

Seniors Rule

Eastern Oklahoma Development District
 Area Agency on Aging
 1012 N. 38th St. / P.O. Box 1367
 Muskogee, OK 74402
 Caring Assistance Line (800) 211-2116
<https://eoddok.org>



Volume 7, Issue 3 April 2026

Donate Life With Your Driver's License




 April is
 National
 Donate
 Life
 Month

Thank you for saying **Yes** and sharing life with your fellow Oklahomans! Now, when someone asks you “**Do you have a heart?**”, you can proudly answer: “**Yes!**”

The Oklahoma Donor Registry will allow organ, eye and tissue recovery coordinators with LifeShare and the Oklahoma Lions Eye Bank to quickly determine if you have declared your intent and consent to be a donor.

If you indicated your consent to be a donor on your state driver’s license, or ID card, (a red heart will be on the front of your license or state ID) you are already in the LifeShare Donor Registry. However, it is important, whenever you renew or replace your driver’s license or state ID card, that you indicate your desire on your license or ID card, and you wish to do so. Now, you may continue with the online registration process at lifeshareoklahoma.org.

 Check the box, then go to lifeshareoklahoma.org to complete your registration.



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Seniors Rule is a publication of the Eastern Oklahoma Development District Area Agency on Aging, serving Adair, Cherokee, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Sequoyah and Wagoner counties. Send submissions or suggestions to Janet Bowen at the EODD Area Agency on Aging office, 1012 N. 38th St. in Muskogee; by mail to EODD Area Agency on Aging, P.O. Box 1367, Muskogee, OK 74402; by phone at (918) 682-7891; or by email at info@eoddok.org. Funding for this newsletter is provided in part by state and Older Americans Act funds from EODD Area Agency on Aging and DHS Community Living, Aging and Protective Services. It is the policy of EODD Area Agency on Aging to serve all individuals who are eligible for its programs without regard to race, national origin, ancestry, color, religion, sex, age or disability.



ROAD TO RECOVERY - RTR

by Becki Word

Recovery is rarely a straight line. It is a series of interconnected attending treatment, securing housing, maintaining employment, and fulfilling legal obligations. However, for many individuals in Eastern Oklahoma, progress often stalls not because of lack of will, but because of lack of mobility support. When transportation becomes a barrier, the entire recovery ecosystem is at risk of breaking down.

The Road to Recovery program, administered by the Eastern Oklahoma Development District (EODD), was designed to solve this specific challenge. Funded by the Oklahoma Opioid Abatement Board, this regional transportation voucher program operates on a simple but powerful premise: recovery outcomes are shaped as much by access as they are by clinical care.

Unlike traditional services, Road to Recovery does not provide clinical treatment or case management. Instead, it serves as the logistical backbone for those already in accredited recovery services.

By providing no-cost transportation vouchers, we ensure that individuals can consistently reach the places that sustain their stability. We recognize that a “recovery-supportive” trip is about more than just getting to a doctor’s office. Our vouchers cover a broad holistic range of needs essential for long-term success, including:

- Treatment program
- Employment interviews and training
- Housing-related meetings
- Court obligations
- Shopping
- Laundromat

The program is designed to support, not disrupt, or replace our local partners. We utilize a centralized coordination model that manages eligibility and transit logistics, allowing recovery providers to focus on their clients without added logistics burden. All coordination is handled with confidentiality and fully compliant with HIPAA.

By leveraging existing transit providers and recovery infrastructure, Road to Recovery serves as a practical model for how regions can integrate transportation into recovery systems without creating silos.

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DO YOU QUALIFY FOR EXTRA HELP ?
 If you are 65, on Medicare, and are struggling to pay for prescription drugs, contact EODD Area Agency on Aging for information at (918) 682-7891.



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

June 15, 2026

Stand Up for Older Adults
 Together communities can help protect seniors by learning the signs of abuse and speaking up when something isn't right.

What Is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse can take many forms, including:

- Neglect
- Financial Exploitation
- Emotional or Psychological Harm
- Physical Abuse

Awareness is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect older adults.

WEAR PURPLE ON JUNE 15

Need Information or Assistance?

Local Ombudsman

Shelli Dunham & Dominique Bonilla

EODD ☎ 918.682.7891

Respect • Protect • Support

Working together to keep older adults safe, valued, and respected in our community.



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

by Shelli Dunham

Sexual assault affects people of all ages, backgrounds, and genders. Many survivors face emotional, physical, and psychological challenges after an assault. Advocates emphasize the importance of listening to survivors, believing their experiences, and providing access to counseling, medical care, and legal support.

By raising awareness, communities hope to create safer environments and strengthen systems that protect individuals from violence.

Another important issue connected to community safety is the abuse of older adults. Senior abuse can take many forms, including physical harm, emotional mistreatment, neglect, and financial exploitation. In many cases, the abuse occurs in settings where older adults depend on others for care or assistance.

Because seniors may fear retaliation, feel ashamed, or rely on their abuser for support, many cases go unreported.

“Communities and advocates such as the local Ombudsmen work to prevent elder abuse by promoting education, encouraging regular wellness checks, and strengthening protective services” says Shelli Dunham, local Ombudsman.

Family members, caregivers, and neighbors play an important role in recognizing warning signs, such as unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behavior, or unusual financial activity. By raising awareness and supporting reporting systems, communities can help ensure that older adults are treated with dignity, respect, and protection.

If you have any questions or concerns about abuse, please call your local Ombudsman, Shelli Dunham and Dominique Bonilla at 918.682-7891.

The Ombudsman program is always looking for volunteers to go to facilities and play a big role in advocating for these residents. The next training is scheduled for April 6th through the 10th. The training is available even if you just want to learn about the program.

Oklahoma State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Ombudsman Program serves residents in Oklahoma long-term care facilities including nursing homes, assisted living, and residential care facilities. An Ombudsman helps improve the quality of life and the quality of care available to the residents.

A long-term care Ombudsman is someone who receives complaints from residents of long-term care facilities or anyone who has contact with residents. Ombudsmen attempt to resolve those complaints by communicating with the facility and others associated with complaints. The Ombudsmen have authority to explore problems and make recommendations with residents’ consent.

This program is supported by local Ombudsman and volunteers committed to improving and enriching the lives of institutionalized people.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



CHAMPION YOUR HEALTH: MAY 2026

by Tashanda Myers

Older Americans Month was established in 1963 when at the time, there were only 17 million Americans living who had reached their 65th birthday. Around a third of older Americans lived in poverty, and programs to meet their needs were few. For that reason, there was growing national interest in older Americans and their concerns. In April 1963, a meeting was held between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens (N.C.S.C.), leading to the designation of May as Senior Citizens Month, now known as Older Americans Month.

At first, Older Americans Month was observed as an appreciation of past and present older Americans for their contributions to the country, especially those who defended the nation. Since then, every President has issued a formal proclamation during

or before May, requesting all citizens to pay tribute to older Americans in their communities. Since 1978, according to the Administration for Community Living (A.C.L.), Older Americans Month has been observed with a different theme each year—the first being Older Americans and Their Families.

In 2019, the theme was Connect, Create, Contribute encouraging older adults to connect with family, friends, and services; create by engaging in activities; and contribute to their communities. In 2020, the theme Make Your Mark encouraged individuals of all ages, communities, and organizations to make an impact. The 2021 theme, Communities of Strength, celebrated the stories and contributions of older Americans that supported and inspired others. In 2022, the theme Age My Way

focused on how older Americans can plan to remain in their homes and live independently in their communities.

Beginning in 2023, new themes continued to highlight the resilience, diversity, and empowerment of older adults: In 2023, the theme was Aging Unbound, which encouraged flexible thinking about aging and invited communities to explore diverse aging experiences while combating stereotypes. In 2024, the theme was Powered by

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EODD Area Agency on Aging
 Is a partner agency with the *State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)* and *Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)*.

Report Suspected *Medicare Fraud* by calling
1 (800) 634-2273.

Older Americans Month
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Celebrate the Senior Nutrition Program

2026 - SERVING UP SOLUTIONS

Connection, emphasizing the importance of meaningful social relationships and highlighting how social connection supports emotional, physical, and mental well-being among older adults.

In 2025, the theme was Flip the Script on Aging, focusing on challenging outdated stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive, empowered understanding of aging as a period of continued growth, purpose, and engagement. In 2026, the theme is Champion Your Health, underscoring prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility as essential components of healthy aging and encouraging older adults to take an active role in managing their well-being.



ROAD TO RECOVERY
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We are proud to strengthen the systems already doing the hard work of rebuilding lives in our community.

For more information on the Road to Recovery program, or to learn how our agency can become a referral partner, please contact Becki at EODD - 918-682-7891 or email rtr@eoddok.org.

Since 1972, the national Senior Nutrition Program has supported nutrition services for older adults across the country. Funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA), local programs serve as hubs where people 60+ find healthy meals and vital services that strengthen social connections and promote well-being. The Association for Community Living (ACL) celebrates their programs every year and its many accomplishments at the national and local levels. Local programs promote how nutrition services help people stay

in their homes as they age, and highlight critical senior nutrition issues.

The 2026 theme, Serving Up Solutions, reflects the creativity, innovation, and collaboration that define the Senior Nutrition Program. It highlights how local programs continually adapt to meet community needs — from providing nutritious meals to creating opportunities for older adults to stay engaged and independent. With every meal, programs are serving up solutions that support health, well-being, and stronger communities.

Article from <https://acl.gov/snp/celebrate>

Spring into Support

Essential Services for Seniors

Spring is a season of renewal, and there is no better time to ensure you have the support you need to thrive. If you or a loved one are 60 years of age or older, the EODD Area Agency on Aging Outreach Program is here to help you maintain your independence and well-being.

by April Reynolds

Whether you need a nutritious meal, a reliable ride, or help navigating legal documents, our dedicated specialists are ready to connect you with the right resources.

Connect With Our Specialists

Don't navigate these options alone. Our Aging Specialists are available to answer your questions and help you apply for services.

Contact April or Sherika at (918) 682-7891 or areynolds@eoddok.org or scherry@eoddok.org.

Services Available to You:

- Nutritional Support: Access home-delivered meals, congregate (group) dining, and professional nutrition counseling.
- In-Home Assistance: Practical homemaker services to help with daily household tasks.
- Transportation: Reliable assistance to get you to medical appointments and essential errands.
- Caregiver Services: Vital support and resources for those dedicated to caring for others.
- Legal & Advocacy: Professional legal help and guidance provided through our Outreach Program.

Like Us On Us Facebook!



<https://me-qr.com/EODDFacebookpage>

Navigating Medicare

Can Be Hard!

Our SHIP certified counselors are ready to help you if you are aging in to Medicare; with Medicare questions; during General & Open enrollments; explaining the "Birthday Rule"; and the new Medicare Prescription Payment Plan.



Contact EODD Area Agency on Aging for Information at (918) 682-7891.

Walk in Their Shoes

Dementia Simulation & Caregiver Support Day

Understand Their Journey. Support Their Strength.

Thursday- April 30

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Muskogee Civic Center
425 Boston St., Muskogee, OK



Experience the Dementia Simulation

Support for Caregivers

- Step into the world of dementia
- Eye-opening interactive tour
- Guided reflection session

- Resource & Vendor Fair
- VA Caregiver Programs
- Memory Care & Health Services
- Legal & Financial Assistance
- Wellness & Self-Care



Dementia & Memory Care



Health & Home Support



Legal & Financial Help



Caregiver Resources



Self-Care & Wellness



Veteran Services

★ FREE EVENT! OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



eoddok.org

Area Agency on Aging



CDCE
VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement



VA Caregiver Support



To participate, contact **Tammy Warren** at **918-310-4628** or **Alysa Kinnell** at **918-682-7891**

The Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregivers Support Group meets virtually at 2 p.m. every Thursday. The third Thursday is designated Grief Share.

McIntosh County meets the 4th Tuesday, 2:30-3:30PM, Under One Roof, Eufaula and the last Monday each month, 1-2PM, First United Methodist Church, 419 W. Gentry, Checotah

Muskogee County meets the 3rd Wednesday, 2-4PM, Presbyterian Church of Muskogee, 2000 Haskell Blvd., Muskogee Contact Alys Kinnell at (918) 913-9560 or akinnell@eoddok.org for more information.

APRIL

- National Donate Life Month
- National Minority Health Month
- Testicular Cancer Awareness Month
- Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

April 7
 • Adair County PALS (Provider Agencies Linking Services), meets at noon, virtual only. For information call Janet at (918) 682-7891.

April 6 & 8
 • Matter of Balance (MOB) Coach Training, 10AM-2:30PM, at EODD AAA, 1012 N 38th St, Muskogee. Call Alys to sign up at (918) 682-7891 or email akinnell@eoddok.org.

April 6-10
 • Ombudsman Volunteer Training, virtual only. Contact Dominique or Shelli at (918) 682-7891 for information.

April 11
 • Chilli Cookoff

April 15
 • Muskogee Elder Resource Council (MERC), meets virtually and in-person at 11AM, EODD Area Agency on Aging, 1012 N. 38th St., Muskogee. Call (918) 682-7891.

April 30
 • Walk In My Shoes Dementia Tour and Caregiver Support Day, Muskogee Civic Center, 425 Boston St. in Muskogee. Contact Alys Kinnell at (918) 913-9560.

MAY

- Arthritis Awareness Month
- Huntington's Disease Awareness Month
- Lyme Disease Awareness Month
- National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month
- National Stroke Awareness Month
- Older Americans Month

May 20
 • Muskogee Elder Resource Council (MERC), meets at 11AM, EODD Area Agency on Aging, 1012 N. 38th St., Muskogee. Call (918) 682-7891.

May 21
 • Council on Aging, meets at 10 a.m., EODD Area Agency on Aging, 1012 N. 38th St., Muskogee. Call (918) 682-7891.

May 25
 • Memorial Day

JUNE

- Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month
- ALS Awareness Month
- Cataract Awareness Month
- Men's Health Month

June 2
 • Adair County PALS (Provider Agencies Linking Services), meets at noon, virtual only. For information call Janet at (918) 682-7891.

June 14
 • National Flag Day

June 15
 • EODD AAA Caregiver Conference, 10AM-3PM, Freewill Baptist Church, 713 N. Broadway in Checotah. MUST RSVP to Alys (918) 682-7891 or email akinnell@eoddok.org by June 1st.
 • World Elder Abuse Day

June 17
 • Muskogee Elder Resource Council (MERC), meets at noon, EODD Area Agency on Aging, 1012 N. 38th St., Muskogee. Call (918) 682-7891.

June 18
 • EODD ANNUAL MEETING, ICTC in Muskogee

June 19
 • Juneteenth—National Independence Day

Email info@eoddok.org if you would like an article in our next edition.