AgeSpan Area Plan 2026-2029

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Enhance access to in-home support services that help older adults maintain independence and safely age in place.

Objective:

1. Increase the number of older adults receiving in-home services (e.g., personal care, homemaker, chore assistance) by 5% over the next two years, with a focus on individuals with the greatest economic need and have significant functional impairments.

Strategies:

- Expand partnerships with local in-home care providers to increase service area availability.

- Conduct targeted outreach in underserved areas to identify and enroll eligible individuals.

- Utilize consumer feedback to refine service delivery and prioritize needs.

- Continue education and training with outreach staff regarding assessment for services.

Performance Measures:

- Number of providers who expand their service area coverage annually.

- Number of outreach events held in underserved communities and number of individuals enrolled through those efforts (annually).

- Percentage of consumers surveyed annually, and the proportion of service changes made based on feedback.

- Number of staff trained annually and pre-/post-training assessment scores showing increased knowledge or confidence.

Goal 2: Enhance access to timely services that support older adults aging in the community.

Objective:

1. Decrease the number of days older adults wait for services to begin in the Home Care Program by 10% over the next two years.

Strategies:

- Ensure timely referral processing within the Information & Referral Department.

- Train staff to improve follow up time after conducting an initial assessment.

- Expand partnerships with local in-home care providers to increase service area availability.

- Increase outreach from Service Procurement to providers regarding consumers in hard to fill areas or unique situations to decrease wait time.

Performance Measures:

- Average number of days between initial contact and referral processing completion (tracked quarterly).

- Number of staff completing training annually and average follow-up time post-assessment (tracked quarterly).

- Number of providers who expand their service coverage annually.

- Number of outreach attempts per month and decrease in their percentage of cases waiting over 90 days for services.

Goal 3: Improve access to dependable, affordable, and accessible transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities in the AgeSpan service area to support independence, reduce isolation, and ensure access to essential services.

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness and utilization of existing transportation services (public, private, and volunteer-based) by 20% by FY2026.

2. Strengthen regional partnerships to coordinate and advocate for age- and disability-friendly transportation systems.

Strategies:

- Map existing transportation resources, including:

    o Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA)

    o COA van services and Dial-A-Ride programs

    o Medical transportation vendors and volunteer driver programs

- Develop and widely distribute information on regional transportation resource guides in collaboration with:
    - Councils on Aging in AgeSpan service area
    - Northern Essex Elder Transport
    - Local housing authorities, libraries, and health centers

Performance Measures:

- Number of community engagement events or sessions held (target: at least 6), and number of older adult participants (target: 200+)

- Distribution of 5,000 transportation resource guides (print and digital)

- 20% increase in older adult usage of identified transportation services by FY2026, tracked in collaboration with MVRTA and local providers.

Goal 4: Improve the affordability and accessibility of health care services for AgeSpan consumers and other older adults throughout our service area.

Objectives:

1. Increase access to affordable primary and preventive health care services for older adults.

2. Reduce out-of-pocket health care costs for older adults.

3. Advocate for improved health care access and funding for underserved older adult populations.

Strategies:

- Offer bilingual navigation services to help older adults enroll in Medicare, Medicaid, or other benefit programs.

- Provide counseling on health insurance options and medication assistance programs through SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) or similar services.

- Facilitate prescription drug assistance via programs such as Extra Help or pharmaceutical discount cards.

- Engage in policy advocacy with state and local representatives around older adult health care funding and access.

- Collect and share data and client stories to inform public policy.

- Collaborate with local coalitions and stakeholders to push for systemic improvements.

Performance Measures:

- Number of older adults served by outreach events.

- Percentage increase in enrollment in health coverage programs (Medicare Savings Program, MassHealth).

- Number of individuals receiving SHINE or benefits counseling services.

- Number of advocacy meetings or public testimonies conducted annually.

- Inclusion of older adult health access issues in local/state health improvement plans.

- Policy changes influenced or supported through AAA advocacy efforts.

Goal 5: Provide enhanced nutrition service delivery, combat food insecurity, and improve nutrition, and respond to the dietary needs of older adults with a range of medical needs and/or cultural needs and requests.

Objectives:

- Reduce food insecurity among homebound and low-income older adults by increasing enrollment in nutrition services.

- Improve the nutritional quality and personalization of meals to support older adults with chronic medical conditions (including diabetes, hypertension, renal disease) and those with cultural dietary needs.

Strategies:

- Expand outreach through agency's Outreach team and partnerships with community-based partners to reach those not currently engaged with services.

- Implement targeted screening for food insecurity during intake and home visits.

- Increase capacity for home-delivered meals through volunteer recruitment.

- Continue to provide and expand medically tailored meal options.

- Implement a vegetarian meal option.

- Implement individual nutrition assessment and nutrition counseling for all new consumers.

- Offer group and individual nutrition education sessions in English and Spanish.

Performance Measures:

- Number of older adults newly enrolled in Home-delivered and congregate programs.

- Number of outreach events or materials distributed in multiple languages (e.g., Spanish, Khmer)

- Number and types of medically tailored and culturally appropriate meal options.

- Percentage of consumers receiving a nutrition assessment within 30 days of enrollment.

- Number of consumers participating in nutrition education/counseling sessions.

Goal 6: Improve housing stability, affordability, and safety for older adults throughout our service area by addressing barriers related to cost, accessibility, and home maintenance.

Objectives:

1. Increase access to affordable housing options for older adults.

2. Increase access to home modification and accessibility improvements for at least 100 older adults with mobility challenges over the next two years.

3. Assist 150 older adult homeowners or renters annually with minor home repairs and maintenance to prevent displacement or unsafe conditions.

Strategies:

- Partner with local housing authorities, developers, and nonprofits to prioritize older adults in affordable housing projects.

- Advocate for inclusion of older adults in city housing plans and funding opportunities.

- Provide housing navigation support to help older adults apply for and access subsidized housing.

- Collaborate with organizations offering home modification services (e.g., ramps, grab bars, stair lifts).

- Secure funding through grants, local donors, or state programs to subsidize home modification costs.

- Promote awareness of available home accessibility programs through outreach and case management.

Performance Measures:

- Number of new or existing affordable housing units made available to older adults annually.

- Number of older adults successfully assisted in applying for or moving into subsidized housing.

- Number of homes modified for accessibility annually.

- Percentage of home modification recipients reporting increased ability to safely remain at home (via post-service survey).

- Amount of funding secured for accessibility improvements.

- Number of older adults receiving home repair assistance annually.

Goal 7: Enhance mental and behavioral health support for older adults in our service area by building staff capacity to identify and respond to high-risk consumers.

Objectives:

1. Ensure relevant staff receive suicide prevention training.

2. Increase staff knowledge, skills, and confidence to identify warning signs and administer interventions.

3. Embed suicide prevention into organizational policies and procedures.

4. Promote on-going learning and support for staff to maintain competency and workforce well-being.

Strategies:

1. Implement mandatory evidence-based suicide prevention training to managers and frontline staff.

2. Use supervision to review real-life case scenarios and debrief after crisis intervention.

3. Update organizational procedures to include suicide risk protocols such as screening, documentation, and referral.

4. Offer refresher training once a year.

5. Establish peer support network and mental health resources for staff.

Performance Measures:

1. 100% of front-line workers will be trained annually.

2. 80% of training participants will demonstrate increase in knowledge and confidence.

3. Within first year, 75% staff will report improved ability to support at-risk individuals.

Goal 8: Reduce social isolation and loneliness among community-dwelling older adults, with a particular focus on those who are homebound.

Objectives:

1. Launch one intergenerational social engagement program by the end of 2025.
2. Bridge the digital divide by increasing access to online resources, services, and engagement opportunities for older adults with limited digital literacy
3. Increase awareness of volunteer opportunities for older adults and family caregivers, particularly those opportunities connecting volunteers to isolated older adults.

Strategies:

- Partner with local housing sites and local Children's Services organization in Andover to design and implement intergenerational programming.
- Provide ongoing and enhanced digital literacy training and access to technology for older adults.
- Develop communication strategies centered around the value of social connection for volunteers and isolated individuals.

Performance Measure:

- 10% decrease in feelings of isolation or loneliness among program participants and volunteers.
- Increased confidence in using technology to connect safely and securely with family, friends, neighbors, providers and others.

Goal 9: Enhance the quality of life and well-being of caregivers by increasing access to support services, resources, and education tailored to their diverse needs.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen emotional and peer support for caregivers through support groups and mental health services.

2. Improve access to financial assistance and planning resources.

3. Expand availability and awareness of in-home care services.

4. Provide accessible, high-quality information, training, and resources to caregivers.

5. Expand volunteer engagement within AgeSpan by integrating volunteer roles into the Family Caregiver Support Program to enhance support for caregivers.

Strategies:

- Facilitate regular caregiver support groups (in-person and virtual).

- Integrate mental health check-ins during caregiver assessments.

- Partner with behavioral health professionals to provide counseling sessions.

- Provide financial literacy workshops tailored to caregivers.

- Connect caregivers with benefit programs (e.g., Medicaid waivers, tax credits).

- Coordinate referrals to in-home care providers and maintain an updated directory of vetted home care agencies.

- Advocate for funding to support low- or no-cost in-home care services.

- Offer educational workshops/webinars on caregiving skills, self-care, etc.

- Create a centralized online caregiver resource page.

- Distribute printed and digital caregiver guides in multiple languages.

- Develop new volunteer roles that provide respite, emotional support, or resource navigation for family caregivers.

- Conduct listening sessions or surveys with current and former family caregivers to identify specific support needs and preferred volunteer services.

- Provide specialized training for volunteers to ensure they are equipped to collaborate with caregivers effectively and sensitively.

Performance Measures:

- Number of support groups held and average attendance per session.

- Number of caregivers accessing mental health services.

- Number of caregivers reporting reduction in stress or emotional burden.

- Number of caregivers attending financial workshops.

- Number of caregivers referred to financial assistance programs.

- Self-reported improvement in financial knowledge or stability.

- Number of caregivers connected with in-home care services.

- Number of caregivers attending trainings or webinars.

- Website traffic and downloads from the resource page.