Aging Services – Commission on Aging

Programs for the elderly in the United States were first authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1965 with passage of the Older Americans Act (with subsequent revisions). The Nevada Division for Aging Services was established by the Nevada State Legislature in 1971 with passage of Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 427A. The Division's major function is to develop, implement, and coordinate programs for Nevada's seniors. The Division is also the primary advocate for Nevada's elders.

The Division was initially organized into area agencies for Washoe and Clark Counties, and a state area agency to administer the balance of state aging programs. In 1976 the U.S. Commissioner on Aging authorized the reorganization of the state into a single planning and service area to increase efficiency and accountability, and to eliminate duplicate administrative costs. Division offices were established in Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, and Elko. Overall, the division is divided into four administrative units: grants management, elder rights, community-based care, and fiscal management. The Division is funded by block grants from the Older Americans' Act, the Medicaid Waiver program, and from the Nevada General Fund.

The Commission on Aging is the policy making body for the Division and was established in 1983 by NRS 427A.032. It is comprised of eleven voting members appointed by the Governor. Four members are selected from the governing bodies of city and county government. At least six of the Commission voting members must be 55 years of age and older and have an interest in or knowledge of problems and concerns of older individuals. The Director of the Department of Human Resources serves as chairperson. The Administrator of the Division for Aging is also a member; both the Director and the Administrator are non-voting members. In addition, two non-voting members are selected from the Nevada Legislature by the Legislative Commission; one is an elected Assemblyman and the other an elected State Senator. The Commission meets quarterly.

According to the NRS, the duties of the Commission on Aging are to:

- Determine and evaluate the needs of the older people of Nevada.
- Seek ways to avoid unnecessary duplication of services for older persons by public and private organizations in Nevada.
- Establish priorities for the work of the Division according to the most pressing needs of older persons as determined by the Commission.
- Promote programs that provide community-based services necessary to enable a frail elder person, to the fullest extent possible, to remain in his or her home and to be an integral part of their family and community.
- Establish priorities for programs funded under the Older American Act.
- Review and approve the State plan for providing services to meet the needs of older persons.

- Gather and disseminate information in the field of aging.

- Conduct hearings, conferences, and special studies on the problems of elder persons and programs which serve them.

- Evaluate existing programs, recommend needed changes, and propose new programs that would effectively and economically serve the needs of older persons.

- Evaluate any proposed legislation that would affect older persons.

- Coordinate and assist the efforts of public and private organizations that serve the needs of older persons.