

## ELDERCARE LOCATOR DATA REPORT

# Consumer Needs in an Aging America

Connecting to Community Resources



Connecting You to Community Services

# Overview of the Eldercare Locator

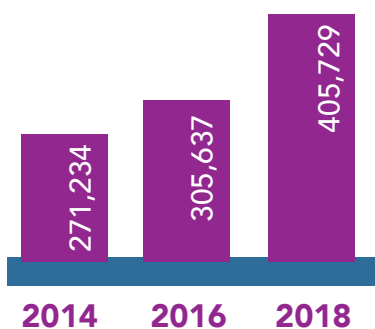
Research shows that 80 percent of older adults share the goal of remaining in their homes as they age.<sup>1</sup> However, doing so can require a bit of assistance, such as home and community-based services that are designed to maximize independence and health. Examples include transportation options, in-home personal care, nutrition services such as home-delivered meals, caregiver supports and much more.



With the unprecedented growth in the number of older adults living in the United States—rising from just over 49 million in 2016 to 78 million in 2035<sup>2</sup>—connecting older adults and their caregivers to services and support is more important than ever. Yet many caregivers and older adults struggle to find such help, even when it's right there in their community!

That's where the Eldercare Locator comes in. With a national Call Center and online database of resources in nearly every community in the country, the Eldercare Locator connects older adults and their caregivers to valuable federal, state and local resources and support that can help them continue living in their homes and communities as they age, with dignity and independence, for as long as possible. The Locator is a public service of the Administration on Aging, which is part of the U.S. Administration for Community Living, and is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a).

## Inquiries Received by the Eldercare Locator








In 2018, the volume of phone calls, emails and online chat inquiries to the Eldercare Locator rose to its highest levels ever, with 405,729 requests for assistance, a 33 percent increase from 305,637 in 2016. In fact, in 2018, the Eldercare Locator made its four millionth connection to vital local resources. Through its Call Center, website, online chat function and email, older adults and their caregivers can rely on the Eldercare Locator to provide connections to trusted supports and resources.

The staff of the Eldercare Locator's Call Center is trained to handle a range of calls, from the simple to the complex. And when they receive a call from an individual who has a complex question or is in a crisis situation, the call is transferred to an Enhanced Services Specialist who has been trained to provide support to callers in critical situations. All calls related to elder abuse are handled by Enhanced Services Specialists.

1. <https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/community/info-2018/2018-home-community-preference.html>  
2. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/03/graying-america.html>

## Consumer Needs: Issues Facing Older Adults in America Based on Inquiries Received by the Eldercare Locator

	Transportation	22%	
	Home and Community-Based Services	16%	
	Medical Services and Supplies	15%	
	Home Repair and Modification	7%	
	Elder Abuse	6%	

The Eldercare Locator staff understand that, just as older adults are all different, so are their needs. However, there are definite trends observable in the Eldercare Locator's data. Top inquiries received from older adults and caregivers fall into the following categories: transportation (22 percent), home and community-based services (16 percent), medical services and supplies (15 percent), home repair and modification (7 percent), and elder abuse (6 percent), all critical issues in helping older adults continue living in their homes. The Locator also receives calls on a range of other aging issues, including nutrition services, long-term care, employment services, adult day care, community programs and more.



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### About the Eldercare Locator

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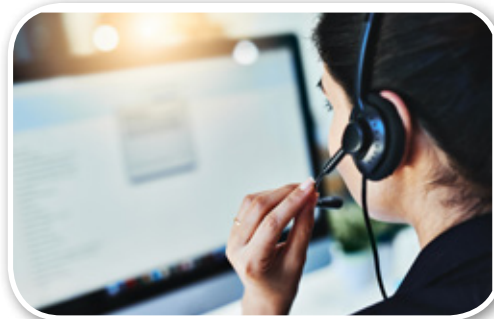
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# Who Calls the Eldercare Locator? And Where Are They Referred?



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Ofentimes, older adults need assistance with learning about or accessing local aging resources that can help them live at home and in the community. In 2018, record-breaking numbers of older adults, caregivers and others contacted the Eldercare Locator to receive connections to services to help them continue living at home, which is where 80 percent of older adults living in the United States want to be.<sup>1</sup>



In 2018, the volume of phone calls, emails and online chat inquiries to the Eldercare Locator rose to its highest level, with 405,729 requests for assistance. Whether they contact the Eldercare Locator through its Call Center, website chat function or email, older adults and their caregivers can rely on the Eldercare Locator to provide connections to trusted supports and resources in their communities.

By collecting limited demographic information, the Eldercare Locator is able to create a snapshot of the types of people seeking services, their service needs, how they learned of the Eldercare Locator and where they were referred.



*Staying consistent with recent years, women compose **73%** of people contacting the Eldercare Locator.*

## Who Contacts the Eldercare Locator?

Consistent with recent years, 74 percent of individuals contacting the Eldercare Locator did so to find services for themselves. Due to the large role caregivers play in the lives of their loved ones, it makes sense that a quarter of all those contacting the Eldercare Locator in 2018 were doing so to seek services for others. This group consisted of family members (20 percent), professionals (three percent) and neighbors or friends (two percent). Women composed 73 percent of people contacting the Eldercare Locator in 2018.

1. <https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/community/info-2018/2018-home-community-preference.html>

## What Are They Calling About?

Just as all older adults are different, so are their needs. The major inquiries received from older adults and caregivers fall into the following categories: transportation (22 percent), home and community-based services (16 percent), medical services and supplies (15 percent), home repair and modification (7 percent) and concerns related to elder abuse (6 percent), all critical issues facing older adults as they continue living in the home and in the community.

## How Did They Learn About the Eldercare Locator?

Most of the people who contacted the Eldercare Locator were referred by a federal, state or local government agency. In fact, these sources account for 64 percent of all inquiries to the Eldercare Locator. The next highest sources of referrals include professional organizations (9 percent), the internet (7 percent), health insurance providers (3 percent), and media and social media (2 percent).

## Where Are They Being Referred?

By and large, most of the people who contact the Eldercare Locator are referred to local Area Agencies on Aging. This is due, in no small part, to the breadth of services these local agencies provide to older adults, caregivers and other consumers in communities around the country. In addition to providing information and referral services, health insurance and benefits counseling, case management services, dementia and caregiving programs and support, Area Agencies on Aging also connect consumers to transportation, meals and in-home services available in their communities.



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# Transportation

Transportation is more than a ride. For many older adults, transportation is a critical connection. In 2018, 22 percent of all inquiries received by the Eldercare Locator were from individuals seeking information on local transportation options that enable them to maintain their health, secure their independence and stay connected to the community—all critical components to aging well.

## Consumer Needs: Issues Facing Older Adults in America Based on Inquiries Received by the Eldercare Locator




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Whether it is a ride to a medical appointment, the grocery store, religious services, a volunteer opportunity or the barber shop, the Eldercare Locator connects older adults and caregivers to local transportation solutions that are often provided by local Area Agencies on Aging and other community providers.

Access to transportation not only helps keep older adults healthy and connected to their communities, it helps make life easier for caregivers helping their loved ones manage their daily needs. The Eldercare Locator connects caregivers to local agencies that provide transportation services for older adults, helping caregivers maintain their professional and other commitments while ensuring their loved ones get where they need to go.

## What Do the Consumers Contacting the Eldercare Locator Want?

Transportation to medical and dialysis appointments	75%	
General transportation	12%	
Other	10%	
Special accommodations for a wheelchair or scooter	3%	



For older adults living in rural areas where transportation options are not as widely available as they are in urban areas, access to transportation can play an even more critical role in helping older adults maintain connections to the community. And for older adults who have limited mobility and use a cane, walker or wheelchair, it can be difficult to find options that meet their needs—and fit their budgets. This is where the Eldercare Locator comes in. The Eldercare Locator’s trained staff can help older adults and caregivers in communities around the country find connections to local, reliable and affordable transportation options that are available in their communities.



## CALL CONNECTIONS

After learning about the Eldercare Locator from a family member, Mrs. Sanchez, 71, contacted the Eldercare Locator to learn about transportation options in her community that would allow her to go shopping, visit the local senior center, attend church services and run other important errands. Mrs. Sanchez was concerned that, because she lives in a rural area, she may not be able to find transportation that would help her get to where she needed to go, but the Information Specialist she spoke to was able to connect her with her local Area Agency on Aging where she could explore and access the transportation options that are available in her community.



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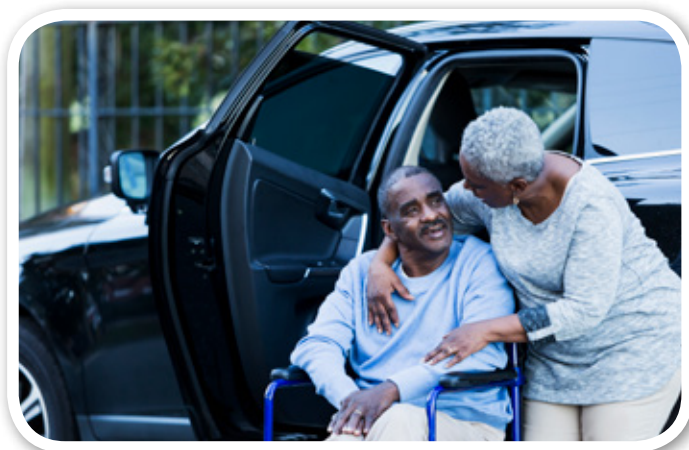
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# Home and Community-Based Services

For many older adults, a critical component to healthy aging in the community is access to services that help them meet their daily needs. Oftentimes this support comes in the form of assistance with bathing, toileting and personal care, or help with housekeeping, transportation or meal preparation and other necessary activities. These home and community-based services are a backbone to helping ensure that older adults can maintain their health and well-being while continuing to live independently in their homes, which is where they want to be.



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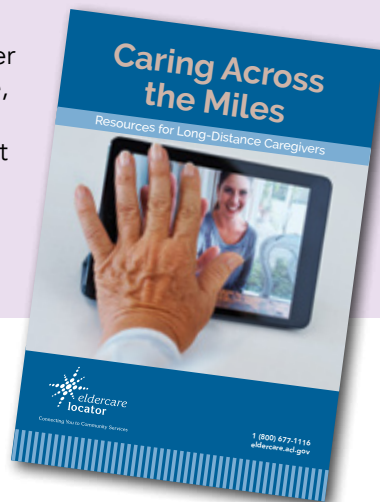
Fortunately, the Eldercare Locator connects older adults and caregivers to these vital home and community-based services. Most often, individuals who contact the Eldercare Locator seeking information or assistance about home and community-based services are doing so because they would like assistance with chores around the home (43 percent); personal care activities such as assistance with bathing, grooming and dressing (35 percent); home health care services (17 percent); and financial assistance that can help with affording these services (5 percent). Without the critical connections made by the Eldercare Locator to these locally provided services, many older adults would not be able to live in the community.





## CALL CONNECTIONS

After being referred to the Eldercare Locator by a health care professional, Mrs. Jackson, the sole caregiver for her 78-year-old father who lives 45 minutes away, contacted the Eldercare Locator for assistance that could help her care for her father from afar. Her father, a veteran, needed in-home assistance with personal care tasks, medication management and daily meal preparation. The Information Specialist Mrs. Jackson spoke with connected her to her father's local Area Agency on Aging and to the Veterans Administration's Caregiver Support Line, which could provide information on in-home care, home health aide available programs, home-delivered meal services and other resources available to veterans. The Information Specialist also made sure Mrs. Jackson received *Caring Across the Miles: Resources for Long-Distance Caregivers*, an Eldercare Locator brochure, to help her with tools and resources that would help her support her father—and take care of herself.



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# Medical Services and Supplies

**A**long with age comes an increased likelihood that an older adult will need to access medical services. As a result, the Eldercare Locator connects older adults, caregivers and others to supports that can help them access and afford these vital services. It is through these services and supports that older adults and their caregivers can receive assistance with finding ways to afford hearing aids, dental care, vision care and medical prescriptions.

Although Medicare covers doctors' visits, it does not pay for many aspects related to medical care, including co-payments, non-emergency medical transportation, hearing aids, dental care, long-term services and supports and many other services. As a result, many older adults and caregivers contact the Eldercare Locator to seek financial assistance and information on programs that will help them afford medical care.



## Consumer Needs: Issues Facing Older Adults in America Based on Inquiries Received by the Eldercare Locator



In 2018, individuals contacting the Eldercare Locator about medical services received information on ways to afford these services (29 percent), and information on dental services (26 percent), hearing aids (19 percent), prescription assistance (14 percent) and vision programs. Other requests for medical services included inquiries related to mental health, substance abuse, rehabilitation and hospice facilities.

Consumers contacting the Eldercare Locator in 2018 also sought financial assistance that would enable them to afford medical supplies, including durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, blood sugar monitors, canes, crutches, hospital beds, incontinence supplies, personal emergency response systems and more.



## CALL CONNECTIONS

When Mr. Lee learned that his insulin prescription wasn't fully covered by his insurance and that he would need supplemental insurance to cover medical expenses that weren't covered by Medicare, he conducted online research, which led him to the Eldercare Locator. Mr. Lee was quickly connected to his local SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program), which provides counseling that could help Mr. Lee explore options for supplemental insurance. He was also referred to his local Area Agency on Aging which could provide Mr. Lee information about other supportive resources such as healthy aging programs.



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# Home Repair and Modification

A key component to healthy aging in the community is ensuring that homes can continue to meet the needs of the older adults who live in them.

This means that housing for older adults should be safe, affordable and able to meet the changing needs that can accompany aging—but, unfortunately, many older adults need assistance in making sure their homes can meet these needs. And so,

they and their caregivers contact the Eldercare Locator to seek assistance with finding independent housing (56 percent), financial assistance to help cover rental expenses (20 percent) and subsidized housing (18 percent).



## Consumer Needs: Issues Facing Older Adults in America Based on Inquiries Received by the Eldercare Locator



Yet housing needs don't end once older adults are able to find and afford a home. Many older adults find that their homes need repairs or modifications that help enable them to continue living safely in their homes. So, whether it be repairing a leaky pipe or modifying one's home to accommodate a stair lift, home repairs and modifications play a central role in enabling older adults to continue living in their homes.

Of the many of the older adults and caregivers contacting the Eldercare Locator for assistance with home repairs in 2018, 41 percent sought assistance with finding information on repairs such as roof replacement, plumbing or structural issues. Others sought assistance with home modifications—changes such as the installation of wheelchair

ramps, grab bars in the bathroom or shower, or the addition of other features that update the home to help ensure that it meets the needs of older adults whose physical needs are changing.

Another major reason older adults and their caregivers contact the Eldercare Locator regarding housing is to seek information on financial assistance programs that will help them continue to afford living in their homes.

Additionally, the Eldercare Locator can connect older adults who do not own their homes to resources that can provide information on local subsidized housing programs such as the local Area Agency on Aging or field office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help older adults continue living in the community independently.



## CALL CONNECTIONS

Mr. Newman, 67, contacted the Eldercare Locator about rental assistance and affordable senior housing communities after learning that he would no longer be able to afford his rent and would have to move to a more affordable apartment. Mr. Newman wanted to make sure that wherever he moved would be both affordable and safe, so he called the Eldercare Locator to learn what rental assistance programs existed—and whether he was eligible for them. An Eldercare Locator Information Specialist provided Mr. Newman with contact information for his local Area Agency on Aging where he would be connected to information about housing programs and options near where he lived.



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# Elder Abuse

**E**lder abuse affects one in 10 older adults living in the United States, which helps explain why elder abuse accounts for 6 percent of all inquiries the Eldercare Locator receives. Elder abuse takes many forms—physical or emotional abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect. The Eldercare Locator connects older adults and their caregivers to local programs and resources that can help stop elder abuse in its tracks.



Older adults no matter where they live—in their homes or in institutional settings such as a nursing home or assisted living facility—can be touched by elder abuse. Thanks to its vast database of resources and its trained staff, individuals contacting the Eldercare Locator seeking assistance because they or a loved one have been affected by elder abuse can be connected to the appropriate local resource that can help them prevent, address and report elder abuse to the proper authorities.

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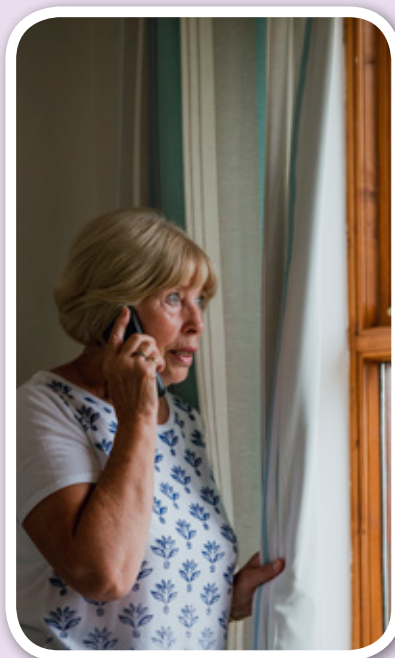
Calls that deal with elder abuse fall into the many categories of sensitive and highly complex calls that are handled by the Eldercare Locator's Enhanced Services Specialists. In fact, 22 percent of all calls to the Eldercare Locator are handled by Enhanced Services Specialists, all of whom have received specialized training that equips them with the skills necessary to provide important information to individuals who may be experiencing immediate crisis situations. Calls that fit into this category involve individuals seeking resources for caregivers, long-term care and supports, and calls from individuals in crisis situations.





## CALL CONNECTIONS

Ms. M contacted the Eldercare Locator to learn how she could report suspected elder abuse because she was very concerned about the safety of her 80-year-old neighbor. After learning that sometimes her neighbor did not have food in her home, often lacked money and had frequent bruises on her arms, Ms. M suspected that her neighbor was being emotionally, physically and financially exploited by her children. Ms. M wanted to help, but her neighbor refused to call the authorities to report her children. She was hoping someone could investigate her neighbor's situation. The Enhanced Services Specialist who spoke with Ms. M thanked her for taking action on the concerns she had for her neighbor, provided a brief explanation of Adult Protective Services and referred her to the local Adult Protective Services office for assistance. The Enhanced Services Specialist also made sure Ms. M received a copy of *Older Adults and Elder Abuse*, an Eldercare Locator fact sheet that is available online.



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