

COMMUNICATION, REFERRAL AND INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING
SERVICE STANDARD

Definitions

Communication—The process of offering general information to a client, caregiver, professional or other individual. [Ex. A caller asks for the number of the local DSS and the intake coordinator provides the number.]

Referral—The process of informing a client, caregiver, professional or other individual about appropriate choices and linking them with external entities providing opportunities, services, supports and/or resources to meet their needs. A referral does not involve direct services provided by the referring agency (AAA). [Ex. A caller inquires about how to apply for financial assistance. After asking several questions, the intake coordinator determines that the individual may be eligible for Medicaid and refers the caller to the local DSS office.]

Information and Assistance—The process of assessing a client or caregiver and transferring them to a service provided directly by the agency (AAA) or through a subcontractor and paid by the agency, or directly assisting them with obtaining needed services, supports and/or resources and, if necessary, advocating with entities on their behalf. [Ex. A caller inquires about financial assistance. The intake coordinator determines that the individual may be eligible for Medicaid, but is homebound and needs assistance with the application. The caller is assigned a care coordinator who will do a home visit to assess the individual, assist with the Medicaid application process, and determine if there are other services, such as home delivered meals, that could be beneficial.]

Follow-Up—A process of contacting individuals and the organizations to which they were referred to determine the outcome of the referral. Determining the quality and effectiveness of the referral and the service provided to the person referred. Additional assistance to the individual in locating or using needed services may be a part of the follow-up.

Planning and Evaluation—The process of aggregating and analyzing information collected through the provision of the service; collecting and reporting data on unmet needs for other services; and evaluating the overall effectiveness of the Communication, Referral, and Information and Assistance service.

Eligible Population

Communication and **Referral** services are targeted to persons who are 60 years of age or older, persons with disabilities aged 18 and over, and their families and caregivers.

Individuals are eligible for **Information and Assistance** services if they are 60 years of age or older. Priority shall be given to older individuals who are in the greatest economic and social need, and older individuals at risk for institutional placement, with preference given to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas.¹ Families and caregivers of older adults may also receive information and assistance for needed services.

¹ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 306(a)(4)(A)(i)

Service Delivery Elements

If an agency provides **Communication**, no further action is required. The agency may opt to document communications in PeerPlace or some other format.

Agencies providing **Referral** services are required to complete the Virginia Service – Quick Form.

Agencies providing **Information and Assistance** services must perform all of the following components:

Assessment: The process of identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing the needs of older persons, utilizing the required minimum assessment tool for the service to which the individual is being transferred, and any other client assessment documents as determined by the AAA. (Refer to the Information Systems Service Guide or applicable service standard.) Federal Poverty/VDA Sliding Fee Scale is required, unless all information needed to determine federal poverty is documented on the UAI (self-declaration only; no income verification is required).

See “Client Records” for the required documentation.

Administrative Elements

Staff Qualifications:

- **Knowledge:** Communication, Referral and Information and Assistance service staff should have an awareness of the biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging and caregiving; the impact of disabilities and illnesses on individuals; interviewing principles; community resources; and public benefits eligibility requirements.
- **Skills:** Communication, Referral, and Information and Assistance service staff should have skills in establishing and sustaining interpersonal relationships; problem-solving; advocacy; and use of computer office software.
- **Ability:** Communication, Referral, and Information and Assistance service staff should have the ability to: communicate with persons of different socio-economic backgrounds; conduct an effective interview; complete an assessment; arrange and negotiate service referrals; and work independently.

Job Descriptions: For each paid and volunteer position funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act, an Area Agency on Aging shall maintain:

- A current and complete job description which shall cover the scope of duties and responsibilities of Communication, Referral, and Information and Assistance service staff; and
- A current description of the minimum entry-level standards of performance for each job.²

Agency Data Requirements

Referral and Information and Assistance services will collect data to support community needs assessment and community planning activities.

² 22 VAC 5-20-250, Grants To Area Agencies On Aging, Department for the Aging Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code

AIM System Agency Data Requirements for Recording Referrals and Information and Assistance

Units of Service: Units of service must be reported in AIM for each client receiving services. Service units can be reported for client on a daily basis, but not aggregated (summarized) more than beyond one calendar month.

- Contacts: count the number of interactions with the client and with agencies, caregivers, professionals and others related to establishing services, and when a Quick Form or Part A of the UAI is completed.
- Persons served (unduplicated): the individual who is receiving a direct service(s).

Optional Units (Not Entered into AIM but may be reported on AMR for AAA use)

- Number of **communication** calls (i.e., **tick marks or call log**)

Program Reports:

- Aging Monthly Report (AMR) is due to VDA by the twelfth (12th) of the following month. If the Area Agency on Aging provides this service, this report must be updated and submitted even if no expenditures or units of service occurred.
- AIM client level data must be transmitted to VDA by the last day of the following month.

NWD Tools / PeerPlace System Agency Data Requirements for Recording Referrals and Information and Assistance

Note: Each field described below must be asked of an individual for Referral and Information and Assistance services in order to properly coordinate their services and to meet NAPIS and other federal reporting requirements. These fields include all data elements from the Virginia Service – Quick Form, as well as some additional fields now needed to coordinate services across agencies.

*Virginia Service – Quick Form data elements have been noted by an asterisk.

Date: date service need established.

First Name:*

Last Name:*

Street Address: where individual resides*

City: where individual resides*

State: where individual resides*

Zip: where individual resides*

Phone Number: include area code*

Required Fields for ADRC Reporting:

DOB: Individual needing service.*

Contact Type: Received request for service information from

- Consumer/Individual
- Caregiver/Supporter
- Professional
- Other

Service Type: Service Requested.

Disability Type: Record disability category of the individual needing service as either:

- Physical
- MR/DD/ID
- Mental Illness
- Dementia Disorders (includes Alzheimer's Disease)
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Sensory Disabilities
- Multiple Disabilities
- Unspecified
- No Disability

Federal Poverty: Answered as 'Yes', 'No', or 'Refused to Answer'*

Federal Poverty/VDA Sliding Fee Scale Level A through G*

Assistance Type: Individual needing service was provided:

- Options Counseling
 - Benefits Counseling (as part of options counseling)
 - Long Term Care Futures Planning (as part of options counseling)

Race:*

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black / African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other
- White
- 2 or More Races
- Refused to Answer

Ethnicity*

- Hispanic
- Non Hispanic
- Refused to Answer

Does the Individual Requesting Service Live Alone: 'Yes' or 'No'*

Gender:*

- Male
- Female

Veteran: 'Yes' or 'No'

FIPS Code:* (often referred to as county code) refers to Federal Information Processing Standards codes of jurisdiction of where the individual resides.

Referral Data Elements for the NWD Tools Application

Referral agency type: category or type of agency, including but not limited to:

- CIL
- CSB
- DRS
- DSS

Units of Service: Units of service must be reported in PeerPlace for each client receiving services.

- Contacts: count the number of interactions with the client and with agencies, caregivers, professionals and others related to establishing services, and when the required fields in the IA record are completed.
- Persons served (unduplicated): the individual who is establishing the need for service(s).

Contributions/Program Income

The Area Agency on Aging shall formally adopt written policies and procedures, approved by the governing board, regarding the collection, disposition, and accounting for program income.³

- Cost Sharing/Fee for Service: An Area Agency on Aging is **not** permitted to implement cost sharing/fee for service for recipients of communication, referral or information and assistance services.⁴
- Voluntary Contributions: Voluntary contributions shall be allowed and may be solicited provided that the method of solicitation is non-coercive.⁵

Quality Assurance

Staff Training:

- Staff should receive orientation on agency policies and procedures, computer database (PeerPlace or AIM), client rights, client confidentiality, community characteristics and resources, and procedures for conducting the allowable activities under this service.
- Staff should receive a minimum of eight (8) hours of in-service training per year based on the need for professional growth and upgrading of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

³ 22 VAC 5-20-410, Grants To Area Agencies On Aging, Department for the Aging Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code

⁴ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 315(a)

⁵ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 315(b)

Follow-up: Follow-up is required in 10% of the referrals. Individuals and the organizations to which they were referred should be contacted to determine the quality and effectiveness of the referral and the service provided to the individual referred.

Supervision/Case Review: Consultation, supervision and case review shall be available to all staff providing the service.

Program Evaluation: The agency should conduct regular (at least annual) systematic analysis of the persons served and the impact of the service.

Client Records: Service providers must maintain specific program records that include the following information:

- For **referral** purposes only, the Virginia Service - Quick Form is required.
- For **information and assistance**, the required minimum assessment tool for the service to which the individual is being transferred must be completed for clients requiring direct services. (Refer to the Information Systems Service Guide or applicable service standard.)
- Federal Poverty should be determined and documented. The Federal Poverty/VDA Sliding Fee Scale form should be used. (Self-declaration only; no income verification is required.)
- Progress notes or contact logs to document case activity.