

Oregon State Plan on Aging

October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2026

The mission of the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity. It is the vision of ODHS' Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) that Oregon's older adults, people with disabilities and their families experience person-centered services, supports and early interventions that are innovative and help maintain independence, promote safety, well-being, honor choice, respect cultural preferences and uphold dignity.

APD develops a State Plan on Aging (herein referred to as Plan or State Plan), as required under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended. The Plan is a contract with the Administration on Aging (AoA), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) and allows Oregon to receive funds under the Act. This Plan provides a vision and direction for Oregon's aging network and provides an opportunity to share goals, objectives, and strategies over the next three years to improve the lives of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers.

APD is accountable for implementing programs for older adults and people with disabilities in Oregon including the Older Americans Act, Medicaid long-term services and supports, adult protective services and long term care facility licensing. APD's Community Services and Supports Unit (CSSU) is responsible for administering Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and does this by working collaboratively with older adults, family caregivers, Oregon's 16 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), the network of Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) agencies, the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon and other Tribal entities, Centers for Independent Living, public-private partnerships and our federal and state government partners.

APD works closely with Oregon's AAAs to create an array of comprehensive services. AAAs provide information and a wide range of services to older adults and people with disabilities throughout Oregon,

while APD coordinates distribution of federal funds, provides training and technical assistance, and ensures statewide oversight and coordination for OAA programs. APD also oversees Oregon Project Independence (OPI) and the OPI Expansion project. OPI is a state-funded program managed by all AAAs in Oregon providing in-home services to older adults and individuals with dementia who need assistance to remain in their own homes and delay or avoid needing Medicaid long term services and supports. The OPI Expansion project serves younger people with disabilities and is administered by seven AAAs.

This Plan articulates Oregon's vision to serve older adults over the next three years. This Plan's overall vision is to help make Oregon an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state, in its capacity of implementing the Plan's goals, objectives, strategies, and measurable outcomes around OAA programs and other initiatives and partnerships across Oregon's aging network. While the State Plan on Aging cannot summon all of the resources necessary to make Oregon an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state, there are opportunities within its scope to partner, collaborate and complement the resources and advocacy other statewide and local organizations commit to this vision.

Oregon's older adult population faces many challenges in the immediate future. Like other age groups in the state, many older adults struggle with housing costs and food insecurity, and a growing number of people aging in Oregon are leaving the workforce with fewer assets and resources than previous generations. Many older adults from communities of color, the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon and other Tribal members, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and Two Spirit (LGBTQIA2S+) communities, and immigrant communities have experienced lived and intergenerational trauma and inequities borne by systemic racism and other forms of social discrimination. Oregon faces a workforce crisis in direct care and social services, further weakening the capacity to meet the growing demand. And, as the COVID-19 pandemic made even more clear, older adults are disproportionately affected by social isolation and loneliness.

This State Plan proposes to work toward a more age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon by addressing the five federally required focus areas:

- OAA programs

- COVID-19 recovery
- Equity
- Access to home and community based services (HCBS)
- Caregiving

There is a goal oriented toward an age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon in each of the five focus areas, and a set of objectives, strategies and outcomes that will chart Oregon's work over the next three years.

APD is committed to implementing the State Plan with its partners. This Plan reflects work being done not only by state and local partners, but within the area plans of Oregon's AAAs, which have identified key priorities such as increasing outreach and information on resources in the aging network to older adults, reaching communities affected by systemic racism and other forms of social discrimination, and empowering older adults to not only live independently, but to help others in their communities interdependently.

Although the challenges facing Oregon's older adults are many, this Plan not only articulates goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes oriented toward an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state, it also assumes that older adults are an asset to their communities and their state. What follows is a State Plan that articulates what programs and services can do for Oregon's older adults, including how these programs, services, and activities empower older adults for the benefit of their communities and the state. This Plan offers, in its scope and capacity, one part of the roadmap along which Oregon may become an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state.

State and Federal Focus Areas

APD worked closely with an advisory workgroup to identify priorities and focus areas, and create goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes for each focus areas in the State Plan. The advisory workgroup represented AAAs, Commissioners, Title VI grantees, the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO), community members and advocates, and state staff. The advisory workgroup considered many issues facing older Oregonians,

especially within the last two years. This Plan adopts the federally required focus areas, organized around the vision of an age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon. Each focus area's objectives, strategies, and measurable outcomes are organized around a goal related to the focus area. These goals are:

- **Older Americans Act (OAA) Core Programs:** Contribute to making Oregon an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state.
- **COVID-19:** Build upon best practices and lessons learned during the pandemic to contribute to Oregon being an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state.
- **Equity:** Build capacity for culturally and linguistically responsive services in an age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon.
- **Expanding Access to Home and Community Based Services:** Support an age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon that provides older adults with a safe home and community that promotes their well-being.
- **Caregiving:** Cultivate a strong family and community support system to maintain and improve wellbeing for caregivers and older relative caregivers (Grandfamilies and Kinship Families), to support an age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon.

Below are descriptions of each focus area, followed by lists of objectives under each focus area.

Older Americans Act (OAA) Core Programs

Older adults in Oregon are facing significant challenges, especially older adults with the greatest economic and social needs. The term "greatest economic need" means the need resulting from an income level at or below the poverty line. Those with the greatest social need include older adults within communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQIA2S+ persons, rural and frontier communities, indigenous communities, members of religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and communities in which English is not the primary language used.

This Plan proposes to prioritize information, outreach, and new ways to deliver core OAA services to these communities, including the ongoing

efforts to coordinate Title III and Title VI services. Moreover, and especially post-COVID, older adults in these communities face disproportionate risks in the areas of housing, safety and access to legal services. This Plan places special emphasis on providing information and assistance to older adults who are at risk in these areas in an effort to make Oregon an age-friendly and dementia-friendly state.

Objectives:

- Support older adults who are housing insecure.
- Increase collaboration to improve justice and safety for older adults.
- Strengthen Title III and Title VI coordination at the state and local levels.
- Increase public knowledge, and knowledge among professionals serving older adults, of services and supports available for all older adults, with emphasis on reaching populations in greatest economic and social need (with particular attention to older adults living with HIV/AIDS, Holocaust survivors and those at risk for institutional placement).
- Develop age-friendly and dementia-friendly programs inclusive of populations with greatest social need.

COVID-19

In building objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this Plan draws from lessons learned to address an array of issues and risks facing Oregon's older adults. For one, Oregon's older adults have experienced wildfires, adverse weather, drought conditions and other emergencies alongside the COVID-19 public health emergency. This Plan undertakes work to ensure the aging network is at the center of emergency preparedness planning, and that Oregon is an advocate for older adults who may be at the highest risk, such as older adults living with dementia. This Plan also includes efforts to combat and address social isolation and loneliness, position older adults as volunteers and contributors to their communities, and improve behavioral health supports for older adults with behavioral health, substance use or suicide ideation risks.

Objectives:

- Develop programs, including intergenerational programs, aimed at reducing social isolation and feelings of loneliness among older adults.
- Build a preventive and early intervention network for older adults with behavioral health and substance use risks, including suicidal ideation and screening for suicide risk.
- Deepen connections with community partners to develop disaster preparedness and disaster relief plans that are age- and dementia-responsive.
- Support and increase volunteer networks and opportunities.

Equity

Oregon's older adult population is becoming more diverse, and this Plan strives to work on objectives and strategies that improve OAA services and supports to meet the needs and preferences of older adults in many of Oregon's communities. Services that will be of particular focus in this Plan include nutrition programs, the ADRC network, caregiving, health and wellness programs, legal services (as mentioned in the OAA focus area), and the Senior Community Service Employment Program. In so doing, this Plan will use data collection to track progress toward measurable outcomes and emphasize building relationships with communities who are not currently adequately served by Oregon's aging system with the aim of building an inclusive age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon.

Program units across APD, including central office units, APD districts and the CSSU, have completed Service Equity Plans. Service Equity Plans guide our intention to provide equitable and person-centered services to older adults and people with physical disabilities living in Oregon. Oregon's AAAs have also completed Service Equity Plans, as part of the equity work delineated in the 2021-2023 State Plan on Aging. AAAs will continue to implement those local plans during the 2023-2026 Plan period with the intention that the work will be built into the design and delivery of programs, service and supports. The CSSU Service Equity Plan is incorporated by reference into this Plan.

Objectives:

- Enhance data collection and program evaluation to be inclusive of all populations who are not currently adequately served by Oregon's aging system, including LGBTQIA2S+, Native American elders and older adults living with HIV/AIDS. (Note: Data collection will not include questions about a person's HIV/AIDS status.)
- Establish and build upon relationships with communities and organizations who are not currently adequately served by Oregon's aging system, including Older Americans Act programs and services.
- Create strategies to lower barriers to core OAA programs for older adults experiencing systemic racism and other forms of social discrimination.
- Strengthen ADRC capacity to reach older adults in rural areas, those who speak languages other than English, LGBTQIA2S+ older adults, Tribal elders and older adults living with HIV/AIDS. Focus on intersectionality and increasing service capacity in rural/frontier areas.
- Build upon culturally and nutritionally responsive meals in congregate and home delivered meal programs.
- Build upon capacity for auxiliary aids, alternate format and language access services to remove barriers to effective communication for older adults.

Expanding Access to Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Oregon is a national leader in home and community-based services for older adults, including those who access services through Medicaid and those who get services through private pay. Unlike many states, Oregon does not have Medicaid managed care models for long-term services and supports, and long-term services and supports are not integrated into Medicaid medical services. However, there is a long-standing commitment to coordination between the medical and long-term services and supports systems under Medicaid. Within this Plan, the proposed objectives and strategies focus on new initiatives, health and wellness programs, and building provider capacity so older adults can have increased access to home and community-based services in a more age-friendly and dementia-friendly Oregon. This includes initiatives through which older adults can help each other (such as peer supports) and their communities, just as the communities can empower them with a more accessible system of home and community-based services and supports.

Objectives:

- In partnership with APD, the AAAs, and the Oregon Health Authority, the single state Medicaid agency, plan and implement the 1115 waiver expanding Oregon Project Independence (OPI) and creating a Family Caregiver Assistance Program (FCAP) that enhances in-home long-term services and supports and assists individuals at risk of institutionalized care and Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports.
- Increase outreach and community partner efforts to grow community based HCBS capacity in rural and frontier areas of Oregon, such as direct care workforce recruitment, volunteer networks, and adult day services.
- Promote integrated health and wellness programs that address older adults' physical and behavioral health needs, with an emphasis on screening for immunization status to mitigate vaccine-preventable infectious diseases, in a culturally responsive manner.

Caregiving

Caregivers are fundamental in this Plan's theme of making Oregon a more age-friendly and dementia-friendly state. This Plan proposes a set of initiatives for caregivers to have information on key services under the OAA, such as health and wellness, nutrition, safety, and abuse prevention, and places an emphasis not only on family caregivers, but on older adults who may not have any kin in their communities and have caregiving needs met by friends, neighbors, or trusted peers in their everyday lives. This Plan places emphasis on outreach to rural communities and communities of color, communities within which family caregivers as well as caregivers for those without kin are essential in making Oregon a more age-friendly and dementia-friendly state.

Objectives:

- Empower family and unpaid caregivers with information, education, and supports to improve and enhance older adult health, wellness, and abuse prevention and detection.

- Develop or scale currently effective volunteer programs to connect peers with older adults who have no kin or relationships in their communities, particularly in rural communities.
- Strengthen marketing and outreach regarding available services and supports to family and unpaid caregiver supports, including outreach to adult partners in rural areas, in communities of color, immigrant communities, older adults for whom English is not their primary language, and LGBTQIA2S+ older adults.
- Provide resources and support to family caregivers in underserved and underrepresented populations and document best practices that are identified in these initiatives.

Contact Us

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Community Services and Supports Unit at (503) 945-6237 or email SUA.Email@odhsoha.oregon.gov. We accept all relay calls, or you can dial 711.