



Adult Services

Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of elders and adults with disabilities in Union County.



UNIONCOUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES



How to Report

Contact Social Services and ask to speak with an Adult Services Intake worker to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a disabled adult.

You will remain anonymous and are protected from civil and criminal liability for reports made in good faith.

Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Business Hours: 704.296.4300

Hotline: 704.296.6124
After Hours: 704.289.1591

Fax: 704.296.4404

Information Needed to Report

- Name and address of the disabled adult.
- Age or date of birth of the disabled adult.
- Name of the caregiver, if any.
- Details about the situation and why you feel the person needs protection.
- Information on the mental or physical condition of the disabled adult.
- Name of others who may provide information regarding the situation, if available.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Statement

Translation services are provided, free of charge, to agency customers who do not speak English.

Non-Discrimination Policy

We do not discriminate services because of sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or handicap.



Our Purpose

To advocate for older adults and adults with disabilities, respect their right to self-determination, provide services to enhance their quality of life, assist them to live in a safe, secure environment and be free of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Rights & Responsibilities

Your family has the right to be treated with dignity.

You have the right to know Social Services' legal authority to intervene.

You have a responsibility to cooperate with Social Services to ensure the safety of the adult in question.

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Guardianship for adults who have been deemed incompetent by a court of law and no other appropriate guardian of the person is available.

- Special Assistance in Home.
- Individual and Family Adjustment.
- Adult Placement.
- Adult Home Monitoring.



Services for the Blind

Through the **North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind**, promotes and provides independence for visually impaired and blind individuals. Available to adults and children who qualify.



Disabled Adult: At least 18 years old and physically or mentally incapacitated.

Caretaker: Anyone who has responsibility for the care of an adult by family relationship, private paid contract, individual, or who voluntarily assumes the responsibility.

Adult Protective Services

The Adult Protective Services division evaluates whether a disabled adult has been abused, neglected or exploited and is in need of protective services.

Adult Protective Services activities include

- Making a face-to-face, unannounced visit to the adult with a disability.
- Working with the adult, family and multidisciplinary providers to secure needed essential services for the adult such as food, safe housing or medical care.
- Planning with and supporting the disabled or elderly adult and the family or caregiver to identify, remedy and prevent problems that result in abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Reporting evidence of mistreatment to the District Attorney and regulatory agencies; court action is initiated as necessary to protect the adult with a disability.

Protective services are available only to adults who meet all three criteria:

1. Must be physically or mentally disabled.
2. Must be alleged to be abused, neglected, or exploited.
3. Cannot access essential services and needs protection.

A snapshot

- The most common form of mistreatment was neglect; 88% of the cases involved neglect, while 64% involved self-neglect.
- The most frequently named perpetrator was an adult child, followed by a spouse, other relative or non-relative caretaker.
- The most frequently identified services needed to address the problems of abuse, neglect and exploitation are: Medical or Health Care, In-Home Aide Services, Placement, and Financial Assistance.

Do any of these concerns apply to you or someone you know?

- Bruises, burns, cuts, scratches.
- Sprains, fractures, dislocations, malnutrition.
- Untreated medical condition(s).
- Unsafe or unsanitary housing.
- Lack of medications, hearing aids, glasses or dentures.
- Mental anguish and distress.
- Mistrust towards others.
- Unpaid utility and other bills.
- Mismanaged property or savings
- Sudden change in will or power of attorney.
- Unable to provide care needed.

Common Behavioral Indicators of Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

- Avoidance of eye contact.
- Confusion.
- Hesitance to talk openly.
- Withdrawal.
- Change in appetite or sleep patterns.
- Suspicious or paranoid behaviors.
- Radical change in behavior.
- Depression.

Abuse

The willful or intentional infliction of physical pain, injury, mental anguish, unreasonable confinement or deprivation by a caretaker of services which are necessary to maintain mental and physical health.

Look for:

- Unusual and unexplained bruises, welts, fractures, and burns in various stages of healing or in the shape of an object.
- Bed sores, weight loss, or dry skin and lips.
- Clothing inappropriate for temperature and conditions.
- Inadequate shelter or medical care.
- Excessive sweating or chills.
- Intentional confinement in a dangerous environment.

Caretaker Neglect

The failure of the caretaker to provide services necessary to maintain the physical or mental health of the disabled adult.

Look for:

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, and attention to personal and incidental needs.
- Failure to provide or arrange for medical needs.
- Failure to manage resources to meet needs.
- Failure to provide a safe living situation that is not hazardous to health and safety.
- Failure to provide appropriate supervision.



Exploitation

The illegal or improper use of the disabled adult or his/her resources for another's profit or advantage.

Look For:

- Unexplained withdrawal of money from bank accounts.
- Use of deceit, treachery, or coercion to obtain money or assets.
- Inappropriate sexual activity.
- Unusual interest by anyone in the disabled adult's assets.
- Difference between assets and lifestyle.
- Unusually large payment for services.
- Mismanagement of person's funds (failure to pay for essential services).

Self Neglect

A disabled adult who lives alone or has no caretaker and is not able to provide necessary services to maintain his/her mental or physical health.

Look For:

- Forgetfulness in lighting or turning off stove or gas.
- Aimless wandering at night.
- Inability to cook, eat, bathe, toilet, dress, medicate, or care for self.
- Unusual thinness.
- Dehydration.
- Living in an unsafe dwelling or environment.
- Inappropriate use of medication.
- Inability to communicate.

To prevent further mistreatment, the following services may be recommended.

Adult Day Care (ADC) & Adult Day Health (ADH)

Provides financial assistance to eligible, disabled adults to attend a licensed program in a community group setting.

Supports their personal independence and promotes their social, physical and emotional well-being.

A social worker monitors the adult's progress, attendance and ensures their needs are being met.

In-Home Aide Services

Assists eligible, disabled adults to safely remain in their home as long as possible while maintaining their independence and quality of life, slowing the deterioration of an individual's functional capacity, preventing abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, and avoiding premature institutional care.

Provides an in-home aide and a social worker to monitor, advocate and assist an individual and/or their family with these goals.



What should you do if you suspect mistreatment?

When you suspect mistreatment of an older adult or an adult with a disability, NC law requires you to contact Adult Protective Services at the Department of Social Services in the county where the adult is living.

See page 1 for more details on how to report mistreatment.

Adult Day Care & Adult Day Health

Adult Day Care

Adult Day Care (ADC) is the provision of an organized program of services during the day in a community group setting for the purpose of supporting the adult's personal independence and promoting their social, physical and emotional well-being. Services include a variety of program activities designed to meet the individual needs and interest of the participants, a nutritious meal and snacks as appropriate.

Adult Day Health

Adult Day Health (ADH) provides a structured program of activities and services during the day for aging, disabled and handicapped adults. However, participants enrolled in adult day health also require daily nurse supervision. This health care component distinguishes it from adult day care.

In summary, day care is a social model while day health has medical care medication management, blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar monitoring, toileting assistance, etc.) as a part of the daily service.

Who needs ADC/ADH?

Adults who need day care or day health vary.

However, they are generally older adults or adults with disabilities who have impairments which prohibit them from living independently without supportive services or staying home without a caregiver.

Currently, Union County has two Adult Day Health providers:

- New Testament Adult Day Care, located in Monroe.
- Blessed Assurance Adult Day and Health Care, located in Matthews.

Adult day care/health is also a service for caregivers who need respite or who have to work and are unable to leave their family member at home alone.

Who is eligible?

The Human Services agency makes this determination based on funding availability, need and space. The adult day care providers are not involved in determining if an adult receives grant funding.

Is there a waiting list?

Yes, as of August 2023.

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What is the priority for receiving services paid for with grant money?

Referrals are prioritized by available funding sources as follows:

- Older adults where the need is part of an adult protective services plan; and/or adults who require full time supervision.
- Older adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation; and/or adults who need help with Activities of Daily Living (ADL's) and/or support from their caretaker in order to remain in their home.
- Older adults with extensive ADL/IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living) impairments who are at risk of placement; and/or adults who need intervention in the form of enrichment and opportunities for social activities in order to prevent deterioration that would lead to placement.
- Older adults with extensive ADL/IADL impairments
- Older adults with less extensive ADL/IADL impairments

The funding sources also include other eligibility requirements, but the items listed above are the general reference points for determining need and priority.

What are the funding sources?

Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) are the two funding sources available for DSS to use for ADC and/or ADH.

HCCBG funds are limited to individuals aged 60 and older and are linked to the Federal Older American's Act. SSBG funds have no age requirement. These funding sources are limited and subject to budgetary reductions.

Costs

For those receiving grand funds, there is no direct cost to the adult to attend an approved number of days. However, consumer contributions are welcome.

In-Home Aide Services

In-Home Aide Services

Union County social workers work with our residents and manage the In-Home Services cases to empower Union County residents to be healthier, more productive and to enjoy a higher quality of life.

Private providers are contracted to provide direct service to our clients. Social workers monitor the services received and regularly assess clients needs to ensure they are receiving the appropriate care and level of service.

While aides do provide some housekeeping tasks, this is not a maid or housekeeping service. They will not clean the entire home or provide services to other family members.

The following services enable clients to live safely in their residence and to be independent.



Home Management I

- Bill paying as directed by client
- Assist with shopping
- Launder clothes of client
- Basic housekeeping tasks such as sweeping, mopping, dusting and vacuuming in the client's main living area (bedroom, kitchen, bath, living room, etc.)
- Change linens on client's bed and make the client's unoccupied bed
- Identify medications for client
- Shop for client's food and other essentials

Home Management II

- Assist client with following a prepared budget
- Assist with accessing community resources



Personal Care I

- Assist ambulatory client with mobility and toileting
- Provide normal skin care
- Assist with personal hygiene like mouth care, hair and scalp grooming, and bathing (shower, tub, bed, basin)
- Assist and encourage physical activity and or range of motion prescribed exercise
- Assist client with self-monitoring their temperature, pulse, weight and/or blood pressure

Personal Care II

- Give bed bath
- Make occupied bed
- Assist limited function patient with dressing

Who is eligible?

Union County elderly and/or disabled adult residents who require assistance with activities of daily living to remain safe and as independent as possible in their residence, can be considered for services.

Is there a waiting list?

Yes, clients are reviewed for service by available funding, need and in the order of when the referrals are received.

Adults with a substantiated Adult Protective Services case are given priority over other referrals.

What are the funding sources?

Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) are the two funding sources, as well as donations.

HCCBG funds are limited to individuals aged 60 and older and are linked to the Federal Older American's Act. SSBG funds have no age requirement. These funding sources are limited and subject to budgetary reductions.

What are the costs?

There is no direct cost to the client for this program, however consumer contributions are welcome and encouraged.



What is guardianship?

Guardianship is a legal relationship in which someone is authorized by the Clerk of the Superior Court to be a substitute decision maker for an incompetent adult.

Incompetence is determined in a court proceeding and means an individual is unable to manage his own affairs, or is unable to make important decisions.

Guardianship

How to get started with a guardianship appointment?

Anyone — including a family member, representative of the department of social services, mental health center, health department or anyone else who knows the person — may file a petition with the Clerk of the Court alleging that the adult should be declared incompetent and have a guardian appointed. The petition must include a sworn statement that the information is true. A filing fee may be required in some situations.

When a petition is filed, the Clerk sets a date and time for a hearing. Copies of the petition and notice of the hearing are served on the adult and the attorney or other representative. The petitioner must mail copies to the adult's spouse or other relatives.

The petitioner may not need to be represented by an attorney at the hearing. However, it is advisable to speak with an attorney before starting a guardianship proceeding.

What is involved in a guardianship proceeding?

Before the hearing, the Clerk may order medical, psychological, social work and other evaluations of the adult to help determine whether they are incompetent. The petitioner or the respondent may request such evaluations at the time the petition is filed, and both may receive a written report of the results.

The respondent may arrange for an attorney of their choice to represent them in the proceeding. If they do not have an attorney, the Clerk of Superior Court appoints one, called a Guardian ad Litem, to represent them. The respondent is responsible for their attorney's fee, but if the respondent is not financially able to pay the fee, the court will pay it.

At the hearing, the Clerk will consider the results of requested evaluations and other evidence that relates to whether the respondent is incompetent. The petitioner is responsible for presenting sufficient evidence to convince the Clerk that the respondent is incompetent. If the evidence does not convince the Clerk that the adult is incompetent the petition is dismissed. If the Clerk decides the adult is incompetent, the Clerk hears additional evidence about who should be appointed the guardian for the adult.

Once the adult has been determined incompetent, the guardian will receive a written order of appointment from the Clerk. This order explains the guardian's powers and duties. The Clerk may appoint a Guardian of the Person and/or Guardian of the Estate, or General Guardian.

What are the powers and duties of a guardian?

The specific powers and duties of a guardian may be given are found in North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 35A. Every guardian should have regular contact with their ward and understand their needs, problems and strengths. The guardian has the duty to make the best decisions possible for the ward so their life is as comfortable, healthy and safe as possible. The guardian also has the duty to permit the ward to participate as fully as possible in all decisions that the ward is able to understand and participate in.

If the ward becomes competent to make decisions for himself, the guardian has the duty to petition the Clerk to have the ward legally restored to competence.

Unless limited by the Clerk's order, a Guardian of the Person has the authority to make decisions in most areas of a ward's personal life, including:

- Deciding living arrangements based on the ward's preferences, needs and resources. Preference for where the ward will live must be given to community-based living situation over institutional settings.
- Seeing that the ward receives good care.
- Arranging for the appropriate training, education, employment, habilitations or rehabilitation that the ward may need.
- Giving consent of approval for the ward to receive any needed service like medical, dental, legal, psychological, etc.
- Taking reasonable care of the ward's personal belongings.
- Taking legal action needed to protect the ward.

A Guardian of the Estate has authority to manage the ward's income and property. They must keep good records and make regular reports (annual accounts) to the Clerk of Superior Court about the ward's estate. The Guardian of the Estate is required to post a bond for the protection of the ward's estate. Certain actions, such as the sale of the ward's property, require the Clerk's prior approval. A Guardian of the Estate (or General Guardian) should talk with the Clerk of Superior Court or an attorney to find out more about the legal requirements involved in managing a ward's estate.

A General Guardian has the powers and duties of both a Guardian of the Person and a Guardian of the Estate.

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Are there any guardian financial obligations to the ward?

A guardian is not required to support the ward financially or to contribute to his own resources to the ward, and is not liable for the ward's debts. A guardian may be reimbursed from the ward's estate for reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out his duties as a guardian. A guardian of the estate or general guardian may also receive a commission set by the clerk from the ward's estate for serving as guardian.

When does a guardianship end?

A guardianship, and the guardian's power and duties end when any of the following occurs:

- The ward dies
- The Clerk of Superior Court removes the guardian
- The ward's competence is restored
- The guardian resigns

Guardianship

For adults who have been deemed incompetent by a court of law and no other appropriate guardian of the person is available.

You may be referred to the following services:

Individual and Family Adjustment (IFA)

Provides assistance to individuals in support of attempts to restructure or solidify the individual's environment. Includes counseling in areas of:

- household management
- consumer affairs
- family life
- drug and alcohol addiction
- intellectual disability
- mental illness

Adult Care Home Monitoring

Monitors the program and/or facility to ensure it meets the needs of the individuals it serves through licensing, review of records and working with the home regarding complaints.

Answers inquiries and assists individuals who are interested in opening a new facility or adult day care in Union County.

Special Assistance, In-Home (SA/IH)

Financially assist Medicaid and qualified medically disabled individuals with basic necessities in order for the individual to remain safely in their own home. Alleviates the need for facility placement, where the cost is greater.

Adult Placement

Assists disabled individuals and their families in finding homes in a residential health care facility appropriate for their needs when they are unable to remain in their current living situation. Includes:

- Assisted living facilities
- Family care homes
- Nursing home placement



Special Assistance, In-Home (SA/IH)

An Alternative to Adult Care Home Living for Eligible Disabled Adults

Few decisions are more difficult than when the time comes to consider having to move a family member from the home to an Adult Care Home Facility. In many instances, this decision is driven by lack of economic resources and the inability to continue to provide the level of care the loved one needs.

With sufficient income, housing, health and social services, and reliable informal support from family, friend and case management, some individuals could remain safely at home and not have to face the move to a rest home setting.

Recognizing this, the North Carolina General Assembly has passed legislation to establish a program in select North Carolina counties, including Union County, to address cases of this type. The goal of this program is to allow individuals to remain part of the community and live as independently as possible.

Eligibility

- A disabled adult determined to need domiciliary (ALF) level in a licensed facility, but desires to live in their own home or other private living setting.
- Have an FL-2 form completed by their physician
- Meet Medicaid and Special Assistance/ In Home (SA/IH) eligibility requirements. Gross monthly income to be eligible is \$1,133, including your Medicare premium.
- Request SA/IH payments and appropriate in-home or community-based services. Can, his/her health, safety and well-being maintained at home.

SA/IH Payment

The SA/IH income supplement for aged and/or disabled adults who have income below poverty level is intended to cover items such as: food, shelter, clothing, and other daily necessities. It does not replace formal and informal services already available to an individual.

Referral Process

Refer an individual to the Department of Social Services Adult Medicaid Intake Unit by calling 1.704.296.4300. An income maintenance caseworker will explain the program and document the client's choice to apply for participation.

The worker then conducts a mini-screening to determine if SA/IH is potentially appropriate, and if so, an Adult Services Social Worker is assigned to the case and will complete a thorough assessment to determine if the applicant's needs can be met at home.



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