

PUBLIC INFORMATION/EDUCATION **VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING** **SERVICE STANDARD**

Definition

Public Information/Education service is the process of informing older persons and the general public about the programs, services, and resources available to elderly persons and their caregivers. Service activity involves a contact with several elderly clients or potential clients (group services). The service may incorporate the development of special information campaigns to inform older people and the general public about issues, problems and benefits important to older people.

Eligible Population

Individuals are eligible for Public Information/Education service if they are 60 years of age or older. Preference shall be given to older individuals with greatest economic need or older individuals with greatest social need, with preference given to low-income minority individuals, and to those older persons residing in rural or geographically isolated areas.¹ Families, friends and referral sources may also receive information and suggestions for needed services.

Service Delivery Elements

Agencies providing Public Information/Education service must perform all of the following components:

Information: The process of informing older persons and the general public of available opportunities, services and resources. This may be done by preparing and distributing agency newsletters, brochures, facts sheets, and resource guides; making presentation to community groups; and preparing and distributing media releases and public service announcements.

Electronic Media: The process of receiving and soliciting information via the Internet and e-mail.

Planning and Evaluation: The process of aggregating and analyzing information collected through the provision of the service. Collecting and reporting data on unmet needs are also part of the service delivery element. There should be an evaluation process to determine the overall effectiveness of the program.

Administrative Elements

Staff Qualifications: Staff providing Public Information/Education service shall possess the following qualifications:

- **Knowledge:** Public Information/Education service staff should have an awareness of the problems and needs of older persons; community resources for older persons; community organizations who may wish to schedule presentations or receive written information; community media resources; group dynamics; how to reach older people in the community; basic journalistic writing techniques; and desktop publishing, brochure preparation, etc.

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

- Skill: Public Information/Education service staff should have skills in interviewing; working with groups; effective oral and written communication techniques; an overview of community services; preparation of audio-visual materials; lay-out of written materials.
- Ability: Public Information/Education service staff should have ability to conduct an effective interview; arrange and negotiate service referrals; communicate effectively orally with groups of persons, with persons of different socio-economic backgrounds, including persons with disabilities; write creatively, using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation; 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 service staff; and
- A current description of the minimum entry-level standards of each job.²

Units of Service:

- Contacts: the number of people in a group or circulation counts for a publication.

Optional Group Units (Not Entered into AIM)

- Group Participants – The number of people attending the presentation, meeting or program (activity provided to more than one person or in a group setting).
- Number of Group Presentations – Number of presentations.
- Number of Publications Distributed

Group Units – These activities cannot be entered into the AIM system.

Program Reports

- Aging Monthly Report (AMR) 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.

Quality Assurance

Staffing Training:

- Staff should receive orientation on agency policies and procedures, community characteristics and resources, and procedures for conducting the allowable activities under the service.
- Staff should receive a minimum of 10 hours of in-service training per year, the content of which to be based on the need for professional growth and upgrading of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Supervision/Case Review:

Consultation, supervision and case review shall be available to all staff providing the service.

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

Program Evaluation:

The agency should conduct regular systematic analysis of the persons served and the impact of the service. Subcontractors shall be monitored annually.

Service Records:

Service providers must maintain specific program records that includes;

- compilation of presentations conducted year-to-date;
- the number of publications distributed year-to-date;
- compilation of individual contacts year-to-date.