



Western Reserve

Area Agency on Aging

Taking Care this Winter

Winter 2025

Winter is here! In Northeast Ohio, that means snow, ice, and cold temperatures. These conditions can threaten health and safety, so it is important to know how to access essential resources that can help keep you or someone you care about warm, fed, and engaged with the community. Read on to learn about resources to help you stay safe this season.

KEEP YOUR HOME WARM

If you are struggling to afford your energy bills, the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help. HEAP is a federally funded program that provides eligible Ohioans assistance with their home energy bills. You can apply online, by appointment, or by mail. For **more information, visit** <https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/apply-now-energy-assistance-programs>.

If your home is still too cold, consider going to a warming center, which are public facilities that provide temporary shelter from extreme cold or inclement weather. To find the location of warming centers in your area:

- **Contact your local government or community centers**
- **Check your city's website**
- **Tune into the news**
- **Call 2-1-1**

MAINTAIN PROPER NUTRITION

Good nutrition during winter is important because colder temperatures, reduced sunlight exposure, and seasonal food availability mean your body needs more nutrients, particularly vitamin C, vitamin D, and other immune-boosting elements to combat potential illnesses like colds and flu.

Consider increasing your intake of fruits, vegetables, fish like canned tuna or salmon, and eggs—these are all great sources of crucial vitamins. However, if you are having trouble affording groceries or getting to the store, contact **Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA) at 800-626-7277**. Our staff can assist in connecting you to a home-delivered meals program, food banks and pantries, and congregate meals in your area.

GET AROUND SAFELY

Cold and icy conditions can make getting around in the winter risky for everyone, but particularly for older adults who may be more prone to falls. When the weather is particularly bad, stay inside if you can. However, when you do go outside in the cold and snow, follow these tips to help you stay safe.

Keep outdoor walkways and stairs clear of snow and ice. If you are unable to do so yourself, be sure to ask for help! The combination of cold temperatures, advanced age, and a history of cardiovascular disease can lead to an increased risk of heart attack while shoveling heavy, wet snow.

Advocacy. Assistance. Answers on Aging and Disabilities.



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When going outside...

- Wear sturdy shoes with good traction.
- Use handrails when available.
- Look out for and avoid walking on icy surfaces.
- Dress in layers, including wearing a hat and gloves.
- If possible, let someone know you are going to be outside and carry a fully charged cell phone.

Transportation services can also be a great resource during the winter months to help you get to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social activities. To learn about transportation options in your area, take a look at WRAAA's [five-county transportation guide](#), or call WRAAA's Aging and Disability Resource Center at 216-539-9240.

STAY ENGAGED

Staying socially engaged and physically active can help keep the winter blues away. Your local senior center, library, and community centers often offer fitness classes, art classes, educational activities, and socialization opportunities to help keep the mind and body occupied.

In addition, the Community Outreach & Advocacy Department at WRAAA and Friends of the East Cleveland Public Library sponsors the *Novel Players Book Club*, a book group that reads and discusses a different book each month. Those interested in participating can do so in person or online. To register and learn about upcoming books and meetings, call 216-502-6777 or email communications@areaagingsolutions.org.

Sometimes a friendly call is all you want to stay connected to your community and its resources. WRAAA's TeleCare program offers telephone calls to those who live alone or are socially isolated. The program offers:

- Personalized telephone calls for each client at specific times.
- Phone call discussions and activities that are tailored to the individual's needs.
- Reassurance to clients that they are safe and have service options in adverse situations.
- Emergency plans for individuals in case the phone call is not answered.

The program is available for Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina County residents aged 60 years of age or older and those with disabilities. Call 216-727-2550 for more information and to get registered!

If you have questions or want more information on programs and services for older adults and those with disabilities, contact WRAAA at 800-626-7277.

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