



Age Strong VT strives to build a future where all Vermonters thrive throughout all stages of life.



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Aging Council
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Why A Multisector Plan on Aging?

Demographics:

As of 2021, there are approximately 183,000 Vermonters 60 years old and older in Vermont (28.4% of the total population and growing).

Policy:

Older Vermonters Act passed in September 2020 and called on the State to put forth a “process for the development of a Vermont Action Plan for Aging Well.”

Culture:

Ageism is negatively impacting our population. An MPA can help elevate issues and drive cultural change.



[2021 VT Census Brief Older VTers.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Why a Multisector Plan on Aging? It's what Vermonters want:

2023 Vermonter Poll Results:

- When asked if Vermont has the *resources to address the needs of the older population* as it continues to increase,
 - 64% said NO
 - only 11% said YES
- When asked *how important it is for Vermont's elected officials to prioritize and invest in an MPA*,
 - 81% said very or somewhat important
 - only 6% said somewhat or very unimportant

The Vermonter Poll is a statistically representative, statewide survey conducted annually by UVM Center for Rural Studies.

Long-term Value Add for the State

- First plan of its kind in VT
- Age Strong VT strives to build a future where all Vermonters thrive at all stages of life. 'Age-friendly' means livable for all.
- Expanding and strengthening partnerships across government, business, community
- Leveraging existing resources to meet key goals
- Equity at the forefront
- Communicating in a whole new way about aging – energy, opportunity, possibility – addressing ageism, increasing public awareness/education



Accomplishments To Date

- Established an [Advisory Committee](#) including representation from agencies across State government, external providers supporting older Vermonters across the state, diverse older adults and caregivers in Fall 2021
- Hired a .5FTE project coordinator and a .5FTE public health data analyst (cross-dept shared position) in Spring 2022
- **Conducted a Baseline Assessment:** [Survey](#), Public [Listening Sessions](#), Focus Groups, Interviews, expert presentations, data gathering (Spring 2022-Summer 2023)
- Participated in a 10-state MPA Learning Collaborative 2022-2023
- Developed strategic communications with support from HARK – branding, promotion, polling (Spring 2023)
- Developed draft Multisector Plan on Aging with 7 subcommittees (Summer 2023)

93% of older Vermonters who responded to the survey want to age at home.



Objectives & Strategies in 7 Focus Areas from the Older Vermonters Act

1. Affordable Aging
2. Healthy Aging for All
3. Social Connection is Key
4. Infrastructure for the Future
5. Valuing Family Caregiving
6. The Fight for Justice
7. Strengthening Systems of Support

Affordable Aging



Objectives:

1. Increase the amount of income available to older Vermonters.
2. Increase Vermont's 60+ workforce participation rate.
3. Support programs and policy initiatives to enhance Vermonters' opportunities for and education about retirement.



Healthy Aging for All

1. By 2033, decrease to 11% (from 13% in 2021) the percentage of adults age 70 and older who have 4 or more comorbidities. (BRFSS, Vermont Department of Health)
2. Reduce comorbidities: Increase exercise: By 2033, increase non-leisure physical activity among older adults age 65 and older to meet or exceed the Healthy Vermonters goal. (BRFSS, Vermont Department of Health).
3. Decrease hunger: By 2033, reduce household food insecurity to 5% (from 9% in 2020). (Current Population Survey, Food Security Supplement, Agency of Human Services).
4. Reduce falls-related deaths: By 2033, reduce the fall-related death rate to 117 per 100,000 Vermont adults age 65 (from 156 per 100,000 in 2020). (BRFSS, Vermont Department of Health).
5. Stop suicide: By 2033, decrease to 21 (from 26.4 in 2021) the rate of suicide deaths per 100,000 male Vermonters age 65 and older. (BRFSS, Vermont Department of Health)

Social Connection is Key

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness and identification of social isolation and loneliness among all older adults.
2. Support and strengthen Vermont's network of viable senior centers, adult day centers and other local community institutions such as libraries and churches with quality and equitable programming for older Vermonters.
3. Increase volunteerism of older Vermonters by 10% by 2035 (both number of volunteers and level of engagement).
4. Increase the number of intergenerational engagement opportunities – implement at least 5 new models by 2030.

Infrastructure for the Future

Housing Objectives

1. Provide 5,000 new units of high-quality affordable housing by 2030 within or adjacent to walkable centers that enable residents to age well in community.
2. Increase age-specific housing available for 55+ by 3,750 homes by 2034.
3. Support older adults to “age in place,” which means choosing to remain at home or in a supportive living community as they grow older without having to move each time their needs increase.

Transportation Objectives

1. Focus future transit service to encourage “Residential Growth Zones.”
2. Expand the Vermont Elders and Persons with a Disability (E&D) program by 20% funding with zero denials.
3. Increase access to walkable, bikeable and transit friendly communities that facilitate independence and support aging in place.

Community Design Objective

1. Increase the availability of accessible, inclusive public spaces (indoor and outdoor) in towns by encouraging Smart Growth and infill development.

Valuing Family Caregivers

Objectives

1. By 2029, reduce the percentage of Vermont caregivers providing care/assistance 40 hours or more in an average week to a friend/family member from 19% to 9%.
2. By 2028, increase the percentage of Vermont family caregivers who report knowing about respite options and how to access them to 80%.
3. By 2028, increase the percentage of Vermont family caregivers who report being knowledgeable about services and resources related to self-care, medical benefits, long term care and estate planning, and medical conditions of their care recipients to 80%.
4. By 2029, reduce the number of caregivers reporting a negative impact on their financial security due to caregiving from 32% to 10%.



The Fight for Justice

1. By 2026 the state will establish policies and interventions that are appropriate and allowable in cases of self-neglect with specific reference to the Self-Neglect Working Group report.
2. By 2030 Long-Term Care Facility Survey and Certification data will be transparent and publicly available to ensure appropriate oversight, system performance improvements, and public access to data to make informed decisions.
3. By 2030, the state, in concert with community partners, will create 5 beds of safe emergency housing for victims that can also deliver some level of medical or long-term care services as needed.
4. By 2026, Vermont elder justice providers will be sufficiently coordinated and connected to allow for high quality referrals and system collaboration.

Strengthen the System of Supports



Objectives

1. By 2026, Vermont will create a standardized set of protocols, competencies and training for call centers that provide information, referral and assistance and a method for monitoring performance that includes consumer experience.
2. By 2026, Vermont will establish no wrong door portals for reporting abuse, neglect, exploitation across support systems that will include universally agreed upon decision trees.
3. By 2028, Vermont will increase the percentage of older people and family caregivers who are knowledgeable of critical programs and services from 45% to 75%.

Moving Forward

- Engage with state leadership to prepare for public launch
- Promote “Age-friendly State” designation to further Age Strong VT goals
- Gather more input/feedback: public comment period in November 2023
- Develop an evaluation plan with measurable outcomes
- Launch and implement plan in 2024!

Thank You & Questions

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