

Department of Forensic Science
November 14, 2014

Report on the Response of the Department of Forensic Science to the Impact of the Aging of
Virginia's Population

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Pursuant to Code of Virginia §§ 2.2-5510 and 51.5-136, the Department of Forensic Science submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

The person in the agency designated to review policy and programs and accommodating the interests of older adults and adults with disabilities:

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Executive Summary

As indicated in the *Agency Mission, Roles and Responsibilities* on page 4, the purpose of the agency is to provide services to law enforcement agencies and medical examiners. Those two groups are our sole consumers. The agency does not deal with or interact with end-user consumers in the traditional sense. That is, the agency does not provide direct services to citizens of the Commonwealth, as citizens are not authorized to gather, handle, and deliver crime scene evidence. On the other hand, the agency does provide services indirectly to all citizens of the Commonwealth in that, when crime scene evidence is delivered to one of the agency's laboratories, the agency analyzes that evidence in order to help solve crimes. These crimes can and do affect all citizens.

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Agency Mission, Roles and Responsibilities

The Department of Forensic Science provides scientific analysis of evidential material for all law enforcement agencies, Commonwealth's Attorneys, medical examiners and other agencies in the Commonwealth as prescribed by law; provides expert testimony at trial; maintains a DNA Data Bank; trains law enforcement personnel on forensic related subjects; and provides limited photographic processing services to law enforcement agencies.

Information Requested

Item 1. If your agency has undertaken any actions to respond to the current and future impact of an aging population, such as needs assessments, strategic planning, or use of best practices, please briefly describe those actions. Please indicate what assistance from DARS could help your agency as it prepares to serve an aging Virginia population.

Agency management periodically conducts strategic planning, which addresses the potential effects on the agency when employees approach retirement. At this time, assistance is not needed for strategic planning.

Item 2. Briefly describe your agency's services that are used primarily by older Virginians and the funding streams (types and amounts) that support those services. If these particular services or funding streams are provided in conjunction with other state or local agencies or other for profit or non-profit organizations, please list them.

The services of the agency are used primarily by law enforcement agencies rather than directly to the public. The agency provides services that indirectly affect suspects and victims of crime of all ages.

Item 3. Identify current agency programs specifically designed to serve older Virginians that fall into any of the following eight categories:

- Health Care/Wellness
- Education
- Public Safety (including Adult Abuse Prevention)
- Recreation
- Housing
- Accessibility (including Livable Communities <http://www.vadrs.org/vblc/>)
- Financial Security
- Transportation

It isn't within the mission and scope of the agency to provide these types of services. See the response to #2, above, and the *Agency Description* page.

Item 4. Is your agency able to meet all of the service demands of older Virginians for the services listed above? If there are any instances where the demand for services exceeds your agency's ability to meet the demand, please indicate the service and the extent of the unmet demand. Also, if your agency maintains waiting lists for services, please provide this information, including the waiting list numbers for each service.

Yes. Since it isn't in the agency's scope to provide services to specific age groups, the agency is able to meet the service demands for all age groups.

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Item 5. Provide the number of persons, by gender if available, who received services from the agency in each of the past five state fiscal years (FY 2010 through FY2014) who fell into the following age ranges: 60-64; 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If your agency lacks specific information about the numbers of older Virginians it serves but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer older Virginians than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.

Details of the suspects and victims of crimes are usually unknown to the agency. Therefore, the ages of those receiving the agency's services are unknown.

Item 6. Referring to the services or funding you described in item two, describe any services or funding provided to older Virginians for which the accessibility or availability varies considerably in different parts of the Commonwealth.

(Not Applicable)

Item 7. Over the next five to 10 years, in what ways do you anticipate that an aging population will impact your agency's services, funding streams, or policies? Consider the impact from an increase in the number of older Virginians and whether the needs of older Virginians will differ from those of today's older adults. Please include any anticipated impacts upon the cost of services, changes in type of services or the manner of service delivery, or modifications to agency policies, staffing needs, or procedures.

No differences in the agency's services, funding streams, or policies are anticipated as a result of the aging of the population.

Item 8. Please describe the primary steps that should be taken at the federal, state, or local levels to meet the future demands of older Virginians and to make services delivery more effective and efficient.

The agency's mission is to provide analysis of crime scene evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies. Details of the suspects and victims of crimes are usually unknown to the agency. Therefore, delivery of the agency's services specifically to older Virginians is seldom possible.

Item 9. Identify the extent to which your agency provides "customer-oriented" publications and websites that are designed to be "senior-friendly." If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to older Virginians, please identify any steps your agency is taking to improve their access to this information.

The agency implemented a new website in 2013 that meets all accessibility requirements. The agency does not serve consumers as traditionally defined. The agency does not produce publications.

Item 10. Describe any other services or programs that your agency plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

Since no impact to the agency is anticipated as a result of the aging of the population, no other services or programs are anticipated.

Item 11. Please indicate if your agency is experiencing an increase in employees retiring later and describe any actions your agency is taking or plans to take to accommodate its aging workforce with innovative practices.

The agency was established in 2005. DFS has not identified any trend relating to delayed retirements, but recognizes that the agency does not have a long history for comparison.