

## Advancing Equity in Aging:

# A Collaborative Strategy for NC

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Carolina State Aging Plan is a comprehensive plan aimed at addressing the needs and challenges faced by our aging population. To gain insights into the needs, priorities, and challenges of North Carolina's aging and disability population, a comprehensive community engagement approach was employed. This involved seven listening sessions attended by 350 individuals, two surveys with a total of 3,793 responses, and a round table discussion with 180 subject matter experts. Additionally, to effectively utilize expertise and knowledge, a diverse 45-member aging plan committee was formed to develop objectives and strategies for the plan, actively involving diversity equity and inclusion organizations and older adults.



## Introduction: Federal and Legislative Requirements

As mandated by NC General Statute 143B-181.1A and Section 307 of the federal Older Americans Act (42 U.S.C. § 3027), the North Carolina State Aging Plan is a strategic plan that outlines the goals, objectives, strategies, and expected outcomes to support our aging population. The plan is due to the North Carolina General Assembly and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Community Living (ACL) by July 1, 2023.

## Vision

By centering on equity throughout the plan, the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) commits to cultivating inclusive aging communities, promoting fair access to services and opportunities, recognizing the social determinants of health to address disparities, and engaging historically marginalized populations in decision-making. This commitment, along with a focus on the department priorities – strong and inclusive workforce, child and family well-being, and behavioral health and resilience – will guide our efforts as we work collaboratively with stakeholders and communities to implement strategies that promote equitable access for diverse aging populations throughout our state.

## Priorities

The proposed Plan Federal Fiscal Years 2023-2027 prioritizes the following six focus areas and integrates both the *Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020* reauthorization and the Biden-Harris Administration key priorities guiding ACL's work:



**Safety, Protection, and Advocacy:** Use policy, advocacy, education, and a multi-disciplinary approach to protect the rights of Older North Carolinians from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.



**Healthy Aging/Quality of Life:** Support programs and partnerships that improve the health and well-being of Older North Carolinians.



**Housing and Homelessness:** Adopt an equity-centered housing lens approach to enable older adults to age in their place of choice with the appropriate services, supports, and housing opportunities.



**Caregiving Support and Workforce Development:** Advance equity, accessibility, and inclusion through informal and formal caregiving support.



**Long-Term Preparedness Planning:** Incorporate innovative practices learned through COVID-19 and create reliable systems and infrastructures that will have the capacity to serve the growing aging population, all while recognizing the need for communication equity to foster involvement from all stakeholders.



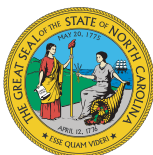
**Advancing Equity and Reframing Aging:** Advance equity by supporting and encouraging older adults of all backgrounds and their support systems to access information that helps them make informed choices about support services at home or in the community.

## Evaluation and Accountability: Measuring Success

The North Carolina State Aging Plan is committed to regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure its effectiveness and recognizes the importance of data-driven decision-making and accountability in achieving its goals. Mechanisms for evaluation include incorporating clear data measures and expected outcomes to assess the impact of our strategies, embedding a data equity lens throughout the data collection, analysis, and communication process, and developing a public-facing data dashboard as a part of our commitment to transparency, accountability, and equitable progress.

## Next Steps: Implementation and Partnerships

Addressing the needs of our aging population requires a collective effort from government agencies, community-based organizations, service providers, academic/research institutions, and stakeholders, including older adults, their families, advocacy groups, and representatives from diverse communities. By coordinating a unified approach to cultivate a collaborative ecosystem, we can leverage existing infrastructures, expertise, and funding to improve overall well-being and health outcomes for North Carolina's older adults.



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Aging and Adult Services

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