



# Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

## Ranked Categories and Recommendations

The following five categories were ranked by Planning Group members leading up to the February 10, 2020 meeting - the categories are in rank order. Beneath each category are the corresponding recommendations made by the Planning Group from 2016 to 2019.

### Age-Friendly Planning

- A. Colorado's counties and municipalities, in collaboration with the Area Agencies on Aging and state agencies, should develop and implement comprehensive local and, where appropriate, regional plans for aging that prioritize services and expenditures, promote efficiencies, and identify public and private strategies to ensure adequate long-term funding. These plans should include strategies and solutions that have been demonstrated to help improve the lives of older Coloradans, help them age in place, and contribute to their communities.
- B. As key first steps in helping communities reinvent themselves so that Colorado seniors have more opportunities to age in place and remain active, the General Assembly should take the following steps to build on promising existing efforts:
  - i. Support efforts to create a Universal Design Certification program to encourage the inclusion of universal design elements in new and remodeled housing for seniors, such as the one within the Colorado State University Institute for the Built Environment. This should include adequate resources for piloting this Universal Design Certification process with the Partnership for Age Friendly Communities in Larimer County and to share and promote the lessons of that pilot program with communities throughout Colorado.
  - ii. Support the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) State Coordinating Council in coordinating among the wide range of programs that help serve the transportation needs of Colorado's aging population. The Council should be charged with making specific regulatory, legislative and funding recommendations to improve the reach, effectiveness and efficiency of existing programs.
  - iii. Utilize the CDOT State Coordinating Council and regional councils to help seniors access tools and training to remain safe on the road, such as AARP Driver Safety Courses, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the Car Fit Program, the Colorado Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families, and the 2015 Strategic Highway Safety Program.
- C. The State of Colorado, along with local governments and the private sector, should support partnerships to promote and develop the expansion of community-wide efforts to make all of Colorado an age-friendly state in-line with the Lifelong Colorado initiative.
- D. Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and local health departments to identify state and national funding opportunities to develop, implement, and maintain an age-friendly public health system in coordination with existing community-based organizations
- E. The State of Colorado along with non-profit and private sector partners should define, develop, and implement a program to help employers create age-friendly workplaces. Furthermore, employers who receive government contracts should be required to implement age-friendly workplace practices.



# Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

## Workforce to Support Older Adults

- A. Colorado must work to ensure its workforce meets the service needs of its aging population, including nursing homes, assisted living communities, home health agencies, caregivers, and other professionals who support the state's aging population. Colorado should address the employment and skill development needs of workers who serve older Coloradans. The CWDC also should ensure that older workers have access to training and support services required for meaningful employment.
- B. The state should build on the effective talent development strategies already in place to identify workforce needs and develop career pathways (including those related to aging services), led by the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The General Assembly also should identify an entity to advocate for workforce development in industries serving older adults and for services to older workers; that entity should collaborate with the CWDC to utilize existing talent development strategies and infrastructure to ensure Colorado's future workforce meets the needs of older adults.
- C. The State of Colorado should:
  - i. Support the infrastructure to address the growing need for a workforce to serve older Coloradans;
  - ii. Work to ensure that the state educational system has the capacity to educate and train a workforce to serve older Coloradans;
  - iii. Work with the business community to develop programs and best practices addressing existing and future workforce shortages in sectors to serve older Coloradans as they age in their communities.

\*this is a combination of three different recommendations from 2018
- D. The State of Colorado should prioritize the development of feasible career ladders from direct care worker positions (e.g., certified nursing assistant) to the allied health professions (e.g., paramedic, occupational therapist) and more traditional healthcare professions (e.g., registered nurse, pharmacist) – linking emerging technologies, training, education, and career support services.
- E. The State of Colorado should identify aging-related worker shortages across the state (e.g., in-home care workers, private/public guardians, geriatricians, paratransit drivers). Based on this analysis, the Governor's Office and General Assembly should assess the feasibility of incentivizing the development or expansion of workers in areas with shortages. This may include, but is not limited to, increased provider reimbursement rates, the development of grants and scholarships, loan forgiveness, and tax incentives.
- F. The State of Colorado should continue to support, develop, and expand a formal training process accompanied by stackable certificates (e.g., dementia-specific training) for direct care workers which corresponds to increased reimbursement for the provider and a wage increase for the employee.

## Funding for the Continuum of Long-Term Services and Supports



## Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

- A. In order to improve the accountability of health care spending and support community-based providers as care settings continue to shift towards home and community-based services, the Governor's Office, Office of Saving People Money on Health Care, and General Assembly should take the following steps:
  - i. Continue to support rate increases for home and community-based service providers to enhance capacity and ensure continued quality, enabling older adults to age in their local communities;
  - ii. Encourage and support the development of a secure and bi-directional service referral database accessible and mutually beneficial to community-based, medical, and health insurance providers to determine whether or not individuals are receiving referred services, evaluate community-based provider capacity, and identify referral trends;
  - iii. Identify and implement strategies that support reimbursement to community-based organizations for services in order to expand community-based provider capacity to meet demand for referrals from medical and health insurance providers.
  
- B. In order to maintain and increase the provision of a variety of long-term services and supports, encourage aging in community, and delay utilization of Medicaid services, the following steps should be taken to bolster regional Area Agencies on Aging and other community-based provider organizations:
  - i. The Governor's Office and the General Assembly should prioritize funding through State Funding for Senior Services and identify additional state-level funding opportunities beyond General Fund revenue;
  - ii. The Colorado Department of Human Services, State Unit on Aging, regional Area Agencies on Aging, local governments, and service providers, should evaluate innovative opportunities (e.g., Medicare Advantage expansion, State Innovation Waivers) and additional funding streams (e.g., private insurance, fee-for-service options) in response to shifting demographics, growing demand for services, and limited availability of state and federal resources to address funding gaps.

### State Planning and Governance

- A. The Governor should create a permanent, high-level office or position within the executive branch to be accountable for and lead the state government's work on aging issues. The Governor should propose and the General Assembly should consider legislation to grant this new office or position the authority and capacity to:
  - i. Set consistent statewide policy priorities;
  - ii. Coordinate the aging-related work of state agencies and workgroups;
  - iii. Help the state coordinate effectively and consistently with federal and local partners — and learn from the experiences of other states, commissions, planning groups, and other research entities, including the work conducted by and on behalf of SAPGA;
  - iv. Maximize efficiency and cost-effectiveness and identify potential savings;
  - v. Identify gaps and unmet needs;
  - vi. Identify and help develop innovative new financing mechanisms, including utilizing opportunities for matching funding;
  - vii. Collect, analyze, and share data across agencies to improve decision-making related to workforce development and participation, health and wellness, and other key areas related to aging policy;



## Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

- viii. Help drive public education efforts concerning the effects of aging in Colorado;
  - ix. And oversee the implementation of the state's Strategic Action Plan on Aging as well as appropriate recommendations from other efforts such as the Community Living Advisory Group (CLAG), Colorado Aging Framework, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Healthy Aging Plan, and the Colorado Alzheimer's Disease Plan.
- B. The Colorado Legislative Council should consider establishing a similar and parallel high-level mechanism and process for tracking and coordinating aging issues as well as educating individual lawmakers.
- C. The Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting, the Colorado Legislative Council, and the Joint Budget Committee staffs should work together to compile a comprehensive state budget on aging to identify all state expenditures related to aging issues (including revenue expenditures such as tax credits) as a tool to help policymakers plan and prioritize at the state level. These efforts should also include identification of major long-term trends in state expenditures with special attention given to resolving the state's structural imbalance and its impact on funding aging-related programs.
- D. Designees from the Governor's Office, General Assembly, Colorado Commission on Aging, all Colorado departments listed in HB15-1033, and other select stakeholders should convene a working group chaired by the Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging to explore innovative directions to structurally integrate and crystallize past, current, and forthcoming aging efforts in order to support implementation, coordination, and collaboration in Colorado. In turn, promoting effective and responsive governance of aging issues with specific consideration to fiscal impacts on state, local, and family resources

### Family Caregiving

- A. To provide support to the growing number of Colorado workers who are also caregivers for aging loved ones, the General Assembly and Governor should take these concrete steps:
- i. Establish family leave policies that set standards for compensating employees who are caring for aging family members. This might include a Temporary Caregiver Insurance Program through employee payroll deductions, such as those in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island.
  - ii. Create and promote a partnership among state and local governments, employer groups and educational institutions to identify and promote best practices for educating and supporting employees who are also caregivers.
  - iii. Fully fund the recommendations made by the Respite Care Task Force in their January 2016 report.