

Commonwealth Council on Aging

Overview

What is the Council?

- The Virginia General Assembly created the Commonwealth Council on Aging in 1998.
- The purpose of the Council is to promote an efficient, coordinated approach by state government to meeting the needs of older Virginians.
- The Council's specific duties are:
 1. Examine the needs of older Virginians and their caregivers and ways in which state government can most effectively and efficiently assist in meeting those needs;
 2. Advise the Governor and General Assembly on aging issues and aging policy for the Commonwealth;
 3. Advise the Governor on any proposed regulations deemed by the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget to have a substantial and distinct impact on older Virginians and their caregivers;
 4. Advocate for and assist in developing the Commonwealth's planning for meeting the needs of the growing number of older Virginians and their caregivers;
 5. Advise the Governor and General Assembly regarding the activities of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; and
 6. Assist and advise the Department with the development and ongoing review of the Virginia Respite Care Grant Program.
- The Council consists of 24 members, including 19 nonlegislative citizen members:
 1. There is one member from each of Virginia's 11 congressional districts, appointed by the Governor.
 2. Four at-large members are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates
 3. Four at-large members are appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections
 4. There are also five nonvoting, ex officio members, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Director of the Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Commissioner of Social Services, and the President of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging, or their designees.

Why does Virginia need a Council on Aging?

- The number of Virginians over the age of sixty will increase from 1.4 million (17.8% of our population) in 2010 to 2.3 million (23.9% – about one in four) in 2030, according to projections of the US Census Bureau.
- The Council will help the Governor and the General Assembly develop policies to address the needs of these older Virginians.

What are the Council's ongoing activities?

- Best Practices Awards: The awards are designed to recognize unique programs serving older Virginians and their caregivers and to encourage the replication of model programs across the Commonwealth. Programs are judged for their innovation, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, ease of replication, and their impact on the quality of life of older adults and their families.
- Community Conversations on Aging: These “conversations” provide an opportunity for older Virginians and their families, service providers, and local businesses, as well as education and legislative leaders to address the needs of today’s aging population. The Council and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services use the feedback gathered in these meetings to develop plans for future services and programs, as well as to inform advocacy efforts with the Governor and General Assembly. The meetings are open to anyone, and everyone is encouraged to attend and make their voices heard.

How can Virginians of all ages help the Council in its efforts?

- Share your ideas with Council members directly or write the Council. Mail for the Council should be sent to:
Commonwealth Council on Aging
c/o Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100
Richmond, VA 23229.
- Attend Council meetings, if possible. All meetings are open to the public and the meeting dates are available from the Virginia DivisionP for the Aging by calling toll free 1-800-552-3402.
- Let the people in your family and community know about the many services that are available to Virginia’s older residents and their families. Give them the toll-free telephone number 1-800-552-3402 to call for access to these services and their Area Agency on Aging. Let the public know about key websites: Virginia Easy Access at www.easyaccess.virginia.gov, the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging at www.vaaaa.org, and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services at www.vda.virginia.gov.