



# Wisconsin's Community Options

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## **WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY OPTIONS PROGRAM (COP)?**

Community Options helps people who need long term care to stay in their own homes and communities. Its purpose is to provide cost-effective alternatives to expensive care in institutions and nursing homes. Elderly people and people with serious long-term disabilities receive funds and assistance to find services they are not able to get through other programs. Community Options care managers know what services are available in the community. A care manager will talk to you or your family member about how to arrange the services and supports you need to avoid going to a nursing home.

## **WHO CAN GET HELP THROUGH COMMUNITY OPTIONS?**

Community Options serves people who need long term support, regardless of age or type of disability, who need the same levels of physical or mental health care as nursing home residents do. There are no income limits on eligibility for a COP assessment and care plan. However, income guidelines are used to determine if Community Options will pay for part or all of the costs of services that the assessment determines are necessary. People who can afford to pay may receive help finding the services they need after an assessment is completed.

All other sources of funding will be considered before Community Options funds are used to pay for services. For example, if you are eligible, Community Options will use federal Medical Assistance funding for services arranged by the same care managers. Also other community resources will be used to meet your needs. Getting services will also depend on the availability of program funds. Counties may have waiting lists for Community Options funding.

## **WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY OPTIONS PROGRAM?**

Based on your needs, strengths and resources, Community Options provides services, equipment or aids which allow you to live safely, with dignity and respect in the community. Some examples include:

**Home Modification  
Adaptive Equipment  
Care Management  
Home Health Care  
Personal Care**

**Respite Care  
Financial Counseling  
Communication Aids  
Residential services  
Housekeeping**



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### HOW DO I FIND OUT IF I AM ELIGIBLE FOR COMMUNITY OPTIONS?

Every county in Wisconsin has a Community Options Program. You may contact your county directly, or you may be referred for a Community Options assessment by a social service agency or a hospital.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL FOR HELP?

In most cases the county Community Options agency will gather some basic information and schedule a time to meet with you in your own home if possible. If there is a waiting list for services you will still be offered an assessment and help putting together a plan of care. Or, you may choose to postpone the assessment until funding for services becomes available.

At the scheduled meeting a county social worker or nurse will talk with you and if you say it's okay, with close family and friends to decide what you need to continue living at home or to return home. The assessment will gather information about your health, what help you need to take care of yourself daily, what special equipment or training could help you, your strengths, and how you prefer to live and use the help that may be available.

Next your county care manager will work with you to develop a plan that includes: how each of your needs will be met, who will provide services when, where, for how long, and at what cost. The care manager will figure out how much different programs, including the Community Options Program, can pay toward these costs, and the amount, if any, you will be expected to contribute, depending on your income and assets.

Once services have begun, a care manager will continue to contact you to see how well the care plan is working, how satisfied you are with your services and whether you feel as safe and connected to your community as you would like to be.

### WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

To learn more about the Community Options Program **contact your county Department of Human Services or Department of Social Services or Unified Services**. Your local aging office is a good source of information for older people as well. The Community Options Section of the state Bureau of Long-Term Support in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services coordinates the Community Options Program.