

**Illinois Department on Aging
State Plan on Aging 2026-2028
Responses to Public Comments**

THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING WISHES TO THANK ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE PUBLIC AND VIRTUAL HEARINGS TO PROVIDE VALUABLE FEEDBACK ON THE 2026-2028 STATE PLAN. THE STATE PLAN CONTAINS OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES THAT ENSURE THE FEEDBACK IS WOVEN INTO THE DOCUMENT TOGETHER WITH SHORT, INTERIM, AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES.

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD OVERVIEW

The Illinois Department on Aging conducted four public hearings on the draft FY 2026-2028 State Plan on Aging in accordance with the Older Americans Act and federal guidelines from the Administration for Community Living. The public hearings were held in person, and virtually, to collect public input and feedback on the draft State Plan. IDoA appreciates the participation and opportunity to hear first-hand from older adults, caregivers, and stakeholders about their preferences, the services provided through the Aging Network, and their vision of the future.

Two in-person hearings were held on May 19, 2025, including one at the Renaissance Senior Center in Chicago (hosted by the Senior Services Area Agency on Aging, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services) and a second at AgeGuide located in the Chicago suburb of Lombard. An in-person public hearing hosted by the Egyptian Area Agency on Aging was held on May 28, 2025, at Senior Adult Services Senior Center in Carbondale. A final virtual hearing was held via Webex on May 29, 2025. A total of 255 comments and feedback were received via the public hearings.

In addition, feedback was collected via email, letter, or an online comment form on the IDoA website. Finally, flyers with a QR code were distributed at all public hearings and at the Senior Celebration (a significant sized event) held on May 21, 2025, in Springfield, Illinois. A copy of the flyer that was distributed at all in-person events is included in Appendix A below. The public comment period was held for 50 days, through June 19, 2025.

MAY 19, 2025, RENAISSANCE SENIOR CENTER, CHICAGO, IL

Anora

How about keeping healthy older people healthy? Chicago has Community Colleges doing free programs for older adults, does the state plan and the department have anything like this?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Area Agencies on Aging offer multiple programs to older adults with no cost including “Matter of Balance”, Savvy Caregiver, and much more. Objective 1.9 of the State Plan includes strategies to increase the number of older adults receiving health screenings, and strengthen connections with health partners and providers.

Carol Ann Jones

I’m the Aerobics Instructor here. Is there any possibility that they could take away the aerobics instructions programs? I have numerous sheets of paper showing that we need this program for our physical and mental health. Looking at spectrum of available funding we have, this is an important program, it improves physical/social/mental activity.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback. Each Area Agency on Aging receives funding to ensure programs like the one you mention continue to be provided. The State Plan envisions the continuation of evidence-based programs under Objective 1.7, 1.9, and 2.9.

Anita Stevens-

I’m an ambassador for the center. Younger seniors attend the senior centers, but ask “What are you planning for us, is there a session where we put in what we want, but I don’t see anything that we want?” I donate to this Senior Center, but we need the revenue from the state to keep the Senior Center open to help combat what happens if people don’t have these resources. We have a large age range, we have more seniors in the past 6 years than I have never seen, we are healthier, lowering our blood pressure, talking to each other, getting people out of one room they live in.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. It is critically important to ensure that activities at the Senior Center are attended by “young seniors” and that the input of all participants helps to shape programming. One of the Statewide goals is to use data and feedback to ensure programs take into consideration client satisfaction. Several strategies to meet this goal are included in Objective 1.5 and Objective 2.9.

Anita Stevens

How are you going to meet the needs of those who are incapacitated and don't know about services, we have literature in our center for every senior building but how do we help people who cannot get out? What are we doing it through radio, television, how are we going to do this?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. One of the Administration for Community Living's focus areas included in the State Plan is aimed at expanding Home and Community Based Services. Objective 1.8 contains numerous strategies aimed at addressing the unmet needs of older adults. In addition, one of the overarching Statewide goals is to increase visibility of the services offered throughout the Aging Network, with Objective 1.1 laying out numerous strategies to ensure those that don't know about services are connected to programs and providers.

Penny

Does the Department fund PACE Disability buses?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. While IDoA does not fund PACE disability buses, there are numerous programs and services available through the Area Agencies on Aging and Community Care Program Providers like the Adult Day Centers that do offer transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and other errands. In addition, IDoA oversees the Benefit Access Application that provides eligible older adults with discounted transportation in the City of Chicago.

Anitra

You mentioned the statewide needs assessment, is this open to the public and when will it be done? How do I find out when it takes place?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments to the State Plan. The statewide needs assessment will be open to the public. Indeed, IDoA will be seeking robust input from older adults and caregivers in all service areas. Objective 1.1 sets forth numerous strategies to increase awareness of programs and identify preferred communication methods. When the statewide needs assessment is launched the Area Agencies on Aging and Aging Network will play a pivotal role ensuring older adults are aware and how to provide feedback.

LaShaun

It seems like the population of ADRD [Alzheimer's Disease] is increasing, is there any study that looks at what is going on, and why?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As noted in the context section of the State Plan, research and data suggest the incidence of ADRD is increasing. Objectives 1.4, 1.9, 1.10, 3.1, and 3.3 all set forth strategies and objectives aimed at ensuring the needs of older adults with ADRD and their caregivers are addressed.

Janet

I bristled when I saw Adult Protective Services(APS) because I called it for my neighbor. I would have helped myself, but I was taking care of my elderly mother. My neighbor had Alzheimer's, she would walk out, and doorman would lock the door and leave her on the street. APS told me that she could bathe herself and her bills were paid so she was okay. I also found out that it is not against the law for your children to neglect you so don't depend on that.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments to the State Plan. Objectives 2.10 and 2.11 set forth strategies to increase education and awareness of the services provided under the APS program.

Antonia

I'm curious to find out, we are telling you what we need to do and what we need, you also mentioned federal, how do we make federals listen to us to keep Senior Centers open and get us what we need? I'm curious how do we go and tell federal not to take it away from us:

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. A day of advocacy is being coordinated by the Area Agencies on Aging.

Kristie

I'm assuming this plan realizes seniors are not all the same, I live in the area, and it is different from other part of the city/state. Most of us are single and many don't have families, this center in particular is incredibly important because it gets us out and offers us things we cannot do other ways. I can get here easily and there are things that matter, some of the things here matter where it wouldn't elsewhere. This SC is a crossroads and is about relationships and we meet people we never would have otherwise, which is important for mental health. Are you aware that not everyone is the same, we need to be heard also, and I agree that other things are true and important but please don't forget us, this is truly and unique.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Statewide Goal #1 to increase visibility of Aging Network services contains numerous strategies and objectives that recognize the diversity of individuals served through the numerous programs. In addition, Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 2.6, and 2.8 all focus on a person-centered approach to outreach and feedback. Also, as programs and services under the Older Americans Act are aimed at addressing those with the greatest social and economic need programs are tailored to meet needs at the community level as well.

Florence Thompson

I thought that I was here to tell you about how fantastic this particular center is, this center that I gravitated to because they have what I need and more. As an addition to what was said, we have specific needs, but this is a terrific center, what you saw when you came in was exactly how they treat us here every single day. They make us feel special, that's how they always speak to us, everyone here is very active, I'm astounded at what we do, we need more publicity for IDoA. We need this, I don't think you are trying to take this away from us, I never thought when I was younger that I'd be a big fan of senior centers, but this place meets my needs, and I need this place.

Tell your congressman, tell people your story, people don't understand where these programs are funded from, this comes from federal and state money but if any of those things are cut, we will have to cut right when the population is growing. If there is no organization of response, there won't be any response the effort to get to the funders will fail unless someone is in charge of doing it at every single center. Not going to happen unless people make it happen, you may not be able to do it, but someone needs to be responsible for collecting responses.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback concerning the importance of maintaining a thriving senior center and community. Numerous objectives in the State Plan will solicit feedback directly from older adults including 1.4, 1.10, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, and 3.1.

Teri

My life was changed when I was living in Chicago when someone told me to come here. If we are worried about funding being cut, we need to vote. Turnout was so low, but we need to vote and let people know why that matters, we need to let things trickle down and tell them how services are accessible. We need to let people know how to contact their persons and find their people, not IDoA's responsibility but we are all intelligent people we need to be doing our work to make sure we are educated and reached out.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for comments and feedback. One of the Administration for Community Living's focus areas included in the State Plan is aimed at expanding Home and

Community Based Services. Objective 1.8 contains numerous strategies aimed at addressing the unmet needs of older adults. In addition, one of the overarching Statewide goals is to increase visibility of the services offered throughout the Aging Network, with Objective 1.1 laying out numerous strategies to ensure those that don't know about services are connected to programs and providers.

Debra and Robert Hansen

We are fairly new and luckiest day was when we discovered Renaissance, I had a stroke, but the center put me back on my feet through dance, I'm using my brain in improv classes, everyone here is a friend, encouraging and happy to see us and we are so happy to see them, this is my lifeline. I'd be isolated/depressed and wouldn't have a friend unless senior center was around.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback and for sharing the importance of connectedness at the senior center. There are numerous objectives and strategies in the State Plan that address evidence-based programs provided through the Area Agencies on Aging at senior centers throughout the State. Objective 1.7 includes strategies to address social isolation in part through programs offered at senior centers.

Carol Ann Jones

They need to know numbers, there are over 400 people a month in this very room doing exercise classes, it is vital to have this exercise class, we need this class, 400+ people and they leave here as a better person.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Each Area Agency on Aging receives funding to ensure programs like the one you mention continue to be provided. The State Plan envisions the continuation of evidence-based programs under Objectives 1.7, 1.9, and 2.9.

Chuck

I want to address technology and aging, about 6 years ago I got involved in restoring historic buildings. We had funding but needed more so I found community groups which involved older adults, and they asked "Can 't you have computer classes for us?" I told them to go to the Senior Center and they said they are always watered down for old people. So, our program has a synergy between older people and younger people, with technology, we developed programs that young people who dropped out wrote program for restorative justice but wanted to design it around what older people can use. Some people might be interested in the program and some of it relates to older population.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Based on your feedback, Objective 3.1 now includes a strategy to “coordinate efforts at the state and local level to support inter-generational programs and initiatives.”

Antonia

Piggybacking on involvement in youth, we had a collaboration of dance classes with young adults. I’m wondering how do we get donors to support us if we lose funding?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. There are numerous objectives and strategies set forth in the State Plan that are aimed at community collaboration.

Marion Stricker

We run an adult day service, all of the resource you talked about today were focused on home services for older adults and caregivers, we want to raise awareness of day services as an option, but I haven't heard you speak to this yet in this deck yet or in the draft.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comment and feedback. IDoA offers ADS as a waiver option and recently held a retreat with ADS providers to see how we can grow the service and make it more visible. For the ADS retreat planning we pulled data about ADS utilization and thought we'd see a retraction in numbers, but it was a decline not in number of providers but instead a decline in participants. IDoA is currently conducting research into innovative ideas such as mobile ADS to determine how we can meet the needs of older adults and caregivers throughout the State.

The Illinois State Plan on Aging Goal #1 is to increase the visibility of the Aging Network to ensure older Illinoisans and their caregivers are aware of all the services offered including those under the Persons Who Are Elderly 1915(c) Waiver/Community Care Program such as the Adult Day service.

Diane Slezak

About social determinants of health, it isn't only about translation into languages but also addressing cultural issues, such as foods, but it can be more expensive and something to pay attention to, reporting elder abuse can be different and need specific outreach. For SDOH it is not just the poverty level but those people just above poverty level that need the most support, it is looking at the elder poverty index and seeing how expenditures surpass income

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comment and feedback. The Illinois State Plan looks at how we can address cultural needs in terms of nutrition. During the Public Health Emergency, the Department and Aging Network worked with restaurants and providers to target nutrition and meals that were consistent with the cultural needs of individuals. IDoA agrees it is critical to pay attention to poverty gap and how scary it is for people on that cusp but not Medicaid eligible.

The Illinois State Plan on Aging encompasses the strategies, objectives and outcomes of all Area Plans. Numerous strategies identified by the Area Agencies on Aging ensure outreach to older adults and caregivers that is person-centered. In addition, State Plan Goal #2 seeks to ensure continued quality assurance and improvement activities that are person-centered while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network. Finally, as there is no means testing for services under the Older Americans Act this ensures, in part, that individuals in the gap receive nutrition, education, and access to services offered by the AAAs.

State Plan Objectives 2.10 and 2.11, drawn from the Area Agencies on Aging Area Plans includes specific goals related to Adult Protective Services and outreach.

Marion Stricker

The question I have is for AI tools that are available online simplify searches, you can put together a great portal, if someone doesn't have the skills to navigate, have we incorporated an AI tool to help people navigate the various websites.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comment and feedback. IDoA is committed to ensuring the Caregiver portal is accessible to all Illinoisans regardless of their skill level. Artificial intelligence (AI) can be a valuable tool to assist individuals navigate online resources but must be utilized in a manner that is consistent with the State's policies, practices and protocols. Regardless of the format, IDoA is committed to increasing visibility and accessibility to services provided through the Aging Network.

Marion Stricker

How do we consolidate efforts so people can apply once and get access to everything they need, we do we have to have so many different hoops for people who need so many different things? How do we look at people wholistically and see all of the different ways they intersect with us.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comment and feedback. IDoA and the Aging Network providers are committed to a person-centered approach while also ensuring access to programs is as seamless and user friendly as possible. To that end Objective 1.2 includes strategies and outcomes to increase the ability to refer across programs and services with closed looped referrals.

Marla Fronczak

Funding is important because that determines what you can do, this is the first plan. We need do public education because outreach doesn't do it. That's one of those discretionary dollars so if there is no funding, we have to eliminate discretionary program, but then how do we do what we need to do? Word of mouth is powerful but there is more we need to do, and we need the funding for it.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Secretary of the Administration for Community Living remarked recently about the importance of telling the story of outcomes as this can leverage programmatic changes and impact future funding. The State Plan includes numerous strategies from the Area Agencies on Aging Area plans that focus on public education including those found at Objectives 1.4 and 2.3.

Marion Stricker

I saw a post about “Did everyone receive their senior property tax exemption” and there were hundreds of comments about “what is this/how do you get this” so how do we balance connecting people to services.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. There are numerous objectives and strategies in the State Plan that address outreach, education, and partnerships with community representatives and stakeholders (Objectives 1.10, 2.9, 3.1). Through these partnerships and building age friendly communities the Aging Network hopes to ensure older adults are connected to services and supports. In addition, as noted in the State Plan, Governor Pritzker authorized the development of a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging that will provide a strategic plan and roadmap to ensure older adults are connected to services at the community and state level.

Marla Fronczak

People don’t know what or how to ask, we talk in acronyms and terms that people cannot understand, they don’t connect what they get to what it is, how it is funded, etc. People don’t understand what services they get and where it is coming from. Even people working in the network don’t understand what the funding and network is.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Ensuring a person-centered approach ensures the Aging Network utilizes terminology appropriate to the individual. This concept is woven into the State Plan goals and numerous objectives outlined to meet those goals. Increasing the visibility of the services offered throughout the Aging Network as stated in State Plan Goal #1 and as further outlined in the strategies and outcomes addresses this important feedback. In addition, Objective 2.3 that supports State Plan Goal #2 to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities calls the Aging Network to action for purposes of collaboration and a shared language.

Micki Miller

You have to be aware of marketing too. The more you market the more people come in the door, and you may not have enough funding to serve them. So how can you balance funding with availability with marketing, otherwise you have a wait list.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Aging Network strives not to have wait lists for programs, particularly in the Community Care Program where it is essential to initiate services to avoid placement or extended stays in a skilled nursing environment. The State and Area Agencies on Aging also monitor wait lists for nutritional programs owing to the need to balance funding with sustained and ever-increasing need for nutritious meals. The State is required by the Administration for Community Living to ensure that funding and services are aimed at addressing those

with the greatest social and economic need. Thus, funding for these programs follows a formula that ensures this occurs.

Micki Miller

People don't come in knowing these programs, so we have to share everything and that takes time.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Increasing the visibility of services provided under the Aging Network umbrella is encompassed in State Plan Goal #1 together with achievable strategies and short-term, intermediate, and long-range outcomes. This staggered approach recognizes the time necessary to develop thoughtful and strategic communication strategies.

Diane Slezak

Building awareness of our programs is critical. We are having 44 sessions in Illinois on awareness building and even if just 100 people come to each session that's 4,400 people.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Increasing the visibility of services provided under the Aging Network umbrella is encompassed in State Plan Goal #1 together with achievable strategies and short-term, intermediate, and long-range outcomes. This staggered approach recognizes the time necessary to develop thoughtful and strategic communication strategies. In addition, one of the objectives in the State Plan is to conduct a state-wide needs assessment (Objective 3.4) that will in part solicit feedback on increasing awareness of services provided by the Aging Network.

Elaine Grande

The visibility is something we work really hard on and when we see IDOA having that as a goal it is really important to us. But we don't have a lot of money to put to it, so having the Department do it with a bigger reach is really important. We have so many people in need that we try to reach but it is really hard. Trying to outreach to people over 75 in mass mailings but still not getting everyone, so to have the department do it is so important. Hopefully this will help us do it, but then of course we have to have the services to support it.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA developed the State Plan Goals including those related to increasing visibility and outreach in partnership with the Area Agencies on Aging and based on feedback from numerous advisory committees, councils, and stakeholders. The goals and strategies recognize that outreach must involve numerous strategies and the development of long-term relationships at the community level (Objectives 1.1 through 1.3).

Catherine Stowers

For the May 28 event it is educating people about their services as part of advocacy and teaching people about where funding is coming from. We sent to our home delivered meals clients, so they know about the event and where their funding is coming from and what happens if it goes away.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. On May 28th the Aging Network held over 40 events around the State to increase awareness of services provided under the Aging Network umbrella and to encourage older adults and caregivers to ensure their voices were heard. Home delivered meals have long been recognized by the Area Agencies on Aging and Nutrition providers as an important method of communication, from addressing social isolation, vaccine education, and census information. In the State Plan, there are numerous strategies and objectives related to increasing awareness of programs and building relationships at the community level.

Diane Slezak

One thing we haven't mentioned at all, the number of scams targeting older adults. I made the mistake of picking up a call and was late because of a call about a scam, we need to do more about scams to raise awareness together this is so important.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objectives 2.10 and 2.11 address the need to increase training, education, and collaboration with numerous external stakeholders to raise awareness of the services provided under the Adult Protective Services Program.

Micki Miller

Another thing is billboards, I saw one and nearly drove off the road because I saw a billboard about APS and scams. We need to do more of that because talk about a way to raise visibility.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objectives 1.1 and 3.1 incorporate strategies to consider using different methods of communication based on feedback from older adults, caregivers, and stakeholders.

Marla Fronczak

Radio advertising is very effective, digital marketing, getting really good results with this. We need to do more of this and do a marketing plan, not for lack of trying but people are getting information in so many ways, how do we get credible information to people because they may not be getting the right information from the right channels.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objectives 1.1 and 3.1 incorporate strategies to consider using different methods of communication to increase the visibility of the Aging Network. These strategies ensure robust feedback from older adults, caregivers, and stakeholders.

MAY 28, 2025-SENIOR ADULT SERVICES, CARBONDALE, IL

Unnamed Older Adult

Comment: Transportation is very essential for easy accessibility to essential services (such as getting to the senior centers and health care appointments). Having transportation makes it easier for seniors to maintain independence, and support their wellbeing, and make everything else falls into place if it they are easily accessible. There are no buses or limited accessibility for buses, vans or no drivers to drive the vehicles.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments to the State Plan. The State continues to provide funding for rural transportation recognizing how vital this service is in areas of the State where transportation can be challenging. In addition, Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 outline strategies to address the transportation needs of older adults and caregivers. Finally, as IDoA increases visibility of services under various programs like the Community Care Program that offers transportation for medical appointments and errands older adults will have additional options.

Unnamed Older Adult

Comment: We don't even have an Adult Day Care here anymore.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments. Expanding home and community-based services that include adult day care services is a focus area of the State Plan. IDoA is working closely with our Adult Day Services providers and community to explore new models and innovative ideas to expand those services, particularly in rural areas. In addition, Objectives 1.4, 2.9, and 3.1 set forth strategies to increase the number of adult day services throughout the planning and service areas.

Unnamed Older Adult

I don't even know what services IDoA offers.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments. One of the Statewide goals included in the State Plan is to increase visibility and awareness of services offered by IDoA and the Aging Network. There are numerous objectives and strategies woven into the State Plan to achieve this goal over the next three years including 1.3, 1.3, 1.4 and 3.1.

Mary Jo

I'm part of the retired teachers' association and that people come in all the time to our meetings. I think that there should be engagement with the civic centers, where the

agency can talk to different people to let them know about the available services rendered to older adults.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Increasing partnerships within the community is vital to increasing awareness of supports, services, and evidence-based programs available to older Illinoisans and their caregivers. Objectives 1.1 and 1.10 in particular set forth strategies to increase community engagement and outreach.

Unnamed Older Adult

There is a need of social life for older adults at the centers, that keeps them connected, engaged and get to know themselves at these places.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA and the Area Agencies on Aging that are funded to provide the many programs and services available at senior centers are committed to these services as envisioned in many objectives and strategies described in the State Plan including those found in Objectives 1.7, 1.8, and 2.6.

Unnamed Older Adult

Senior Centers become your family and are so important

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA and the Area Agencies on Aging that are funded to provide the many programs and services available at senior centers are committed to these services as envisioned in many objectives and strategies described in the State Plan including those found in Objectives 1.7, 1.8, and 2.6.

Unnamed Older Adult

We need a helpline at the centers or somewhere to help older adults with getting stuff from the basement to the curb, for them to pick up and to deal with the blocked access to the driveways and doors by the winter ice and snowstorms.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Through a combination of state and federal funding the Area Agencies on Aging continue to build relationships within the community to increase the number of Age and Dementia Friendly communities. This ensures a focus on supports and services that allow older adults to thrive in their homes and communities. Objective 1.10 in particular addresses this concern and builds on community relationships.

Unnamed Older Adult

It is difficult to get affordable healthy food, there's limited markets for cheap healthy food, and coupons expire before the end of the market because it is given out late in July.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Nutrition programs including the Senior Farmers Market are funded through the Department of Human Services and provided by the Area Agencies on Aging and nutrition providers. Both IDoA and the AAAs and nutrition providers recognize the importance of ensuring fresh, nutritious foods are available to older adults. Objectives 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 set forth strategies to ensure these vital programs continue and are tailored to the needs of older adults.

Unnamed Older Adult

Sometimes we get food but don't know how to cook it.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objectives 2.7 and 2.8 in the State Plan describe activities to solicit feedback from older adults as to their preferences and needs with respect to nutrition. This feedback will ensure needs such as providing recipes together with fresh nutritious foods are addressed.

Unnamed Older Adult

Do we get the statistics on Alzheimer's and is there something that contributes to increasing numbers? What are you doing to educate individuals on early signs so we can get connected to treatment options?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. In the "context" section of the State Plan and appendices (Chart F16-18) are statistics related to the prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia. The State Plan also sets forth numerous objectives and strategies to increase awareness and partnerships with health care providers including those found at 1.9, 2.9, and 3.3.

Unnamed Older Adult

So, if you do not have these social determinates of health, you get Alzheimer's?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Ensuring the social determinants of health such as access to medical care (transportation), nutrition, education, and community relationships are important to ensuring the health and well-being of older adults. Funding provided through the Older Americans Act is required to address those with the greatest social and economic need. In addition, there are multiple objectives

and strategies in the State Plan to ensure the social determinants of health for older Illinoisans are met including but not limited to those found at 1.9, 2.6, 2.9, and 3.3.

Unnamed Older Adult

As older adults, we used to have people come to the senior center to do BP, hearing, vision checks but this doesn't happen anymore. Do you know if they were cut, reduced, what happened? This was important to so many people and we miss it, and we look for it. Also, connecting older adults to health professionals with routine medical checks, etc. is essential for us.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Several objectives and strategies aimed at connecting older adults to health care providers and services at senior centers are addressed in Objectives 1.9 and 2.6.

Mary Jo

Social interaction for older adults is so important and how do we encourage it?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA and the Aging Network recognize the importance of social connectivity addressed in the many services and programs including those offered at senior centers and through congregate dining. Home delivered meals, telephone reassurance, and virtual programs are also offered for those older adults and caregivers who might not be able to participate in person. Objective 1.7 is specific to preventing social isolation and includes numerous strategies to ensure social connectivity.

Unnamed Older Adult

As older adults, we used to have vans to get people picked up to visit the senior center, but it discontinued. Now it takes two (2) hours to get home, and I live a mile away and so the vans are no longer an option. So, I do not use the senior center anymore.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments to the State Plan. The State continues to provide funding for rural transportation recognizing how vital this service is in areas of the State where transportation can be challenging. In addition, Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 outline strategies to address the transportation needs of older adults and caregivers. Finally, as IDoA increases visibility of services under various programs like the Community Care Program that offers transportation for medical appointments and errands older adults will have additional options.

Unnamed Older Adult

Mass transit no longer does direct routes, we would love a senior route

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments to the State Plan. The State continues to provide funding for rural transportation recognizing how vital this service is in areas of the State where transportation can be challenging. In addition, Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 outline strategies to address the transportation needs of older adults and caregivers. Finally, as IDoA increases visibility of services under various programs like the Community Care Program that offers transportation for medical appointments and errands older adults will have additional options.

Expanding home and community-based services that include adult day care services is a focus area of the State Plan. IDoA is working closely with our Adult Day Services providers and community to explore new models and innovative ideas to expand those services, particularly in rural areas. In addition, Objectives 1.4, 2.9, and 3.1 set forth strategies to increase the number of adult day services throughout the planning and service areas.

Patrick Laws

We have been trying to get transportation set up, but the ball has not been picked up with mass transit in the county, we cannot get simple contracts for meal delivery, bus trips. We've tried to get the word out to legislators, same with adult day service. Insurance was the end of the end for us for senior center transportation.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments to the State Plan. The State continues to provide funding for rural transportation recognizing how vital this service is in areas of the State where transportation can be challenging. In addition, Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 outline strategies to address the transportation needs of older adults and caregivers. Finally, as IDoA increases visibility of services under various programs like the Community Care Program that offers transportation for medical appointments and errands older adults will have additional options.

Unnamed Older Adult

I want more information on how to get a computer.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your response. IDoA ensures technology including devices like computers and education are provided to older adults through our partnership with the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP). IDoA agrees that providing older adults with technology and education are vital to addressing social isolation, connecting with health care partners and other positive outcomes. Objectives and strategies to address this need are found at 1.3 and 2.4.

Unnamed Older Adult

Some of us try to give rides to people but sometimes I have an appointment/conflict so I cannot offer rides for people and then they do not get the rides to access essential services.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your feedback and comments to the State Plan. The State continues to provide funding for rural transportation recognizing how vital this service is in areas of the State where transportation can be challenging. In addition, Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 outline strategies to address the transportation needs of older adults and caregivers. Finally, as IDoA increases visibility of services under various programs like the Community Care Program that offers transportation for medical appointments and errands older adults will have additional options.

Sharon Stolz

I am a retired professional in aging. I started in the community care program in 1989, and I ended in 2024. And I worked with grandparents raising grandchildren in between, so I wasn't always with the Community Care Program. But I got to see it at its beginning and then I got to see it again many years later. And my number one, well I have two priorities I'm going to cheat and say two priorities. The 1st is the sustainability of the Community Care Program. When I left my job in 2024, care coordinators had an average of 300 clients on their caseloads. And that's not, that's not sustainable. Care cannot be person centered under those circumstances in any way. Care coordinators are exhausted, and so we see them quitting constantly and we see a problem with community continuity of care. But this is where I'm going to be very, very blunt, and please bear with me because I have empathy for all parts of families and individuals, but it broke my heart to see the program misused and principally I saw it misused by wealthy families who had a low-income relative living with them, very often a mom or a dad. And these were very wealthy families you know, you would drive up to a home and see multiple, Mercedes Benz in the driveway, and they were not, they were refusing to pay for their parents' care. They expected the community care program to pay for the care and in essence, they were seeing the community care program to get mom or dad a maid. I'm going to be frank, these were not older adults who were living with high impairment, but they scored just enough on the dawn, that they would be able for eligible for hours of service. And my concern is that the more this happens and unless we address this issue, we can't adequately serve the older adults that the CCP program was meant to serve. And that is persons living with dementia and very specifically lowest income. highest physical needs older adults living alone. The program will not be sustainable unless we address this issue. So, thank you so much. I don't mean to speak ill of anybody. I truly don't. I'm sympathetic to family. I've seen African American families care in extraordinary ways for their older adults and they ask minimal of the state when they could ask more. And so, it breaks my heart to see misuse within the program. It's not rampant and I don't mean to say that it is, but it's there.

And so, I'm asking us to please refocus the program on the older adults, it's principally meant to serve.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As outlined in the State Plan expansion and sustainability of programs like the Community Care Program (CCP) is vital to ensuring older adults can age in place and thrive in their homes and communities. The CCP provides supports and services to older adults over the age of 60 that meet eligibility requirements and to individuals with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59 that meet eligibility requirements.

The Administration for Community Living required all State Units on Aging to focus on the expansion (and thus sustainability) of home and community-based services. This is accomplished in part by addressing the demand for direct care workers, adequate

funding, and the activities of the Care Coordination Units that assist with determining eligibility and case management. Statewide Goal #2 seeks to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities that emphasize person-centered and trauma-informed services while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network. Numerous Objectives and strategies to meet this goal are included in Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3. In addition, Objective 1.5 outlines additional strategies to ensure services are driven in part through the collection of data.

Anthony Linden

I'm Anthony Linden, from Alternatives. I was just wondering; I know all the news about Medicaid that's going on. How much is CCP actually funded by Medicaid or how much is it, I know it's all state money, but is it some federal dollars attached to it?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA serves as the operating agency of the Persons Who Are Elderly 1915(c) Medicaid Waiver which is in part funded through Medicaid and General Fund revenue.

Anthony Linden

And also, the fee for services is also tied to the Medicaid waiver?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA serves as the operating agency of the Persons Who Are Elderly 1915(c) Medicaid Waiver which is in part funded through Medicaid and General Fund revenue.

Parks, Teresa

I am Teresa Parks with the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission. And along the lines of promoting the independence of older adults and self-direction, I would just like to emphasize the importance of supported decision making and as an alternative to guardianship. Currently Illinois supported decision making statute only applies to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, supported decision making could be a viable resource to older adults. In fact, other states have implemented supported decision-making statutes for older adults. We have attempted to do that here in Illinois. Our agency has tried to initiate an expansion of supported decision making, but we have been met with resistance so we would just ask the aging community to consider better, that is a future public policy goal to offer that as an additional option and an alternative to guardianship. Also, we see the need to reach more older adults about advanced directives powers of attorney, limited guardianships instead of full plenary guardianships. There are still many people out there in, in sometimes marginalized communities that just do not have, advanced directives and we would like to see more of that again to protect against future guardianships. So that's all I had to share.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Area Agencies on Aging are funded in part with federal dollars under the Older Americans Act to connect older adults with legal services providers in their planning and service area. In addition, IDoA operates and oversees the Adult Protective Services (APS) program by coordinating services with the Area Agencies on Aging and their service providers to ensure high quality APS services throughout the State. Continuing education and collaboration with our many stakeholders are both crucial to meeting the goal of providing high-quality APS services. Objectives 2.10 and 2.11 speak directly to your concerns and set forth strategies to conduct outreach and education.

Sharon Stolz

I'm sure you have heard this before, but churches. My experience in the congregational world is that pastors, rabbis or I'll say faith congregations and make that broad, are not familiar with the services at all and the reality is that for many congregations older adults are their largest population and largest attending group so faith communities from all backgrounds would be a good way to reach not only older adults but their family members.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The State Plan envisions objectives and strategies that ensure community outreach to a wide variety of organizations, including faith based. Objective 1.10 contains strategies to build partnerships with faith-based organizations.

Amber Knox

This is Amber Knox from Alternatives. I just had a thought. I was curious, I know there's regionally some partnerships with local police departments, but I feel like really homing in on that helps not just with Adult Protective Services, obviously in those really critical sometimes self-neglectful and otherwise cases, but I don't know how well-educated police departments are about the Community Care Program and their CCU's. They are really, I think more focused on those extreme cases that end up with Adult Protective Services and then usually make their way to the local CCU but I think they are probably seeing a lot more individuals who aren't necessarily in crisis but could be, you know, handed over to their local care coordination unit to help sustain them long term, so it doesn't end up in crisis.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Numerous objectives in the State Plan include strategies to foster collaboration with public officials including law enforcement. Objectives 2.10 and 2.11 speak directly to increasing program education and literacy among mandated reporters, caseworkers, and other service providers. Objective 1.7 includes strategies to decrease social isolation and loneliness that provide

opportunities for mental health screenings at senior centers, focal points, and community health fairs.

Parks, Teresa

My 91-year-old father who lives alone uses Facebook Portal to video call relatives, friends, grandkids and great grandkids to stay connected and help with isolation.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Technology is a valuable tool to mitigate against social isolation and loneliness, in addition to communicating with health care providers. Objective 7.1 includes strategies to decrease social isolation and loneliness while Objective 1.3 sets forth strategies across the Aging Network to increase the use of technology. Older adults receiving services through the Community Care Program are offered Emergency Home Response services that also uses technology to provide a system to respond quickly to issues such as falls in addition to providing a GPS system.

Nathaniel Tran

Could we look into WBEZ or other public TV/radio special features on services?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Statewide Goal #1 is to increase the statewide visibility of the Aging Network to connect Illinoisans with supports and services that encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. Objective 1.1 includes strategies to explore multiple communication channels and to forge partnerships with other organizations to meet the goal.

Sharon Stolz

Low-income grandparents raising grandchildren are extraordinarily isolated. Many live without computers, or any kind of "Smart" device. Helping them afford user-friendly technology would be a great help.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Technology is a valuable tool to mitigate against social isolation and loneliness, in addition to communicating with health care providers. Objective 7.1 includes strategies to decrease social isolation and loneliness while Objective 1.3 sets forth strategies across the Aging Network to increase the use of technology.

As the State Plan includes an overarching goal to increase the visibility of the Aging Network and available services Objective 1.1 identifies strategies including forming community partnerships and using multiple communication channels to reach older adults and caregivers. In addition, Objective 2.4 proposes as a strategy to survey older adults to gain further understanding into the needs and barriers to utilizing technology.

Anthony Linden

I know our agency Alternatives for the Older Adult, we have gone to a couple of junior achievement career fairs in the past, and it's mainly focused on 8th graders. So, we also spread the word that way and kind of, there's like only two social services agencies that were there, the Iowa side and then the Illinois side for our counties. Maybe that's a possibility.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA has a long-standing history of forging relationships with academic partners to provide education, explore funding opportunities, and assist with developing major initiatives. The State Plan envisions continuing to partner with learning institutions to assist with addressing the direct care work force shortage and need to support unpaid caregivers. Additional information is provided in the context section of the State Plan. In addition, Governor Pritzker's recent Executive Order authorizing the development of a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging (MPA) will serve to create a strategic roadmap and plan for all older Illinoisans. The MPA created the Community Advisory Council, comprised of 25 members many with academic experience.

Anthony Linden

And it was also the concept that we had a couple years ago was, just because you work for a social service as nonprofit agency doesn't mean you have to be a social worker because there's positions like the fiscal manager for example. You need all aspects of the business have to be covered, such as accounting, IT. So, we pushed that angle a little bit.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Aging Network is comprised of a diverse multi-disciplinary team committed to IDoA's Mission to serve older adults and caregivers. In addition, Governor Pritzker's recent Executive Order authorizing the development of a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging (MPA) will serve to create a strategic roadmap and plan for all older Illinoisans. The MPA created both a Task Force comprised of 15 state agencies and the Community Advisory Council, comprised of 25 members with diverse backgrounds and education.

Sharon Stolz

And I realized that this is in the written material and the written materials are fantastic. Thank you. And thank you for this. I mean this is really a substantial very helpful effort. If you can tell us, as you've traveled across the state, what are the top three issues that you hear from people?

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As reflected in the many comments contained in this document sustaining existing supports and services such as senior

centers, providing technology, and increasing visibility of the Aging Network resonated as top priorities among the participants. The State Plan reflects a commitment to addressing these priorities. For example, Statewide Goal #1 addresses the need to increase visibility through numerous strategies outlined in Objective 1.1. Objective 2.4 includes numerous strategies to learn more about the technology needs of older adults and caregivers. Objectives 1.8 and 3.2 include strategies to provide transportation to help maintain independence. IDoA and the Area Agencies on Aging that are funded to provide the many programs and services available at senior centers are committed to these services as envisioned in many objectives and strategies described in the State Plan including those found in Objectives 1.7, 1.8, and 2.6.

Brianne Moser

This is Brianne Moser from AgeGuide Region 2, so I have a whole stack of postcards here from the different events from the day of advocacy yesterday, and I know a lot of my coworkers do as well. So I haven't had a chance to read through all of them yet, but I would say just looking through it, probably the common theme is just about that social connection of saying you know if I didn't have these meals, if I didn't have a congregate meal site to go to I might not leave my house or I was feeling really isolated until I was able to take these bingo sized classes or the programs that I had access to have really helped me make connections in my community, so I think just that that social connection I think is the really the strong piece that stands out reading through these.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback and for sharing the importance of connectedness at the senior center. There are numerous objectives and strategies in the State Plan that address evidence-based programs provided through the Area Agencies on Aging at senior centers throughout the State. Objective 1.7 includes strategies to address social isolation in part through programs offered at senior centers.

Anthony Linden

We have a little pot of money that we have on the agency dime called staff recognition, like taking our staff out for retreats or more gift cards for good work, not just more work so that's kind of how we try and keep the retention. It's only a little, and then we, like when we have annual evaluations, we come out to lunch afterwards or so we kind of have a little money in that pot.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objective 1.4 that aims to support older adults and caregivers seeking to thrive in the community includes several strategies to increase volunteers. Objective 1.8 sets forth a strategy to enhance outreach, recruitment and retention of community volunteers. In addition to the many full and part time staff employed throughout the Aging Network, volunteers at senior centers, those serving home delivered meals, and individuals providing education to older adults are valued for their commitment and contribution to IDoA's mission.

Amber Knox

Another success that we've had is partnering with local colleges. So, we actually had some interns, a couple of interns and a few of our programs, and we in our care coordination program actually were able to hire on an intern. And so she is currently working with us full time and that is going really well. And we're hoping to build on that and really strengthen partnerships with some of the colleges in our area, but I think, you know, as a network in general, number one, so the schools, they know that this is a growing employment area. Not just for social services or someone who's going for social work, but it can also be for other areas as well, but really kind of creating that pipeline as well as a lot of those programs require, e.g., a lot of bachelor social work, programs require volunteer hours. So, I think that's kind of twofold trying to draw in the volunteers as well as that pipeline maybe for some interns into long term employment.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA has a long-standing history of forging relationships with academic partners to provide education, explore funding opportunities, and assist with developing major initiatives. The State Plan envisions continuing to partner with learning institutions to assist with addressing the direct care work force shortage and need to support unpaid caregivers. Additional information is provided in the context section of the State Plan. In addition, Governor Pritzker's recent Executive Order authorizing the development of a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging (MPA) will serve to create a strategic roadmap and plan for all older Illinoisans. The MPA created the Community Advisory Council, comprised of 25 members many with academic experience.

Sharon Stoltz

Sharing information about Provider contracts would be helpful. Too many times in my work I witnessed Home Care Aides being paid minimal hourly rates while the Providers hired marketers at very high salaries. A track for career advancement for Home Care Aides would also be helpful

I witnessed a great deal in, in my life as a care coordinator. So, what I'm talking about is an individual provider agency.

And it used to make us crazy as care coordinators that an individual agency would come, a provider would come to our agency and try to market to us with gifts, you know, and so that we would refer more clients to them and that's inappropriate, that should be a conflict of interest really in the CCP program, it should be ruled that NO provider can gift an agency with anything. You know, they would come at Christmas with beautiful, beautiful, expensive gift baskets for us While the care aids were receiving nothing for Christmas, but that's, just an aside. What I mean here is that we would hear about rate increases for the home care providers, but we were not sure what proportion of that rate increase would, would generate an hourly increase for the home care aids themselves So, you know, we knew home care aids who were being, you know, paid, you

know, \$17 and now, you know, they are not as you know, reimbursed if they go to a client's home and the client's not there, they're not reimbursed for time missed. They're only reimbursed for what they paid for transportation. So, the home care aids, our experience was we're generally not treated well by the provider agencies. We would then hear that the provider agency had hired somebody to do marketing for them at really \$80,000. And I know that some of these agencies many of them are part of national networks and that might be where, you know, some of that is coming from, but there's a disconnect. You know, so, that's what I meant about provider contracts. So, when for example there is an increase from the state of Illinois to a home care provider, is there a proportion that is designated to the home care agency salary. I'm assuming that's a yes, but it just, it just feels like the home care aids continuously are at the bottom of the barrel. And, I know I don't have to tell you about the turnover at that level. So for example a track for career advancement for home care aids would be very helpful.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As the State Unit on Aging and Operating Agency IDoA ensures a robust system of monitoring and quality improvement is operationalized throughout the state. Objectives 2.2 and 2.5 outline strategies that ensure high quality services are provided by the Aging Network providers.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RATING OF GOALS ON THE ILLINOIS STATE PLAN ON AGING, SUBMITTED ONLINE

IDoA sought feedback from the public about the importance of certain goals and priorities outlined in the State Plan and asked them to rate the importance on a Likert scale, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important. The following is a summary of the responses with comments listed and answered with a summary of the Likert scale responses to the state agency goals below.

Comments from Online Respondents

Matilde Rios

For me the Renaissance court is the place where I get exercise, talk to many people, get informed about events, sometimes we get free tickets to concert, plays or symphony. For most is us we wouldn't be exercising or going to events. I am so proud to live in Chicago in part because of the Renaissance court. We need more services no less.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback concerning the importance of maintaining a thriving senior center and community. Numerous objectives in the State Plan will solicit feedback directly from older adults including 1.4, 1.10, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, and 3.1.

Janet

I have documented how wonderful and needed is Renaissance Court and all of the food services provided. I cannot afford the soaring costs of groceries. Social events have been greatly appreciated.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback concerning the importance of maintaining a thriving senior center and community. Numerous objectives in the State Plan will solicit feedback directly from older adults including 1.4, 1.10, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, and 3.1.

IDoA also recognizes the importance of ensuring the availability of nutritious meals at senior centers. Objective 2.8 sets forth numerous strategies to increase food security and service quality while sustaining nutrition programs.

Unnamed

The State Plan on Aging should include a requirement for local councils dedicated to older adults. In the City of Chicago, some wards already have such councils, but it should be mandated that every ward establish an older adult council. Each ward should also host an annual resource fair to inform older adults about the services available to them.

We should also leverage social media platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn to

inform the public about free programming offered at the state and local levels. For example, Chicago has free senior centers, yet many residents are unaware of their existence or the activities they provide. Similarly, the park district offers free programs that are not widely known or promoted.

As part of my Watson Fellowship, I traveled across ten countries to engage with older adults in both rural and urban settings. Through this experience, I observed many innovative practices that could be adapted to improve the wellbeing of older adults in our state. These include fostering intergenerational exchanges between schools and care facilities and increasing access to information and community services.

In Argentina, for example, the city of Buenos Aires hosts a website [<https://buenosaires.gob.ar/desarrollohumanoyhabitat/personas-mayores/ciudad-amigable-para-personas-mayores>] where "Boti," a chatbot, helps older adults locate resources and access support. A similar tool could be developed by the Illinois Department on Aging, using artificial intelligence to guide users through available services.

We should also consider the creation of "Health Stations" at the state or city level, particularly in Chicago, to promote active aging. In Buenos Aires, there are free activities for older adults in parks every weekday. These Health Stations provide information on benefits, host wellness programs, and serve as community hubs. Additionally, day centers in Argentina are open monthly for older adults to gather and celebrate, fostering social connection.

As demographics continue to shift in Illinois and Chicago, it is crucial that we develop innovative, community-centered solutions that embrace technology and prioritize prevention. You can learn more about my findings from my travels abroad that have inspired me to make Illinois and Chicago the best places to age in place in a more community-based approach that is accessible to all: watson.ljcordero.com

Resources: <https://buenosaires.gob.ar/vicejefatura/estaciones-saludables>
<https://www.instagram.com/bienestarba/>

Instagram is a platform that can reach young caregivers too and support others. I've also been trying to think about how we can have cognitive mobile clinics or administer MoCA exams more readily available for older adults who have memory concerns. You can learn more about my travels here: watson.ljcordero.com

We also need to create a research group for all nursing homes across the state. As a volunteer ombudsman, I am curious to understand the data that is being collected and how we can use it to improve the system and quality measures across the state to ensure every older adult and future older adult is heard.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Statewide goals and objectives set forth in the 26-28 plan align with many of your suggestions. Although IDoA cannot require units of local government to establish advisory councils, IDoA is served by the Older Adults Services Advisory Committee, the Community Care Program Advisory Committee, the Illinois Council on Aging, and the Long-term Care Council. Representatives and stakeholders from across the state provide feedback to IDoA to lift up innovative practices and best practices as mentioned in your comments.

Objective 1.4 seeks to support older adults and caregivers to thrive in community using numerous strategies that require collaboration at the community level. Objective 1.10 is included in the State Plan to build capacity and collaboration with community partners, faith-based organizations and other service providers.

Statewide goal #2 will drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities that emphasize person-centered and trauma-informed services while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network. Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 describe strategies to collect data to identify trends, analysis and program adjustments.

Nora and Charles Borso, Renaissance Court Senior Center, Chicago, IL

I only rated the highest priority for each of the 3 for very good reasons. What I did not see included in the plan is the concerted effort to keep older people, healthy, active, and engaged in their community. Having spent time in California and seeing how, a friend of my age has services available to do what I stated above. This is commonly done through the community colleges, (where they had already paid taxes for many years for the school district) such as offering classes by Well-trained instructors at extremely low rate, if in fact, any fee at all. What I observed went in that environment, is older people got healthier and healthier older people became more vibrant. The California aged population looks a lot younger than my Illinois population. I would love to converse more if anyone reading this had any interest. My email address is:

Noraborso@gmail.com

Thank you for your time and attention

, Nora Borso and Charles versus Borso

Long time residence of Illinois and business owner of an Illinois corporation,

PS I liken to what I said above, would they analogy with healthcare in the US versus some other countries for example France. Our doctors in the US., and my daughter is a doctor, get paid more when the patient is sick. They are not well versed in how to keep patients healthy. In France, a doctor does not have anywhere near the salary of a US doctor. There are many more doctors since medical school is not a huge burden in France as it is in the United States. French doctors even do house calls and their reputation and possibly their pay is based more on how their patients stay healthy. Thank you for indulging me with the forgoing statements.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for comments and feedback. The State Plan does contain numerous objectives and strategies aimed at ensuring older adults remain healthy, active and engaged as members of their community. For example, Objective 1.4 includes strategies that directly increase participation in community events. Objective 1.7 aims to decrease social isolation and loneliness through senior center activities in the community. Objective 1.9 aims to promote health and wellness by increasing access to healthy programs and services including health screenings. Objective 1.10 speaks to Building Capacity and Collaboration through numerous strategies that build partnerships with community organizations, faith-based institutions and other service providers. Anticipated outcomes associated with these strategies include expanding opportunities for older adults and caregivers throughout communities.

Chicago Cultural Center Renaissance

Variety of services is critical. Socialization, Physical Activities, new skills, games, health issues and information. Opportunities to grow. Offers to attend civic and cultural events for free are so appreciated. The staff is phenomenal, they truly care about the programs and the clients. Staff is always respectful most notably with clients who are demonstrating mental health issues. This group goes above and beyond always seeking input to improve offerings, etc. Friendships are formed due to the programs. Thank you for seeking input about the aging population. We celebrate milestones...amazingly folks report healthy lives well into their 90s and THAT is because of these programs!! Take a bow! FUNDING is essential to keep these services. I agree with the 3 goals...how to enact those will be a challenge.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback and for hosting the first public hearing for the 26-28 State Plan at the Chicago Cultural Renaissance Center! IDoA staff observed a profound connection between the staff and the participants. We look forward to working collaboratively with the Area Agencies on Aging, CCUs and providers to ensure we reach the goals set forth in the 26-28 State Plan.

Renaissance

The programs are great for older adults who need socialization, exercise and health support. These programs are not offered in a lot of senior facilities, so the centers give people a chance to get out which is very important with cognitive and physical health.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback and for hosting the first public hearing for the 26-28 State Plan at the Chicago Cultural Renaissance Center! IDoA appreciates your comments and feedback concerning the importance of maintaining a thriving senior center and community. Numerous objectives in the State Plan will solicit feedback directly from older adults including 1.4, 1.10, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, and 3.1.

Simply Designed, LLC

More programming that engages seniors and that makes them feel they are important part of society.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA and the Aging Network value the contributions of our older adults to the communities in which they live and their views on what supports and services are important now and in the future. There are numerous initiatives in the State Plan that will continue to garner feedback from older adults and caregivers over the next three years included under Objectives 1.1, 1.4, 1.14, 2.7, 2.9, and 3.2.

Eva Franklin

A friend invited me to the Renaissance Court Senior Center about two years ago. I was first greeted by the wonderful staff at the front desk. They gave me all the information about the classes that were available at the center. When I met the directors, I noticed they too treated each person with respect, and great care. The Renaissance Center is a safe and wonderful space generously given to all people from different social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, allowing them to freely express themselves in many creative ways, through art, jewelry making, writing, and dancing.

It's a safe, nonjudgmental space with classes on how to heal the mind and body. We learn about our wonderful city, and the many resources it has to offer us as seniors. We even have a space to clown around and laugh out loud. The Renaissance Center is a place for Seniors to come together for growth, Friendship, and artistic expressions. I am glad to be a part of this amazing community.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA heard directly from so many participants how much they value the Renaissance Court Senior Center, staff, and the friendships they have forged because of the welcoming environment. It is critically important to ensure that activities at the Senior Center are based on the input of all participants as this helps to shape programming. One of the Statewide goals is to use data and feedback to ensure programs take into consideration client satisfaction. Several strategies to meet this goal are included in Objective 1.5 and Objective 2.9.

American Association of Retired Asians, NFP

These priorities are well-aligned with the evolving needs of our aging population, and we believe they lay a strong foundation for future progress.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and response. IDoA acknowledges in the State Plan that our shared vision for older adults and caregivers in the Aging Network requires continual feedback and collaboration from many stakeholders.

Unnamed Older Adult

Please keep funding the current free-of-charge activities available to seniors.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and response. IDoA, the Area Agencies on Aging, Community Care Program providers and funded grantees strive to ensure older adults and caregivers have access to a robust number of programs and services. The services under the Older Americans Act are not “means tested”, recognizing the requirement to serve those with the greatest social and economic need.

Sharon Stolz

1. Concerning Goal 2: The Community Care Program (CCP) has been stretched beyond capacity, with Chicago-area Care Coordinators carrying caseloads of 300 clients. CCP service delivery cannot be person-centered under these circumstances. To sustain CCP for the future, we can, and must, refocus the program on: (1) Older adults with the highest need and with the fewest opportunities for supportive care (Low-income older adults who live alone and who have higher DON scores) and, (2) Caregivers of persons living with acutely disabling illnesses such as Dementia, MS, and ALS and Parkinson’s Disease.

2. Distribution of technology/assistive devices should focus on, and be limited to, low-income older adult residents.

2. I don't think Providers need a wider variety of trainings. What they need instead (particularly Home Care Providers), is to develop basic competencies. I am a former Care Coordinator and witnessed decreasing competence among Home Care Supervisors and Home Care Aides while I was a part of the CCP Program.

3. It’s hard to answer Goal 3, Priority 1, because you have bundled together very different types of services. Transportation is an ever-present need.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Community Care Program was developed to ensure older adults that meet eligibility requirements receive services to avoid institutionalization and remain in their homes and communities. As the context section of the State Plan observes, the number of older adults is increasing as is their medical complexity. The State Plan includes numerous goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure Illinois is prepared to meet the future demand (Objectives 1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). In addition, the Older Americans Act requires funding and services to be directed to individuals with the greatest social and economic need.

Unnamed Older Adult

Older adults should receive more free services.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and response. IDoA, the Area Agencies on Aging, Community Care Program providers and funded grantees strive to ensure older adults and caregivers have access to a robust number of programs and services. The services under the Older Americans Act are not “means tested”, recognizing the requirement to serve those with the greatest social and economic need. In addition, numerous programs including those aimed at providing assistive technology, and gap filling assistance for emergencies are free of charge to older adults.

SWAN

More information on Scams going on all over the state (US) so people working with the elderly can pass it out. More funding for programs for aging adults to get help in the home.

Funding for Assisted living for Disabled adults between the ages of 18-59. Right now, there are no facilities available in the South-Central part of the state.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objectives 2.10 and 2.11 address the need to increase training, education, and collaboration with numerous external stakeholders to raise awareness of the services provided under the Adult Protective Services Program. The Community Care Program also serves disabled individuals between the ages of 18 and 59 that meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, the State operates waivers similar to the elderly waiver to meet the diverse needs of Illinoisans that require long-term care supports and services.

Universal Industries, Inc.

Please keep in mind the diversity of older adults and language barriers.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. IDoA and the Aging Network strive to ensure the diverse needs of older adults and caregivers remain at the forefront of providing supports and services. The Older Americans Act requires funding and services to be aimed at addressing those with the greatest social and economic need that recognizes English may not be the primary language of older adults and their caregivers. As a result, IDoA and Aging Network providers collect data to ensure critical documents and educational materials are offered in multiple languages. In addition, Objective 1.1 and Objective 3.1 ensure that outreach and surveys consider the diversity of the population we serve.

Shirley Fastner

Provide more access to info on services available to us and how to access them

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Statewide Goal #1 is to increase statewide visibility of the Aging Network to connect Illinoisans with supports and services that encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. To meet this goal, Objective 1.1 outlines numerous strategies.

Paul H. Bennet, PHD, MSW

Objective 1.5 Improve Service Quality and Effectiveness using data driven decision making.

- Comment: Ensure programs have outcome evaluations that focus on the effectiveness.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Strategy 1.5(b) ensures programs will be evaluated to determine outcomes and inform service delivery improvements.

Objective 1.8 Provide In-Home Services that address the unmet needs of older Illinoisans. Strategies

- Comment: Outcome measures refer to CCP, however these services are not CCP services and therefore success should be measured by OAA and state funded programs and services.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Older Americans Act ensures that services throughout the Aging Network include a comprehensive system of long-term care supports and services. This ensures collaboration between the Area Agencies on Aging, Community Care program providers, and IDoA. As a result, some outcomes reflect the need for coordination.

Objective 1.11 Address Trauma and Promoting Well-being.

- Comment: A significant amount of ACL funding has been given to trauma care in the past several years. Illinois should build upon recent research and support best practices that has already been demonstrated.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As reflected in the context section of the State Plan IDoA strives to build on best practices and base program improvements on evidence-based programs.

Objective 1.14: To increase awareness among residents of long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, specialized mental health rehabilitation waiver participants and Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (DSNP) individuals regarding the availability for advocacy to receive the care that they need, want and deserve.

- Comment: Recommend that Ombudsman have an established protocol of identifying and referring persons who may no longer require institutional long-term care.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback.

Objective 2.1: Conduct extensive data collection and analysis to evaluate client satisfaction.

- Comment: Measurements need to be more than client satisfaction. Most people are satisfied. Focus needs to be on effectiveness. Have we seen health improvement? Decreased hospitalizations? Delayed institutionalization?

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objective 2.2 includes strategies that evaluate effectiveness of programs. IDoA continually monitors the effectiveness of programs as required by the Persons Who Are Elderly 1915(c) Medicaid Waive and in collaboration with the State Medicaid Agency.

Objective 2.3: Build a culture of mutual collaboration and effective communication between AAAs, direct service providers, and Aging Network partners.

- Comment: Need to include Care Coordination through Managed Care since so much of assessment and service delivery comes through this process.

- Comment: Ensure programs have outcome focused evaluations that focus on the effectiveness.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback.

Objective 1.8 Provide In-Home Services that address the unmet needs of older Illinoisans. Strategies

- Comment: Outcome measures refer to CCP, however these services are not CCP services and therefore success should be measured by OAA and other state funded programs and services.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Older Americans Act ensures that services throughout the Aging Network include a comprehensive system of long-term care supports and services. This ensures collaboration between the Area Agencies on Aging, Community Care program providers, and IDoA. As a result, some outcomes reflect the need for coordination.

Objective 1.11 Address Trauma and Promoting Well-being.

- Comment: A significant amount of ACL funding has been given to trauma care in the past several years. Illinois should build upon recent research and support best practices that have already been demonstrated.

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As reflected in the context section of the State Plan IDoA strives to build on best practices and base program improvements on evidence-based programs.

Nancy

One of the problems I see in some elderly services such as legal services is that you are turned down by agencies stating they cannot help you. For example, in losing the section / CHA housing, as it happened for my mom. It was very difficult to obtain respite services. It is difficult obtaining services, period. The elderly rely on others to help get services. Obtaining services should be easy, not so difficult for the elderly. People answering the calls should be doing follow-up to ensure the elderly received the requested services. Rid of the current run around style where they tell you to call elsewhere. You call elsewhere and get the run around.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. Objective 2.1 and related strategies are directed towards client satisfaction and the delivery of services. In addition, Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 outline strategies to ensure services are known and readily available to caregivers.

Bill Morris

I see goal 3 as the most important set of priorities.

Since there are so many caregivers at home I would like to see as much support for them as possible, as well. Many cannot work outside the home due to caregiver demands. They need resources; they need rental assistance, snap, and quality in-home assistance. I praise the organizations that are there for these people.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. As noted in the context section of the State Plan and Focus Area 3, the needs of unpaid caregivers are critically important to IDoA, the Area Agencies on Aging and Aging Network. There are numerous Objectives and related strategies IDoA identified as next steps to meet the needs of unpaid caregivers including development of the Caregiver Portal (Objective 3.5) and those described in Objectives 3.1 through 3.4 and 3.6.

Carroll County Senior Services

Living in a rural area specialized service is not at our fingertips. However, Carroll County Senior Services serves more seniors than just our County, we are serving seniors and disable persons from surrounding counties which we are very happy to do. Saying that we are not allowed any extra grant funding as funding is based on our population!! Something needs to be done to increase our funding to compensate serving other counties because they treat the clients poorly.

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. The Older Americans Act distributes funding to all state units on aging using an interstate funding formula. Similarly, all states are required to distribute funding using an intrastate funding formula that targets

funding to all planning and service areas based on the greatest social and economic need. In addition to federal funding, the State of Illinois and IDoA provides general fund revenue to support rural locations and services.

Northwest Home Care, Inc. dba Abcor Home Health, Inc.

Dear Director Killough,

I am writing to acknowledge and commend your leadership in developing the comprehensive Illinois State Plan on Aging for the period 2025–2028.

As a family caregiver representative for the Older Adult Services Act Advisory, I deeply appreciate the enhancements included in the plan to support caregivers. These measures are crucial in helping to prevent burnout, isolation, loneliness, and financial hardship for those who provide care.

Additionally, the State Plan on Aging's goals to promote person-centered care, combined with innovative use of technology, have great potential to significantly improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations across Illinois.

Once again, thank you for your dedication and leadership in crafting this plan, and for the inclusive approach taken to gather valuable feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts.

Sincerely,

Gustavo Saberbein, MS-HSM
Chief Operating Officer
Northwest Home Care, Inc. d/b/a Abcor Home Health, Inc

IDoA Response:

IDoA thanks you for your comments and feedback. In addition, IDoA appreciates your advocacy and work on numerous councils and committees that assist us with shaping the future of Aging services.

Summary of Likert Responses to State Plan Goals

GOAL 1: INCREASE STATEWIDE VISIBILITY OF THE AGING NETWORK TO CONNECT ILLINOISANS WITH SUPPORTS AND SERVICES THAT ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE, DIGNITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE AS WE AGE.

Goal 1, Priority 1: Conduct a state-wide survey on preferred communication methods of older adults.

Four (4) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Two (2) of the respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Six (6) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Seven (7) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Twenty- two (22) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 41 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 1, Priority 2: Distribute paper materials about programs and services at physicians' offices, libraries and other community locations.

Four (4) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Two (2) respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Ten (10) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Five (5) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Twenty-three (23) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 44 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 1, Priority 3: Utilize modern technology such as text messages and social media to share information about programs and services.

Five (5) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Six (6) respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Five (5) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Eleven (11) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Seventeen (17) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 44 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

GOAL 2: DRIVE CONTINUOUS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES THAT EMPHASIZE PERSON-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES WHILE MAXIMIZING EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES DELIVERED THROUGH THE AGING NETWORK.

Goal 2, Priority 1: Offer a wider variety of training opportunities to providers that deliver services to older adults.

Three (3) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Two (2) respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Seven (7) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Nine (9) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Twenty-four (24) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 45 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 2, Priority 2: Expand access to technology including smart phones, tablets, assistive technology and smart home devices and training of older adults.

Two (2) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Two (2) of the respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Seven (7) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Fifteen (15) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Seventeen (17) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 43 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 2, Priority 3: Increase opportunities for social connections of older adults at nutrition sites, adult day sites and senior centers.

Three (3) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

None (0) respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Two (2) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Nine (9) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Thirty (30) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 44 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

GOAL 3: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF CAREGIVER NEEDS, AS WELL AS RESOURCES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF ILLINOIS TO PROMOTE INCREASED CAREGIVER

ENGAGEMENT IN PERSON-CENTERED, TRAUMA-INFORMED, AND EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Goal 3, Priority 1: Address critical needs like transportation, home modifications, and legal assistance.

One (1) of the respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Two (2) of the respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Four (4) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Five (5) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Thirty-two (32) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 44 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 3, Priority 2: Address common family caregiver challenges such as social isolation, loneliness, burnout, and financial strain.

Two (2) respondents rated this priority as a 1.

One (1) of the respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Seven (7) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Thirteen (13) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Twenty-three (23) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 46 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

Goal 3, Priority 3: Ensure a trauma-informed approach to recognize the potential for trauma in caregiving situations and providing services that are sensitive to these experiences.

Two (2) of the respondents rated this priority as a 1.

Three (3) respondents rated this priority as a 2.

Eight (8) respondents rated this priority as a 3.

Nine (9) respondents rated this priority as a 4.

Twenty-two (22) respondents rated this priority as a 5.

In summary, 44 respondents submitted a rating for this priority.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS FLYER

Illinois State Plan on Aging
Public Hearing
SCHEDULE

STATE PLAN ON AGING
PUBLIC HEARING

IDoA
Illinois Department on Aging

Share your feedback on the [proposed Illinois State Plan on Aging](#) which will go into effect October 1, 2025, for a three-year period. Under the federal Older Americans Act, each state is required to detail how it plans to serve older adults. This plan was crafted after IDoA hosted nine in-person and three virtual roundtables in the Fall of 2024, in addition to discussions with IDoA advisory council members, to gather feedback on priorities. This plan is also based on the area plans of the State's thirteen Area Agencies on Aging. Attend a public hearing to learn more about the plan and provide feedback to the Illinois Department on Aging.

MAY 2025	
MON 19	9:30 AM – 11:00 AM Renaissance Court (at the Chicago Cultural Center) 78 East Washington // Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 744-4550
MON 19	2:30 PM – 4:00 PM AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois 1910 S. Highland Ave., Suite 100 // Lombard, Illinois 60148 (630) 293-5990
WED 28	10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Senior Adult Services 409 N. Springer St. // Carbondale, IL 62901 (618) 457-4151
THU 29	9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Virtual Hearing WebEx Link: https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m35d9b3f194716d2e6179090daa28ffa8



Provide written feedback [here](#) or visit:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/58f7602695194e2a92f1f2a07fe2d3a4>

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate against any individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or unfavorable discharge from military service in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have a right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information call the Senior Helpline: 1-800-252-8966; 711 (TRS).

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois (digital) 5/25