



**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR SERVICES**

# Guide to Services

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## **OUR MISSION**

To promote the independence and dignity of those we serve through a comprehensive and coordinated system of quality services.

**1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463)**

**[AlabamaAgeline.gov](http://AlabamaAgeline.gov)**

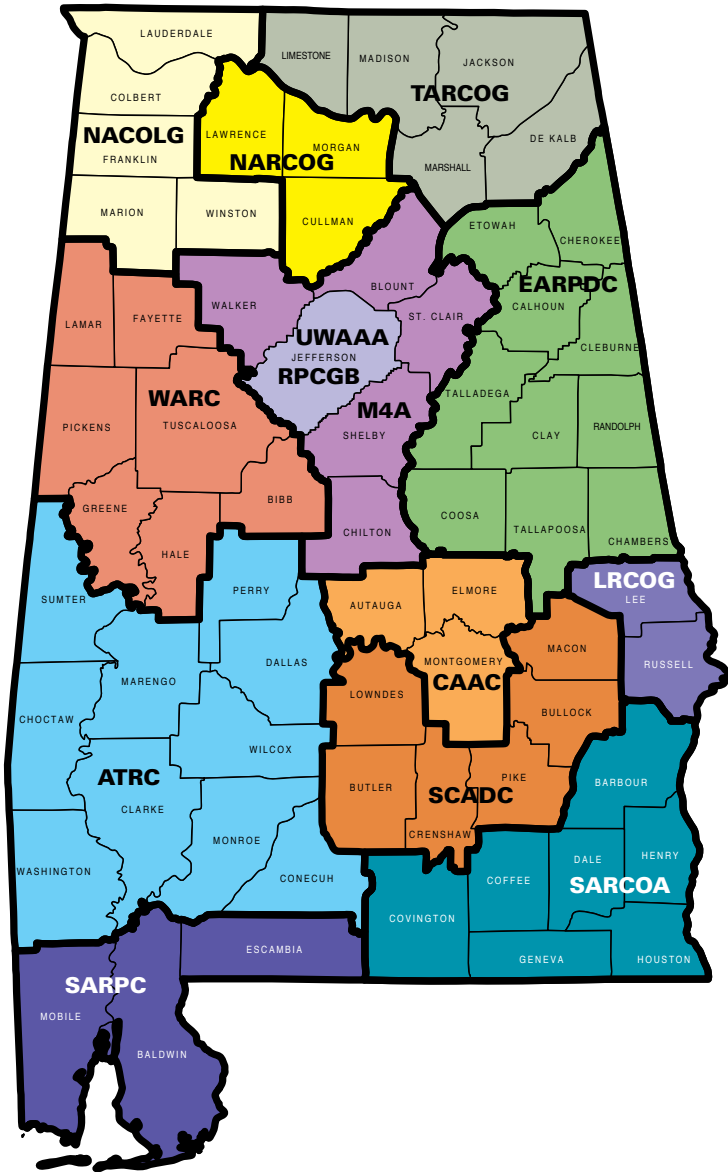
## ABOUT US

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**The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS)** is a cabinet level state agency with 50 employees. As a planning, development, and advocacy agency for senior and disabled Alabamians, ADSS advocates on behalf of its constituents and administers aging programs through 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Each AAA provides comprehensive services through contracts, grants, and through more than 300 senior centers to:

- Secure and maintain the independence and dignity of older Alabamians and persons with disabilities
- Remove social and individual barriers for older Alabamians and persons with disabilities
- Ensure the provision of a continuum of care for older Alabamians and persons with disabilities
- Develop comprehensive, coordinated systems for older Alabamians and persons with disabilities

# AREA AGENCIES ON AGING



## AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

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Alabama has 13 designated Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) which are responsible for the implementation of Senior Services programs and services. The AAAs were established under the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1973 to respond to the needs of Americans 60 and older in every local community. AAAs provide a range of options that allows older adults and people of any age with a disability to choose the services and living arrangements that works best for them to age in place and remain in their homes and communities.

ADSS and the AAAs work collectively to develop, coordinate, and deliver aging and disability services in all 67 Alabama counties. Each AAA provides comprehensive services through contracts and grants to serve older Alabamians and people of any age with a disability by:

- Securing and maintaining their independence and dignity
- Removing social and individual barriers
- Assuring the provision of continuous care
- Developing comprehensive and coordinated systems

# AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS

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Housed within each AAA is an Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC). This is the first place to go with aging, disability, and caregiver questions. This program, known as One Door Alabama, provides free information, counseling, and access to programs and services provided by the Alabama Department of Senior Services, state agencies, and federal programs.

During normal business hours each ADRC will:

- Have a live person answer the phone
- Screen for programs and services
- Assist with application processes
- Answer questions
- Refer applicants to other agencies
- Follow up as needed

Some services available through One Door Alabama are:

- Crisis support
- Transportation
- Food assistance
- Legal assistance
- In-home services
- Senior employment
- Elder abuse prevention
- Long-term care advocacy
- Caregiver support services
- Prescription drug assistance
- Medicare and Medicaid counseling

Local AAAs may also offer other programs and services not listed in this guide.

## LOCAL SENIOR CENTERS

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Alabama has approximately 300 local senior centers, with at least one in every county. Senior centers act as a focal point for older adults to receive many aging services and are a vital part of the aging network.

Each center is community based and provides many services including:

- Daily fun activities
- Nutritious meals
- Health and wellness education
- Arts and humanities activities
- Transportation services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Education opportunities
- Leisure travel programs

## NUTRITION

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The Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP) provides seniors with nutritious meals and the opportunity to be active while also building new friendships. A variety of services are provided at local senior centers in a social meal setting. In some areas, a meal delivery program is available for homebound seniors who qualify. There is no charge for the meal.

Alabama's ENP depends on local community support to help cover senior center costs and volunteers for meal delivery, program activities, and staff support. As with other OAA programs, the participants have the opportunity to make voluntary financial contributions.

### Eligible Participants

- Anyone 60 years of age or older
- Spouses of participants, regardless of age
- Persons with a disability residing with an eligible participant
- Persons with a disability under the age of 60 residing in a living community where the ENP is provided

# MEDICARE BASICS

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**Part A** (hospital insurance) covers inpatient hospital stays, care in a skilled nursing facility, hospice care, and some home health care.

**Part B** (medical insurance) covers certain doctor services, outpatient care, medical supplies, and preventive services.

**Part C** (Medicare Advantage) is a type of health plan offered by a private company that contracts with Medicare to provide Part A and Part B benefits.

**Part D** (prescription drug coverage) adds prescription drug coverage to original Medicare and other health insurance plans approved by Medicare.



## HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

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The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) is the operating agency for several Medicaid Waiver Programs. These programs provide home and community-based services to individuals whose needs would otherwise require care in a nursing facility. The services provided through these programs allow individuals to remain in the community. To access waiver services, individuals must have Medicaid coverage or meet financial eligibility criteria and qualify medically.

### **WAIVER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH ADSS**

- **Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver**

The ACT waiver provides services to individuals with disabilities or long-term illnesses who live in a nursing facility and wish to transition to a home or community setting. ADSS works with Medicaid Transition Coordinators and ACT Case Managers to facilitate the transition of clients from the nursing home back into the community. A variety of services is available to ensure a successful transition into the community and to provide ongoing care in the community based on the client's medical needs. Most transitions occur within 180 days of the application date.

- **Elderly and Disabled Waiver**

The Elderly and Disabled Waiver program provides services to the elderly and individuals with disabilities at risk for nursing facility placement. Case managers work with clients to develop a person-centered plan of care based on the client's medical needs. Depending on their plan of care, individuals in this program may receive personal care, homemaker, respite, adult day health, companion services, and/or home-delivered frozen meals.

- **Technology Assisted (TA) Waiver for Adults**

The TA waiver provides services to individuals age 21 or older with complex skilled medical conditions who are ventilator dependent or have a tracheostomy and who would otherwise require care in a long-term care setting to remain in the community. The plan of care and case management services are based on individual client needs. ADSS provides targeted case management for the TA program. Services include private duty nursing, personal care/attendant service, medical supplies, assistive technology, and targeted case management.

# HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

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## AVAILABLE SERVICES

**Case Management:** A case manager is a person who works with the client to determine what help is needed to remain safely at home. The case manager makes changes in services when needed and keeps the client informed of all available resources.

**Personal Care:** Personal care services help clients with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, and eating.

**Homemaker Services:** Homemaker services provide assistance that will help maintain a safe and clean home environment.

**Companion Services:** Companion services are for clients who cannot perform activities of daily living without additional support or supervision.

**Respite Care:** Respite care provides relief for caregivers who care for individuals who are unable to care for themselves. Respite Care can include skilled and unskilled care.

**Adult Day Services (where available):** Adult day services are available in some areas and are designed to maintain and promote the health of the client through individual group activities.

**Nutrition and Meals:** This service is designed to provide meals if needed. Each meal provides approximately 1/3 of the recommended daily nutritional values set forth by national standards.

*Services may vary according to program and additional services may be available other than those listed above.*

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

- **Personal Choices Program**

Personal Choices provides self-directed home and community-based services. It is designed to offer older adults and individuals with disabilities more choices and flexibility in the type of care they receive. Clients enrolled in the program can use their allotted budgets to get the personal care they need. They can also save for other items that sustain or improve their health.



- **Hospital To Home Program**

Hospital to Home helps individuals return home after a hospitalization. Ideal candidates for Hospital to Home are full Alabama Medicaid beneficiaries who are admitted from home to an acute-care facility and are at risk of permanent placement in a long-term care facility.



**SeniorRx** is not just for seniors. SeniorRx is a prescription medication assistance program that has helped thousands of Alabamians receive FREE or LOW-COST prescription medications from pharmaceutical companies. SeniorRx is for Alabamians with disabilities regardless of age or persons aged 55 and older who have been diagnosed with at least one medical condition that requires a prescription medication.

Eligible clients may receive a three-month supply of medication from pharmaceutical companies FREE or at a LOW COST. Medication refills are permitted as long as the participant remains eligible for the program.

To qualify for SeniorRx, an individual must be an Alabama resident and meet ONE SET of the following:

- A. Age 55 or older
  - Have a chronic medical condition
  - Have no prescription drug insurance or limited prescription drug insurance
  - Meet certain income limits
- B. Any age with a disability – If you have been deemed disabled by Social Security, have applied for disability, and are awaiting a decision, have a doctor’s declaration of disability, or you are in the 24-month Medicare waiting period.
- C. You have Medicare and have reached your Medicare Part D coverage gap (donut hole).

# STATE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SHIP)

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**SHIP** is Alabama’s State Health Insurance Assistance Program. SHIP counselors and volunteers are committed to helping participants make informed choices regarding insurance benefits. Counselors and volunteers are not affiliated with any insurance company and will not attempt to sell insurance. All counseling records are strictly confidential.

SHIP is a trusted source for information about Medicare, related health insurance, and low-income resources. SHIP counselors can help participants know and understand their insurance options.

## **WHAT CAN SHIP DO FOR YOU?**

1. SHIP can help you understand Medicare benefits.
2. SHIP can help you determine which Medicare Prescription Drug Plan best fits your needs.
3. SHIP can answer your questions about Medigap, long-term care insurance policies, and other health insurance programs for seniors.
4. SHIP can assist Medicare beneficiaries in specific areas such as home health benefits, Medicare claims and appeals, and other similar issues.
5. SHIP can provide details about benefits available in your area and refer you to other helpful programs.

# STATE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SHIP)

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SHIP provides FREE education, counseling, and information concerning:

- Medicare
- Medicare supplements
- Medicare savings programs
- Medicaid
- Prescription drugs
- Plan comparisons
- Billing & claims
- Rights & protections
- Long-term care



Family caregivers play a vital role in caring for an older individual, child, or a relative with severe disabilities. **Alabama CARES** provides support services to help families sustain efforts in caring for their loved one. The services provided by the Alabama CARES program do not replace the role of the family caregiver but enhance their ability to provide informal care for as long as appropriate. Family caregivers have unique needs and preferences for the types of services they wish to receive.

The CARES program provides these core services:

- **INFORMATION** for caregivers and the public on resources and services available within their communities.
- **SUPPORT GROUPS** establishing a mutual support system for caregivers to discuss their experiences and concerns.
- **ASSISTANCE** to family caregivers through short-term case management in gaining access to services and resources available to them within their communities.
- **RESPIRE SERVICES** that offer temporary, substitute support to relieve family caregivers from their daily caregiving responsibilities. Due to limited funding, this service is available for family caregivers who have the greatest burden and highest need of relief.



## ALABAMA CARES

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- TRAINING, family caregiver education, and guidance that assist family caregivers in making decisions and solving problems related to their roles as caregivers.
- SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES, available on a limited basis, are intended to complement the care family caregivers provide for their loved one.

### **WHO HAS ACCESS TO THESE SERVICES?**

- Primary family caregivers of frail, older adults age 60 or older
- Older relative caregivers (not parents), including grandparents age 55 or older, caring for children ages 18 and younger with or without disabilities
- Older relative caregivers and parents, including grandparents age 55 and older, caring for adults age 19-59 with disabilities

### **ARE SERVICES BASED ON INCOME?**

A person's income will not prevent them from receiving services. However, family caregivers with the greatest social and economic needs are considered when prioritizing appropriateness for direct services.

# OMBUDSMAN

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The **Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** provides consumer protection advocacy services to individuals residing in long-term care facilities consisting of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, specialty care facilities, and boarding homes.

Ombudsmen work to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of Alabama's long-term care residents. Anyone can use an Ombudsman, including residents, residents' family and friends, or employees of long-term care facilities.

Ombudsmen work to:

- Resolve residents' problems
- Protect residents' rights
- Ensure residents receive fair treatment and quality care
- Investigate and resolve complaints
- Educate residents, family, and facility staff
- Provide information to the public
- Advocate to bring about changes at the local, state, and national levels to improve the lives of residents in long-term care facilities

## LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENT RIGHTS

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Residents in a long-term care facility have the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Be free from chemical and physical restraints
- Voice grievances without fear of retaliation
- Associate and communicate privately with any person of their choice
- Send and receive personal mail
- Have personal and medical records kept confidential
- Apply for state and federal assistance without discrimination
- Be fully informed prior to admission of their rights, services available, and all financial charges
- Be given advance notice of transfer or discharge

Complaints may be filed in writing, by phone, or in person.  
Complainants do not have to give their name and all  
information is confidential.

**Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman**  
**(334) 242-5753**

## LEGAL SERVICES

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The **Legal Assistance Program** is a statewide system of legal professionals who assist older adults with personal legal issues. These legal professionals provide advice and counseling, legal representation, legal research, preparation of legal documents, negotiation, legal education, and community outreach to Alabama's older adults. The Legal Assistance Program works on a non-fee-generating basis and strives to protect and secure the rights, benefits, and dignity of adults age 60 and older.

The Legal Assistance Program can assist with:

- Accessing health and long-term care
- Advanced directives
- Consumer issues
- Debt collection
- Elder abuse exploitation and fraud
- Guardianship issues
- Housing
- Income maintenance
- Medicaid & Medicare
- Powers of attorney
- Social Security
- Wills

## IMPORTANT LEGAL DOCUMENTS

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Five important legal documents to consider:

- **Medical Directive**

A medical directive, also known as a living will or advance healthcare directive, sets out what kind of care you want to receive if you become ill or incapacitated.

- **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare**

A durable power of attorney for healthcare allows your loved one to make healthcare decisions for you. A Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) release gives them access to your health records and physicians.

- **Durable Power of Attorney for Finances**

A durable power of attorney for finances allows someone to manage your financial affairs, pay bills, sell property, and other financial matters.

- **Revocable Living Trust**

A revocable living trust allows a loved one to retain control over your estate while making transfers of assets to beneficiaries. They designate what property goes into the trust and to whom it will be granted. A revocable living trust has the important advantage of allowing your estate to possibly avoid probate upon your death.

- **Will**

A will is a written directive of who will receive your assets and personal property. A properly written will helps to avoid disagreements over your estate after your death.

## ELDER ABUSE

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The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) was appointed by the State Legislature to establish and oversee the work of the **Interagency Council for the Prevention of Elder Abuse**. The council's mission is to strengthen partnerships to protect elders and raise awareness of elder abuse issues through education, advocacy, and outreach.

ADSS has the responsibility to empower, protect, and advocate on behalf of the state's aging population. The council provides education and awareness to seniors, their caregivers, professionals, and the public on the rights of older adults and elder abuse prevention.

Through the collaboration and work of the council, Alabama has some of the strongest criminal elder abuse laws in the nation. The council meets several times each year to advocate for new state initiatives and laws that better protect Alabama's senior adults.

Elder Abuse can occur anywhere. Data shows older adults are most often abused by family members or those in a position of trust.

Elder abuse is defined as:

- **Abandonment** – desertion of an elder by anyone who assumes the responsibility for care or custody of that person

## ELDER ABUSE

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- **Emotional Abuse** – inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder through verbal or nonverbal acts, e.g., humiliating, intimidating, or threatening
- **Financial Exploitation** – the illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of an elder for someone else’s benefit
- **Neglect** – the failure by those responsible to provide food, shelter, healthcare, or protection for an elder
- **Physical Abuse** – inflicting physical pain or injury on an elder, e.g., slapping, bruising, or restraining by physical or chemical means
- **Sexual Abuse** – non-consensual sexual contact of any kind

It is important to understand how to prevent and report elder abuse. ADSS has a free Elder Abuse Protection Toolkit available with important information on how to identify, prevent, and report elder abuse. Call 1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463) to request a toolkit.

### **To Report Elder Abuse Contact:**

**Department of Human Resources (DHR)  
Adult Protective Services**

**ADULT ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-458-7214**

The hotline is available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Reports may also be made to your county  
DHR office or local law enforcement.

Reports may be made anonymously.

# ALABAMA SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL (AL SMP)

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The mission of the **Alabama Senior Medicare Patrol's (AL SMP)** is to teach and empower Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and families how to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse. Federally funded through the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the AL SMP is comprised of dedicated staff and volunteers who respond to reports of suspected Medicare fraud and abuse and determine next steps.

The AL SMP's key objectives are to continuously work in these three main areas:

1. **Conduct Outreach and Education.** The AL SMP gives presentations to groups, displays exhibits at events, and works one-on-one with Medicare beneficiaries.
2. **Engage Volunteers.** Protecting older persons' health, finances, and medical identity while saving Medicare dollars is a cause that attracts civic-minded Americans.
3. **Receive Beneficiary Complaints.** When Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and family members bring their complaints to the AL SMP, the AL SMP determines whether fraud, errors, and/or abuse is suspected. When fraud is suspected, AL SMP makes referrals to the appropriate federal agency for further investigation.



## RESOURCES ON DEMENTIA

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Dementia is not easy to describe or understand. Dementia is most easily described as changes in memory, thinking, language, judgment, and behavior. There are many types and causes of dementia, and not all types of dementia present the same way. While dementia is usually diagnosed in older adults, there is also early onset dementia that may be diagnosed in younger adults. Most causes of dementia cannot be stopped and the disease will progress over time.

The word “dementia” often brings thoughts of someone being forgetful; however, forgetfulness does not mean one has dementia. Forgetfulness that gets worse over time, or changes in one’s ability to do tasks that had been done before without help, is a concern. Changes in behavior like frequently getting mad or becoming fearful are also a concern.

ADSS promotes a statewide program of dementia-friendly communities known as Dementia Friendly Alabama (DFA). More and more communities in Alabama, and even some outside Alabama, have taken an interest in the initiative adopted and sustained by the Central Alabama Aging Consortium (CAAC). The objective of dementia-friendly communities is to create welcoming, comforting communities where those diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers feel respected and supported to live, age, and thrive.

**For more information on Dementia Friendly Alabama  
or to receive a free Dementia Resource Guide visit:  
DementiaFriendlyAL.org  
or call 1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463).**

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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The **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** is a community service and work-based training program for older workers. SCSEP provides useful community services and fosters individual economic self-sufficiency through training and placement into unsubsidized jobs.

Participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities. Participants work, on average, 20 hours a week, and are paid the highest of federal, state, or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants. No resource/asset limit is required.

To qualify, participants must:

- Be an Alabama resident
- Be age 55 or older
- Be unemployed
- Have an income of less than 125% of the federal poverty level

# ALABAMA SENIOR CITIZENS HALL OF FAME

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The **Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame (HOF)** was created in 1983 by the Alabama Legislature to honor Alabamians age 60 and older who have made significant contributions toward enhancing the lives of Alabama’s elderly citizens. In 2008, the HOF became part of the Alabama Department of Senior Services. An induction ceremony is held each year to welcome new members into the HOF.

Community leaders and members of the public are asked to submit nominations. Each year, 10 permanent members are nominated and selected to be inducted into the HOF. Other special awards are given in various categories, including individuals who are 100 years old or older and couples who have celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.

Nominations for the HOF are accepted each year between March 1 and May 1. The HOF awards ceremony is in August.

## OUR VISION

To help society and state government prepare for Alabama's changing aging demographics through effective leadership and stewardship.

## OUR VALUES

- To promote the worth, dignity, and rights of older and disabled persons
- To promote the independence and self-determination of older and disabled persons
- To promote the efficient and effective management and utilization of resources
- To promote public support and input

### **Alabama Department of Senior Services**

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**[AlabamaAgeline.gov](http://AlabamaAgeline.gov)**