



News Release

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Virginia State Plan for Aging Services released

(RICHMOND, Va.) — The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) released the new Virginia State Plan for Aging Services, which examines current and future needs of older Virginians.

Developed every four years by DARS, this plan fulfills federal requirements to receive Older Americans Act funding through the Administration for Community Living and state law requiring a Virginia strategic aging plan. The plan is effective Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2027.

DARS' multi-method approach included conducting a statewide needs assessment, engaging with stakeholders and soliciting public comment.

DARS conducted the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults, hearing from almost 9,000 older Virginians about their needs and preferences.

“The Commonwealth is committed to elevating aging services and this plan equips us with the priorities and resources needed to make Virginia a great place to grow older,” said **Secretary of Health and Human Resources John Littel**.

“This comprehensive plan serves as a blueprint to enhance the lives of older Virginians so that they can comfortably age in their own homes and communities,” said **DARS Commissioner Kathy Hayfield**. “Serving as the backbone of the aging network, Virginia’s 25 area agencies on aging provide vital services, such as home-delivered meals, in-home services and caregiver supports. Last year, they served 69,000 Virginians. DARS is proud to uplift their work through this plan.”

Virginia Center on Aging at Virginia Commonwealth University held 31 in-person and virtual focus groups and interviews with older adults, caregivers, advocacy organizations, aging and long-term care service providers, universities and state agencies. The center also conducted an analysis on older Virginians needs as evidenced in state and national data, trends and reports.

The **University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center Demographics Research Group** compiled demographic data on older adults to assist with updating the funding formula for area agencies on aging and to create a more robust depiction of older Virginians.

With nearly two million adults aged 60 and older in Virginia, some emerging findings were:

- Older residents contribute \$38.5 billion annually to their communities and the commonwealth through paid and unpaid work
- About 79 percent of older residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good
- Older Virginians listed their top concerns about aging in place in their current homes as: financial reasons (52%), health reasons (44%) and the home not being suited for aging in place (27%)
- Other overall concerns reported included:
 - Housing needs (45%)
 - Access to information (42%)
 - Financial challenges (30%)
 - Mobility or transportation needs (24%)
- 41 percent of older Virginians are estimated to need assistance with chore services, such as heavy housework or yard work
- 37 percent of older Virginians are estimated to need home repairs or maintenance assistance, such as door or window repairs or weatherization

DARS has used these findings to help obtain a three-year, \$1.17 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant for home modifications for older adults living in rural areas. DARS anticipates that the plan and accompanying data and materials will support a coordinated effort across the public and private sectors to better serve older residents.

To access the State Plan for Aging Services and related materials:

<https://vda.virginia.gov/stateplans.htm>

To learn more about aging services in Virginia or to find your local area agency on aging:

<https://easyaccess.virginia.gov/> or www.dars.virginia.gov or call 2-1-1.

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with community partners, provides and advocates for resources and services to improve the employment, quality of life, security and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or follow DARS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vadars.