



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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800 Austin Elders to Receive Emergency Supply Kits

Kits Can Help Homebound Austinites During Emergencies

Austin, Texas - The Aging Services Council of Central Texas (ASC) was awarded a \$15,000 grant by the City of Austin to prepare and distribute eight hundred (800) emergency supply kits.

On Friday, January 26 at 9 a.m., volunteers from ASC-member organizations will start preparing the kits at the Capital Area Food Bank (8201 South Congress Avenue, 78745) and will later deliver the kits to homebound elderly people in Austin. Austin City Council Member, Lee Leffingwell, and Joyce Lauck with the Austin Groups for the Elderly will make remarks at 10 a.m.

The emergency supply kits will contain a 72-hour supply of food, water, and toiletries, a flashlight, and a brochure with important information. Some 100 recipients of the emergency supply kits will also receive a radio telephone for emergency communication. The kits can help older adults who live alone remain at home during a temporary emergency such as a power outage, flooding or residential quarantine.

The 800 recipients will be clients served by ASC member agencies. Eligibility criteria to receive an emergency supply kit are to be an elder living alone and subsisting at up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Plans for the emergency supply kits grew out of the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. During meetings with city and county emergency preparedness officials, it became apparent to ASC members that they needed to educate older adults on when to stay at home during an emergency, what to have on hand when staying at home, and how to arrange to leave their home if necessary during an emergency. Helping elders stay in their homes if possible during a limited emergency can reduce the burden on community resources and shelters.

The first 800 emergency supply kits will be distributed between January 26 and March 15, 2007. Depending on the success of the project and on funding, the Council will distribute more emergency supply kits as needed.

In Travis County, there are 56,909 people aged 65 and older. Some 8,423 (15 percent) live below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, or \$14,700 for a person living alone. About 37 percent of older adults of any income level live alone. Among those living alone, 1,348 (16 percent) do not own or drive a car, and 253 (3 percent) find it physically difficult to leave their homes or apartments.

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The purpose of the Aging Services Council of Central Texas is to ensure that older adults and caregivers have the information and services they need to support themselves and family members as they age. The membership of the Aging Services Council is diverse and broad-based and includes about 20 faith-based, nonprofit, and public service organizations. See www.agingservicescouncil.org for more information and a list of the Council's member organizations.

About Aging Services Council of Central Texas:

Purpose

To ensure that older adults and caregivers have the information and services they need to support themselves and family members as they age.

Vision

By 2008, the Aging Services Council and stakeholders in Travis County and surrounding areas will develop a system for support which ensures client-centered services for well, vulnerable and frail elderly in order to support vital, proactive, successful aging.

Central Objectives

1. Maximize resources for aging services through a formalized collaborative process,
2. Promote community awareness and investment around aging issues,
3. Develop a model system of support to guide planning in the Travis County community.

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