

AoA Older Americans Month 2008 Program Champion



Project: Franklin County Ohio Senior Options Levy

Organization: Franklin County Office on Aging & Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging

Project Description

The Franklin County Senior Options Levy was established through a successful community wide effort to pass a Franklin County, Ohio property tax levy in 1992. The five-year levy was passed for the 4th time in 2007 and will bring in approximately \$26 million for senior services. The primary mission of the levy is to provide more home care options in the community and avoid nursing home placement when possible. People that are not eligible for Ohio's PASSPORT Medicaid waiver home care program can find themselves without home care services, often leading to premature institutionalization, asset spend down and left with the more expensive choice of Medicaid nursing home care. The levy's case managed array of services is recognized by the Franklin County Commissioners and voters as being a nursing home diversion program good for all concerned.

In addition to home care options, the Franklin Co. Senior Options Levy provides grants to thirty-one agencies for a wide variety of other services. These include health prevention, senior employment and legal assistance. An important value of the levy program is to address the growing diversity of population in Columbus and it funds grants to organizations like Community Refugee and Immigration Services, which can provide assistance in 25 languages. The levy web site provides information in five languages.

The Franklin County Office on Aging, an agency of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, administers the Senior Options levy, serving over 5,000 seniors per month. The Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA) is under contract to provide home assessments, in-home case management and monitoring of provider contracts. Numerous provider agencies in the community are also partners, providing services such as meals, personal care, adult day services, home repair, and medical transportation. The partnership between COAAA and FCOA is extensive. COAAA Older Americans Act Family Caregiver service funds are administered through the Office on Aging and supplemented with local levy funds. Local funding blends with the Older Americans Act dollars to provide a great deal of flexibility to meet the needs of older adults and their caregivers.

Perhaps the most valuable outcome of the Franklin County Senior Options Levy is that it has served as a model for many other care-managed home care levies in Ohio. The willingness of communities to provide additional funding to assist older adults with their independence has been proved many times in Ohio.

For more information on the Senior Options Levy visit www.officeonaging.org/fcso or contact Toni Carroll at 614-462-6200 or via e-mail amcarrol@franklincountyohio.gov.