

# Council on Aging Name Change

2021 Annual Town Meeting, Article 26



**Amend general bylaw and  
change our name from  
Council on Aging  
to  
Council on Aging and  
Human Services**

# Goals of the name change

- **To better express the services the COA actually provides, both in terms of services and ages of those we serve.**
- **To reduce confusion among younger residents who may hesitate to come to the COA for services because they believe it is only for older people.**
- **To ensure that potential grant funders and others are clear when we ask for resources that the funders will provide assistance to all ages.**
- **To counter a stereotypical view of the COA that we offer primarily recreational services to older adults.**

# History

Even though the COA was originally established to serve residents 60 and older, almost immediately we began to service residents of all ages, especially those in crisis because there were no other human services departments in town government.

This included most especially the Emergency Assistance Fund and Fuel Assistance. Over the years, we have gained responsibility for overseeing more and more staff and programs that serve all ages, in many cases initiating and implementing those programs.

However, we frequently hear from younger residents that they are hesitant to come to us for help because they don't believe that we serve younger people. Also, many of the programs and services for younger residents are grant-funded and we must constantly explain that we are submitting the proposals because we provide human services to all residents in town.

# Staff & volunteers who serve all ages/primarily younger residents

- Town Social Worker
- Veterans Services Officer
- Public Health Nurse
- SHINE health Benefit Counselors
- Tax Aide Counselors
- Mental Health Clinic Counselor
- Property Tax Program Work Off Coordinator

# Programs & services for all ages/primarily younger residents

- Social Work services
- Mental Health Clinic
- Rental Assistance Program
- Veterans Services
- Tax Aide Program
- SHINE Health Benefits Counseling
- Public Health Nursing
- Fuel Assistance
- Emergency Assistance Fund
- Property Tax Work Off Program
- Intergenerational Programming

# Statistics

- Town Social Worker in the past year: almost 1,150 units of service to more than 350 residents. In the preceding year: almost 700 units of service to almost 70 residents.
- In FY19, emergency assistance fund served 11 residents under 60 with \$12,200 in assistance (compared with 6 older residents receiving \$4,500 in support) (pre COVID figures)
- Rental Assistance – of initial applications received, 10 of 29 consist entirely of household members under 60.

# Other Towns that have also changed their names:

- Department of Human Services and Council on Aging – Taunton
- Council on Aging and Human Services – Foxboro
- Human Services and Council on Aging – Seekonk
- Council on Aging/Senior Center/Human Services – Norton
- Elder and Human Services - Littleton