

# Introduction to NC's Multisector Plan for Aging



NC's Multisector Plan for Aging is a forward-looking, 10-year, cross-sector state-led initiative designed to address aging from a perspective that spans all ages and stages of life in North Carolina. This comprehensive plan is structured around four key topics:

1. Supporting Older Adults and Their Families
2. Strengthening Communities for a Lifetime
3. Optimizing Health and Well-Being
4. Affording Aging

The plan is dynamic and adaptive, with priorities and action steps reviewed and adjusted every two years to ensure they remain relevant and effective in responding to emerging needs and opportunities.



**Importance:** NC's Multisector Plan for Aging is crucial for creating a supportive environment where aging is addressed proactively, ensuring that individuals at every stage of life can age with dignity, health, and vitality. By focusing on these key areas, the plan aims to improve quality of life, enhance community engagement, and ensure that older adults have access to the resources they need.

## KEY STATISTICS

### Population Estimates and Projections

In 2024, **88 counties** have more people above the age of 60 and older than under the age of 18.



In 2024, there were **4,503 centenarians**. This population is projected to **increase to 16,804 by 2050**, a 273% change.



	2024		2050		% Change 2024-2050
	#	%	#	%	
<b>Total</b>	10,984,106		14,241,032		30%
<b>0-17</b>	2,277,028	21%	2,841,892	20%	25%
<b>18-44</b>	3,950,947	36%	4,769,622	34%	21%
<b>44-59</b>	2,074,345	19%	2,763,692	19%	33%
<b>60+</b>	2,681,786	24%	3,865,826	27%	44%
<b>65+</b>	1,993,441	18%	3,038,133	21%	52%
<b>85+</b>	210,203	2%	529,204	4%	152%



# Priorities and Recommended Action Steps

## Supporting Older Adults and Their Families



**GOAL:** 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.

### Home and Community Based Services

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Increase funding for home- and community-based services to meet the growing need among older adults for high quality, community based care.
- Align NC policies with the Older Americans Act rules to meet its intended goal of supporting more older North Carolinians to live at home and in the community.
- Pursue data modernization to better support our aging population through improved program management and service delivery.

### Family Caregiver Support

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Provide family caregivers with more support including a comprehensive range of services like respite care.
- Sustain the NC Caregiver Portal so that caregivers can easily find reliable resources that meet the needs of the person for whom they are caring.
- Strengthen family leave policies to support caregivers in managing their dual roles and strengthen businesses by supporting employee retention.
- Support development of a state tax credit for caregivers to provide crucial financial relief and recognize their significant contributions to caring for older North Carolinians.
- Create a unified referral system with a “no wrong door” approach so caregivers receive tailored and accurate information, referrals, and access to long-term services and supports no matter which “door” they walk through.



## Strengthening Communities for a Lifetime

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

### Housing

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Increase funding for housing repairs and modifications to allow low-income older adults to safely stay in their home.

- Increase access to and sustainability of affordable housing for individuals with disabilities.
- Raise income eligibility for property tax relief programs so more people can afford to remain in their homes.
- Boost affordable housing development through tax credits and low-interest loans to stimulate investment in building and renovating properties.
- Encourage adoption of universal design principles to ensure that homes and buildings are accessible for people of all ages and abilities.
- Ensure evolving housing needs of aging individuals with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and mental health needs are met so they can age in place and have equal and accommodative access to aging supports, programs, and facilities.
- Advocate for a more coordinated approach to addressing housing challenges such as availability, affordability, accessibility, safety, and quality.

### Adult Protective Services

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Pass statutory changes to address gaps in service delivery, update legal frameworks to reflect current best practices, and improve the protection of vulnerable adults.
- Advocate for state funding to ensure county departments of social services have the necessary resources to deliver effective adult protective services, including emergency services.

### Age-Friendly State and Communities

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Foster a culture of healthy living across the lifespan through support for programs that enhance adults’ health and well-being including multipurpose senior centers, evidence-based health promotion, and disease prevention programs.
- Address social isolation and improve connectivity to improve quality of life for older adults.
- Increase digital equity for older adults, especially in rural areas through training, broadband expansion, and physical resources.
- Promote best practices in health care delivery that involve older adults in their care decisions.
- Promote innovative, replicable transportation options to help older adults and people with disabilities improve their independence.
- Address barriers to food insecurity for older adults including improving access to food and streamlining connections to available services.
- Increase training on fraud, scams, and consumer protection to help reduce the risk of exploitation for older adults.
- Assist communities and institutions in pursuing Age-Friendly designations that help create environments that are welcoming and accessible to all ages.

- Establish a Legislative Study Commission on Aging to help ensure that the state's aging population receives needed support and that necessary legislative changes are made to effectively address emerging needs and challenges.
- Enhance NC211 and NCCARE360 as comprehensive resources for older adults and people with disabilities to obtain information and connect to needed services, such as housing, health care, food, transportation, and life-long learning resources.



## Optimizing Health and Well Being

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

### Long-Term Services and Supports

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Increase awareness of long-term care costs and Medicare limitations through the promotion of the NC Department of Insurance's Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program's (SHIIP) to help individuals plan more effectively for potential care needs and avoid unexpected expenses.
- Address challenges including the delivery and long-term financing to help achieve a continuum of community services and supports now and in the future.

### Workforce

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Expand consumer-directed options for caregiving to provide greater flexibility and personalization in caregiving arrangements, enabling individuals to receive care from trusted sources and maintain their independence.
- Ensure a skilled workforce for diverse aging field jobs by developing targeted recruitment campaigns, creating partnerships with educational institutions, and enhancing training programs to better prepare individuals for careers in aging services.
- Address recommendations from the Investing in North Carolina's Caregiving Workforce report to strengthen and support the health care workforce.
- Expand financial incentives for health care careers such as loan repayment programs, tuition reimbursement, and stipends.



## Affording Aging

**GOAL:** North Carolinians will have the means to effectively strategize for their later stages of life, ensuring sufficient and sustainable financial provisions, fostering avenues for personal growth and advancement, and actively contributing their knowledge and expertise to the betterment of their communities

### Potential of All Older Adults

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:

- Strengthen and expand volunteer engagement opportunities for older adults to strengthen social connection and improve organizational capacity.
- Expand appropriate employment opportunities for older workers which helps older adults remain active in the workforce, supports their financial stability, and enriches organizations with valuable perspectives.
- Launch an ageism education and advocacy awareness campaign to challenge stereotypes and promote positive attitudes toward aging.
- Reduce out-of-pocket Medicare costs for lower-income older adults to help alleviate financial stress and improve access to necessary care.
- Explore reinstating free tuition benefits for older adults at public institutions to promote lifelong education and intellectual engagement.
- Establish state-facilitated retirement savings programs to encourage more residents to save for retirement.
- Increase economic wellbeing of older adults through financial education to empower older adults to manage their finances more effectively, achieve greater financial security, and reduce economic disparities.
- Implement pre-retirement planning programs in the public and private sectors to provide valuable information about financial management and retirement benefits.



# QUICK FACTS ON AGING ADULTS

## Demographic Snapshot (2022)

NC ranks **9th** in total population nationally. NC also ranks **9th** in the population of those age 65 and older.



An estimated **47,600** people 60 and older migrated from another state or country to North Carolina.



By 2031, the number of individuals aged 65 and older is **expected to surpass** the population under 18 years old.



Adults aged 85 and older are **projected to experience the fastest growth in the state** over the next 20 years.



## Caregiving in NC (2021)

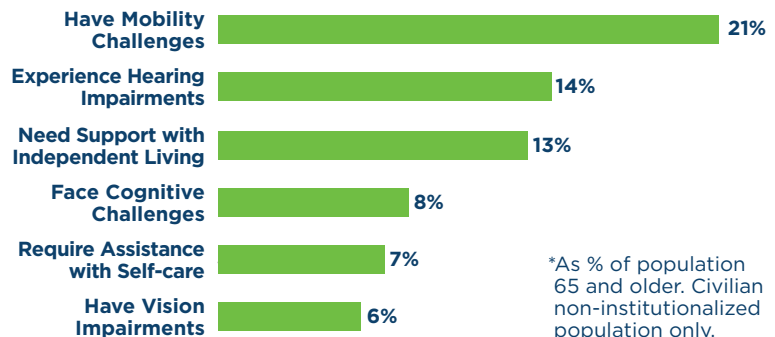
 # of Family Caregivers: **1,280,000**

 Total Hours of Unpaid Care: **1.2 Billion**

 Total Value of Unpaid Care: **\$16.5 Billion**

*A caregiver is a person of any age who tends to the needs or concerns of a person with short- or long-term limitations due to illness, injury or disability.*

## Disability Status, 65+



*\*As % of population 65 and older. Civilian non-institutionalized population only.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022, 5-year estimates. Table S1810: Disability Characteristics, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>; [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6873710/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6873710/)*

## Health and Wellness Characteristics for Older Adults (2022)

- **Chronic Conditions:** 81% of older adults managed chronic conditions, with 54% navigating two or more, showcasing their resilience and proactive health management.
- **Flu Shot:** 71% of older adults protected their health with a flu shot/spray.
- **Pneumonia Shot:** 75% of older adults have taken prevention actions receiving a pneumonia shot at some point in their lives.
- **Exercise:** 72% of older adults stayed active by exercising regularly.

## Characteristics of Adults 65 and Older (2022)



*\*As % of population 65 and older*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022, 5-year estimates. Table B17024: Age by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months; Table B09020: Relationship by household type (including living alone) for population 65 and over, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>*

