

Division of Aging State Aging Plan Year 3 Updates

During SFY 2025–2026, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Aging continued to advance priorities across the State Aging Plan through expanded partnerships, strengthened programs, and strategic investments in older adults and caregivers. Key accomplishments included increased workforce training, expanded nutrition and caregiver supports, improved transportation and housing initiatives, strengthened emergency preparedness, and completion of the first year of implementation of All Ages, All Stages NC. These efforts reflect continued progress toward building a more age-friendly North Carolina.



Goal 1: Use policy, advocacy, education, and a multidisciplinary approach to protect the rights of older North Carolinians from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

NCDHHS Adult Services continued to expand its Learning Management System (LMS), significantly increasing training opportunities for Adult Services and Adult Protective Services (APS) professionals.

- Instructor-led courses increased from nine to 16 (**78% increase**) over the past five years.
- On-demand eLearning expanded from two to 41 courses (**1,950% increase**).
- Total training hours increased by **60%** in SFY 2024–2025 (834 to 1,332 hours).

NC Online Aging and Adult Services Information System (NC OAASIS) was successfully implemented, transitioning county DSS Adult Services staff to a modernized statewide system that now houses Adult Protective Services and Guardianship data, improving consistency in data collection, reporting, and service delivery across North Carolina.

Adult Services continued implementation of the DHHS-AS-0008 notification process, an initial notification sent by a county Department of Social Services (DSS) director to the District Attorney and/or law enforcement, which strengthens coordination between DSS agencies, law enforcement, and District Attorneys responding to alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults. Adult Services also continued Legal Concepts training for DSS attorneys to support consistent application of Adult Protective Services and guardianship law statewide.

The *Investigating Crimes in Long-Term Care Facilities: Voiceless Victims* curriculum continues to strengthen North Carolina's response to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Offered through the NC Justice Academy at least three times annually, the course is now required for law enforcement officers pursuing a credential through the Criminal Investigations Certification Program (CICP) and has received consistently positive participant feedback.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program continued strengthening volunteer capacity.

- **159** Certified Ombudsman Advocate volunteers designated from 2023–2025.
- **386** certified volunteers statewide.



GOAL 2: Support programs and partnerships that improve the health and well-being of older North Carolinians.

Participation in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program continued to grow during the 2025 season.

- **9,795** voucher sets distributed.
- **55** participating counties (up from 52).
- **43** participating aging services agencies (up from 42).
- **81** certified farmers' markets (up from 74).

The Providing Elders Additional Sustenance (PEAS) Project continued increasing access to healthy food.

- **23,308** grocery boxes distributed.
- **28,167** meals delivered.
- **10,414** older adults served.

The hospital discharge meals pilot program also wrapped up September 30, 2025. Over the course of the three-year project, 614 older adults received meals and 7,291 meals were delivered.

The Division of Aging and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) continued advancing access to evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention (EBHP/DP) programs.

- **265** additional workshops completed.
- Approximately **690** additional older adult participants.

North Carolina continued implementing the 2021–2025 Falls Prevention Strategic Action Plan while advancing development of the 2026–2029 Falls Prevention Strategic Action Plan. Collaboration continued to expand access to evidence-based falls prevention programs and education across the state. Two new regional coalitions were established, resulting in 93 of North Carolina's 100 counties now being connected to a regional falls prevention coalition.

Efforts to improve transportation for older adults continued through the Division of Aging's partnership with the North Carolina Coalition for Older Adult Transportation. During the year, the coalition met regularly and established new workgroups focused on CarFit, which promotes an educational checklist ensuring older adults properly fit in their vehicles for comfort and safety, and a law enforcement cue card initiative, which developed tools and guidance to help police officers with older or medically impaired drivers. A statewide transportation website was launched to help drivers, caregivers, and professionals identify transportation options in every county. In addition, partners advanced the development of an evidence-based screening tool, adapted from the University of California San Diego's Driver Orientation Screen for Cognitive Impairment, to help law enforcement distinguish between impaired driving and potential dementia or cognitive impairment, while pursuing opportunities to incorporate this training into the law enforcement academy.



GOAL 3: 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.

The Division implemented the Choosing Home program to supplement Housing and Home Improvement (HHI) funding, expanding available resources across several AAA regions. In this past fiscal year 1,017 clients were served through Housing and Home Improvement (HHI) programs. There are about 30 providers across NC who are providing housing and home improvement services. These services assist in promoting mobility and accessibility services as a means of keeping people safe in their homes.

The Division continued to administer the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Rapid Rehousing programs.

- **1,307** individuals served.
- **516** move-ins completed.

The Emergency Solutions Grants Program holds Office Hours Monthly with sub-recipients to provide information and updates on guidelines, rules and regulations, upcoming due dates, and monitoring. The ESG Office also holds monthly webinars on topics relevant to ESG and homelessness services. The ESG Office also provides a weekly email update to ensure continuous communication with all subrecipients and other stakeholders.

GOAL 4: Advance equity, accessibility, and inclusion through informal and formal caregiving support.

There was continued investment in North Carolina's caregiving infrastructure, with a focus on workforce development, family support, and dementia-friendly initiatives, despite the ending of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

- **20** caregivers received ARPA-funded respite.
- **27** caregivers received ARPA-funded supplemental services.
- **1,009** caregivers received FCSP respite (**52,182 units**).
- **1,108** caregivers received FCSP supplemental services (**20,099 units**).

The NC Caregiving Portal continued growing statewide.

- **3,412** registered caregivers (as of June 2026).
- **39.3%** increase from the previous year.
- **92%** reported improved belonging and support.

These results suggest the Portal is helping reduce caregiver social isolation by providing easier access to resources and fostering a stronger sense of connection.

For Dementia Capable North Carolina work (DCNC), the Collective Impact framework was reinvigorated in the summer of 2025. The DCNC Steering Committee was established and began meeting in December 2025. The Shared Aspirations/Common Agenda for the DCNC movement has been established, and the group hopes to use this framework to continue moving these goals forward.

The Division developed a person-centered counseling/communication training specifically designed for professionals in aging services, Options Counselors. The training was created in-house and led by Division staff, delivering this training at no cost to participants, expanding access while generating substantial savings across the state. Division staff continue to collaborate with North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness (NCCHW) by partnering with the No Wrong Door (NWD) grant. Through the NWD governing body, a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) workgroup was created and meets regularly to move the work forward.

The Division supported the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) expansion efforts; there are now 15 PACE centers across the state, expanding availability for older adults and increasing service area coverage.



GOAL 5: 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.

The Division has worked to achieve compliance in areas mandated by the Older Americans Act (OAA) Final Rule. Legal services and Family Caregiver Support Program FCSP are compliant with the OAA final rule. The new area plan and State Aging Plan will incorporate the OAA final rule updates to comply in Oct 2027. The Ombudsman & nutrition program have convened workgroups to focus on implementation, and manual updates are being reviewed and prepared. The Division's plan to gain full compliance has been approved and there will be quarterly communication with Administration of Community Living (ACL).

The Division of Aging continues to strengthen emergency preparedness and response for older adults and people with disabilities through ongoing collaboration with North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM), the State Emergency Response Team (SERT), the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Communication, Medical, Independence, Support and Safety, Transportation (CMIST) Advisory Committee, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and local emergency response partners. The Division also supports the expansion of call-down systems and other communication processes to help identify and contact individuals with greatest social and economic needs before and after hurricanes and other natural disasters.

All Ages, All Stages NC, the state's multi-sector plan for aging, completed its first year of implementation, advancing priority strategies through collaboration across state agencies, local partners, community organizations, and stakeholders. Throughout the year, workgroups and implementation partners moved forward actions across the plan's focus areas while strengthening cross-sector coordination and accountability. Progress is being documented through the Year One implementation report and a public implementation tracker, providing transparency on accomplishments and establishing a foundation for continuous improvement as implementation enters its second year.

