

**Priority:** Safety Net Services

**Lead Agency:** Non-Departmental - All

**Program Offer Type:** Existing Operating

**Program Contact:** Julie Neburka

**Related Programs:**

**Frameworks:**

### **Executive Summary**

Elders in Action is a powerful voice and resource for local seniors. As a non-profit organization relying on the skills and talents of more than 150 volunteers, Elders in Action works to solve problems, tackle important issues and create opportunities for Portland area seniors to get involved. Our volunteer driven programs maximize resources and work in collaboration with other public and private organizations to accomplish significant and lasting results.

### **Program Description**

Elders in Action Commission members provide a voice for local seniors when it comes to the issues seniors care about. These city and county-appointed volunteers regularly meet with local and state officials to provide input on critical issues ranging from housing and transportation to crime, healthcare and other important services. With achievements such as initiation of the 24 hour Senior Helpline, the Housing Emergency fund, and the Elder Crimes Response Team, the Commission has enhanced the network of aging services in the region.

Ombudsman Services' volunteers work one-on-one to help solve problems, support seniors who are facing serious and/or complicated issues in the area of fraud and crime, housing and health care, and who have nowhere else to turn. Volunteers evaluate and certify businesses and organizations as "Elder Friendly," based on how well they meet the needs of older customers. Community Education volunteers provide important information on a variety of topics affecting seniors, ranging from health care to how to prevent fraud.

### **Program Justification**

14.3% of the Multnomah County population, or 95,000, are people over the age of 60. Of those, 9.5%, or 9,000 are below poverty level. Mobility limitations impact close to one in 5 of those over age 60. And those 85+, the fastest growing segment of the population, and has increased 18% in the past decade.

The older population is more frail, less mobile and may experience vision or hearing loss, thus presenting unique challenges to social and health care systems already over-burdened. Service levels are being reduced at a time when demand is growing. In addition, our world is increasingly technical and complex which creates added difficulties for older people not familiar with technology, who may be confused, or suffering from other age-related losses or illnesses. Elders in Action provides personal, one-on-one problem solving assistance through Ombudsman Services, the only service of its kind available in our community. The tremendous skills and talents of older adults are channeled in this effective and innovative program to improve the quality of life for those less fortunate while at the same time empowering the older person to take as much responsibility for their own problems as possible.

### **Performance Measures**

Number of individuals served one-on-one by Ombudsman Services

Number of individuals educated as smart consumers

Number of evictions prevented

Amount of funds in benefits owed and that lost to scams recouped for individuals

Funds saved in drug costs for low-income seniors

### **Summary of last year's program results and this year's expected results**

877 individuals received personal one-on-one problem solving assistance:

of those 35% were crime and abuse, 26% health care, and 39% housing.

3970 individuals participated in consumer education.

54 individuals living on fixed income prevented from losing their homes.

\$90,764 recovered in benefits owed and funds lost due to crime.

**Program Mandate: 4 Program and Funding Level Choice**

Multnomah County's funding for Elders in Action is a discretionary General Fund expenditure.

**Revenue/Expense Detail**

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
	2005	2005	2006	2006
<b>Program Expenses</b>				
Contracts	\$152,083	\$0	\$158,140	\$0
Internal Services	\$2,502	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	<b>\$154,585</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$158,140</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Administration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Support	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Total GF/non-GF:	<b>\$154,585</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$158,140</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Program Total:	<b>\$154,585</b>		<b>\$158,140</b>	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Program Revenues</b>				
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Explanation of Revenues**

Elders in Action has a diverse financial base, with funds from the County, the City of Portland, grants, fees, and corporate and individual donations. Multnomah County General Funds comprise 25% of the Elders in Action annual budget. Faced with a substantial reduction in revenue for FY 04 EIA successfully increased individual, corporate, and local foundation support. Multnomah County General Funds provide partial support for operation of the Elders in Action Commission and Ombudsman Services.

**Significant Program Changes**

Due to massive cuts in aging services and housing on the horizon at the federal, state, and local level, Elders in Action expects to see the dramatic increase in demand for service, paralleling the 31% increase immediately following the 2003 cuts.

Elders in Action has several new initiatives on the drawing board. In a major effort to inspire neighbors to action, a special community-building campaign called Neighbors Caring for Seniors, will seek to rally neighborhood support for services to help provide reliable care and resources for people as they age. Additionally EIA is currently working on new arthritis and cancer initiatives for Ombudsman and Community Education services.