

# ONI Budget Advisory Committee: Program Summary

## December 2015

### **Organization / Program title**

#### **Elders in Action (503) 235-5474**

**Mission:** *To assure a vibrant community through the active involvement of older adults.  
Sharing experience. Staying engaged.*

### **Briefly describe the program funded with city dollars**

Elders in Action provides a crucial link in the public/private partnership that is required for our community to provide services and support resources to older adults living in Portland. We fulfill our mission through four organizational programs: the Elders in Action Commission, Community Engagement, the Age Friendly Business Network and the Personal Advocate program. Each program engages and serves older adults by advocating for change on the policy level and, in the case of the Personal Advocacy program, on the personal level, each having a positive effect in the lives of seniors. Local government and non-profit agencies refer clients to us because of the uniqueness of our program and the value our volunteers bring to providing one-to-one services to older adults. Our programs help fill gaps that government or other community organizations cannot provide. We engage older adults in actively assisting those in need.

Last year the Elders in Action Personal Advocate Program saw an 11% growth in the demand for services. This is the third year in a row that we have experienced an increase between 10% and 20% in the number of people helped. Many of those requests for services came from our community and governmental partner agencies including: City and County offices, Adult Protective Services, Senior Centers, and in-home healthcare workers. Along with the increased calls for assistance has also come an increase in the complexity of the cases. We have seen a dramatic increase in housing related calls due to the housing shortage crisis. There has also been an increase in calls involving scams with the most frequent type being identity theft.

Our growth is a reflection of the national trend in aging. Between 2010 and 2030, while the general population will grow by 35%, the region's over 65 population will grow by 106% (Metro 2009). City dollars help Elders in Action to continue to advise city officials, connect the talent of older adults with those in need and provide services to City residents so that they may continue to live independently and be actively involved with their community.

Our Elders in Action Commission is the federally mandated advisory group for the City of Portland on aging and issues affecting its elder citizens. Our Commission members meet twice a month; leadership meeting and full Commission meeting. Our advocates work closely with elected officials and City departments to provide input at by attending and testifying at hearings and participating in task forces and work groups.

### **Major activities and accomplishments (ending June 30, 2015).**

- Advocate volunteers met with each City Commissioners between December 2014 - March 2015 to discuss the city budget.
- Our advocates continue to advise, promote and participate in the Pedestrian Safety Activities. We have a member on the City's Vision Zero Committee and also representatives at the Traffic Safety Coordinating Committee.
- EIA Commission advocates have representation at most PHAC and a Home For

Everyone meetings.

- We continue to honor our Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Portland, Multnomah County and Elders in Action to help promote and assist people in signing up for the Public Alerts Volunteer Emergency Registry program.
- Staff represented older adults and people with disabilities on the Private for Hire Transportation Task Force.
- Our 75 Personal Advocates volunteers assisted hundreds of City residents with problems related to housing, health care, crime or abuse. We received 394 referrals from a variety of City Bureaus and programs including the Water Bureau, Police Bureau, City/County I&R, Auditors office and Housing Inspectors.
- Elders in Action is actively engaged in the Age Friendly Action Plan Coordinating Council.
- EIA works closely with Portland Police Bureau Elder Crimes Unit to maintain 2 volunteer advocates in the unit on a weekly basis to assist older adult victims of crime.
- In 2014-15 EIA coordinated a fraud panel, at the North Portland Library, for older adults.
- In Spring of 2015 EIA integrated the Urban League, Home Forward, REACH, Welcome Home, Oregon ON, and the Fair Housing Council into our Housing Advocacy Training.
- EIA staff and Commissioners attended all PBOT input open house sessions regarding the Transportation User Fee.
- Advocates provided testimony in support of Portland's photo red-light bill during the 2014-15 legislative session.
- Staff completed over 12 trainings on the Portland Arts Tax exemption and filing process, reaching 766 adults and communicating via mail with over 1,000 other older adults.
- Staff and volunteers participated in hearings and discussions of the Transportation User Fee.

#### **Summary of program budget and staffing**

ONI City funding supports staff and materials & services for operating the Commission, Personal Advocate, and Age-Friendly Certification programs for the City of Portland in FY 14-15. This funding represents 26% of our budget and allows us to leverage additional grants and donations. Our organization volunteers contributed 11,652 hours over the course of the fiscal year, valued at \$248,770. (State of Oregon 2013 hourly volunteer rate \$21.35/hr. from the Points of Light Foundation)

#### **Partnerships with other organizations**

We work with many organizations, and are working to build more robust relationships with other ONI Partners. On a regular basis we work with the IRCO, Impact NW, NAYA, AARP, Impact NW/YWCA, Verde, East Portland Action Plan, Welcome Home Coalition, Hollywood Senior Center, Urban League, APANO, Neighborhood House, Friendly House, Metropolitan Family Services, Jewish Family Services, Q-Center, SAGE Metro, PSU Institute on Aging, TriMet, Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services, Store to Door, Meals on Wheels, Oregon Walks, Lift Urban, Home Forward, Bridge Meadows, NW Pilot Project, Seniors for Generational Equity, and others.

# Elders *in* Action

EST. 1968

We fulfill our mission *to assure a vibrant community through the active involvement of older adults* by:

- providing life enriching opportunities to volunteers of every age;
- proactively filling the gaps in vital services to a growing older adult population; and
- offering educational and civic engagement opportunities to the public and business community.

Elders in Action is growing to meet the expanding need in our community. We hope you will join us to ensure we all have the opportunity to age with dignity in the communities we call home.

## **Personal Advocate Program**

Our trained volunteers provide assistance to people age 60 and older who are facing serious and complicated issues in their lives. We provide the support to help them remain independent and empowered. Every day our volunteers provide:

- Assistance in navigating complex systems
- Support in dealing with issues due to fraud and abuse
- Helping individuals determine and access benefit programs and services

## **Civic Engagement**

Our work helps empower and educate individuals before a crisis occurs. This in turn allows us to positively support our aging community. We provide a variety of education programs that include:

- Protection from fraud and abuse
- Healthy aging seminars
- Service learning programs engaging community members in days of service that benefit older adults

## **Age Friendly Business Network**

Over 1,000 area businesses have gone through our certification program. By being Age-Friendly our community can help support independence, work to reduce isolation and encourage an active community for ALL ages. Our volunteers provide:

- Aging Awareness education and trainings to businesses and organizations
- Evaluation and recommendations for our Certified Age Friendly Business Network
- Feedback on the age-friendliness of websites and written materials

## **Elders in Action Commission**

The Commission is a volunteer-led advocacy group that informs and advises the Multnomah County Area Agency on Aging (Aging Disabilities and Veterans Services) and the City of Portland on issues of concern to older adults. Key issues that the Commission works on include:

- Housing
- Transportation Accessibility and Safety
- Healthcare