

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES</b>		
	<b>SERVICE MANUAL</b>		
	<b>Chapter:</b>	7000	<b>Effective Date:</b>
<b>Section Title:</b>	Dementia Care Specialist Basic Requirements		
	7101	<b>Previous Update</b>	N/A

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) Program is to increase dementia awareness, expand community education and partnerships, and strengthen available resources and programming for care partners and People Living with Dementia (PLWD). The DCS will accomplish these goals through brain health education, providing early detection through memory screenings, building dementia capable communities, and supporting individuals with dementia and mild cognitive brain impairment so they can maintain a quality of life.

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the DCS is to educate Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff, provider staff, local businesses, families, health care professionals, and communities so they are dementia aware and can build more dementia capable communities. By building a strong communal network, care partners will have the resources, skills, and support to keep the individual living with dementia residing in their current environment for as long as possible.

**DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST QUALIFICATIONS**

Each AAA must employ one (1) full time equivalent (FTE) Dementia Care Specialist. The responsibilities of the DCS in the AAA include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Train AAA staff and the aging network, local businesses, health care systems, and the community to recognize individuals with dementia and build a skill set to support people living with dementia.

- Provide education, resources, and support to care partners so they have the tools necessary to help themselves become better care partners and to take care of the person living with dementia. Through this support, the goal is that the person living with dementia can remain in their environment for as long as possible and continue to have an active, safe, and meaningful life.

Education requirements for the position of DCS:

- Bachelor's degree preferably in health or human services, social work, gerontology, sociology, psychology, or related field, OR
- Registered, professional nurse currently licensed to practice in the state of Georgia AND two years' experience in the human services or health related fields, OR
- Associate 's degree in human services or health related field AND a minimum of two years' experience in working directly with aging or disability populations.
- At least one year of full-time paid experience or internship working directly with multiple people with dementia and family or informal care partners (for example, providing direct care, case management, support group facilitation, residential care management, home care)