

# State of North Carolina

**ROY COOPER**  
GOVERNOR

May 2, 2023

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 280**

## **NORTH CAROLINA'S COMMITMENT TO BUILDING AN AGE-FRIENDLY STATE**

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina strives to be a great place to grow older, where those who are aging can thrive within families, neighborhoods and communities and be supported to maintain a high quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 1.7 million North Carolinians are age 65 or older and that number is growing; by 2030, one in five will be older than 65; and

**WHEREAS**, by 2030, and for the first time ever, North Carolina will be comprised of more older adults than children; and

**WHEREAS**, Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias affect an estimated 300,000 North Carolinians and this number is expected to increase to 400,000 people by 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, Hometown Strong in the Governor's Office and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) partnered with AARP NC in 2022 to conduct the "Age My Way NC" survey statewide to assess the needs and preferences of North Carolinians with regards to aging and the survey results provide data to guide planning; and

**WHEREAS**, each North Carolina Cabinet Agency works in age-friendly domains and can join with their public and private sector partners to improve the health and quality of life of older people and those with Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias while enhancing the attractiveness of their communities to people of all ages; and

**WHEREAS**, AARP administers a national Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities as an affiliate to the World Health Organization Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities program; and

**WHEREAS**, this program sets out eight (8) domains of community life that provide an effective framework for improving lives and enhancing communities, specifically: community and health services; outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; and communication and information; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina residents have already enjoyed the success of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities program in several cities, namely Archdale,

Durham, Jamestown, Matthews, Mount Airy; and counties, namely Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Lenoir, Mecklenburg, Orange, and Wake; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of North Carolina will become an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state through a renewed focus on the needs of the State's rapidly aging population and through cooperative efforts that foster livable communities and improve services and supports; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article III of the Constitution of North Carolina and N.C. Gen Stat. §§ 143A-4 and 143B-4, the Governor is the chief executive officer of the State and is responsible for formulating and administering the policies of the executive branch of state government; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-12, the Governor has the authority and duty to supervise the official conduct of all executive and ministerial officers.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, by the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, **IT IS ORDERED**:

**Section 1. Multisector Plan for Aging**

DHHS shall implement a planning process with expert working groups to develop a Multisector Plan for Aging in North Carolina. The planning process shall be led by the DHHS Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Division of Health Benefits and shall consist of representatives from state agencies and partner organizations including Hometown Strong, AARP NC, the NC Coalition on Aging, the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, and other stakeholders and experts as identified by DHHS. The Multisector Plan for Aging will serve as a blueprint for the development, enhancement, and coordination of critical services for North Carolina's rapidly aging population, which will ultimately have positive impacts on individuals of all ages and abilities.

The Multisector Plan for Aging development process will include building an inventory of existing programs and services to identify efficient and effective practices in supporting healthy aging, as well as recommendations for scaling and extending these practices. The Multisector Plan for Aging will include key data indicators with 10-year targets.

A report on the Multisector Plan for Aging shall be submitted to the Office of the Governor no later than one (1) year from the date of this Executive Order. The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging will periodically review the Multisector Plan for Aging in North Carolina and make annual recommendations that support its goals.

**Section 2. Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Group**

DHHS and the North Carolina Department of Commerce shall convene a Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership group with representatives from across education, workforce, and economic development. The Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership group will develop and implement recommendations to better recruit and retain workers in the areas of behavioral health, direct care, and nursing which will support North Carolina's aging population.

**Section 3. Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

DHHS shall collaborate with the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging and other stakeholders to make recommendations to improve protection of vulnerable adults from maltreatment, as adult protective services cases have increased by nearly seventy percent (70%) in the last five (5) years. Recommendations shall include revisions to North Carolina's adult protective services statutes, which have not had a thorough review since enactment in 1975. Recommendations shall also address improving the quality of practice across the state to meet the diverse needs of adults who are subject to maltreatment and improving community stakeholder

education and engagement in preventing maltreatment. A report on recommendations shall be submitted to the Office of the Governor one (1) year from the date of this Executive Order.

**Section 4. Summit on Nutrition Services for Older Adults**

DHHS shall collaborate with the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging to convene a summit to study and make recommendations regarding nutrition services available to older adults statewide and improvements needed to reduce food insecurity, which helps prevent further declines in health conditions among people who are aging.

**Section 5. Improving Access to Outdoor Spaces for Older Adults**

The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) shall improve and promote outdoor spaces and buildings for use by older adults through outdoor recreation programming, with an emphasis on fourteen (14) Trail Day events during the 2023 NC Year of the Trail.

**Section 6. Transportation for Older Adults**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) shall build upon its success in offering public transportation coverage across the state by implementing additional projects that improve the coverage, quality, reliability, and convenience of public transportation, including expansion of passenger rail services and improved first and last mile connections to fixed route rail and bus services.

DOT shall increase the convenience and flexibility of public transit by expanding on-demand micro-transit services and developing a statewide Mobility-as-a-Service system that allows for seamless trip planning, scheduling, and payment across services, modes, and jurisdictions.

DOT shall pursue additional deployments, testing and analysis of shared autonomous mobility technologies under the Connected Autonomous Shuttle Supporting Innovation (CASSI) program to determine the viability of shared autonomous vehicles as a safe and convenient alternative mode of transit for aging adults.

DOT, in coordination with metropolitan planning organizations, rural planning organizations, and local governments, shall collaborate to create safe, sustainable, and connected communities with diverse transportation options that benefit older adults and vulnerable road users.

**Section 7. Broadband Access and Digital Literacy Services for Older Adults**

The North Carolina Department of Information Technology (DIT) shall improve communication and outreach to the state's aging and older adult population as part of its continuing work to expand broadband access to ninety-eight percent (98%) of all North Carolina communities and raise high-speed internet subscriptions to eighty percent (80%) by 2026 as identified in the Governor's plan to close the digital divide.

DIT shall solicit feedback from older adults about their needs for high-speed internet access, digital devices, and digital literacy resources in the state's planning process to inform five-year comprehensive broadband and digital equity plans, including listening sessions with older adults and the community organizations that support them. DIT shall collaborate with staff at the DHHS Division of Aging and Adult Services to inform their work. DIT shall also form partnerships with organizations that serve aging adults to ensure this population benefits from ongoing DIT broadband infrastructure investments, promotion of the Affordable Connectivity Program to assist with internet service affordability, and support of digital navigation services to increase digital literacy.

DIT's Office of Digital Equity and Literacy shall partner with DHHS, Hometown Strong, the North Carolina Business Committee for Education and other state government agencies to identify specific strategies for raising digital awareness and digital literacy skill levels among the state's aging and older adult population.

DIT's Office of Digital Equity and Literacy, DNCR, DHHS, Hometown Strong, and the North Carolina Business Committee for Education shall promote digital literacy programs that support older adults including digital navigators and intergenerational coaching in order to improve access to telehealth and mental health supports.

**Section 8. North Carolina's Application to Become Age-Friendly State**

The State of North Carolina shall apply to become a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Membership in this Network will provide access to AARP staff and volunteers who engage and mobilize communities, share expertise, and deliver technical assistance and access to other members to share experiences and best practices in creating age-friendly communities, as well as access to grant opportunities that assist in implementing age-friendly projects.

**Section 9. Additional Cabinet Agency Work to Support Older Adults**

Cabinet agencies are directed to cooperate in the implementation of this Executive Order. The activities directed by this Executive Order are not exhaustive of all state cabinet agency age-friendly planning efforts and programs and additional priorities will be identified by the development of the Multisector Plan for Aging.

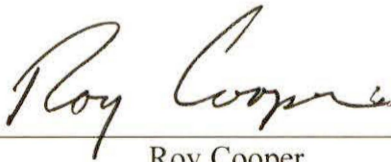
**Section 10. Other State Agencies**

Council of State agencies, higher education institutions, local governments, private businesses, and other North Carolina entities are encouraged to support and provide input on the creation of age-friendly programs developed through the implementation of this Executive Order.

**Section 12. Effect and Duration**

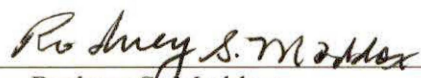
This Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until rescinded or superseded by another applicable Executive Order.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in the City of Raleigh, this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three.



Roy Cooper  
Governor

**ATTEST:**



Rodney S. Maddox  
Chief Deputy Secretary of State

