

Office of Aging

Role and Duties

The Hawaii County Office of Aging develops services in Hawaii County which enable older persons to reach and maintain the highest level of dignity, independence, and personal well-being.

Among the office's many roles, it continuously assesses the needs of older persons in Hawaii County and develops programs aimed at meeting these needs. It represents the interests of older persons to public officials and public and private agencies.

The Office of Aging maintains data on the profile and needs of older persons in Hawaii County and have this information available for other organizations and the general public.

Highlights

Community empowerment and public/private partnerships

Planning and service development at the community level, together with private/public partnerships were among the achievements of the Office of Aging for the fiscal year 2001-2002. These endeavors, along with implementation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program, provide a solid foundation on which additional needed services can be developed to meet the challenges of the "Graying of America."

Community Voices

The Office of Aging is soliciting the support and participation of individual communities to promote needed development of additional services and to ensure that planning is community-based. During the past fiscal year over 80 individuals from ten districts around the island gathered at the Community Voices Conference for a day of brainstorming. From grassroots development of an intergenerational facility to street signage and house numbering in rural communities to improve emergency response, Community Voices Councils have made a difference in their communities.

Caregiver Support

The Office of Aging has received funding to expand and enhance the existing Caregiver Resource Center at our Kona office as well as establishing a comprehensive system of support for our family caregivers islandwide. Funding is through the *National Family Caregiver Support Program*.

Because of the widely-dispersed and rural characteristic of our island, an effort will be made to empower and mobilize individual communities to find unique ways to meet the needs of the caregiver.

Supplemental Funds Through Grants

Prompted by early findings of the caregiver project that there is an acute shortage of in-home health and social services workers, the Office of Aging applied for and received funding to investigate the feasibility of developing in-home community based eldercare services at various rural areas of the Big Island.

Aging Institute of Hawaii

Received a \$68,000 grant from the Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division to provide a five-week course on aging-related issues. Classes have been held in Hilo and Kona, with some 35 individuals participating.

Public Awareness Grant

In partnership with the South Hilo Community Voices Council, KTA Super Stores and George Yoshida dba The Silver Connection, the Office of Aging conducted a public awareness campaign on services available for the elderly. Services such as the Prostate Cancer Support Group, the Mobile Care Unit, care homes, Hawaii Island Adult Care, and the Alzheimer's Disease Support Group were aired on the *Seniors Living in Paradise* public access television program. A lending library of videotapes was also made available.

HMSA Foundation Grant

The Hawaii County Office of Aging partnered with the Hawaii County Subarea Health Planning Council of the State Health Planning and Development Agency, the Mass Transit Agency, the Department of Research and Development and the University of Hawaii Department of Urban and Regional Planning to identify the transportation needs of Hawaii County residents who require mental health and substance abuse services. The partners received a grant from the HMSA Foundation to conduct a detailed assessment of the transportation needs on the island and to provide recommendations for action.

Silverfest III

The third annual Silverfest opened its doors to a crowd of over a thousand seniors at the Hilo Afook-Chinen Auditorium. The lively program featured a variety of information booths, demonstrations, prize drawings, discounts on health products, good food and entertainment.

Kupuna Care Project

The Kupuna Care Project, a state funded long-term care program for Hawaii's frail elders, completed its third year of a four-year demonstration. Through this project, over 2,000 seniors were provided with over 99,000 units of case management, home-delivered meals, personal care, homemaker, chore, attendant care, assisted transportation and day care services.

Older Americans Month

The Office of Aging celebrated Older Americans Month with a well-attended luncheon at the Outrigger Waikoloa Beach Resort. Over 400 attendees witnessed the selection of Norman Sakata of Kona and Donna Saiki of Hilo as the Outstanding Older Americans of Hawaii County. Mayor Harry Kim was on hand to make the presentation and to congratulate all 28 nominees.