

**Alaska Commission on Aging
KEY POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT:**

**Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)
\$375,000 GF/MH**

**FY 2010 Budget Increment
February 2009**

Issue.

The Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) serve as a visible, trusted place for older adults and people of all ages with disabilities to go for information and assistance regarding long-term care supports and services. Federal funding agencies began requiring states to offer ADRCs after discovering that centralized, convenient long-term care information and assistance can streamline access to care and save money by allowing consumers to choose from all available alternatives. Originally funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging through a grant to the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) which was administered by the Statewide Independent Living Centers (SILC) for three years, the program has transitioned to management by the State of Alaska's Senior & Disabilities Services beginning in FY 2009. Regional sites have provided information assistance, benefits pre-screening, and referrals to services since FY 2005. In order to extend the program to all areas of the state (there are regional ADRC offices in Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, and Southeast Alaska) and provide an adequate level of staffing, additional State funding is needed.

Background.

During five statewide community forums held by the Alaska Commission on Aging in advance of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, a top priority of participants was access to information about the services available in their communities. Seniors said they would like to see a clearinghouse for information about senior services and benefits, a "one-stop shop" that would disseminate information and help seniors navigate the system of benefits. ADRCs provide assistance to seniors and persons with disabilities with completing applications, long-term care options counseling and support.

The ADRCs served Alaskans for three years under SILC management, beginning with five regional offices and adding a sixth in the final year. Each year the agencies served more seniors, with 979 older Alaskans served in FY 2008. One example of how the ADRCs provide assistance is their role in guiding seniors through the complex enrollment process for Medicare Part D (prescription drug program). The ADRCs provide guidance for seniors enrolling in Part D for the first time or seeking to change the plan in which they are enrolled (there are dozens of plans offered, each covering a different array of drugs at a different premium). ADRCs also provide information about home- and community-based services, home modifications, assistive technology and other services available.

With the move to State management in FY 2009, and loss of some federal grant funding, currently only three regional offices are funded. For FY 2010, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority committed \$125,000 in MHTAAR funds to the ADRC program. The program requires an additional \$375,000 in State funding to provide basic services through its current regional offices.

The ultimate goal of the ADRC program in Alaska is to offer a one-stop center for access to long-term care support services in every region of the state, especially with the anticipated growth in demand for such services that will accompany our growing number of seniors (increasing at about six percent per year – currently giving us the fastest-growing senior population of any state). Each regional site will be familiar with all the services and supports available in their area, and able to pre-screen consumers for eligibility for programs such as home- and community-based services and Medicaid. The program will be promoted to Alaskans so that they will recognize it as their first contact when they are in need of long-term services and supports. Special efforts will be made to promote ADRC access for unserved and under-served populations such as persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Full funding of this program will result in the establishment of two additional ADRCs in locations not currently served by the existing sites.

The ADRC program also maintains a website in conjunction with Network of Care which allows Alaskans to directly locate the kinds of care they need in their communities by going to the Network of Care website. The website has a host of useful features to help individuals and their caregivers to track medications, health care providers, and many other details regarding care. The Alaska Network of Care website can be accessed at the following address:

<http://alaska.networkofcare.org/aging/home/index.cfm>

Recommendation.

The Alaska Commission on Aging recommends support for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), a \$375,000 increment to the operating funds for the program within Senior & Disabilities Services. Full funding for this program in every region of the state will help provide a one-stop resource for seniors and individuals with disabilities to access information about available services and pre-screening for service eligibility. ADRCs will develop into a statewide information resource, accessible to all Alaskans via phone, internet, and agency outreach.