

Conference abstract

## Partnering the ageing and disabilities systems – the USA experience

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** In the United States, the original Older Americans Act (OAA) created a system of community-based social support services for persons age 60 and older. An updated OAA included provisions for access to these services by persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and supports for older carers of persons with I/DD. Many state and local initiatives have been initiated for use of the OAA as a means for promoting greater integration of older persons with I/DD into existing community-based social services for the elderly by targeting primarily the nation's network of senior centres and neighbourhood congregate meal sites.

**Description:** To help these efforts a national training program underwritten by a federal grant was undertaken in which workshops, networking building, and technical assistance efforts were conducted by a team of government and university colleagues.

**Conclusion:** The outcome was an enhanced understanding—among workers in community ageing programs—of the needs and wants of older people with I/DD, an opening of programs, and greater collaboration on sharing resources and providing supports and services. Although obstacles remain, often linked to enmity toward people with disabilities, unwillingness to share funds and resources, or age-peer ignorance, the initiatives generally have proved to be productive resulting in enhanced social integration and the elimination of barriers to planning cooperative community services.

### Keywords

**intellectual disabilities, Older Americans Act, collaborative programs, aging people, senior services, social integration**

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