



# Senior Centers

## FACT SHEET

**R**ecognized by the Older Americans Act (OAA) as a community focal point, senior centers have become one of the most widely used services among America's older adults. Today, nearly 11,000 senior centers serve 1 million older adults every day.

### Participants

- Approximately 70% of senior center participants are women; half of them live alone.
- The majority are Caucasian, followed by African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians respectively.
- Compared with their peers, senior center participants have higher levels of health, social interaction, and life satisfaction and lower levels of income.
- The average age of participants is 75.
- 75% of participants visit their center 1-3 times per week. They spend an average of 3.3 hours per visit.

### Services

- Senior centers serve as a gateway to the nation's aging network—connecting older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent.
- More than 60% of senior centers are designated focal points for delivery of OAA services—allowing older adults to access multiple services in one place.
- Senior centers offer a wide variety of programs and services, including:
  - Meal and nutrition programs
  - Information and assistance
  - Health, fitness, and wellness programs

- Transportation services
- Public benefits counseling
- Employment assistance
- Volunteer and civic engagement opportunities
- Social and recreational activities
- Educational and arts programs
- Intergenerational programs
- To maintain operations, senior centers must leverage resources from a variety of sources. These include federal, state, and local governments; special events; public and private grants; businesses; bequests; participant contributions; in-kind donations; and volunteer hours. Most centers rely on 3 to 8 different funding sources.

### Impact

- Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental, and economic well-being.
- Today's senior centers are reinventing themselves to meet the needs and desires of the aging baby boom generation. Boomers now constitute more than two-thirds of the 50+ population. Senior centers are developing new programs and opportunities for this dynamic generation of older adults.

# NCOA: SENIOR CENTERS FACT SHEET

## NCOA's Role

### NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC)

NISC supports a national network of over 2,000 senior center professionals dedicated to helping older adults remain active, engaged, and independent in their communities. NISC is setting the standard for the future of senior centers through its cutting-edge research, promising practices, professional development, and advocacy. NISC also offers the nation's only National Senior Center Accreditation Program. Accreditation provides official recognition that a senior center meets NISC's nine standards of senior center operations. To date, more than 200 senior centers have received accreditation.

For more information, please visit [www.NCOA.org/NISC](http://www.NCOA.org/NISC).

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## About NCOA

The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve health, live independently, and remain active in their communities. For more information, please visit [www.NCOA.org](http://www.NCOA.org).

