



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING

2026 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GAC) January 2026

North Carolina is undergoing a dramatic demographic shift: by 2050, the population aged 65 and older will grow by over 50%, from 2 million today to more than 3 million in 2050. In 2026, the first baby boomers will turn 80. By 2029, all baby boomers will be 65 and older, and by 2036, all will be 70 and older. During this period, the fastest population growth will be among adults age 85 and older, a group with the highest demand for health care, long-term services and support, and other critical state services.

This demographic shift carries urgent policy implications. As North Carolina's population ages rapidly, our State's medical infrastructure, workforce, and support systems must be strategically strengthened to meet the growing and complex needs of older adults.

Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order No. 280 committed the State to a whole-of-government approach to support an aging population. The North Carolina Multisector Plan for Aging, known as All Ages, All Stages NC (AAASNC), launched in 2024, advancing the mission of Executive Order 280 by providing a comprehensive roadmap with clear priorities, including:

- Supporting Older Adults and Their Families
- Strengthening Communities
- Optimizing Health and Well-Being, and
- Affording Aging

The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GAC) monitors progress and provides actionable recommendations for the AAASNC initiative. Sustained support from both the Governor and the Secretary of the NC Department of Health & Human Services (NC DHHS) is critical to ensure the initiative's continued success. **We encourage the Governor and the Secretary of NC Department of Health & Human Services to reaffirm a public commitment to the objectives of Executive Order 280, with particular emphasis on the Multisector Plan on Aging, All Ages, All Stages NC, given its essential role in advancing age-friendly North Carolina.**

The well-being and prosperity of the State is inextricably intertwined with the well-being of its older adults. To adequately prepare and respond to the emerging needs of North Carolina's older adults, we recommend continued investment in the State Division of Aging to identify and strengthen its capacity to oversee, coordinate, and advance the implementation of a comprehensive, multisector plan on aging. Enhancing the Division's resources will ensure it can effectively meet the growing and complex needs of North Carolina's aging population.

Key Recommendations

This report provides the Governor and Secretary priority recommendations to support North Carolina's rapidly aging population. More detail on each of these plan sections, including progress updates, measurable objectives, and key activities, can be found on the [AAAS website](#).

1. Support Older Adults and Their Families by:

- **Advancing a Coordinated Caregiving Strategy:**
Align the Departments of Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Revenue to strengthen family caregiver support, including workplace policies and caregiver tax incentives.
- **Expanding Dementia and Caregiver Supports:**
Scale Project C.A.R.E. statewide to provide dementia caregiving resources in all geographic areas.
- **Supporting Family Caregivers:**
Incentivize flexible work policies and age-friendly practices in NC cabinet agencies that recognize the economic impacts of family caregiving to display that NC is a model employer.
- **Streamlining Access to Aging Related Services**
Continue development of the "No Wrong Door Initiative" which is a one stop shop to social, health, and government services for older adults and their families.
- **Developing Other Caregiver Support Initiatives:**
Support the development of a State Caregiver Tax Credit and other workforce support mechanisms.

2. Strengthen Communities by:

- **Consolidating Housing Efforts under a Centralized Authority:**
Engage stakeholders to evaluate how establishing a dedicated Department of Housing in State government could better support housing efforts.
- **Elevating Housing Accessibility:**
Work with the NC Housing Finance Agency to enhance housing accessibility across the lifespan by prioritizing universal design concepts in Qualified Allocation Plans (QAP) which determine what housing projects receive specific types of funding.
- **Providing Property Tax Relief:**
Work with the General Assembly to address property tax relief measures that will enable tax-burdened older adults and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes.

- **Seeking Funding to Enable Individuals to Remain in their Current Homes**
Increase incentives and funding for housing rehabilitation, repair, and modification to support aging in place.
- **Aligning Transportation and Economic Development:**
Coordinate transportation projects with neighborhood revitalization efforts to improve mobility, safety and accessibility for older adults.
- **Promoting Digital Inclusion for Older Adults**
Prioritize funding and program coordination across cabinet agencies to reduce technology gaps for older adults including affordable internet, devices, and training in underserved communities.

3. Optimize Health and Well-Being by:

- **Preparing for the Increasing Demand for Long-term care Services and Supports:**
With the 85+ age population growing 174% in the next 25 years, increase awareness and comprehensive planning for service delivery and financing of long-term care services. This includes exploring state support for private LTC savings options and examining relevant Medicaid services and related rate structures.
- **Supporting Coordination of Health Workforce Efforts:**
Prioritize initiatives to address health workforce shortages and support continued coordination among executive agencies. Task DHHS and other agencies with ensuring existing initiatives address the workforce needs of older adults and persons with disabilities.
- **Exploring how the Medicaid program can better support family caregivers and the aging and disability workforce priorities:**
Explore how the 1115 and 1915(c) waiver authorities could improve support for family caregivers and integrate workforce development strategies related to wages, training, and retention.
- **Mandating Measurable Workforce Goals:**
Require workforce stability and affordability objectives in relevant strategic plans, with quantitative targets for staff vacancy reduction, service capacity expansion, and cost transparency.
- **Promoting Credential Development and Portability:**
Foster stackable, portable credentials to support career progression among direct care workers.

4. Support Affording Aging by:

- **Expanding Financial Education:**
Compile financial education resources across the lifespan and make accessible to all North Carolina residents.
- **Combating Ageism & Enhance Engagement:**
Launch public awareness campaigns to address ageism in employment, healthcare, and community settings.
- **Leveraging Employer Certifications:**
Expand age-friendly employer certifications to support workforce participation and caregiving balance by encouraging businesses to join the CAFÉ Age Friendly Institute to recognize the importance of older adults to the workforce.
- **Increasing Awareness of Public Benefits Available to Older Adults and Their Families:**
Given that a large percentage of older adults' primary source of income is Social Security and their traditional underutilization of many public benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid and Housing Supports, focus efforts at educating older adults and persons with disabilities about benefit programs and addressing the barriers that exist to program access.