

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AGESPAN FFY 2026–2029 AREA PLAN

Since its founding in 1974, AgeSpan, Inc. has been a cornerstone of support for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers across the Merrimack Valley and North Shore. As a federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA), state Aging Service Access Point (ASAP), and elder protective service agency, AgeSpan is committed to empowering individuals to live independently, safely, and with dignity in their communities.

AgeSpan serves 28 diverse communities and reaches nearly 190,000 older adults—over 11% of the Commonwealth’s 60+ population. In partnership with the Northeast Independent Living Program, AgeSpan co-leads the Merrimack Valley Aging and Disability Resource Consortium, ensuring inclusive access to essential services. With a workforce of nearly 500 and collaborations with over 70 providers, AgeSpan delivers vital supports such as health care access, housing assistance, food security, and financial resources.

2025 Community Needs Assessment Highlights

To shape this 2026–2029 Area Plan, AgeSpan conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment, collecting input from over 8,500 older adults, caregivers, and partners through surveys and focus groups. Key findings include:

Older Adults’ Top Needs:

- In-Home Support for Independence (64.8%)
- Access to Services (53.8%)
- Affordable Health Care (51.5%)
- Transportation Access (50.7%)
- Access to Health Care (47.5%)
- Wellness, Nutrition, Housing, and Socialization rounded out key concerns

Caregivers’ Top Needs:

- Respite Care (71.43%)
- Support Groups (64.29%)
- Financial Assistance (58.57%)
- In-Home Care, Training, Mental Health, and Legal Assistance

Key Trends:

- Increased concern around affordability (health care, housing) and access to services

- A growing need for wellness and social engagement among older adults
- Rising caregiver burnout, with calls for respite and structured support services

Strategic Focus Areas for 2026–2029

Aligned with the missions of the U.S. Administration for Community Living, the Executive Office of Aging and Independence, and AgeSpan’s own values, the 2026–2029 Area Plan will address four priority areas:

1. Older Americans Act Core Programs – Enhance and expand essential services like nutrition, in-home support, and transportation.
2. Greatest Economic and Social Need – Target resources to underserved, low-income, and socially isolated individuals.
3. Expanding Access to Home- and Community-Based Services – Promote independence and reduce institutionalization.
4. Caregiving – Strengthen caregiver support, education, and respite options.

Goals for 2026–2029

- **Goal 1:** Enhance access to in-home support services that help older adults maintain
- **Goal 2:** Enhance access to timely services that support older adults aging in the community.
- **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.
- **Goal 4:** Improve the affordability and accessibility of health care services for AgeSpan consumers and other older adults throughout our service area.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

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

Moving Forward

As AgeSpan enters the next four-year planning cycle, its commitment remains firm: to deliver compassionate, inclusive, and high-quality services that enable older adults and caregivers to live well and age with dignity. Amid changing demographics and evolving federal priorities, AgeSpan's vision is rooted in the belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive—safely, independently, and on their own terms.