

STAYING CONNECTED TO LOVED ONES



Community Connections:

AARP Community Connections is a website created to help people find existing mutual aid groups in their communities or learn how to start a new mutual aid group so they can help the vulnerable people in their community or get assistance themselves. If no group exists in their community, people can also use AARP Community Connections to create a group to ask for help. Many people are feeling anxious about the coronavirus, and localized support groups can provide a vital boost to morale. AARP Community Connections seeks to help people who are self-isolating, especially people without family nearby, older people living alone, people with immune system conditions, and people with a disability or health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, or a chronic lung disease.

Link to Community Connections: <https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/>

For general AARP coronavirus information:

<https://aarp.org/coronavirus> or <https://aarp.org/elcoronavirus> (Spanish).

Click [here](#) for six questions to ask when your loved one is in a nursing home.



Alzheimer's Association

Coronavirus tips for dementia caregivers can be found at:

[https://alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-tips-for-dementia-care](https://alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-(covid-19)-tips-for-dementia-care)

Tips include:

- Tips for dementia caregivers at home
- Tips for caregivers of individuals in assisted living
- Tips for individuals receiving home-based services
- Residential facility has an incidence of COVID-19
- Staying healthy



Idaho Long Term Care State Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are trained advocates, mediators, complaint investigators and problem solvers who are authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA) to serve residents of long-term care facilities free of charge.

While the OAA does not authorize Ombudsmen to serve as first responders in emergencies or disasters, the OAA and federal regulations do require the Ombudsmen to provide services to assist residents in protecting their health, safety, welfare, and rights, as well as to represent the interests of residents before governmental agencies.

Who we are:

The Idaho Long Term Care Ombudsmen have 13 paid staff and 53 volunteers (assistant Ombudsmen), throughout the state, in 6 Area Agency on Aging offices in Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Boise, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. You can find contact information for each area on the Idaho Commission on Aging website, <https://aging.idaho.gov/>

What we do:

The Ombudsmen provide consultation and answer questions related to long-term care. We provide training and education to residents, families and the community. Ombudsmen receive complaints from residents, resident representatives, family, friends, medical professionals and others who serve long-term care residents. We act as mediators in difficult situations where a third party is necessary to resolve concerns. Ombudsmen make routine unannounced visits to the 364 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in Idaho to provide education to staff and residents and to assure that residents health, safety, welfare and rights are protected.

We are here and ready to serve during COVID-19:

Due to CMS's Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Nursing Homes, and the Residential Assisted Living Facility Program guidance, visitation to long-term care facilities is restricted except for certain compassionate care situations such as end of life. Ombudsmen are not exempt from these restrictions, which creates special challenges and the opportunity to be creative in our service delivery. We are available through phone or email to address your concerns.

So, how can we help? Facilities are required to provide residents access to the Ombudsman Program through telecommunication during an emergency such as COVID-19. The Ombudsman Program is advocating using other means than face-to-face visits and is still receiving and investigating complaints to the satisfaction of residents and resident representatives. Ombudsmen are advocating for residents and resident family visitation through telecommunication and other means available.

Residents and complainants have the right to confidentiality and to remain anonymous.

We need to remember, that these are challenging times and our long-term care and residential care administrators and staff are working under extraordinary circumstances and need our kindness and gratitude for what they do to provide care for our loved ones who reside in facilities.



Let's End Loneliness Campaign

Idaho is known for her committed and numerous volunteers. The **End Loneliness Campaign** supports volunteers, professionals, elected officials, and concerned citizens to end loneliness in our state. This campaign is modeled after the End Loneliness UK campaign that has had decades of success in multiple countries around the world.

Ending Loneliness will require action on multiple fronts.

Strengthening Community-level enablers

Ensuring local access to transportation and communication technology

Preventing chronic loneliness for older and disabled Idahoans

Identifying the loneliest Idahoans

Serving them in a way that is meaningful

This is not a small undertaking, but together we **can** make a difference.

Join the Campaign and increase your knowledge about loneliness by taking our six module course, browse the tools and resources, and reach out to your local [Area Agency on Aging](#) to get involved.



Idaho Assistive Technology Project <https://idahoat.org/>

The Idaho Assistive Technology Project is a statewide resource for information & referral, training, and technical assistance related to assistive technology for people with disabilities and seniors. We have four Resource Centers around the state that include libraries of assistive technology for activities of daily living, education, communication, recreation, and computer access. Staff are available to demonstrate equipment and help match the needs of individuals with technology to help maintain independence and achieve goals.

COVID-19 Connection Resources: <https://idahoat.org/home/covid-19>

- Family Communication during COVID-19 Isolation Padlet: <https://idahoat.padlet.org/idahoat1/popayqtqgody>
- Video Communication Tools for Senior Residence Facilities PowerPoint slides: <https://bit.ly/2VJ5JhL>
- Emergency Communication Planning & Communication Profile: <https://bit.ly/3f0yvIB>

IATP Services

- **Information and Referral:** When you have questions about finding, selecting, or funding assistive technology, call 1-800-432-8324.
- **Equipment Demonstrations:** If you have questions about which equipment would best meet your needs, set up an appointment for comparison demonstrations so you can try a variety of options to meet your needs.
- **Equipment Lending Libraries:** Check out equipment for 2 weeks to a month to decide if the item really works for you.
- **Training & Technical Assistance:** Ask us about doing training on AT for your organization.
- **IdahoAT4all Equipment Redistribution Program:** A “Craigslist” style website for assistive technology where Idahoans can buy or sell used equipment. The website also includes a listing of all equipment available in the IATP lending libraries: <https://idaho.at4all.com/>
- **Low-interest Financial Loan Program:** Financial loans at prime interest rate to help people purchase assistive technology such as hearing aids, vehicle modifications, stair lifts, computing devices, etc.: <https://idahoat.org/get-AT/finance-loans>
- **Consultation Services:** We have a contract with the Idaho State Dept. of Education to do consultations with public school IEP teams and can contract with agencies or individuals to provide assistive technology assessments.