



FLORIDA ACTION PLAN ON AGING

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INTRODUCTION

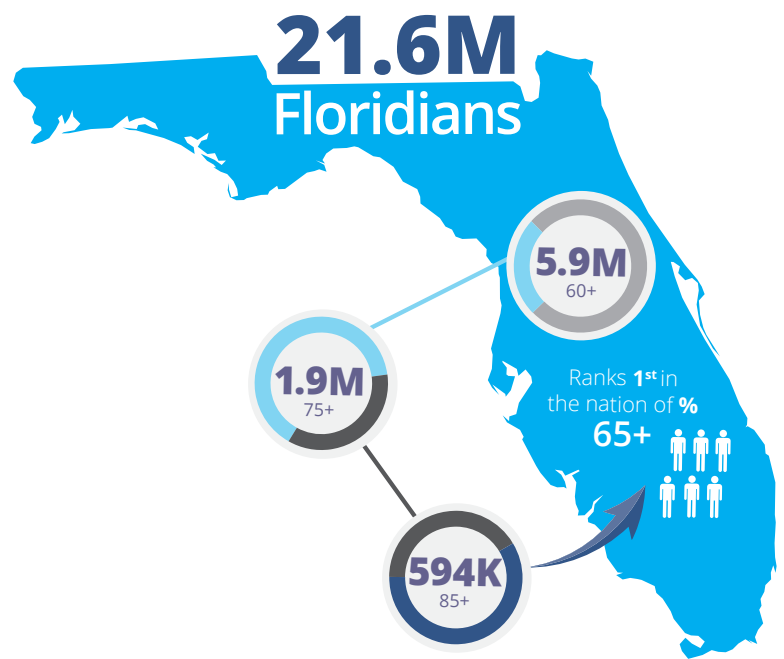
BY THE NUMBERS

Florida is the third largest state in the nation, with more than 21 million residents, and over 28 percent (5.9 million) of those residents are over the age of 60. Florida's senior population outnumbers the senior populations of 20 other states combined, as well as the total population of Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

Older adults 100+ are the fastest growing age group in Florida, emphasizing the need for a statewide focus on healthy aging.

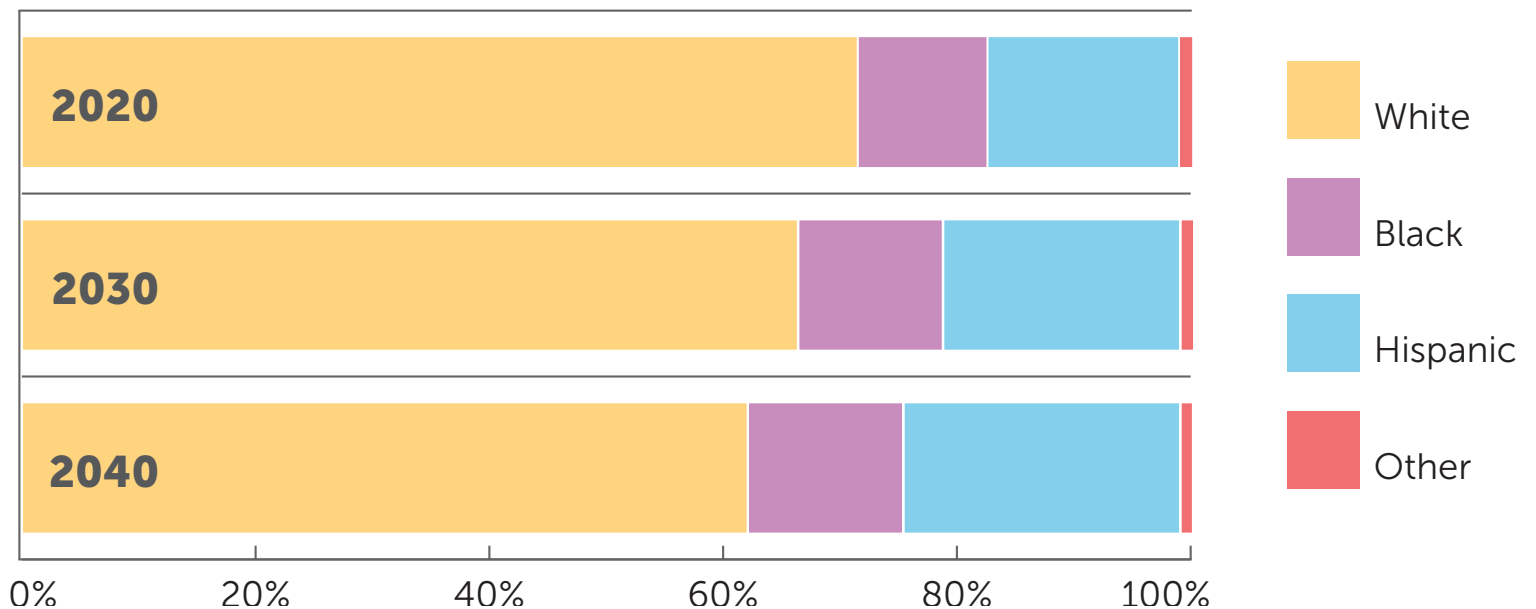
Florida also benefits from a rich cultural diversity. Approximately 29 percent of people age 60 and older identify as a racial or ethnic minority. Among people age 60 and older, the percentage of minorities in Florida continues to exceed that of the nation.

Disabilities among Florida's elder population vary by type, with 13 percent reporting cognitive impairments or problems with memory, 17 percent reporting ambulatory disabilities, and 14 percent reporting two or more types of impairment.



As this age group grows—and the state's entire population continues to grow—states like Florida will be faced with increased demands on infrastructure and services. By 2030 Florida's population of older adults will increase more than 30 percent from what it is today, which may place excessive burdens on the state's economic and healthcare systems for older adults—challenges that have increased because COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on older adults.

Florida's 60+ population by race/ethnicity





CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

The Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), along with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)*, lead agencies, providers, and community partners are responding continuously, and vigorously to serve older adults in Florida during COVID-19. The pandemic brought a renewed focus on the pressing needs of the most vulnerable and put a spotlight on the staggering effects of social isolation. The Department coordinated with the Aging Network to deploy multiple innovative response strategies and interventions including the Feeding Older Floridians Restaurant Meal Initiative, technologies to support individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, socially isolated older adults, and an action plan to address mental health issues.

During these uncertain times, efforts to respond creatively will continue to unfold. The Livable Florida Action Plan, as it relates to COVID-19, is a fluid document that may be updated as new challenges and new creative solutions arise.

**The AAAs also operate as Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), which function as a single, coordinated system for information and access to services for all Floridians seeking long-term care resources. The ADRCs provide information and assistance about state and federal benefits, as well as available local programs and services.*

LONGEVITY

Despite the inherent challenges of aging, Florida's older adults are significant contributors to the state's economy and are very active in their local communities. Older adults are staying employed longer and producing economic value for an extended period. They donate to charitable causes and contribute greatly to their communities by volunteering. Volunteerism in this group continuously enhances communities throughout Florida. The impact of volunteers is evident in local programs and services such as libraries, schools, community-service organizations, museums, theater groups, and art galleries. The total economic contribution of older adults accounts for up to 54 percent of the State's Gross Domestic Product: \$478 billion. Economists often refer to this as the "longevity economy." A longevity economy describes older adults who are more financially capable and have the largest percentage of discretionary spending than any other age group. Additionally, many older adults provide direct care for family members, including raising their grandchildren when a parent is unable.

LIVING WELL AND AGING WELL

The changing demographics of Florida's seniors present numerous opportunities while also creating challenges in promoting the health and well being of a growing and diverse population.

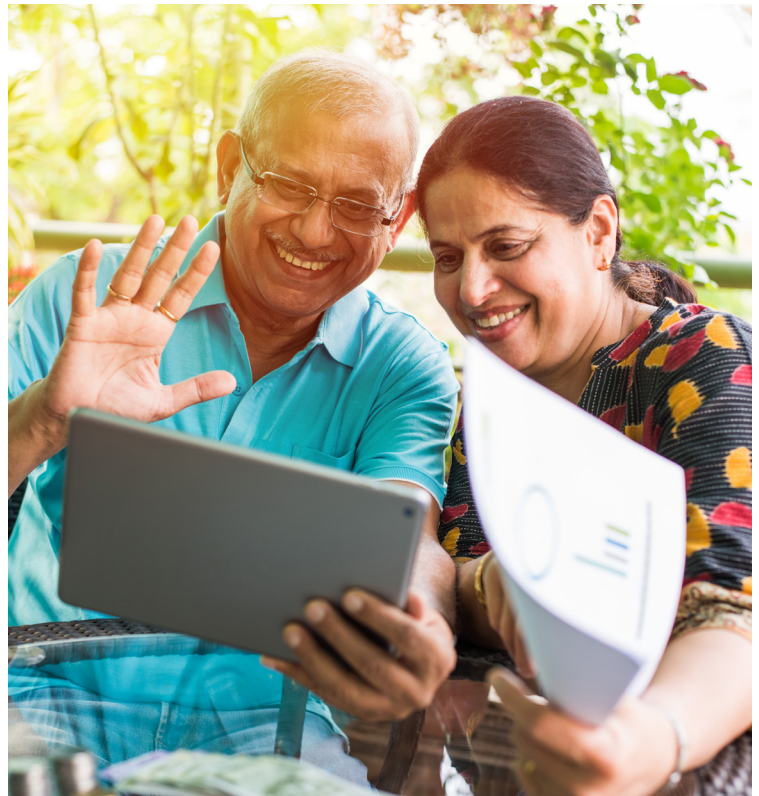
Aging should be an experience everyone embraces as the reward for a life of living and working among, with, and for their communities. It is a period of continued growth, development, and well-being despite physical challenges.

Through the leadership of Governor DeSantis and Lieutenant Governor Nuñez, Florida has embraced the challenges that come with a rapidly growing population and have focused on building a Florida where older adults are not just living, but living well and aging well.

In April of 2019, Florida was designated an Age-Friendly State, and is the second largest state to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Age-Friendly States and Communities address the social determinants of health—the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. As a result of this designation DOEA has added new emphasis to working with local leaders and tackling aging challenges while embracing the possibilities of an aging population—essentially becoming Livable Communities.

Through Livable Florida, DOEA and its partners are working to create Livable Communities in counties, cities, towns, and villages statewide. A Livable Community is safe and secure, has affordable housing and transportation options, offers supportive community features, services, and embraces older adults with varying needs and abilities. Livable Florida is creating new opportunities for an aging population while simultaneously making communities a place where people of all ages will call home.

The Livable Florida Action plan was developed to meet the state's vision of making Florida a place where people can live well and age well. DOEA has



taken a multifaceted approach, connecting Florida's state agencies with local leaders and helping to spearhead Age-Friendly Florida.

“Communities that fare best in the future will be those that both tackle the challenges and embrace the new opportunities that an aging population creates—essentially becoming Livable Communities.”

***~ Richard Prudom, Former Secretary
Florida Department of Elder Affairs***

LIVABLE FLORIDA TIMELINE



2014
FDOT Adopted Complete Streets Plan

2015
Age-Friendly Sarasota 1st County to Join

2015
DOEA Established DCCI

2015
Tallahassee 1st City to Join

2013-14
Miami-Dade 1st US Age-Friendly Community Initiative

2017
DOH Established Age-Friendly Public Health

2017
DOEA & AARP Host 1st Sharing Symposium

2012
AARP Becomes US Affiliate to GNAFCC*

2010
World Health Organization Established GNAFCC*

2019
DOH State Health Improvement Plan Included AD RD Priority

2009
FDOT Established Safe Mobility for Life Coalition

2001
Florida Council on Homelessness Formed

2019
Florida Designated 4th Age-Friendly State

2000
DOEA Established Communities for a Lifetime

2021
16th DCCI Task Force Established

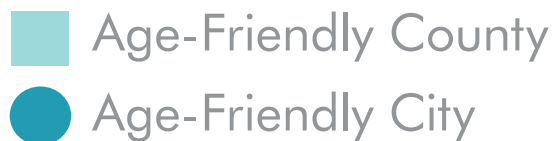
1992
Florida Department of Elder Affairs Established

1997
DOEA Established Elder-Friendly Communities

2021
40th Age-Friendly Community Established

* GNAFCC: Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities & Communities

MAP KEY



LIVABLE FLORIDA IN ACTION

Throughout last year, COVID-19 remained in the forefront as seniors dealt with the disproportionate effect the pandemic initially had on the older population. In addition to guarding themselves against COVID-19, older adults dealt with senior centers closing, congregate meal sites shutting down, and staying at home for their own safety.

Governor DeSantis created the Seniors First initiative, and allowed seniors 65 and older to have first access to vaccinations while the rest of the nation maintained a higher age limit. As a result of the prioritization of vaccines for older adults, there was hope, especially in Florida. However, the effect of social isolation was, and still is, still prevalent.

As a result of the pandemic, it has become even more important to address the pandemic's mental health impact on older adults, particularly loneliness and isolation. To address positive mental health initiatives, the statewide Livable Florida program will build upon age-friendly successes already found in Florida communities such as Cutler Bay, Miami-Dade, Ocala, and Sarasota. Capitalizing on previous and ongoing efforts through AARP, the Aging Network, and various community-based organizations, Livable Florida will serve as a conduit for the expansion of age-friendly strategies across the state.

Together with AARP, Livable Florida seeks to provide advocacy, awareness, and support for their successful implementation. As livable Florida continues to expand, new communities will provide



a statewide umbrella of resources for communities to develop and implement Age-Friendly strategies.

Older Floridians may often be forced to make the difficult choice of leaving their home and community in exchange for a long-term care facility when barriers to remaining independent become too great. These systemic challenges require creative, community-focused solutions. Livable Florida embraces the diversity of communities across the state and encourages local decision making through a bottom-up, inclusive strategy aimed at supporting Livable Communities for all Floridians.



OUR ACTION PLAN ON AGING

GOAL 1: Community Choice

Floridians will be able to live, work, raise a family, and retire in the community of their choosing. Florida's older adults will be able to age in place, contribute to, and fully participate in the community of their choosing for as long as possible.

GOAL 2: Employment, Volunteerism, and Community Engagement

Older adults will be active participants in the labor force, engage in volunteerism, and the community at large as long as they want or need.

GOAL 3: Informal and Formal Caregiver Preparedness

Florida's older adults, their families, and caregivers will be more secure and better prepared to meet the challenges of aging.

GOAL 4: Healthcare and Nutrition

Older Floridians will stay healthier longer through access to affordable person-centered health care and support—including access to nutrition programs, medical care, and social services to promote active and independent living.

GOAL 5: Protection

Florida will empower and protect older adults and their caregivers from scams, fraud, abuse, neglect, and exploitation through public awareness, services, education, and training.



OUR GOALS

To ensure Florida's older adults have the opportunity to live the best life possible in the Sunshine State, Livable Florida is employing tactics which will help increase the number of communities in AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, as well as identify and form partnerships with private and public entities to create and sustain Livable Florida.

DOEA acts as a leader, connecting communities, agencies, and organizations to help Floridians live well and age well. Through Livable Florida, the Department's efforts will center on increasing awareness of Livable Florida and supporting Age-Friendly communities. Additionally, Livable Florida will facilitate partnerships and relationships to increase collaboration on initiatives such as age-friendly universities, age-friendly business and employer designations, and securing more resources.

GOAL 1: Community Choice

Floridians will be able to live, work, raise a family, and retire in the community of their choosing. Florida's older adults will be able to age in place, contribute to, and fully participate in the community of their choosing for as long as possible.



Access to appropriate and affordable housing becomes more complicated with aging. Older adults may face activity of daily living (ADL) limitations which increase the demand for universal design housing and other options allowing them to remain active, safe, and independent.

Transportation options beyond cars help older adults live in homes of their choosing, particularly after experiencing a decline in physical mobility, vision, or the capacity to drive safely. The future of transportation includes more choices—specialized transportation services, such as door-to-door para-transit and escorts to physician's offices should be options. Accessible transportation networks keep people of all ages connected to services, cultural activities, outdoor spaces, and community events.

Florida's climate and natural landscape offer some of the country's most wonderful beaches, beautiful parks, and public lands. These accessible, inviting, and safe outdoor spaces are integral to both mental and physical health, playing a critical role in promoting social inclusion and community choice.

GOAL 2: Employment, Volunteerism, and Community Engagement

Older adults will be active participants in the labor force, engage in volunteerism, and the community at large as long as they want or need.



Many older Floridians will continue to pursue work and/or volunteer opportunities upon retirement. Older Floridians are an asset and an incredible resource. Their strengths, experience, and insights are extremely valuable to the state and its economy. Floridians seeking to remain in the workforce may require education, training, and other forms of support to transition careers, add additional skills, and discover new employment avenues. Assessing the promotion of equal opportunities for older adults in the workforce is vital because age biases and discrimination remain a problem.

The workplace provides a unique context for intergenerational engagement. The state can encourage public-private partnerships to take full advantage of the resources older adults bring to the economy. Additionally, older adults may choose to engage in volunteerism through participation in mission-driven activities, civic organizations, or faith-based institutions. Volunteering has social, mental, and physical benefits for people of all ages.

GOAL 3: Informal and Formal Caregiver Preparedness

Florida's older adults, their families, and caregivers will be more secure and better prepared to meet the challenges of aging.



Providing caregiver support is essential to maintaining the well-being of older adults in a livable community. As the population ages, the support available for caregivers will come into sharper focus.

Connections between family members are important for increasing supports available to caregivers of older Floridians. A caregiver is an unpaid individual—for example, a spouse, partner, family member, friend, or neighbor; involved in assisting others with activities of daily living and/or medical tasks. The caregiving workforce can be grown through caregiver training and professional development opportunities.

Investments made now in both formal and informal caregiving will allow Florida to be better prepared as the need for workforce increases. Investing in informal caregivers may enable families to stay together longer and better meet the needs of an aging parent or relative. A Livable Florida means more caregivers ready to enter the workforce.

GOAL 4: Healthcare and Nutrition

Older Floridians will stay healthier longer through access to affordable person-centered health care and support—including access to nutrition programs, medical care, and social services to promote active and independent living.



To maintain or improve health and wellness, older Floridians must have access to medical care and support. This includes access to affordable person-centered health care and social services to promote active and independent living. Through innovative partnerships, Florida can develop and test new models of community-based care to maximize access to programs and services.

Access to appropriate nutrition means developing new partnerships with nutrition and food science departments at state universities and increasing supply chain linkages to dissemination and delivery services. Building good nutrition habits in older adults starts with removing barriers to participation in nutrition programs and it also means providing good nutrition information and programs for all ages.

Food assistance programs offer more than just a meal. Food Assistance Programs provide food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to Florida's elders. Food Assistance Programs are available to all Floridians age 60 and older.

GOAL 5: Protection

Florida will empower and protect older adults and their caregivers from scams, fraud, abuse, neglect, and exploitation through public awareness, services, education, and training.



Identifying elder abuse has been a critical issue both in the community and within health care settings. Florida needs to be vigilant in protecting older adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by supporting outreach and training efforts conducted through Florida's 11 Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

Florida will pursue inclusion, equity, and protect the most vulnerable from fraud and scams.

Through statewide coordinated efforts focused on protection, Florida can strengthen prevention and responses to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

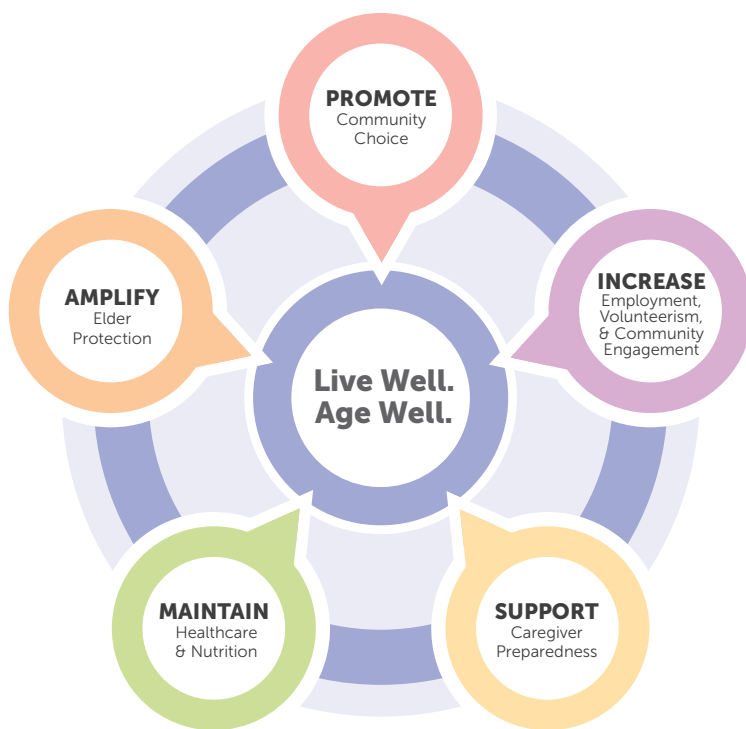


IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of Elder Affairs, the State of Florida, along with local governments and the private sector, should support partnerships to promote and develop the expansion of community-wide efforts to make all of Florida an Age-Friendly state inline with the Livable Florida initiative. Serving as a foundation for the goals and objectives in the 2021-2024 State Plan on Aging, these areas of focus are:

- **GOAL 1:** Community Choice
- **GOAL 2:** Employment, Volunteerism, and Community Engagement
- **GOAL 3:** Aging Preparedness
- **GOAL 4:** Healthcare and Nutrition
- **GOAL 5:** Protection

GOALS FOR A LIVABLE COMMUNITY



GOAL 1: COMMUNITY CHOICE

Floridians will be able to live, work, raise a family, and retire in the community of their choosing. Florida's older adults will be able to age in place, contribute to, and fully participate in the community of their choosing for as long as possible.

STRATEGY 1

Promote resources to address accessible, affordable, and appropriate housing and support aging in place.

TACTICS

- Integrate wrap-around housing services for older adults.
- Encourage local planning for transit-accessible housing.
- Educate builders and realtors on the importance of universal design.
- Increase the resources for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)/Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) through the National Association of Home Builders, the Florida Home Builders Association, and the Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist designation.
- Identify services for pre- and post- disaster preparedness.
- Facilitate partnerships between ADRCs/AAAs, managed care plans, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing authorities, the Florida Council on Homelessness, Homeless Continuums of Care, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and Centers for Independent Living (CILs).
- Increase education of resident legal protections, landlord tenant laws, and low-income housing.

STRATEGY 2

Support the expansion of safe, reliable, innovative, and accessible transportation options designed to increase mobility and quality of life.

TACTICS

- Promote training on the safe use of transportation options.
- Increase transit access by supporting the Florida Department of Transportation's Aging Road User Strategic Plan.
- Promote the findings of studies on autonomous vehicles.
- Identify resources for vehicle retrofitting.
- Promote community volunteerism with ridesharing.
- Increase access to inter-county transport services by collaborating with innovative and established partners in rural areas, including outreach to the private sector to include Uber, Lyft, and other businesses.

STRATEGY 3

Work with community partners and explore emerging public safety strategies to promote accessible, inviting, and safe outdoor spaces and buildings to encourage active participation and recreation.

TACTICS

- Promote age-friendly parks and showcase current best practices.
- Identify community grant programs to meet capacity needs.
- Develop a uniform statewide marketing strategy to ensure message consistency.
- Improve connectivity between neighborhood infrastructure with community centers and services.
- Initiate partnerships with parks and recreation centers to become more age-friendly.
- Promote resources like Florida's Guide to Safe Mobility for Life and AARP's Walk Audit Toolkit.
- Encourage bus stops to be covered, well-lit, and safe.



GOAL 2: EMPLOYMENT, VOLUNTEERISM, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Older adults will be active participants in the labor force, engage in volunteerism, and the community at large as long as they want or need.

STRATEGY 1

Encourage the participation of older adults by increasing employment opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and social and cultural activities designed with older adults in mind.

TACTICS

- Increase collaboration with national Senior Community Service Employment Program sponsors.
- Promote local service volunteer recognition efforts and events.
- Collect, organize, and disseminate data from local partners on volunteer efforts.
- Centralize and capture volunteer service statistics.
- Educate the public and other stakeholders about the benefits of volunteering.

- Work with partners and organizations to support and recognize senior-focused local events.
- Increase technological proficiency and access to promote online, virtual connectedness.
- Increase awareness of social and cultural activities through DOEA's Elder Update magazine, DOEA and AAA websites, the Livable Florida newsletter, and via social media.
- Increase collaboration with faith-based networks to offer shuttle services to community activities.
- Increase the capacity of senior centers by developing a Socialization Toolkit.
- Promote and support positive intergenerational opportunities and interactions through child-centered organizations, including schools and other state agencies.

GOAL 3: INFORMAL AND FORMAL CAREGIVER PREPAREDNESS

Florida's older adults, their families, and caregivers will be more secure and better prepared to meet the challenges of aging.

STRATEGY 1

Increase the resources and support available to caregivers of older adults as well as older adults who are caring for grandchildren.

TACTICS

- Increase education, training, and resources for caregivers, including training for caregivers when someone has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD).
- Promote the early identification of caregivers by encouraging baseline wellness checks with providers.
- Educate businesses and private entities on the need to subsidize or otherwise support onsite or "worker" respite.
- Inventory, promote, and educate caregivers on the availability of technology to ease caregiver burden.
- Increase the availability of flexible respite care.
- Establish or expand direct pay vouchers and associated training.
- Encourage the connection of caregivers to local support groups.
- Work with businesses to host caregiver training for employees.
- Work to connect grandparents to social resources through coordination with local partners such as public schools, pediatricians, and faith-based organizations.
- Increase the availability of resources at community-based organizations and connect grandparents to resources and support groups.
- Identify, pursue, and secure funding for training programs or connect grandparents to existing funding for children.



GOAL 4: HEALTHCARE AND NUTRITION

Older Floridians will stay healthier longer through access to affordable person-centered health care and support—including access to nutrition programs, medical care, and social services to promote active and independent living.

STRATEGY 1

Encourage healthy aging, promote access to health care, and social services options for older adults and their caregivers across the spectrum of long-term care.

TACTICS

- Raise concern and awareness about healthy aging and benefits at a cultural level by encouraging care for older adults and combating ageism.
- Educate caregivers about the availability of services.
- Expand application of telehealth and wearable technology.
- Ensure the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program is well integrated into Aging Network services to ensure older adults have access to free, unbiased, and



comprehensive health insurance counseling and education.

- Inventory of non-profits, initiatives, and organizations and determine overlaps and gaps at a “regional needs” level.
- Educate the public about social services referrals from providers to continuum of care partners in a manner inclusive of various communication and language needs.

STRATEGY 2

Enable individuals to maintain a high quality of life through the provision, integration, and sustainability of home and community-based core programs.

TACTICS

- Increase the use of evidence-based programs in communities.
- Strengthen communication with providers and non-traditional partners assisting clients outside of the Florida Aging Network.
- Develop worker availability and capacity in the fields of health, home health, and social services.
- Identify and serve target populations in need of home and community based services.
- Identify reasons why older adults have gaps in services and work to close the gaps.
- Identify barriers for older adults who are not being served.
- Target and educate those 55 and older about aging and services.
- Streamline access to health, home and community-based services, and long-term care options through partnerships and Aging and Disability Resource Centers.
- Advocate for prevention and early intervention of mental health and substance abuse services.
- Identify a road map of touch points to “follow the client.”

STRATEGY 3

Strengthen Florida's capacity to address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

TACTICS

- Identify a statewide system of resources and support to formalize the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) network.
- Expand and support the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) Task Forces.
- Collaborate with the Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee and propose recommendations for the ADRD State Plan.
- Incorporate ADRD emphasis in education at medical universities and in residency programs while expanding to all health professions such as social work and public health.

STRATEGY 4

Promote good nutrition to maintain healthy lifestyles and empower older adults to engage in healthful behaviors.

TACTICS

- Educate the public and partners on existing nutrition programs.
- Maintain and strengthen the Long-term Feeding Taskforce Group.
- Explore private industry linkages to supply chain food dissemination delivery/access.
- Create intergenerational education and messaging.
- Develop innovative health and preparation options by collaborating with Nutrition and Food Science departments at Florida Universities.
- Develop non-traditional infrastructure through schools, child-care providers, and mixed purpose events to reduce stigma.
- Identify and erode barriers to nutrition program participation.
- Support nutrition education including resources from various programs including: My Plate, American and Florida Dietetic Association, and the Dietary Reference from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



- Cross-coordinate with existing programs such as Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), chronic disease self-management education programs, and SNAP-Ed.
- Provide education on food intake, caloric needs, and variety of choice at cross coordinated program locations such as congregate meal sites and senior centers.

GOAL 5: PROTECTION

Florida will empower and protect older adults and their caregivers from scams, fraud, abuse, neglect, and exploitation through public awareness, services, education, and training.

STRATEGY 1

Establish DOEA as the lead on efforts to stop abuse, neglect, and exploitation (ANE) of older adults and vulnerable populations. Establish DOEA as the clearinghouse of efforts to stop ANE by centralizing available resources and facilitating public awareness of all programs.



TACTICS

- Support and facilitate multidisciplinary responses to ANE of older adults by leading and increasing collaboration among essential and specific federal, state, and private partners across the state.
- Host a sharing symposium with partners at the state level, including options for virtual participation.
- Create a tip sheet to educate the public and partners about who to contact to enhance local efforts.
- Develop partnerships to disseminate information to underserved areas and populations.

STRATEGY 2

Educate prosecutors, elected officials, and constituents on the need to prosecute every offender charged with abuse, neglect, and exploitation (ANE) of older adults and vulnerable populations.

TACTICS

- Identify opportunities to present “a year-in review” to local law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, constituents, etc.
- Enhance partnerships with local law enforcement community and associations by facilitating/developing regional task force groups.
- Enhance partnerships with local constituents through civic organizations.
- Collaborate with victim and consumer advocates and victims’ rights groups.
- Initiate communication and compile a list of groups, mutual concerns, and similar issues to expand resources and develop creative partnerships.
- Provide technical assistance and education to groups on issues related to stopping ANE of older adults and vulnerable populations.

STRATEGY 3

Strengthen and expand elder rights programs and services.

TACTICS

- Collaborate with the Aging Network and other federal, state, and local partners to promote awareness campaigns.
- Work with potential, new, and existing partners to use resources to reach older adults.
- Enhance partnerships with local groups such as faith-based organizations, service clubs, and provider associations to maximize outreach.
- Protect individuals with ADRD from further vulnerability.
- Educate and train law enforcement, legal professionals, and financial industry professionals on issues of ANE of individuals living with ADRD.
- Provide ADRD resources such as training or toolkits and education to faith-based communities.
- Provide ADRD resources and education in public libraries and other community centers.





ACRONYMS

AAA	Area Agency on Aging
ADRC	Aging and Disability Resource Center
ADRD	Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias
AFC	Age-Friendly Community
ANE	Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CILS	Centers for Independent Living
CSH	Corporation for Supportive Housing
DCCI	Dementia Care and Cure Initiatives
DOEA	Department of Elder Affairs
DOH	Department of Health
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
GNAFCC	Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program
SFMNP	Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
SNAP-ED	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education
SHINE	Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders

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