

California Department of Aging

Linkages Program Narrative

Program / Element / Component -- 40.90.50

Description

The Linkages Program is a care management program, which serves frail elderly and functionally impaired adults who are at risk of being placed in an institutional setting. Linkages professionals, known as care managers, link clients to services to assist them in remain independent in their own communities. There is at least one Linkages site in each of the 33 Planning and Service Areas (PSA) in California. Services available through the Linkages Program fill the gaps for individuals who are not eligible for other case management services, such as those offered through the Departments of Developmental Services, Mental Health, and Rehabilitation. Linkages staff are expected to use the individual's family, other informal support networks, and existing community services to their fullest capacity. If other resources are unavailable, the Linkages Program has limited funds available to purchase one-time assistance.

Benefits

A Linkages Program staff professional is assigned to each individual and completes a thorough in-home assessment. The care manager works with the older or disabled person and family or friends involved in their care. A care plan designed to enhance the person's strengths and address their needs is developed and approved by the individual. The care manager may link the person to community services, such as transportation to medical appointments, home-delivered meals, homemaker and personal care, and support for the caregiver. Linkages staff also help the client to obtain various devices, including ramps, hand-held showerheads, and nutritional supplements. Staff contact the client regularly and follow-up to ensure the services and products are satisfactory to the individual.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Linkages Program, a client must be a functionally impaired adult 18 years of age or older. Individuals must have the need for assistance in at least two activities of daily living, such as transportation, housework, dressing, or bathing. They must live in an area served by the Linkages Program and be willing to participate. There are no income limitations. The Program serves approximately 100 clients per site. There is usually a waiting list for services.

Access

Information on the Linkages Program can be obtained by calling the statewide toll free number at **1-800-510-2020** or the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) listed in the blue bordered Community Services section of the Yellow Pages under Senior Information and Referral/Assistance or access the California Department of Aging website at www.aging.ca.gov.

Background

Linkages was established as a demonstration project 1/1/85 by CH 1637/84 (Felando) with a sunset date of 6/30/88. CH 16/88 (Duplissea) extended the sunset date to 12/31/89, and CH 1013/89 (Bentley) established the Linkages Program as a permanent program effective 1/1/90.

A Budget Change Proposal reduced the Program funding beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 1990/91. Assembly and Senate attempts to restore the reduction were vetoed in the Budget Act by the Governor due to higher priorities for limited General Fund resources.

AB 2800, the Mello-Grandlund Older Californians Act (Chapter 1097, Statutes of 1996), integrated seven distinct Community-Based Services Programs (CBSP) into one Community-Based Services Network and transferred responsibility for related contract administration from the California Department of Aging to the AAAs. The Linkages Program is one of these seven programs.

The Budget Change Proposal for FY 1998/99 expanded services from 13 PSAs to all 33 PSAs through the addition of 23 new sites.

In FY 1999/00, legislative efforts by The Coalition for Coordinated Advocacy resulted in a State General Fund augmentation.

In FY 2000/01, the budget included funding for additional expansion. The local assistance was increased for each of the 36 sites.

As a result of the FY 2001/02 Governor's Unallocated CBSP reduction the AAA's reduced the Linkages Program funding statewide.

The FY 2004/05 budget cut staff positions directly assigned to CBSP administrative oversight, including the Linkages Program, eliminating state-level oversight of the Linkages Program.