

North Carolina has seen a significant demographic change in the 21st century. Today, there are over 1.9 million people over the age of 65. In the next 20 years, the number of North Carolinians aged 65 and older will increase by 48% to 2.8 million people.

Although this increase in our older population has been expected, the state has done little to plan for the opportunities and challenges of an increasing number of aging adults. Older North Carolinians have a wealth of knowledge and skills that can help our communities and state as a whole continue to prosper. At the same time, addressing complex issues such as how to handle the growing need for long-term services and support, workforce adequacy and support for family caregivers is imperative.

North Carolina's Response

Building on North Carolina's commitment to being an Age Friendly State, a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging for the State is in the final stages of development. This Plan is a cross-sector, state-led strategic planning resource that can help North Carolina transform its infrastructure and coordination of services for our rapidly aging population, as well as people with disabilities.

During the last year, hundreds of consumers, providers, and aging and disability advocates from across North Carolina have come together to discuss the needs of older adults and people with disabilities in our state and to develop recommendations on (1) how to make our state the best possible place to grown old while utilizing the strengths and skills of our older and disabled residents and on (2) how to address the challenges and gaps that exist to ensuring a good quality of life. Workgroups were formed to develop recommendations in four areas (see back of sheet for details).



Where Things Stand

For the remainder of 2024, the focus will be on finalizing the Plan and raising the awareness of the citizens of our state – including elected officials at all levels of government – of the Plan and its recommendations. Garnering the support and buy-in from all stakeholders will be critical to the successful implementation of recommendations.

As information about the Plan becomes more widely available, North Carolinians are asked to:

- Seek out information about the growth in our state's older population and the implications for this.
- Learn about the recommendations that are being put forth in the All Ages, All Stages NC Plan.
- Identify how they and the organizations/groups they are affiliated with can support proposed efforts to make North Carolina the best place in which to age.

Need More Information?

More information on the All Ages, All Stages NC Plan can be found at this website:
www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/aging/ncs-multisector-plan-aging.



Highlights from Plan Workgroups



Affording Aging

North Carolinians will have the means to effectively plan for their later stages of life. Plans include ensuring sufficient and sustainable financial provisions, while fostering avenues for personal growth and for the betterment of their communities.

This workgroup's recommendations center around:

- promoting educational resources and lifelong learning initiatives.
- optimizing services and innovations while leveraging temporary ARPA funds.
- Expanding employment and job training opportunities for older adults.
- encouraging volunteerism and engagement opportunities.
- strengthening retirement planning and saving options as well as income assistance programs and consumer protection measures.



Optimizing Health and Well-Being

North Carolinians will have access to person-centered services and supports that will optimize their life-expectancy and health quality.

Key recommendations of the workgroup focus on efforts to:

- expand community health resources.
- support healthy aging in our state.
- promote a continuum of services in communities.
- explore health care financing and delivery options to improve care access.
- address the health care workforce crisis.



Strengthening Communities for a Lifetime

North Carolinians will live in communities, neighborhoods, and homes that support thriving at all stages and ages.

Recommendations from this workgroup address:

- keeping older adults safe and protected.
- enhancing transportation options.
- increasing the stock of accessible and affordable housing.
- improving food security.
- decreasing social isolation and promoting social connectivity.



Supporting Older Adults and Their Families

North Carolinians will have access to services and resources that will enable them to stay in their homes and communities as they age and will support their families in their efforts to provide care when needed.

In developing its recommendations, the workgroup gave special attention to:

- addressing the unique challenges faced by people impacted by dementia.
- supporting the use of technology to improve individuals' quality of life.
- meeting the needs of aging adults who have disabilities and aging caregivers.
- ensuring the financial and workplace security of caregivers across the lifespan.
- accessing the services needed to live at home while optimizing health.