**Help Caregivers Self-Identify:** As part of AgeOptions and IDoA Strategic Initiatives for FY 25-27, Grantee must work to increase awareness and knowledge of caregiver needs, as well as the resources and services available throughout the service area to promote increased caregiver engagement.”

Area Agency on Aging Programs and Services

Supportive Services

Funded by Title III-B of the Older Americans Act and Illinois General Revenue Fund

The following services provide older adults with the support they need to remain at home and in their communities as long as possible and prevent premature institutionalization. Supportive services listed below are provided by community service partners and delivered with AgeOptions direction and leadership with the exception of Information and Assistance, which is provided by both AgeOptions and community service partners.

- **Ageing Disability Resource Centers funded for Information and Assistance, Options Counseling through the Aging Mastery Program or locally, Senior Health Assistance Program:** Provides answers to questions and connects older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers to programs and services. AgeOptions is in a Request for Proposal process to have a countywide Aging Mastery Program Coordinator as part of the Options Counseling program.
- **Chore Services or Older Adult Concierge Service Demonstration – new option for FY 25:** Assistance in keeping an older person’s home clean and functional. The Concierge service would allow person centered assistance and support with options such as heavy-duty chores, simple maintenance, laundry pick-up and delivery, grocery delivery set up, and prescription delivery services.
- **Counseling:** Personal counsel to help individuals and families cope with personal problems and/or develop and strengthen capacities for more adequate social and personal adjustments.
- **Education:** provide individuals with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills suited to their interests and capabilities through formally structured, group-oriented lectures or classes. Subject areas for adult education may include nutrition, health, mental health, personal care, consumerism, crime prevention,

legal rights/entitlement benefits, home maintenance and repair, retirement orientation and life enrichment, etc.

- **Home Repair:** Minor modifications to allow older adults to remain safely in the community.
- **Housing Assistance/Home Preservation Services:** are person centered services related to preserving an older adult's housing, preventing homelessness, and assistance in relocating or obtaining more suitable housing which the client can afford. (Excludes direct financial assistance).
- **Legal Assistance:** Assistance in settling non-criminal legal matters, protection of legal rights, advocacy, and education.
- **Recreation:** Activities which foster the health and social well-being of individuals through social interaction and constructive use of time.
- **Respite Care:** In-home or out-of-home care to allow family and friends who care for older adults to take some time away from care giving.
- **Multipurpose Senior Centers:** Community and virtual facilities where older adults gather to enjoy social and recreational activities, dine, attend classes, and take part in health and wellness programs.
- **Senior Opportunity and Services:** This program is specially designed to identify and meet the needs of older individuals belonging to low-income, racially/ethnically diverse populations, and limited English proficient groups through referral to existing services. Activities may include translation, personal escort, telephone reassurance, and other programs to remedy gaps and provide inclusive services.
- **Culturally and Linguistically Accessible Services (CLAS)** – formerly referred to as TCLIP: Identifies and connects older adults who speak little to no English with culturally competent services and programs through translation, referrals, and assistance in applying for services and benefits. AgeOptions funds CLAS agencies under the Senior Opportunities and Services (SOS) program, Memory Cafes, and under the Title III-C Nutrition program.
- **Transportation:** include arranging transportation or providing transport to assist persons unable to use conventional means of transportation to reach services, reduce isolation, or encourage independent living.

Emergency Preparedness

AgeOptions continues to review and revise our Disaster Operations Plan on a regular basis. AgeOptions and the community agencies we fund will use a Continuity of Operations Plan to be able to serve older adults during an emergency when offices may be closed due to a disaster or emergency order. AgeOptions developed a web page to provide tools and information for the community agencies that we fund, as well as tips and resources for various emergency situations: [AgeOptions Emergency Preparedness Resources](#). AgeOptions works to increase capacity building among the aging and disability networks when it comes to emergency planning.

Senior Health Assistance Program (SHAP) and Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)

Funded by Illinois General Revenue Fund, Tobacco Settlement Funds, Administration for Community Living (ACL) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

AgeOptions coordinates an area-wide campaign with local agencies to reach older adults and people with disabilities with information about programs that assist with the cost of prescription medications. These programs include Medicare Part D, Low Income Subsidy (“Extra Help”), Patient Assistance Programs and Medicare Savings Programs. SHAP also includes assistance with enrollment into the Benefit Access Program that assists with transportation costs such as Seniors Ride Free, People with Disabilities Ride Free and the license plate sticker discount. Staff at AgeOptions and local community partner agencies conduct outreach, community education and provide one-on-one assistance to older adults applying for all the above-mentioned programs. SHAP is a mainstay of consumer assistance to identify the best prescription plan possible, to meet deadlines for applying and to assure annual confirmation that a person’s plan will cover their prescription.

SHAP is integrated into the Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN). All agencies that serve under the Aging Disability Resource Network (ADRN) designation are Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) sites. Funding through the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) will allow AgeOptions and the Aging Disability Resource Network (ADRN) sites that provide SHAP services to promote Medicare Part B Prevention and Wellness benefits to consumers, caregivers, and professionals in suburban Cook County by conducting presentations and disseminating written materials.

Nutrition Services

Funded by Title III-C of the Older Americans Act, Nutrition Services Incentive Program and Illinois General Revenue Fund for Home Delivered Meals

- **Congregate Nutrition Services:** AgeOptions funds community dining options, often referred to as “congregate meals”, at a variety of locations throughout suburban Cook County. Of these congregate sites, ten offer “ethnic” meals to serve a specific cultural community. All sites offer freshly served, balanced hot meals, education and information on benefits, plus social engagement, and activities.
- **To-go Meals or “Grab and Go” meals:** During the pandemic, congregate nutrition sites were providing “to-go” meals to clients. Some older adults prefer the flexibility of the “to-go” meals. We hear from clients that while COVID has decreased, they are still concerned about exposure. In addition, some older adults have difficulty attending the Congregate program due to employment or doctor appointments, and some older adults may need the five packs of food to help with their food security. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) will continue to allow the “to-go” meals and these will be counted as “home delivered meals”.
- **Home Delivered Meals Services:** Provide nutritious meals to older adults who are homebound and unable to shop for groceries or prepare meals on their own. At most home delivered meal programs, volunteers deliver lunchtime meals daily and conduct wellness checks to ensure client safety. We now offer therapeutic diets such as diabetic, gluten free and renal meals throughout our service area. In addition, two programs offer “ethnic” home delivered meals to serve a specific cultural community. [Note that AgeOptions funds Home Delivered Meals in all townships of suburban Cook County except for Barrington; the Barrington Area Council on Aging provides the “Barrington Area Meals with Wheels” program without Title III funding.] Currently, there are no waiting lists or unmet needs for home delivered meals.
- **Emergency Shelf-Stable Meals:** These are provided to all congregate and home-delivered meal clients to ensure each participant has a minimum of five days of shelf stable meals in the event of emergencies, weather-related conditions, pandemics, or civil unrest that would prevent the delivery of their home delivered meals or attendance at congregate meal sites. These meals meet 1/3 of the current Dietary reference Intakes (DRIs). These meals have a six-month shelf life and will be distributed to participants twice a year. Grantee will communicate to participants as to when they should consume an emergency meal. When Grantee has called for three days’ worth of meals to be consumed, Grantee will communicate to AgeOptions so that the meals may be replenished.

- **Meal Box Program:** AgeOptions developed a culturally inclusive meal box delivery program. Eligible older adults are challenged with grocery shopping and transportation, have limited access to support, and have the ability and desire to cook. Eligible older adults may also have a homecare worker with a robust service plan who can cook for them. Meal box recipients receive weekly deliveries of fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable foods to prepare 21 meals a week. The meal boxes also contain menus and recipes that, when followed, meet the same standards as a home delivered or congregate meal.
- **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Coupons:** AgeOptions works with the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) and community organizations to distribute Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons during the summer months. The coupons can be redeemed by older adults for \$50 worth of fresh produce and fruit at participating local farmers markets.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Funded by Title III-D of the Older Americans Act

AgeOptions will continue to fund a Countywide Health Promotion Coordinator agency which will deliver evidence-based self-management programming such as A Matter of Balance, Active Living Every Day, AEA Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program, AEA Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, Bingocize, CAPABLE, Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less, Fallscape, Falls Talk, Fit and Strong!, Healthy Ideas, Healthy Moves for Aging Well, Healthy Steps for Older Adults, Healthy Steps in Motion, Home Hazard Removal Program (HARP), On the Move, Otago Exercise Program, PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors), Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), Stepping On, Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention, Tai Chi Prime, Tai Chi Quan: Moving for Better Balance, Walk with Ease, Wellness Recovery Action Plan, YMCA Moving for Better Balance. Diabetes Self-Management Program, Arthritis Self-Management Program, Programa de Manejo Personal de la Arthritis, and Programa de Manejo Personal de la Diabetes.

The Countywide Health Promotion staff will work with AgeOptions direct service waiver program which provides information and self-management skills for older adults with ongoing conditions and their caregivers using the evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management model created by Stanford University.

Caregiver Support Program / Relatives Raising Children

Funded by Title III-E of the Older Americans Act and General Revenue Funds

The National Family Caregiver Support Program serves family and friends who care for persons aged 60 and over or people with Alzheimer's disease (or a related disorder with neurological or organic brain dysfunction) at any age. The program also supports grandparents and other non-parent relatives over 55 who are caring for children under 19 or adults 19-59 years old with a disability. The Caregiver Support Program encompasses the following:

- AgeOptions supports and coordinates counseling, outreach, respite, education and training, support groups, gap-filling services, and legal assistance.
- Expands use of funds to provide respite services.
- AgeOptions mandates that all designated Caregiver Resource Centers utilize the Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral (TCARE) tool as the standardized assessment for caregiver clients.
- The AgeOptions Caregiver Programs Coordinator assists Caregiver Specialists at designated Caregiver Resource Centers countywide and reaches out to the community to increase awareness of caregiver programs.
- AgeOptions continues to support interdisciplinary caregiver work through Caregiver Collaborative meetings.
- The Caregiver Resource Centers also use Trualta, an e-learning platform that provides caregivers with personalized, easy to use, skills-based training to help care for someone at home.
- Evidence Based Training and Education

Special note regarding caregiver services: AgeOptions has spearheaded and plans to continue efforts in FY 2025 to expand caregiver assessments using TCARE, a proven tool to assess the needs of the caregiver rather than focus on the care receiver. Through a series of questions, the TCARE assessment tool identifies the specific drivers of the caregiver's distress. With the stressors identified, an individualized care plan is created to help the caregiver feel more equipped to manage their role as a caregiver. Interventions such as counseling, support groups and respite are put in place to manage stressors and prevent caregiver burnout. These services are offered through our current 10 Caregiver Resource Centers.

Adult Protective Services Program ***Funded by Title VII of the Older Americans Act***

The Adult Protective Services Act (APS) went into effect on July 1st, 2013. It expanded the Elder Abuse and Neglect program to include investigation of reported cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation for individuals with disabilities ages 18-59. In addition, the APS Act was amended on July 1, 2018, to include investigations of reported self-neglect and amended on January 1, 2022, to include investigations of reported abandonment.

Specially trained case managers at local Adult Protective Services Provider Agencies:

- Receive and respond to reports of adult protective services abuse, neglect, self-neglect, exploitation, and abandonment.
- Provide investigation, intervention and follow up services to victims through partnerships with local law enforcement and service agencies.
- Help resolve problems between victims and their substantiated abuser(s), including appropriate service plans to aid individuals in need.
- Provide appropriate follow-up services through Emergency Intervention Service (EIS) funds.
- Organize, conduct, and participate in eight multidisciplinary Team meetings per calendar year.
- Receive and respond to Suspicious Death Reports.

AgeOptions is the Regional Administrative Agency (RAA) for the Illinois Adult Protective Services program in suburban Cook County under an Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) grant. AgeOptions supports APS agencies who investigate reports of alleged abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect for adults over the age of sixty and people with a disability over the age of eighteen. AgeOptions assists IDOA with quality assurance and compliance activities and provides technical support to APS agencies. AgeOptions grants funds to APS agencies for Interdisciplinary teams.

The currently designated APS agencies for Wheeling, Barrington, Palatine and Hanover as well as Bloom, Bremen, Thornton, Calumet, and Rich Townships informed AgeOptions that they will end their designation on September 30, 2024. AgeOptions will conduct a procurement process to identify a new APS partner.

Adult Protective Services includes the following:

- **24/7 Adult Protective Services Hotline:** APS agencies provide 24/7 coverage. Each designated Adult Protective Services Agency created a plan to receive and respond to reports of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect in which an eligible adult is at risk for injury or death, at any time such a report is received, including after normal business hours and on weekends and holidays.
- **Fatality Review Team:** The Suburban Cook Adult Fatality Review Team examines deaths associated with suspected abuse and or neglect of adults with disabilities (ages 18-59) and older adults (ages 60+) residing in Suburban Cook County. The Illinois Adult Protective Services Act ([320 ILCS 20/15](#)) has been amended to outline the team structure and responsibilities. Meetings are coordinated by AgeOptions, occur on a quarterly basis, and adhere to the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Term appointed professionals from many disciplines collaborate to review cases and then give detailed recommendations to the Department on Aging. This approach

incorporates system-level changes to improve the public response for victims of abuse and or neglect and prevent similar outcomes in the future.

Members include the representatives from the following agencies: Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office, Cook County State's Attorney Office, Cook County Office of Public Guardian, Cook County Sheriff Department, Loyola University School of Nursing, Stickney Public Health District, Illinois Department on Aging, Suburban Access, Inc., Kenneth Young Center, Accent Home Care, Catholic Charities South Suburban, Equip for Equality, Legal Aid Chicago, Hines VA, Addus Homecare and AgeOptions.

Community Care Program (CCP) / Comprehensive Care Coordination

CCP provides in-home and community-based services to eligible Illinois seniors, age 60 and over with limited assets and assessed need for long term care. The services under CCP are aimed at assisting seniors to maintain their independence, provide cost effective alternatives to nursing home placement, and support the ability to age-in-place. Services include Adult Day Care, Automated Medication Dispensers, Emergency Home Response, and In-home services provided by home care workers.

Funding Scenario including units, clients

If funding levels change, we will create alternate funding scenarios. See section “How AgeOptions will Administer Increased or Decrease Funding.

AgeOptions Funding (Federal & State)	Projected FY 25 units	Projected Clients for FY 25	Estimated AgeOptions Funding
Social Services (currently in a procurement process)			
ADRN/Information & Assistance	\$168,000	75,000	\$1,680,000
ADRN/Options Counseling - Aging Mastery Program	700	100	\$125,000
ADRN/Options Counseling - one-on-one	4,545	909	\$250,000
Chore Housekeeping	43,182	480	\$950,000
Counseling	100	25	\$25,000
Education	300	100	\$10,000
Housing Assistance	6000	600	\$600,000

Legal Assistance	4700	587.5	\$401,000
Home Repair	725	200	\$145,000
Recreation	1500	300	\$25,000
Respite	4,318	158	\$95,000
Senior Center		400	\$70,000
Senior Opportunity & Services	6,000	1,714	\$150,000
Culturally and Linguistically Accessible Services - CLAS	17,900	5,114	\$447,500
Senior Health Assistance Program			\$330,520
Transportation	46,948	1,878	\$200,000
Long Term Care Ombudsman Service			
Long Term Care Ombudsman	Data is reported directly to Illinois Department on Aging		\$1,357,071
Nutrition Services			
Congregate Meals	458,716	12,500	\$4,000,000
Home Delivered Meals	1,700,000	17,000	\$11,950,000
Meal kits delivered to homes	750,000	7,500	\$3,000,000

AgeOptions Funding (Federal & State)	Projected FY 25 units	Projected Clients for FY 25	Estimated AgeOptions Funding
Caregiver Support Services (currently in a procurement process)			
CRC ADRD Gap Filling	542	201	\$75,000
CRC ADRD Training	817	200	\$200,000
CRC Case Management including TCARE	4,000	1,310	\$750,000
CRC Counseling	1,500	675	\$200,000
CRC Gap Filling	148	101	\$45,000
CRC Group Training and Education	2,029	889	\$200,000
CRC Information and Assistance	3,252	1,500	\$20,000
CRC One-on-One Outreach	2,672	2,672	\$155,000
CRC Respite	-	-	\$498,000
CRC Support Groups/Memory Cafes	800	250	\$300,000
GRG Counseling	575	67	\$35,000
GRG Gap Filling	62	22	\$15,000
GRG Group Training	113	113	\$25,000

GRG Information and Assistance	588	35	\$16,000
GRG Support Groups	314	60	\$26,000
Legal Assistance Relatives Raising Children	853	115	\$40,635
Health Promotion/Disease Prevention currently in a procurement process			
Evidence Based Health Promotion	2,800	680	\$120,000
Title VII I-Team			Title VII I-Team
APS Interdisciplinary teams			\$35,260

Note: if additional funding is not available from Older Americans Act or State GRF, in FY 26, supportive services grantees may receive 20% less funding than in FY 25 and nutrition services may receive 5-10% less funding than in FY 25.

AgeOptions proposed changes to service design from FY 24:

These changes are proposed based on findings from our planning and needs assessment, input from funded partners, as well as AgeOptions response to the Statewide Initiatives.

1. Adding Older Adult Concierge program as an alternative to traditional chore housekeeping
2. Requiring each of our Caregiver Resource Centers (CRC) to self-manage their own respite services. AgeOptions will continue to have a list of vetted Respite Vendors. CRCs will have the flexibility to use other vendors that the caregiver may have familiarity with.
3. Adding an Aging Mastery Program
4. Eliminating the requirement that all CRCs had to provide their own evidence-based training and education. Instead, after AgeOptions procurement process is finished, we will conduct a Letter of Intent for a grantee to offer evidence-based training where it is not available. CRCs will still be required to refer clients to this training.
5. To provide flexibility to applicants, AgeOptions included several services in our Request for Proposal that are not currently funded – counseling, Telephone reassurance, and Friendly Visiting.

Description of AgeOptions Administrative and Direct Services - Funding of Grants and Services

There are three components to AgeOptions grantee’s funding:

1. **Funds provided by AgeOptions:**

- Federal Older Americans Act
- State General Revenue Funds

2. Funds “matched” by the Grantee:

Local Cash: includes funding from non-federal sources such as organizations, municipalities, townships, United Ways, etc., that provide direct support for service costs.

In-kind: includes the value of property or services that benefit a grant-supported service and are contributed by non-federal parties.

- ## **3. Funds provided by the Clients** include client contributions that are made toward the cost of the service received.

How AgeOptions Receives Funds

AgeOptions receives allocations of both state and federal funding through the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). Funds for programs under Titles III-B Supportive Services, III-C1 Congregate Meals, III-C2 Home Delivered Meals, III-E Caregiver, and Illinois General Revenue Funding for community-based services and home delivered meals are allocated to the Area Agencies on Aging by the Illinois Department on Aging using a weighted, population-based formula. The Department reviews the formula every three years before submitting a new State Plan on Aging. These funding levels are subject to change.

Specific factors used in the IDoA formula include the number of people in each Planning and Service Area (PSA) represented by each Area Agency:

- Over the age of 60 (41% of funding)
- Over the age of 75 (7.5% of funding)
- 60 + racially/ethnically diverse (10% of funding)
- 60 + in poverty (25% of funding)
- 60 + living alone (7.5%)
- 60 + rural (9% of funding)

Other programs are funded using these factors:

- Ombudsman Program (number of licensed long term care beds and facilities)
- Title III-D Health Promotion (the percent the 60+ population is of the total population and the share of 60+ population in poverty)
- Title VII Elder Abuse and Neglect (number of assigned Multi-Disciplinary Teams)
- Community-Based Services General Revenue Fund (fixed and weighted allocations)
- Senior Health Assistance Program (base plus Medicare recipients)

- Nutrition Services Incentive Program (based on the meals served in the prior fiscal year and the national level of funding available)
- Special or one-time only funds (such as the Illinois General Revenue Funds for gap-filling services for grandparents of any age)

How AgeOptions Distributes Funds

AgeOptions uses a population-based funding formula to determine the maximum available dollars to each area in suburban Cook County for Supportive Services (Title III-B) and Caregiver Services (Title III-E). The factors and weights of AgeOptions funding formula remain the same as previous years:

Factor	Weight
60+	30%
60+ 100% of poverty	35%
60+ Racially/Ethnically Diverse	15%
75+	10%
60+ living alone	10%
TOTAL	100%

Funds are distributed using the formula for each of the 30 townships (with North and South Proviso broken into two areas) in suburban Cook County.

AgeOptions Procurement Process

AgeOptions maintains a list of organizations interested in receiving notices of funding opportunities/Requests for Proposals (RFP). AgeOptions issues Requests for Proposals approximately every three to four years and administers an application or letter of intent process to identify subgrantees. AgeOptions may issue Request for Proposals for the following services and time periods. Note: Each grantee will receive up to a one-year award and depending on performance, AgeOptions may offer 2-3 one-year extensions:

Programs	RFP Issued	Date for Service to Begin	Estimated Time Period
Nutrition	Winter 2025	October 1, 2025	FY 26-28
Supportive Services (Title III-B), Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Title III-D), Caregiver Support Program (Title III-E), and Senior Health Assistance Program/MIPPA (SHAP),	Winter 2024	October 1, 2024	FY 25-27
Care Coordination Unit	To be determined. AgeOptions will work in conjunction with IDOA.		
Long Term Care Ombudsman Adult Protective Services	Done in conjunction with IDOA.	October 1, 2025	FY 26-28

National and State Issues Impacting Fiscal Year 2025 Funding

Source: [USAging](#) – Labor/HHS Appropriations as of March 22, 2024

Federal Policy Update:

On Friday, March 22, 2024, Congress approved the FY 2024 budget. On March 11, 2024, President Biden presented his FY 2025 budget to Congress which includes a proposed increase in funding for the Older Americans Act. The table below outlines the levels for both:

Older Americans Act (dollars in thousands)	FY 2024 Final Bill 3.22.24	FY 25 President's Budget 3.11.24	Potential Increase (decrease) for FY 25
Title III of OAA (OLDER AMERICANS ACT)			
B - Supportive Services	410,000	410,000	-
C1: Congregate Meals	565,342	621,692	56,350
C2: Home Delivered Meals	381,342	447,692	66,350
Nutrition Services Incentive Program	11,200	80,069	68,869
D. Preventive Health	26,339	26,339	-
E. Family Caregiver Support	207,000	205,000	(2,000)

State of Illinois General Revenue Fund (GRF)

Highlights of Governor Pritzker's proposed FY 25 budget for the Illinois Department on Aging is as follows:

- Increases for the Community Care Program (CCP) to accommodate caseload growth and annualize the rate increases scheduled for January 1, 2024, - \$104.4 million
- Increases funding for Home Delivered Meals - \$3 million increase to cover expansion in home delivered meals.

For more information, [FY 2025 Illinois State Budget](#) and [FY 25 Illinois State Budget Brief](#).

Budget Assumptions

AgeOptions used the following budget assumptions to estimate a funding level for FY25:

- **Title Transfers:** AgeOptions is allowed to transfer funds among three federal Older Americans Act Programs: Title III-B (Supportive Services), Title III-C1 (Congregate Meals) and Title III-C2 (Home Delivered Meals). These transfers do not affect the total funding available in suburban Cook County but do allow some latitude in effectively planning programs as well as enable AgeOptions to maintain historical levels of service.

Since the consolidation of Supportive and Nutrition Services in 1978, AgeOptions has transferred funds from Congregate Nutrition Services to Supportive Services and Home Delivered Meals. We are requesting a waiver of the 20% transfer cap between Title III-C1 to Title III-B from the Illinois Department of Aging. The requested transfer for FY25 is \$913,557 from Congregate Nutrition Services (C1) to Supportive Services (3B). This is the same level of transfer as previous fiscal years.

- **Budget by Title:** All budgets are based on the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) allocations released April 3, 2024. The Title III-B Ombudsman, Title III-B Community Based, Title III-C1 Congregate, Title III-C2 Home Delivered, Title III-D Health Promotion, Title III-E Caregiver, Title VII APS, Title VII Ombudsman and NSIP (Nutrition Services Incentive Program), and Long-Term Care Provider Fund. SHAP/MIPPA funding for ADRN was estimated at FY 24 levels.

Estimated AgeOptions Funding by Service

How AgeOptions will Administer Increased or Decreased Funding

The following section outlines how AgeOptions proposes to administer increases and decreases in funding for the following programs: Title III-C1 Congregate Meals and Title III-C2 Home Delivered Meals including Meal kit delivery. *

- **Increased Funding:** AgeOptions will determine the amount of funds to be made available for Congregate and Home Delivered Meals either by service area, by demand and/or for targeted populations, using the following in awarding funds.
 - Expand special diet, ethnic, shelf stable, weekend/and or second meals and/or
 - Develop new Congregate Meal sites targeting limited English proficient older adults, Black and Brown communities, and/or low-income areas.
 - Provide specific demonstration funding or infrastructure support.
 - Develop new Congregate Meal sites in unserved regions of suburban Cook County.
 - Allow Grantees to submit formal requests and rationale to expand current services within the amounts determined available by AgeOptions. Decisions regarding increases shall be made after considering the rationale, overall performance and support provided to the community by the Grantee and/or
 - Develop a Request for Proposal for distribution of increased funds.

- **Decreased Funding:** If funding to the suburban Cook County region is reduced, and it is necessary to reduce Grantee award levels, AgeOptions will:
 - Redistribute funding if a grantee is not meeting productivity goals.
 - Review each grant based on service levels and/or other performance factors to assure that there will be cost effective service provision that best meets the needs of older adults.
 - Request assessment agencies to reassess all Home Delivered Meals and Meal Kit Box clients to determine if the clients are still in need of meals.
 - Meet with funded partners to discuss strategies to address reduced funding but continue to prioritize low income and priority populations.
 - Review clients who have second or weekend meals to determine if other options are available to them.
 - Prioritize clients based on need and targeting factors such as low income, limited English speaking, living alone and/or minority.
 - Reduce meals in the following order – second meals, weekend meals, Monday through Friday meals, Meal kit, and special diet prepared meals.

The following section outlines how AgeOptions proposes to administer increases and decreases in funding for the following programs: Title III-B – Supportive Services, Title III-D – Health Promotion, Title III-E – Caregiver, General Revenue Funds for Community-based Services and AgeOptions Direct Service funding and AgeOptions Administration funding. *

- **Increased Funding:** If there is an increase in available funding, based on the level of increase, AgeOptions will determine the amount of funds to be made available either by area, by service and/or for targeted populations and will use one of the following options in awarding those funds:
 - Provide demonstration funding for new programming.
 - Provide proportional increases for grantees.
 - Allow grantee to submit formal requests and rationale to expand current services and/or for unit rate increases within the amounts determined available by AgeOptions. Decisions regarding increases shall be made after considering the overall performance and support provided to the community by the grantee/contractor.
 - Develop a Request for Proposal for distribution of increased funds.
- **Decreased Funding:** If funding is reduced to the suburban Cook County region during a grant or contract year, and it is necessary to reduce grantee award levels, AgeOptions will determine a reduction strategy that may reduce funding to each area on a straight percentage basis or reduce or eliminate services that are deemed to not be effectively delivered upon such a reduction of funds. AgeOptions reserves the right to establish new criteria for reductions for each extension year.

The following section outlines how AgeOptions proposes to administer increases and decreases in funding for the following programs: Title VII - Adult Protective Services, Title VII- Long Term Care Ombudsman:

- **Increased Funding:** If there is an increase in available funding, AgeOptions may carry the funding into the next fiscal year and provide proportional increases for grantees. If there is a substantial increase, AgeOptions may provide proportional increases to grantees.
- **Decreased Funding:** If funding is reduced to the suburban Cook County region during a grant or contract year, and it is necessary to reduce grantee award levels, AgeOptions will apply proportional decreases to grantees. AgeOptions reserves the right to establish new criteria for reductions for each extension year.

Information on Funding Possibilities

While AgeOptions main sources of funding are the federal Older Americans Act and Illinois General Revenue Funds, AgeOptions has made progress in securing grant funds from sources other than the Older Americans Act to enhance current programs and develop new programs. AgeOptions has a variety of innovative programs that respond to the rich diversity of our communities. In addition, AgeOptions Board has a Resource Development Committee and is working to expand fee-for-service programs related to our non-Older Americans Act programs.

Minimum Percentage Waiver Request

IDOA requires that a minimum percentage of Federal Title III-B funds be set aside for

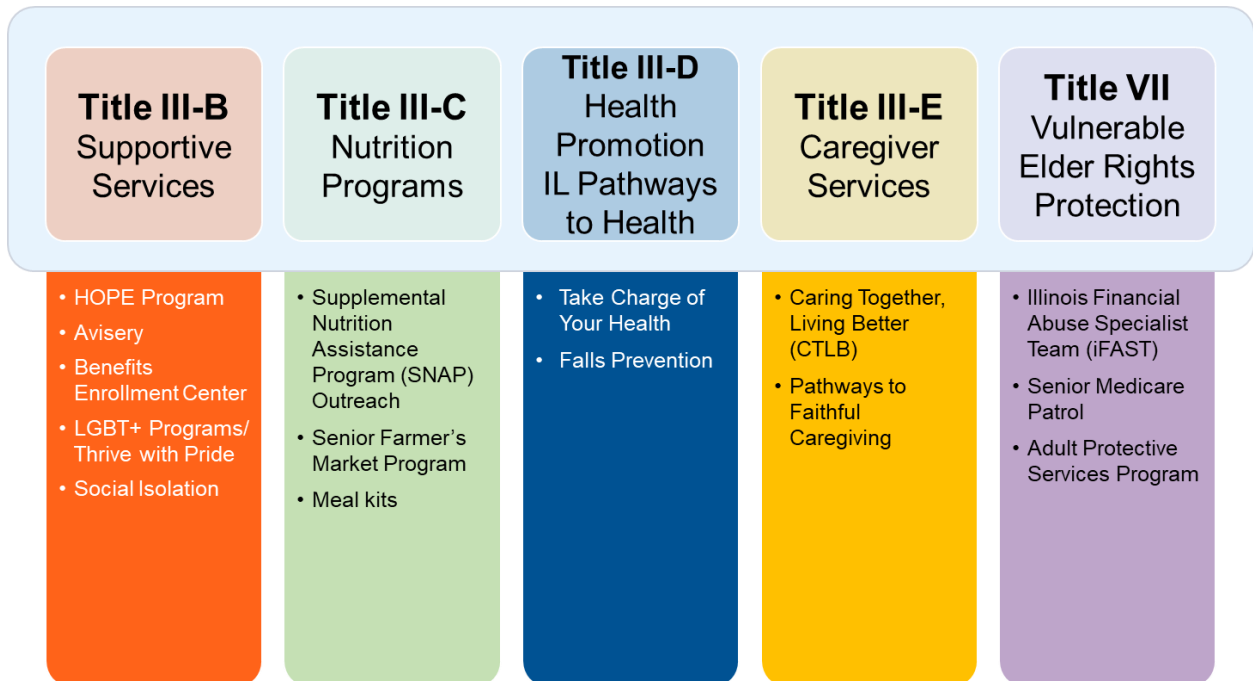
the following types of services:

- Access Services – 33.1%
- In-Home Services - .04%
- Legal Assistance- 3.2%

Area Agencies unable to meet these minimum requirements must submit a waiver request. AgeOptions meets these percentages and will not request a waiver request.

AgeOptions Signature Programs

The Older Americans Act Programs are not equally funded, but their importance is significant and are considered the foundation for all aging services in our region. The associated boxes are the activities AgeOptions has adopted to assure that our region is doing all we can do to bring services to older people. The chart below shows how AgeOptions signature programs augment the Title III and Title IIV programs under the Older Americans Act.



Administrative Funds

Administrative Direct Service Activities

The Older Americans Act restricts Agency administration costs to 10% of the Title III allocation and permits Area Agencies on Aging to provide “administratively related direct services” of Advocacy, Coordination, and Program Development. For FY25, the Illinois Department on Aging caps AgeOptions use of “Administratively related direct services” at \$3,667,134. The AgeOptions allocation for Title III administratively related direct service is \$1,589,996 and is 43% of the maximum cap for FY25 set by the Illinois Department on Aging for administratively direct services.

For FY25, AgeOptions allocated for Title III-B Administrative Related Direct Service, which includes Advocacy \$403,894; Coordination \$302,073; and Program Development \$867,657.

Advocacy

- AgeOptions Monthly Advocacy Task Force meetings
- Leadership and Participation in the i4a Advocacy efforts
- AgeOptions CEO (Chief Executive Officer), Diane Slezak, attending the USAging Policy Briefing and Hill Reception & visits
- Annual Legislative Breakfasts, Legislative Aid Training, and participation in Legislator’s events
- Issuing updates on Advocacy issues including use of social media to elevate our messaging
- Participation in collaborative efforts related to Advocacy such as monthly CEO meetings with AgeOptions, AARP, and Alzheimer’s Association
- Maintenance of AgeOptions Website and social media channels
- Individual client advocacy as well as being a resource to Legislative aides
- Systems advocacy such as our work with Avisery
- Representing the interests of older adults in everything we do

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Coordination

- Convene Quarterly meetings of each of our following services partners: Funded Agencies, Adult Protective Services, Caregiver, ADRN, Nutrition, and Home Preservation. Work to develop their staff, improve systems, and provide technical support.
- Coordinate Illinois Pathways to Health

- Collaborate with 211
- Meeting regularly with the Cook County Sheriff's Office, Suburban Alliance for homelessness, and other housing coalitions
- Provide training and support to funded partners and other interested agencies
- Develop new collaborations with health care, Managed Care, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Public Health.
- Extensive Outreach
- Providing the ICarol Resource Inventory

Program Development

- AgeOptions needs assessments
- Development of new initiatives through funding of our partners, such as Memory Cafe, Libraries and technology, Home Preservation.
- Obtaining outside funding for programs to benefit the Aging Network such as Illinois Pathways to Health, Benefits Enrollment Center, SMP, Oro Latino Network, and Benefits Enrollment Center.
- Testing new service models like providing an option to centralize Caregiver Training and Education, exploring an Older Adult Concierge program as an alternative to traditional chore housekeeping, expanding Respite options.
- Dementia Friends
- Development of new programs and services such as the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Gap and Training
- Developing new outreach and visibility efforts
- AgeOptions Grants Management system and Provider referral link
- Collaboration with community leaders, elected officials, townships, municipalities, behavioral health

Administration includes addressing the needs and concerns of older persons and those who care for them, conduct local planning to reflect local needs and preferences, develop a service delivery system and provide procurement process for those services, Funding and implementing services including quality assurance through audit review and monitoring.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

AgeOptions received \$9,878,235 in ARPA funds which ends September 30, 2024. AgeOptions used the ARPA funding to respond to immediate and emergent needs created due to the pandemic. We immediately increased meal delivery with especially in underserved and low income BIPOC communities. We established vaccine clinics in

local community centers, congregations, and park districts – locations trusted by older Black and Latinx older adults. AgeOptions staff managed the vaccine clinics with help from volunteers we recruited. Shortly after the pandemic began, we transitioned as many programs as possible to remote platforms to combat social isolation. As the pandemic wound down, we were made aware that a growing number of older adults faced homelessness. We established a Home Prevention Program to combat the issue. We were aware that ARPA funding was temporary and were also aware that needs that emerged during the pandemic have not all disappeared. We made plans to reserve traditional Older Americans Act funding to cushion the blow of losing all the nearly \$10 M in ARPA funding at once. We are working with our partners to develop new sources of funding, and use the traditional Older Americans Act funding we reserved to continue the successful programs we created such as the Home Preservation Program, Uniper, expanded work with libraries which all address lasting needs that emerged during and after the pandemic.

Direct Services

Information and Assistance: AgeOptions provides Title III-B and E Information and Assistance responding to the necessity for a central access point to services in suburban Cook County. Negotiating the service system in an area comprised of 30 townships, 130 municipalities and hundreds of providers can be very confusing for an older person or a concerned loved one. The direct service funding for Information and Assistance supports staff at AgeOptions in responding to callers and walk-in clients and through email; maintaining and distributing a wide variety of informational and educational materials; providing technical support to funded partners. AgeOptions maintains a staff person who is a certified Information and Assistance Specialist for Aging and Disabilities (CIRS A/D).

The funding also supports part of the cost of maintaining a computerized resource inventory.

AgeOptions collaborates with Metro Chicago 211 and will cross train them on the Aging Disability Resource Network

AgeOptions is allocating \$258,021 for Title III-B Information and Assistance and \$34,433 for Title III-E Information and Assistance. We project providing 4,700 units of service to 3,800 clients for III-B and III-E Information and Assistance. AgeOptions uses I Carol, to house our information and assistance resource directory. The I Carol system includes a public resource directory that will be available on our website, and we have added the ability to chat with Internet inquiries. In recognition that consumers are increasingly searching online to locate resources, this feature will increase ability to self-serve while also ensuring the information they are receiving has been maintained by a trusted source. We will be adopting new ways to draw in consumers to speak with

information & assistance specialists to ensure they are connected to the full range of services available. For example, our updated website increased the visibility on each page to connect help seekers with information and assistance services.

United Way 211 launched Metro Chicago 211, an information and referral hotline serving Cook and Suburban Cook County in January 2023. AgeOptions aims to provide training to Metro Chicago 211 staff on aging services to ensure awareness about access to aging specific resources through our ADRN information and Assistance service. Our goal is to partner with 211 to provide the most direct referral path for callers to local assistance for older adults and people with disabilities.

AgeOptions Advisery team and will provide information for people about Medicare and Medicaid and will serve as a subject matter expert for SHIP, SHAP and Information and Assistance Staff.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: AgeOptions is requesting a direct service waiver to provide Title III-D Health Promotion and Disease Prevention services through our Illinois Pathways to Health Initiative which includes Take Charge of Your Health (CDSMP), Take Charge of your Diabetes (DSMP), Take Charge of your Pain (CPSMP) and falls prevention programming to include Fit & Strong!, A Matter of Balance (MOB), Tai Chi for Arthritis and Bingocize. For 20 years, AgeOptions has taken a lead on providing the evidence-based Chronic Disease and Diabetes Self-Management program as well as the Spanish-language Tomando Control de su Salud and Tomando Control de se Diabetes throughout suburban Cook County. In 2017, AgeOptions received an ACL grant to add fall prevention programming to our suite of offerings and 2021 received another ACL grant to expand our programming and build the infrastructure for the Illinois Pathways to Health Initiative. This leadership role has allowed AgeOptions to bring in additional funding to support the growth of evidence-based health promotion programming including recent funding from the Cook County Department of Public Health to train and fund CLAS organizations to offer health promotion programming in the languages of their community.

AgeOptions is a leader in the delivery of evidence-based programs. For example, AgeOptions has been awarded its third ACL CDSME grant to increase the offerings of health Self-Management programs across the state and sustain efforts with innovative funding arrangements with health care providers and other entities. AgeOptions has also received an ACL Falls-Prevention Grant in 2019. AgeOptions work has been highlighted in conference presentations and national calls for our work in direct service and as a community care hub focused on health promotion programming.

Our website, ilpathwaystohealth.org, has become the go-to location to highlight statewide evidence-based programming including Self-Management program in the

Take Charge series, fall prevention interventions, evidence-based caregiver support programs and the mental health program, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) for Seniors.

As a result of prior grants and activities, AgeOptions has trained a network of workshop facilitators who implement the “Take Charge” series of programs to include: Take Charge of Your Health (CDSMP) Take Charge of Your Diabetes (DSMP), Take Charge of Your Pain (CPSMP) and Cancer Thriving and Surviving (CTS) throughout suburban Cook County and beyond. AgeOptions works with this network of facilitators (comprised of volunteers and professionals) to ensure fidelity is maintained at each workshop. Each facilitator is also provided technical assistance regarding marketing and outreach to maximize recruitment of participants.

The direct service funding for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention supports staff at AgeOptions to coordinate a variety of programs which includes the “Take Charge” series of programs, and accredited diabetes program and fall prevention interventions such as Fit & Strong! A Matter of Balance, Bingocize and Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention. Coordination includes, maintaining and managing program licenses, assurance that AgeOptions and our partners maintain license compliance and program fidelity, provide expert training and technical assistance to workshop facilitators; collaborate with local partners; facilitate Take Charge of Your Health/Diabetes and falls prevention workshops and expand outreach efforts to engage diverse groups of older adults throughout suburban Cook County. AgeOptions will leverage the Title III-D funds to increase program offerings and expand partnerships with organizations that serve traditionally underserved communities such as black and brown communities and limited English speakers.

AgeOptions is requesting a direct service waiver of \$77,001 from Title III-D to support “Take Charge” of Your Health programs as well as to provide coordination and publicity of all Title III-D activities in suburban Cook County. We project providing 735 units of service to 150 clients for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

COVID Vaccinations: AgeOptions has been engaged in delivering COVID-19 vaccinations to older adults in suburban Cook County since the first vaccines came out in late 2020 with in-person clinics and home visits for COVID and flu vaccinations. For FY 2025, AgeOptions will continue our in-home vaccination program. Overall, our goal is to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities in suburban Cook County have access to the vaccines they need and that together we can address any barriers to those lifesaving vaccines. It is important to remember that even now, someone in suburban Cook County is getting their first COVID–19 shot today. Find out more [here](#).

Additional AgeOptions Programs

Benefits Enrollment Center: The National Council on Aging awarded AgeOptions funding that sustains the Benefit Enrollment Center (BEC). The BEC offers person-centered counseling to find, screen and enroll seniors and persons with disabilities who have limited income and resources into available benefit programs. The primary focus is on the following programs: Medicare Part D Extra Help (or Low-Income Subsidy, LIS), Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP).

AgeOptions BEC also participates in projects to increase awareness and accessibility to money saving benefits for older adults. One such grant project, “Boost Your Budget” is an annual public awareness campaign that supports enhanced outreach about benefits to Suburban Cook County. In addition, AgeOptions was selected to participate in the “Approaching Retirement Pilot Project” funded by NCOA and ACL. AgeOptions has been given permission to share unreleased retirement resource guides created by the federal government. The guides have information about Social Security, housing, food assistance, debt and loans, and taxes. These guides are presented by AgeOptions benefits counselors to consumers through routine benefits screenings to collect feedback from the public on how to improve the usefulness of the guides for older adults reaching retirement age.

Caring Together, Living Better (CTLB): Through Caring Together, Living Better is a grassroots partnership supporting low income and diverse communities in south and west suburbs. AgeOptions partners with faith-based and community organizations to build on caregiver support services available through the AgeOptions Caregiver Program. Caring Together, Living Better connects the majority African American and Latinx caregivers to these services through the faith community and community partners. With the support of the Westlake Health Foundation, and Duly Health Foundation there are currently 5 partners serving the west suburban communities of Bellwood, Berwyn, Cicero, Maywood, and Melrose Park. Our partners provide volunteer-based caregiver education and support programs including three churches with large African American congregations, one church with both Black and Latinx congregants, and one Latin social service organizations.

Caring Together, Living Better (CTLB) was founded in 2009 by AgeOptions with Weinberg Foundation funding in partnership with Kizer Memorial Church of God in Christ, Valley Kingdom Ministries, Victory Christian Assembly Baptist Church, Word Made Flesh Worship Center, Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church, Bethel African

Methodist Episcopal Church, Covenant United Church of Christ, South Suburban Senior Services of Catholic Charities, Metropolitan Family Services Southwest, CJE SeniorLife, . Most of the south suburban church-based volunteer programs continue to operate although the south suburban grant funding has ended.

Care Coordination under the Colbert and Williams Consent Decrees (HOPE):

Since February 2020, AgeOptions has served as a “Prime Agency” under the Colbert Consent Decrees’ implementation plan. As a Prime Agency, AgeOptions together with North Shore Senior Center, are responsible for outreach to nursing home residents, assessments, skill building, housing locations, and support in the community. AgeOptions has branded our work as “H.O.P.E”. “Home Options Path to Empowerment”.

Other partners include Featherfist for housing location, Legal Aid Chicago for helping clients access Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security (SOARS), and other non-funded partners.

The Colbert and Williams Consent Decrees advocates for the rights of nursing home residents to live in the least restrictive environments in line with the 1999 federal Supreme Court Olmstead Decision.

Avisery by AgeOptions: Since 1999, AgeOptions has educated professionals and consumers on how to navigate the various health care coverage options available to older adults. As state and federal governments have sought to increase consumer choice and control health care costs, it has become increasingly difficult for older adults to make informed choices about the insurance options that best meet their needs. While cost is a factor to consider, consumers also need information about 1) whether current health care providers are in-network; 2) whether medications are covered; 3) deadlines for enrolling in different coverage; and 4) eligibility for financial assistance programs to help cover out-of-pocket costs. The frequent introduction of new health insurance plans and revisions to existing policies adds levels of complexity to the public health insurance benefits system.

To help them make the right choices, older adults rely on health insurance counselors and other professionals in aging services organizations for support. Avisery by AgeOptions provides education, training, and technical assistance to these professionals, enabling them to help their clients access affordable healthcare coverage that allows them to thrive as they age. Avisery provides this impartial education to professionals through various avenues, including trainings, webinars, technical assistance, and informational email alerts.

Through interaction with these professionals and their clients, Avisery gathers data on unintended consequences, barriers to access, and implementation failures that plague the health benefits system. Avisery leverages its relationships with public officials, agency employees, and health plan representatives to resolve situations for individual beneficiaries. Additionally, through participation in advocacy coalitions, Avisery works towards system change at the health plan, state, and federal levels.

Home Preservation – Comments brought forth at our listening sessions shed light on the increased housing insecurity and homelessness among older adults in our area. More than half of the evictions the Cook County Sheriff's Office served were to older adults and rents were increasing while income stayed the same. In response, AgeOptions developed our American Recovery Program funded Home Preservation Program. This ARPA funding ends September 30, 2024. AgeOptions has released a Request for Proposal for FY 25-27 services and applicants may apply for these Home Preservation efforts through the "housing assistance" program.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)/Empowering Seniors to Prevent Healthcare Fraud: The SMP Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program is a national program that empowers Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud. AgeOptions leads the Illinois SMP Program with funding from the Administration for Community Living. AgeOptions is able to reach all areas of Illinois with the SMP message by partnering with the 12 other Illinois Area Agencies on Aging, White Crane Wellness Center and the Coalition of Limited English-Speaking Elderly.

Trained volunteers and staff give community presentations (in-person or virtually), SMP Bingo presentations (with prizes), outreach events/health fairs, and provide one-on-one counseling to Medicare and Medicaid recipients and caregivers on the SMP Message:

- **Protect:** Protect yourself from Medicare errors, fraud, or abuse by never giving your Medicare number to strangers who call or visit your home.
- **Detect:** Learn how to detect potential errors, fraud, or abuse by reading your Medicare Summary Notice or explanation of benefits from your insurance company.
- **Report:** If you suspect that you have been a target of errors, fraud, or abuse, contact the SMP Hotline at (800)699-9043 and we will return your call within 24 hours.
- If you would like a presentation on Medicare Fraud you can contact us at (800)699-1463 to schedule.

The Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol has continued their media campaign that includes television public service announcements (PSA's) in both English and Spanish, radio PSA's in both English and Spanish, doctor's office closed circuit television PSA's in over

250 waiting rooms of rheumatologists, cardiologists, and neurologists., internet/banner advertisements on CBS websites, in store audio in over 200 grocery stores across Illinois and a prescription bag monograph campaign in over 300 pharmacies across the state.

Risk of Scams and Fraud

An issue that has emerged is that AgeOptions and its funded partners are informing older adults of the risk of scams and in particular not giving callers any information. However, we hear older adults need hands-on help with such things as how I freeze my credit. A need is not just information, but physical help showing a person how to go on-line to take actions to mitigate the risk of being a victim of fraud and scams.

As part of this solution, AgeOptions has regularly shared the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Money Smarts for Older Adults Resource Guide. Additionally, AgeOptions worked with Legal Aid Chicago to develop the Elder Risk Detector (www.ageoptions.org/ElderRisk) which allows older adults, their caregivers or professionals working with them to screen for potential risks and make referrals to Legal Aid Chicago for further consultation.

Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition (IFCC) – The Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition is a growing Coalition of over 200 organizational members throughout Illinois that serves as a conduit to address the goals of the Federal RAISE Act in Illinois. AgeOptions has assumed a leadership role in supporting the IFCC. AgeOptions serves as the fiscal agent for the IFCC, providing supervision and guidance for the IFCC.

Illinois Pathways to Health: AgeOptions developed and owns the statewide network hub for evidence-based health promotion programming. We offer statewide programmatic training, technical assistance, unified marketing materials including a communications tool kit with templated marketing materials, website, streamlined database, reporting tools and one contract access to this network to health care providers, insurers, and others that are interested in offering these programs to their patients/members.

Take Charge of Your Health Programs: *Take Charge of Your Health* is an interactive workshop series designed for individuals with ongoing health conditions. This evidence-based program, originally developed at Stanford University, now owned and licensed through the Self-Management Resource Center (SMRC) provides information and tools

to help individuals manage their health and lead active lifestyles. Workshops meet weekly for 2 ½ hours for six weeks and are led by two trained facilitators. The workshop group consists of no less than ten and no more than twenty participants. Workshop facilitators are often volunteers who have either personal or professional experience with ongoing health conditions. AgeOptions offers four versions of the program at locations throughout suburban Cook County:

- Take Charge of Your Health: Provides information and self-management skills for older adults with ongoing health conditions and their caregivers.
- Tomando Control de su Salud: A culturally adapted Spanish language version of Take Charge of Your Health for older adults with ongoing health conditions and their caregivers.
- Take Charge of Your Diabetes: Provides information and self-management skills specifically for older adults who have diabetes, are diagnosed as pre-diabetic and their caregivers.
- Take Charge of Your Diabetes - Plus: The same program as above, but with a clinical wrap-around program that includes one-on-one assessments and counseling provided by a registered dietitian. Participants must be diabetic and are required to have a physician referral.
- Tomando Control de su Diabetes: A Spanish language version of Take Charge of Your Diabetes for older adults who have diabetes, are diagnosed as pre-diabetic and their caregivers.
- Take Charge of Your Pain: This class is designed for people who have a diagnosis of chronic pain, offering strategies for dealing with their symptoms.
- Cancer: Thriving and Surviving: Provides information and self-management skills for older adults with cancer and their caregivers.
- Workplace CDSMP: A version of Take Charge of Your Health designed to be delivered at a workplace with one-hour sessions

Under the ACL CDSME grant, AgeOptions works with the Coordinated Care Alliance to offer the HomeMeds program so that Community Care Program participants will be screened for adverse drug interactions and can receive a pharmacist review of medications should the initial screening raise concern. Participants in HomeMeds will be referred to health promotion programming.

Falls Prevention Programming

- A Matter of Balance: a program that emphasizes practical strategies to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels of older adults
- Bingocize: a program that combines exercise and health information with the familiar game of Bingo
- Fit and Strong: a 24-session program that combines low impact aerobics with Self-Management discussions.

- Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention: an evidence-based Tai Chi program designed to reduce the fear of falling, improve relaxation and balance and provide socialization.

AgeOptions currently provides facilitator training for organizations interested in building internal capacity for many of these programs.

Funding for the Take Charge of Your Health Programs and Fit & Strong! come from the Administration for Community Living funding, the Cook County Department of Public Health and from Title III-D direct service funding. In winter 2023, AgeOptions was selected to participate in a national Health Equity Learning Collaborative. In this collaborative, AgeOptions is learning about leveraging the 2024 Physician Fee schedule to work with medical providers to provide care navigation and support for patients identified as needing assistance in one or more areas on a social driver of health assessment screening. Using the learnings from the collaborative, AgeOptions is creating systems that support providers statewide to bill for care navigation services related to addressing social drivers of health.

In addition, AgeOptions is exploring the viability of becoming a Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) Hub. AgeOptions has determined that becoming a DPP is a sound strategic approach to growing the financial support of all Illinois Pathways to Health programming. We are exploring sites that want to work with AgeOptions to bill Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid for Diabetes Prevention Programming, and we are about to receive additional funding from the Illinois Public Health Institute to continue our development of the DPP hub and to get trained to deliver the program.

Memory Café Programs: In 2018, AgeOptions provided stipends to several of our Older Americans Act funded agencies to pilot 21 memory cafes throughout Suburban Cook County. AgeOptions launched the Memory Café concept to address social isolation among older people and to work towards dementia friendly communities throughout suburban Cook County. The stipend opportunities were for Congregate Meal Sites, Caregiver Resource Centers, and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Agencies to allow for a demonstration project during fiscal year 2019 with the intent that it would expand throughout our network and continue beyond fiscal year 2019. For FY2024, there are 14 active Memory Cafes.

A memory café is a social gathering designed for people living with dementia, or another form of cognitive impairment, and their care partners to feel welcomed and engaged in their own community. The cafes focus on socialization, engaging activities, education, and entertainment. They are also designed to be spaces where caregivers can connect to a caregiver specialist from one of our Caregiver Resource Centers to learn more about resources outside of the Memory Café that may be available to them.

Six (6) of the 14 funded memory cafes are being implemented by an AgeOptions funded CLAS agency and are thus bilingual cafes to meet the needs of the communities they serve. There are memory cafes held in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and Gujarati.

Programming in Libraries: AgeOptions works with public libraries across Suburban Cook County to provide recreation services. Libraries in low-income and Black and Brown communities are prioritized. The libraries also prioritize technology offerings – including tech-training and educational materials for older adult patrons. Libraries focused on adapting and expanding programming that would reduce social isolation among their older adult patrons while also connecting them to available resources within their communities, such as their local Aging and Disability Resource Center. Participating libraries also host AgeOptions presentations and evidence-based programming, such as Medicare fraud prevention, benefits access, Illinois Pathways evidence-based classes, and Stress Busters for Caregivers.

Thrive with Pride Cafes: AgeOptions created Thrive with Pride Cafes to combat social isolation among the LGBT+ older adult and their caregivers. This network of community sites provides social support and vital information to the LGBT+ community. Thrive with Pride Cafes are envisioned as safe spaces for older adults and their caregivers to learn more about benefits, share their stories and discuss topics that matter in a safe and affirming environment. Programming is tailored to the needs and interests of participants at each site. Visit [Thrive with Pride](#) for more information.

In addition to our Thrive with Pride programming, AgeOptions is strengthening our network's commitment to reaching older people who are members of the LGBT+ community through training, referrals, striving to increase the number of LGBT+ served through our network.

Uniper Care: Uniper is a virtual senior center delivered to older adults in a low-tech fashion, including via a UniTV devices, that transforms any television into a virtual portal. In 2020, AgeOptions began a Uniper pilot targeting low-income, socially isolated older adults and caregivers and providing Uniper subscriptions to them at no-cost. Early data from this pilot shows decreases in loneliness, depression and fall risks. Uniper is designed to be socially engaging and connect users with programs and activities that engage them. Many of our Uniper members have created community with other users and some have even volunteered to lead discussion groups. More information on Uniper is available [here](#).

Volunteerism: AgeOptions continues to support a welcoming, flexible and creative volunteer program that effectively engages and cultivates the skills of volunteers to

enhance aging services in suburban Cook County. AgeOptions uses volunteers for the SMP program, Benefits Enrollment Center, Take Charge of Your Health, fundraising, iFast, and AgeOptions Board and Advisory Council. For more information about volunteer opportunities, please call at (708)383-0258, email us at volunteer@ageoptions.org, or go to the AgeOptions website at [Apply for a job at AgeOptions](#).

West Cook Coalition (Healthcare Transformation Grant) – AgeOptions is participating in the West Cook Coalitions goal is to improve life for those on Medicaid across their life span. Housing, Food Security and Behavioral Health are the highest priorities for the Coalition led by Loyola, Pillars, and Care Advisors.

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Rev. Kirsten Peachey

Dr. Anthony Perry

Dr. Jeff Waddy

Brad Winick

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Januari Wilson

Contact an Agency in Your Area

Services and programs are available to people with disabilities aged 18 and over and adults aged 60 and over through September 30, 2024.

North Suburbs		West Suburbs		South Suburbs	
Barrington, Hanover and Wheeling Townships Catholic Charities-Northwest (847)253-5500		Lyons, Riverside and Norwood Townships <i>(Including Brookfield and LaGrange Park)</i> Aging Care Connections (708)354-1323		Bloom, Bremen, Calumet, Rich and Thornton Townships South Suburban Senior Services of Catholic Charities (708)596-2222	
Schaumburg and Elk Grove Townships Kenneth Young Center (847)524-8800		Berwyn, Cicero and Proviso Townships <i>(excluding Brookfield and LaGrange Park)</i> Solutions for Care (708)447-2448		Lemont, Orland, Palos and Worth Townships Pathlights (708)361-0219	
Evanston and Niles Townships North Shore Senior Center-Niles (847)864-3721		Oak Park and River Forest Townships Oak Park Township Senior Services (708)383-8060		Stickney Township Stickney Township Office on Aging (708)636-8850	
Maine, New Trier and Northfield Townships North Shore Senior Center-Northfield (847)784-6000		Leyden Township Leyden Family Services Senior Citizen Program (847)451-0330			
Palatine Township Palatine Township Senior Citizens Council (847)991-1112		<p style="text-align: center;"> Type in your address in referral portal to find out your agency and resources near you: https://services.ageoptions.org/ </p>			
Suburban Cook Cultural Services and Support					
Hispanic/Latin Communities Alivio Medical Center (773)254-1400		Arab American Communities Arab American Family Services (708)599-2237	Korean Communities Hanul Family Alliance (847)439-5195	Indo-Asian Communities Metropolitan Asian Family Services (847)824-9414	Chinese Communities Xilin Senior Services (847)607-6555

Countywide Information and Assistance

Suburban Cook County AgeOptions (708)383-0258	City of Chicago Chicago Department of Family and Support Services - Senior Services (312)744-4016	Collar Counties Outside of Cook County AgeGuide (Collar counties) (800)528-2000
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For more information, please contact:

1048 Lake Street, Suite 300
Oak Park, IL 60301-1102

www.ageoptions.org

(708)383-0258
(800)699-9043