

**2020-2024 FOUR-YEAR PLAN  
OF THE  
ALLEGHENY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AREA AGENCY ON  
AGING**

**FOR THE PERIOD  
October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2024**



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Four-Year Plan  
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## **1. Executive Summary**

### **Introduction:**

The Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging (DHS AAA) is part of a nationwide aging network led by the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the Pennsylvania Department on Aging (PDA). Annually, approximately 40,500 consumers receive DHS AAA services through either internally administered programs and contracts, or County Agreements with more than 78 community-based service providers. Every four years, PDA requires each of the Commonwealth's fifty-two (52) Area Agencies on Aging to submit an action plan for the following four years. This Four-Year Plan considers the demographic trends of the region, the changing needs of the consumers, and the current services provided by the DHS AAA.

### **Community Needs Assessment:**

In developing the 2020-24 Plan, the DHS AAA utilized a strategic planning process to elicit input from stakeholders, consumers, universities, and other partners. The process was guided by a long-range recognition of how services have evolved, the state of service delivery today, and how consumer needs and the aging landscape are changing.

DHS AAA worked with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to organize and facilitate three focus group sessions to discuss a range of topics including, but not limited to, unmet needs among Allegheny County older adults and approaches to addressing those unmet needs; challenges tied to the provision of aging services and supports and approaches to addressing those challenges; and manners of promoting awareness and utilization of existing aging services. Facilitators led focus groups and discussion sessions to elicit feedback. A listing of focus group participants is included in Appendix 5.1

From the focus group sessions, four broad themes emerged:

1. Service and Support Needs
2. Need for Increased Community Outreach
3. Need for Enhanced Partnerships
4. Staff-related Needs

Based on these themes, the DHS AAA developed four overarching goals for the 2020-24 Four Year Plan:

1. Advocate for the rights of older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect
2. Improve services for older adults and the ability to advocate for them by using evidence-informed planning, committing to data integrity and being accountable for results
3. Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older adult residents of Allegheny County
4. Strengthen aging network's capacity, promote innovation, and best practices, and build efficiencies to respond to the growing and diversifying aging population

As Allegheny County grows and ages, the percentage of residents identified as seniors is also growing and becoming more diverse. Recognizing the opportunity to better serve the needs of this growing population, and in the tradition of Allegheny County's strategic planning, the AAA initiated development of this Four-Year Plan. This plan is based on extensive community participation and input. However, ongoing monitoring and feedback will ensure that the plan remains an active document, responsive to changing conditions and needs, reflective of community priorities.

Over the next four years, the Allegheny County AAA will continue to deliver a high volume and range of services to the older adult community while pursuing each of the aforementioned goals to increase quality, expand advocacy and foster a sense of community among our constituency and strengthen the network as a whole. In so doing, we will also place special attention on our underserved communities to ensure that we are better equipped to understand and meet their needs, so that individuals of all backgrounds and abilities have an equal place in the aging community.

While executing this plan, the DHS AAA will also be responding to the historic challenges presented by the novel Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 by developing and implementing innovative strategies at both the administrative and service delivery level. It will engage different modes of completing daily work to ensure the highest level of health and safety for staff, while also augmenting available services to best respond to the emerging needs of the community.

## **2. Agency Overview**

### **Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Vision Statement:**

"To create an accessible, culturally competent, integrated and comprehensive human services system that ensures individually tailored, seamless and holistic services to Allegheny County residents, in particular the county's vulnerable populations."

### **DHS Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Mission Statement:**

To assist Allegheny County residents who are 60 years of age and older to live safe, healthy and, when possible, independent lives.

### **Organizational Structure:**

The DHS Area Agency on Aging is a designation of the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Aging (PDA), and is one of the 52 agencies that provide services for older adults 60 years of age and older in designated county or multi-county areas of Pennsylvania. As a program office of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, the AAA is responsible for providing leadership in the delivery of services to senior residents of Allegheny County who are 60 years of age and older.

Annually, approximately 40,500 consumers receive DHS AAA services through either internally administered programs and contracts, or County Agreements with over 78 community-based service providers. Appendices 5.4 and 5.5 of this report contain the organizational structures of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) and the ACDHS Area Agency on Aging (DHS AAA), respectively.

Re-elected (2020-2024) to a third term, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and a 15-member County Council, elected by district, constitute the executive and legislative arms of county government, respectively.

### **Advisory Council:**

The Advisory Council to the AAA works as an advocate for older adults of Allegheny County. The council advises the DHS AAA on the development and implementation of the four-year plan and the annual Aging Block Grant application which are presented for public comment at annual public hearings. The Council also raises issues concerning or impacting older adults and advises the DHS AAA on ways to increase the agency's effectiveness.

### **Administrator:**

The Administrator, who also holds the rank of Deputy Director in the Department of Human Services, directs operations at the Area Agency on Agency. A staff of roughly 110 carry out agency policies and programmatic guidelines in administering contracts and assuring quality service delivery. They have professional training in their fields, including ongoing professional development opportunities. Most of the staff are Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission hires.

## **DHS Statement of Principles:**

DHS is responsible for providing and administering publicly funded human services to Allegheny County residents. All services will be:

- High quality-reflecting best practices in case management, counseling, and treatment
- Readily accessible -in natural, least restrictive settings, often community-based.
- Strengths-based -focused on the capabilities of individuals and families, not their deficits.
- Culturally competent - demonstrating respect for individuals, their goals, and preferences.
- Individually tailored and empowering - by building confidence and shared decision making as routes to independence rather than dependency.
- Holistic - serving the comprehensive needs of families as well as individuals through tangible aid and full continuum of services.

## **Background:**

In 2000, the DHS Area Agency on Aging (formerly the Allegheny County Department of Aging) joined four other County program offices and later three support offices to become part of an integrated Department of Human Services. In addition to the AAA, the other program offices include the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF), Office of Community Services (OCS), and Office of Intellectual Disability (OID). Support offices include, Office of Administrative and Information Management Services (AIMS), Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning (ATP), and the Office of Community Relations (OCR).

The list below, while not all-inclusive, shows the vast array of programs provided directly either by the DHS AAA staff or through County Agreements with over 78 community-based service providers.

- Information & Assistance
- Senior Community Centers
- Nutrition
- Shared Ride Transportation
- Health Insurance Counseling
- Legal Counseling
- Assessments and Functional Eligibility Determinations
- Care Management
- In-Home Services
- Senior Companions
- Adult Foster Care (Domiciliary Care)
- Caregiver Support
- Advocacy for Long-Term Care Consumers (Ombudsman)
- Protective Services
- Legal Guardianship
- Community Care Transitions
- Healthy Steps for Older Adults
- Carrier Alert Program
- Money Management Program

## 2.1 Demographics

### Introduction:

The 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates inform the main demographic characteristics of Allegheny County. The Aging Population Projections were generated using the REMI model, which is a detailed regional econometric model utilized by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for ten counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The model was most recently calibrated by SPC in June 2019 to incorporate the population data available at the time.

### Aging Population Projections and Trends:

US	Age 60-64	Age 65-74	Age 75-84	Age 85+	Age 65+ Total	Total, all ages
2020	21,039,208	32,870,253	16,553,360	6,537,367	55,960,979	332,324,320
2030	19,729,727	39,004,920	25,527,202	8,855,389	73,387,512	355,942,921
2040	19,790,268	36,549,356	30,904,947	14,260,352	81,714,655	376,618,668
2050	23,081,456	39,241,909	29,746,484	18,678,022	87,666,415	394,441,292
2060	24,176,294	45,511,330	32,846,115	19,862,897	98,220,342	412,761,186
Allegheny County	Age 60-64	Age 65-74	Age 75-84	Age 85+	Age 65+ Total	Total, all ages
2020	90,156	138,662	67,881	33,494	240,037	1,227,172
2030	71,412	151,760	100,546	32,851	285,157	1,283,860
2040	72,209	124,317	111,551	50,662	286,530	1,357,596
2050	105,125	147,831	94,090	59,803	301,723	1,450,985
2060	90,763	179,465	115,906	55,536	350,907	1,570,506

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission REMI TranSight Model (v4.2.2)

- The 2018 ACS Estimates reported 221,970 people 65 years or older in Allegheny County, accounting for 18.1% of the population. This compares nationally with 15.2% of the 65 years or older age cohort. The same estimates reported 36,098 people among the oldest old age cohort of 85 years and older in the County, accounting for 2.9% of the population, compared to 1.9% nationally in this age cohort.
- Following the slight increase of almost 1% from 2010 to 2018, the population 65 years and older in Allegheny County is expected to continue on an upward trend to reach 240,037 in 2020 and increase by about 46% between 2020 and 2060. This is lower than the projected growth rate of the older population nationally, which is estimated at 76% over the same period.
- From 2020 to 2060, the proportion of the 65 years or older population is expected to account for around 20% of the total population in Allegheny County, comparable to the national rate.

### Educational Attainment:

Older resident cohorts of Allegheny County have similar or slightly higher levels of education compared to the nation.

- Forty-one percent (41%) of Allegheny County residents age 65 and over have a high school degree or equivalent, compared favorably to 31% of the national population in that age range.



- Twenty-seven percent (27%) of Allegheny County residents age 65 and over hold a bachelor's degree or higher, similar to that of the country overall.

#### **Income and Poverty:**

- Average household earnings of residents 65 years and over in Allegheny County is \$57,611, slightly lower than that of the same cohort nationally (\$59,222).
- Older adults were less likely to be poor in Allegheny County than in the nation as a whole, with 8.3% of adults age 65 and older in Allegheny County classified as living below the poverty level compared with 9.3% nationally.

#### **Housing:**

- The 2018 ACS survey indicates that there are 147,885 housing units occupied by residents age 65 years and over in Allegheny County, reflecting an 8% increase from 137,447 units in 2010.
- Allegheny County has a lower proportion of housing units occupied by older adults with no telephone service (0.8%) than that of the nation (1.5%).

#### **Transportation:**

- In Allegheny County, 85.8% of adults age 65 and over have a Pennsylvania driver's license.

#### **Living Alone:**

- In Allegheny County, 14.2% of adults age 65 and over live alone, compared to 10.7% nationally.
- Of Allegheny County's older adults living alone, 70.4% are female, compared to 68.5% nationally.

#### **Caregiving:**

Family members are an essential resource to older individuals. Without the care and support provided by relatives and friends, it would be difficult and often impossible for older adults to remain in the community. In 2017, the University of Pittsburgh conducted a Regional Caregivers Survey to better understand the caregiving experience in western Pennsylvania.

- Many caregivers are older adults themselves, with 20.3% of local individuals age 55 and over (or about 80,000 people) providing care for someone else. Care recipients locally tend to be older, with 48% of care recipients at least age 85, compared to 32% nationally.
- Of those caring for people age 65 and over, 17% spend at least 40 hours giving care per week, essentially equivalent to a full-time job. This level of involvement can have physical, emotional, financial, and social ramifications for the caregiver.
- Locally, 60% of caregivers note emotional difficulty, 23% self-report their level of health between fair and poor, 23% meet the at-risk criteria for anxiety, and 16% meet the at-risk criteria for depression.

- Of caregivers for individuals age 65 and over, 26% report increased difficulty in their work life due to caregiving, and more than 40% have reduced their work hours or quit their jobs to continue providing care.
- As another financial impact, 40% of local caregivers finance some of the care out-of-pocket.

**Other Related Information:**

***Demographic Characteristics of AAA Consumers:***

- The AAA provided information, assistance, and a variety of care-managed services to approximately 34,000 older adults in FY 2018-19. More than one fourth of the consumers were 85 years and older. Around 68% of these consumers were female and 31% were male. Seventy percent of the consumers were White and around one fifth were Black/African-American. Half of the consumers lived alone.
- Almost one third of the consumers served were in poverty. Only three percent of the consumers 60 years and over lived in the rural areas. A vast majority of the consumers (96%) spoke English as their primary language. Four percent of the consumers reported 22 languages as their primary language. Russian, Chinese, Nepalese and Spanish were the most spoken among these languages.

***Changes in Service Utilization and Demand:***

- In 2019, Allegheny County Older Adults Protective Services program received 6,375 reports of suspected abuse or neglect of adults (age 18–59) and senior citizens (age 60 and older). This number has almost doubled since 2015. Given the upward trend in the aging population projection mentioned above and the improved awareness among the county residents about the Protective Services program hotline and services, the number of reports of abuse is expected to increase in the coming years.
- Older Persons Transportation (OPT)<sup>2</sup> is a door-to-door rider service that will take older adults to appointments, senior centers, grocery stores, etc. for a small fee. Over the past few years, there has been a slight decrease in OPT use by adults age 65 and over in Allegheny County. Between Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018, there was a 6% decrease in average quarterly trip volume (from 50,407 average trips to 47,335), and another 7% decrease by FY 2019<sup>3</sup> (down to 44,167 average trips per quarter).
- The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is designed to help the adults who care for loved ones. Benefits can include respite care, in-home personal care assistance, reimbursement for qualifying expenses, information, resources, and more. Of the caregivers served by CSP in FY 2019, 71% were female, 82% were white and 14% were black, and the median age was 64 years. Additionally, 59% were married and 22% were single, 16% were in poverty, 16% lived alone, and 26% were disabled. Employment status varied, with 29% of caregivers retired and 24% working full time. The most common relationships to the person receiving care were daughter or daughter-in-law (41%), wife (18%), son or son-in-law (14%), and husband (13%).

- The Senior Companion Program provides assistance to older adults with various health issues as well as those who are lonely and could benefit from a friendly visitor. Of the 387 individuals served in FY 2019, 70% were female, 59% were white and 27% were black, and 43% were age 85+ years.
- In March 2020, social distancing measures were put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This has impacted the agency's service utilization in some program areas.
  - The AAA maintained all of its major services to the older adults such as care management and meal services.
    - In 2019, the number of consumers receiving care management service was around 250 on a daily average. From February to May 2020, this number has reached and stayed consistently at above 300.
    - Before the outbreak, the Senior Centers provided lunches to around 1,000 consumers on a daily average. During the crisis, the Senior Centers have used alternative means including drive-by, pick-up/take-out, delivery to senior center participants' homes to provide meals for around 500 clients daily. For the senior center participants that can not have the meals packaged and delivered to their house, the AAA enroll them in OPTIONS for In-Home Meal Service. The OPTIONS In-Home Meals also had new COVID services created that if there was an increase or need for service because of COVID, the Care Managers would setup COVID In-Home Meals. The program has provided these COVID-19 meals to around 200 consumers daily since the outbreak and still maintained the daily provision of meals to 1,300 of its regular clients.
  - Services that were more directly affected by the social distancing measures such as senior center visits saw a drastic decrease. Before the outbreak, the agency recorded visits from a daily average of 500 to 600 clients in 2019 and the first two months of 2020.

## **2.2 Local Political and Economic Conditions**

The Allegheny County DHS AAA expects to see a variety of unique and unanticipated challenges in the local political and economic environment as a result of the novel Coronavirus pandemic of 2020. The nature and extent of those challenges will be dependent on the development and ultimate resolution of the pandemic, and as result forecasting anything in this arena is difficult at this time.

## **2.3 Needs Assessment**

Data from multiple sources were examined to identify the needs of the Allegheny County older adult population, the Aging Network, and the many others working in support of the older adult population. Secondary data sources included [The Neighborland Project](#) (AC DHS), The AAA Older Adult Protective Services Efficiency Project (AC AAA), The OPTIONS New Referral Project (AC AAA), and The Care Coordination Project (AC AAA).

To gain additional insight regarding existing and emergent needs within communities of interest, the AAA conducted three Needs Assessment focus groups. (See Appendix 5.1 for additional information regarding focus group participants.) During focus group sessions, participants were asked to share their perspectives on a range of topics including, but not limited to, unmet needs among Allegheny County older adults and approaches to addressing those unmet needs; challenges tied to the provision of aging services and supports and approaches to addressing those challenges; and manners of promoting awareness and utilization of existing aging services. (See Appendix 5.2 and 5.3 for the focus group guides.)

Four key themes emerged from primary and secondary data analyses:

- Service and Support Needs
- Need for Increased Community Outreach
- Need for Enhanced Partnerships
- Staff-related Needs

### **Service and Support Needs**

Several unmet needs requiring additional services and support emerged from the data examined. These needs included: 1) Housing Needs; 2) Food Needs; 3) Transportation Needs; 4) Technology-related Needs; 5) Social Support Needs; and 6) Senior Center-related Needs.

#### Housing Needs

Needs Assessment focus group participants identified a range of housing-related needs among the County's older adult population. These housing-related needs included the need for additional sources of emergency housing, the need for more affordable housing, the need for hoarding-related support (and associated behavioral health support), the need for support addressing infestations, and the need for additional sources of emergency moving assistance. Focus group participants also asserted that additional support implementing various housing adaptations (e.g., widening doorways, constructing ramps) was also needed throughout the County, noting that access to these adaptations was often limited, leaving some older adults "trapped in place".

Focus group participants noted the potential for volunteers to address some of the less complex housing-related needs that exist among members of the County's older adult community. For example, focus group participants noted that volunteers could potentially support older adults' efforts to age in place by helping with minor home repairs and miscellaneous home maintenance activities (e.g., replacing batteries in fire alarms, installing carbon monoxide detectors, shoveling snow). Focus group participants recommended that the AAA enhance its volunteer capacity by working with community organizations aiming to promote civic engagement and to advance volunteerism.

#### Food Needs

In addition to emphasizing the importance of addressing the housing-related needs of the County's older adult population, Needs Assessment focus group participants also reported that access to food, particularly healthy food, was an issue facing members of the older adult population. Focus group participants asserted that one manner of addressing this need would be the development and implementation of additional sources of grocery shopping assistance, noting the extensive eligibility requirements associated with existing grocery shopping assistance programs.

Food needs also emerged as a prominent theme in the Neighborland Project, a project implemented in response to the COVID-19 crisis. One respondent to the Neighborland Project wrote, *“We need food... Home delivery of groceries... Places to pick up food from food banks... It's time during this crisis to put seniors, the most vulnerable first.”*

### Transportation Needs

Several participants in the Needs Assessment focus groups identified transportation as a major need among Allegheny County older adults. These participants reported that, while some members of the County’s population were able to successfully access and utilize existing transportation options, others faced considerable barriers. Participants identified the following transportation-related issues: lack of affordable transportation options; rider restrictions/eligibility requirements; lack of accessible bus stops and bus routes; and lack of available vehicles and drivers. In response to these issues, focus group participants asserted that time and funding directed towards reconceptualizing and reforming the transportation system were needed.

Transportation also emerged as a need in Neighborland Project data, with one Neighborland Project respondent asserting that a safer, more secure form of transportation for older adults was needed (e.g., OPT-funded ambulance). This individual wrote, *“There is a need for critical/high risk transportation for seniors to doctor appointments... Riding OPT is a jarring ride...”*

### Technology-related Needs

Neighborland Project respondents and participants in the Needs Assessment focus groups also identified several technology-related needs, with several individuals asserting that access to technology varied considerably across the older adult population and that, even those with access to technological tools often lacked technological skill and self-efficacy. One Neighborland Project respondent wrote, *“Often elderly are not savvy [sic] with technology. We need to be able to assist with their needs... particularly those who live alone and need social interactions but cannot do remote interactions”*.

In response to this need, participants recommended efforts be made to supply technological tools and trainings to older adults lacking technology and/or technological skills. One Needs Assessment focus group participant suggested the AAA consider implementing a program mirroring The Tech Buddy Program, a program connecting older adults with volunteer mentors with technological proficiency. Another focus group participant noted the potential of intergenerational volunteer programs to help address this need, suggesting that adolescents be enlisted to help scaffold the technological skills and confidence of older adults.

### Need for Social Support

Data across several of the data sources examined indicated the need for social support among older adults in Allegheny County. For example, during focus group sessions conducted for the Care Coordination Project, care management staff discussed the need for social support among many of their participants. Though care management staff expressed satisfaction with the social and emotional benefits provided by volunteer senior companions via the AAA’s Senior Companion Program, care management staff shared that some of the individuals they had referred to the Program were never able to benefit from Program support due to the lack of available senior companion volunteers. As a result, the social support needs of

these individuals remained unmet, despite the Program Manager’s best efforts to recruit senior companion volunteers.

Neighborland Project respondents and participants in the Needs Assessment focus groups also identified social support as a major need among the County’s older adult population. These individuals asserted that improving older adults’ access to social support was of utmost importance, as the social distancing measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 crisis had the potential to intensify feelings of loneliness and isolation among members of the older adult population. In addition to noting the potential for technology-focused interventions to help address this need, participants recommended the AAA work with community-based entities that were already focused on organizing volunteers and on promoting civic engagement to help address this need.

### Senior Center-related Needs

A small subset of participants in the Needs Assessment focus groups identified a few senior center-related needs, noting the important role senior centers play within the aging services system (e.g., educating older adults on available services and supports, providing application assistance). Participants asserted that many senior centers had been “struggling for survival” and that additional funds were needed in order for centers to more effectively meet the needs of the County’s older adult population. Participants also asserted that, in addition to increasing the level of financial support provided to existing senior centers, efforts needed to be made to establish new senior centers, with attention paid to co-locating centers with potentially synergistic non-profit organizations (e.g., organizations focused on supporting racial and ethnic minorities, refugee and immigrant advocacy organizations, public libraries), in areas devoid of senior centers and other aging supports. Lastly, participants identified the need for centers to expand their service and support offerings to promote broader community participation, noting the profound social and emotional benefits associated with intergenerational engagement.

### **Need for Increased Community Outreach**

The need for increased community outreach was voiced by participants in all three of the Needs Assessment focus group conducted. These participants asserted that active outreach efforts on the part of the AAA had the potential to enhance community awareness of existing aging services and supports and to promote the utilization of aging services and supports. Suggested outreach approaches included: virtual outreach (e.g., utilization of various social media platforms, streaming platforms), print outreach (e.g., newspaper advertisements, bus advertisements, dissemination of informational brochures), and outreach via television and radio (e.g., segments on local news, public television).

Focus group participants also suggested the AAA engage in additional in-person outreach efforts. For example, participants recommended the AAA increase participation in resource fairs and other community events, with particular focus on events targeted towards underserved populations (e.g., racial and ethnic minority groups, groups with limited English language skills, those identifying as LGBTQ, those with disabilities).

### **Need for Enhanced Partnerships**

In addition to asserting that increased outreach had the potential to promote community awareness and utilization of aging services and supports, focus group participants asserted that the development of new, and the enhancement of existing, partnerships between the AAA and community entities had the

potential to promote aging service awareness and utilization. Participants noted the importance of AAA engagement across sectors and recommended that, in addition to continuing to cultivate partnerships with aging-focused entities, the AAA focus its efforts on developing meaningful partnerships with entities indirectly tied to aging.

Participants specifically recommended that the AAA attempt to strengthen ties with community-based entities and organizations with a demonstrated commitment to underserved groups, asserting that racial and ethnic disparities in aging service utilization were likely influenced, in part, by the lack of institutional trust among members of these groups. One focus group participant shared,

*“By definition, these groups tend to feel disenfranchised. They don’t trust the institutions that exist supposedly to help them... We’re asking people to use our services... We’re asking them to trust us to be responsive when the history and the evidence have been that we’re not. So we can’t just get the word out.”*

In addition to helping build trust between members of underserved communities and the AAA, participants also asserted that the cultural knowledge and understanding gained as a result of the cultivation of these relationships could be used to inform the development of more culturally responsive aging services and supports.

Participants recommended the AAA focus on developing relationships with the following groups:

- Community recreation centers
- County Assistance Office
- Faith-based organizations
- Food banks
- Health care centers (particularly federally qualified health centers)
- Local townships/suburbs of Pittsburgh
- Organizations focused on supporting individuals with disabilities
  - Disability Rights Pennsylvania
  - Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
- Organizations focused on supporting individuals identifying as LGBTQ
  - Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh
  - SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) at Persad
- Organizations focused on advocating on behalf of racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees, those facing linguistic barriers
  - Agencies providing interpretation services/language assistance
  - Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh
  - Casa San José
- Organizations focused on advancing volunteerism/civic engagement
  - In Service of Seniors
  - Pittsburgh Cares
- Police bureaus
- Public libraries
- Public schools
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging
  - Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh
  - Dementia-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh

## **Staff-related Needs**

### Need for Additional Staff

The need for additional staff was identified by members of the Needs Assessment focus groups and by participants in The OAPS Efficiency Project and in The OPTIONS New Referral Project. This need was most frequently voiced by AAA-contracted provider staff (e.g., in-home service provider staff, protective service investigative staff) who reported encountering significant recruitment- and retention-related challenges. These challenges included, but were not limited to: providers inability to offer competitive pay; demanding and often inconsistent work schedules (due to consumer cancellations, consumer “no shows”, etc.); and providers’ general inability to hire staff full time and offer benefits.

In addition to voicing the need for additional staff, a small subset of participants in the Needs Assessment focus group sessions also identified the need for increased diversity among AAA staff. For example, one focus group participant suggested that the AAA work to recruit and retain staff from subpopulations known to be underserved (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities), asserting that efforts in this area could help address existing disparities in AAA service utilization.

### Staff Training Needs

A subset of Needs Assessment focus group participants as well as participants in previous data collection efforts (e.g., The OAPS Efficiency Project) asserted that AAA staff would benefit from additional training. More specifically, participants suggested that the AAA provide staff with additional training in the following areas: racial and ethnic cultural competence/sensitivity; LGBTQ cultural competence/sensitivity; trauma; and dementia and other cognitive impairments. Participants speculated that enhancing AAA staff knowledge and skills in these areas would further scaffold AAA staff ability to serve and support the older adult population in the County.

Participants in the Needs Assessment focus group and in past projects also suggested that the AAA provide both internal and provider staff with cross-training opportunities, asserting that this form of experiential learning would promote communication and understanding among members of the AAA Network.

## **2.4 Resource Development:**

DHS AAA strives creatively to identify and engage a wide variety of resources and is not aware of additional untapped or underutilized resources to be accessed.

## **2.4 National Planning Requirements:**

The goals, objectives, and strategies as set forth in the Allegheny County AAA plan for 2020-2024 incorporate all national planning requirements and particularly specify plans for providing services to older individuals with greatest economic or social need, older individuals at risk for institutional placement, low-income minority individuals, older individuals with Limited English Proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas.



### 3. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The DHS AAA identified four primary goals for 2020-24, each with accompanying strategies and objectives:

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**Goal 1:**

Advocate for the rights of older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect.

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**Objective 1:**

Utilize grant funding to provide additional Protective Services outreach and implement innovative strategies to reduce older adults' need for repeated involvement the program.

**Strategies**

- Utilize fully the 2019 grant for the Office on Violence Against Women awarded to the Area Agency on Aging
- Utilize fully the 2018 grant for the Victims of Crime Act awarded to the Area Agency on Aging and complete annual reapplication

**Objective 2:**

Restructure the Protective Services program to increase capacity and effectively manage increasing reports of abuse, neglect, abandonment and exploitation throughout Allegheny County.

**Strategies**

- Increase staff compliment to effectively manage increasing call and investigation volumes
- Innovate the Protective Services Intake Call Center to increase efficiency and quality
- Engage Protective Services in Theory of Constraints pilot project

**Objective 3:**

Expand internal Protective Services program monitoring to drive continuous quality improvement.

**Strategies**

- Engage DHS/AAA monitoring unit as an independent, objective and expanded source of program monitoring
- Create additional administrative positions in the Protective Services unit to conduct performance oversight and compliance monitoring for the DHS/AAA's three sub-contracted investigation providers
- Develop a multidisciplinary Protective Services consultation initiative that utilizes staff with subject matter expertise in multiple areas (Protective Services intake and investigation, OPTIONS Care Management, Monitoring, and Home & Community-based Services) to provide professional recommendations and direction on cases identified to be potentially at risk

**Objective 4:**

Develop and implement additional Protective Services training both within the DHS/AAA and throughout Allegheny County's Aging Network.

**Strategies**

- Establish updated Protective Services program manuals to guide day-to-day intake and investigation functions
- Provide education and training to all DHS/AAA internal staff and network providers to increase program awareness
- Provide education and training throughout the community, including mandated reporter training for hospital, nursing facility, personal care home staff

**Objective 5:**

Enhance Ombudsman networking and volunteer efforts.

**Strategies**

- Increase Ombudsman volunteer outreach
- Establish the Ombudsman PEER program in additional long-term care facilities throughout Allegheny County

**Goal 2:**

Improve services for older adults and the ability to advocate for them by using evidence-informed planning, committing to data integrity and being accountable for results.

**Objective 1:**

Engage DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to complete needs assessments across program areas to identify strengths, weaknesses, needs and challenges.

**Strategies**

- Implement program specific data and analytics dashboards throughout the Area Agency on Aging
- Strategize data collection and sharing with organizations for which the DHS/AAA is a fee-for-service contracted provider
- Complete GIS mapping for Allegheny County programs to identify underserved communities and underutilized services

**Objective 2:**

Develop and implement new internal monitoring processes to help inform program development throughout the agency.

**Strategies**

- Engage DHS/AAA monitoring unit as an independent, objective, and expanded source of program monitoring
- Utilize Integrated Monitoring Tool (IMT) database to consolidate provider monitoring into a single source with report-out capabilities at the provider and DHS/AAA administrative levels

**Objective 3:**

Increase participant quality assurance measures across the OPTIONS In-home Services provider network.

**Strategies**

- Implement participant quality assurance contact requirements in Personal Care & Home Support program Scopes of Service
- Measure quality assurance compliance through DHS/AAA annual monitoring process

**Objective 4:**

Increase the Area Agency on Aging's capacity to serve older adults through strategic and meaningful partnerships and collaborations with local universities.

**Strategies**

- Engage the local area university community in collaborative discussions about Area Agency on Aging needs and potential areas of collaboration relative to aging and caregiver populations in Allegheny County
- Create opportunities related to aging and caregiving throughout Southwestern PA

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**Goal 3:**

Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older adult residents of Allegheny County.

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**Objective 1:**

Promote engagement in healthy aging, nutrition, education and prevention programs.

**Strategies**

- Utilize evidence-based programming to provide healthy aging programming in community settings throughout Allegheny County (i.e. church groups, public libraries, etc.)
- Participate in Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) grant partnership with University of Pittsburgh
- Continue the expansion of the Area Agency on Aging Community Care Transitions Program throughout local area hospitals

**Objective 2:**

Advance efforts to reduce stigma associated with mental health disorders and disabilities and connect older adults with mental health care and disability resources.

**Strategies**

- Expand Area Agency on Aging implementation of evidence-based Mental Health First-Aid training across the aging network
- Develop cross training opportunities between the Area Agency on Aging and the Office of Behavioral Health
- Strengthen Area Agency on Aging relationships with community disability agencies

**Objective 3:**

Ensure a network of age and dementia-friendly providers and communities throughout Allegheny County.

**Strategies**

- Strengthen Area Agency on Aging relationships throughout Allegheny County by performing targeted outreach and relationship building activities with age-friendly and dementia-friendly providers.

**Objective 4:**

Expand the availability and use of programs that reduce social isolation

**Strategies**

- Develop screening questions and referral process related to programs that focus on social isolation and wellness checks
- Conduct focus groups/surveys related to the digital divide and technology needs of older adults and caregivers (religious services, Facetime, telehealth, tele-counseling, virtual support groups, Virtual Senior Academy)
- Promote and educate the community on volunteer opportunities for and with older adults

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**Goal 4:**

Strengthen aging network's capacity, promote innovation, and best practices, and build efficiencies to respond to the growing and diversifying aging population.

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**Objective 1:**

Support families and friends who are caregivers to enable them to thrive in their caregiving roles.

**Strategies**

- Continue to provide training to agency staff and providers on how to support caregivers
- Partner with community-based organizations to increase support, commitment, and resources for caregivers

**Objective 2:**

Ensure Older Americans Act programs are reaching diverse, Limited English Proficiency and socially isolated older adults, including LGBTQ older adults & those living with a disability.

**Strategies**

- Utilize data and analytics tools to identify and guide efforts to increase services/outreach to traditionally underserved populations (Russian, Nepali, LGBTQ, disability community, etc.)
- Conduct targeted outreach to LGBTQ and disability community stakeholders
- Expand Area Agency on Aging community outreach

**Objective 3:**

Implement innovative approaches to Area Agency on Aging staff recruitment and hiring

**Strategies**

Collaborate with DHS Office of Community Relations Talent Acquisition Specialist to:

- Develop a recruitment section for the Area Agency on Aging webpage
- Develop targeted recruitment materials for positions within SeniorLine, Assessment and Protective Services
- Develop recruitment videos for SeniorLine, Assessment and Protective Services
- Attend local area recruitment events on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging

**Objective 4:**

Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network.

**Strategies**

- Implement innovative communication tools to provide more comprehensive access to the AAA for the older adult community in Allegheny County

**Objective 5:**

Explore capacity-building opportunities for OPTIONS In-Home Services Direct Care Workers

**Strategies**

- Research national trends impacting Direct Care Worker recruitment and retention and participate in any State-sponsored workgroups, initiatives or advocacy opportunities relative to capacity building for in-home service providers

#### 4. Performance Measures

**Goal 1:**

Advocate for the rights of older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect.

<b>Objective 1:</b> Utilize grant funding to provide additional Protective Services outreach and implement innovative strategies to reduce older adults' need for repeated involvement the program.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Utilize fully the 2019 grant for the Office on Violence Against Women awarded to the Area Agency on Aging	Meet all performance measures established in the Office on Violence Against Women grant award throughout the 3-year grant period.
Utilize fully the 2018 grant for the Victims of Crime Act awarded to the Area Agency on Aging and complete annual reapplication	Meet all performance measures established in the Victims of Crime Act grant award throughout the 3-year grant period and successfully complete annual renewal in 2021.

<b>Objective 2:</b> Restructure the Protective Services program to increase capacity and effectively manage increasing reports of abuse, neglect, abandonment and exploitation throughout Allegheny County.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Increase staff compliment to effectively manage increasing call and investigation volumes	By 2022, increase care manager staff in both intake and investigator roles from 20 to 26 staff total; dependent on increased PDA funding.
Innovate the Protective Services Intake Call Center to increase efficiency and quality	By 2021, develop and implement an electronic call routing system that includes call monitoring and analytics capacities to guide management practices.
Engage Protective Services in Theory of Constraints pilot project	By 2022, launch the Theory of Constraints Pilot Project in collaboration with Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Analytics, Technology & Planning.

<b>Objective 3:</b> Expand internal Protective Services program monitoring to drive continuous quality improvement.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Engage DHS/AAA monitoring unit as an independent, objective and expanded source of program monitoring	By 2021, develop a written monitoring process for Protective Services that includes collaboration with the DHS/AAA monitoring unit.

<p>Create additional administrative positions in the Protective Services unit to conduct performance oversight and compliance monitoring for the DHS/AAA’s three sub-contracted investigation providers</p>	<p>By 2022, create and hire at least 1 administrative position that will support performance oversight and compliance monitoring responsibilities with contracted investigation provider agencies.</p>
<p>Develop a multidisciplinary Protective Services consultation initiative that utilizes staff with subject matter expertise in multiple areas (Protective Services intake and investigation, OPTIONS Care Management, Monitoring, and Home &amp; Community-based Services) to provide professional recommendations and direction on cases identified to be potentially at risk</p>	<p>In 2020, develop and implement a pilot multidisciplinary Protective Services consultation initiative.</p> <p>By 2021, fully implement the multidisciplinary Protective Services consultation initiative across the entire program.</p> <p>By 2022, complete an evaluation of the consultation initiative to determine effectiveness and viability for long-term use.</p>

**Objective 4:**  
 Develop and implement additional Protective Services training both within the DHS/AAA and throughout Allegheny County’s Aging Network.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<p>Establish updated Protective Services program manuals to guide day-to-day intake and investigation functions</p>	<p>By 2021, create Protective Services program manuals and make available to all program staff. Protective Services manuals will be updated at least annually and on an ongoing basis in accordance with program changes.</p>
<p>Provide education and training to all DHS/AAA internal staff and network providers to increase program awareness</p>	<p>By 2021, secure Protective Services training for all DHS/AAA internal staff and network providers from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and Temple University.</p>
<p>Provide education and training throughout the community, including mandated reporter training for hospital, nursing facility, personal care home staff</p>	<p>By 2022, in addition to training opportunities currently administered to community providers upon request, develop a process to complete at least 12 additional, program-initiated education and training sessions during each calendar year.</p>

<b>Objective 5:</b> Enhance Ombudsman networking and volunteer efforts.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Increase Ombudsman volunteer outreach	Beginning in 2021, conduct at least two Ombudsman outreach initiatives during each calendar year to increase volunteer applicants.
Establish the Ombudsman PEER program in additional long-term care facilities throughout Allegheny County	Beginning in 2021, create at least one new PEER program location each calendar year.



**Goal 2:**

Improve services for older adults and the ability to advocate for them by using evidence-informed planning, committing to data integrity and being accountable for results.

<b>Objective 1:</b> Engage DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to complete needs assessments across program areas to identify strengths, weaknesses, needs and challenges.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Implement program specific data and analytics dashboards throughout the Area Agency on Aging	In 2020, engage DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to develop and implement program dashboards in the following program areas: Protective Services, Senior Companion Program, Information & Assistance, and Ombudsman.  By 2024, develop and implement dashboards in at least 2 additional program areas.
Strategize data collection and sharing with organizations for which the DHS/AAA is a fee-for-service contracted provider	By 2023, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to perform an analysis of current data collection processes in the Community Care Transitions Program to determine if additional strategies can be developed to improve program outcomes.
Complete GIS mapping for Allegheny County programs to identify underserved communities and underutilized services	By 2022, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to incorporate GIS mapping of participants in the following 3 program areas: OPTIONS, Caregiver Support Program and Protective Services.  By 2023, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to explore possibilities to incorporate GIS mapping that utilizes SeniorLine call center data to identify underserved populations in Allegheny County.

<b>Objective 2:</b> Develop and implement new internal monitoring processes to help inform program development throughout the agency.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Engage DHS/AAA monitoring unit as an independent, objective, and expanded source of program monitoring	By 2024, utilize the DHS/AAA monitoring unit to conduct monitoring activities for at least 2 additional program areas.

Utilize Integrated Monitoring Tool (IMT) database to consolidate provider monitoring into a single source with report-out capabilities at the provider and DHS/AAA administrative levels	By 2022, utilize the Integrated Monitoring Tool database for all DHS/AAA provider monitoring.
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<b>Objective 3:</b> Increase participant quality assurance measures across the OPTIONS In-home Services provider network.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Implement participant quality assurance contact requirements in Personal Care & Home Support program Scopes of Service	By 2021, implement quality assurance contact requirements in 2 service areas - Personal Care & Home Support program Scopes of Service.
Measure quality assurance compliance through DHS/AAA annual monitoring process	By 2022, incorporate quality assurance contact compliance into the annual monitoring process for 2 service areas – Personal Care & Home Support.

<b>Objective 4:</b> Increase the Area Agency on Aging’s capacity to serve older adults through strategic and meaningful partnerships and collaborations with local universities.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Engage the local area university community in collaborative discussions about Area Agency on Aging needs and potential areas of collaboration relative to aging and caregiver populations in Allegheny County	In 2020, conduct a collaborative workgroup session with at least 5 local area universities.
Create opportunities related to aging and caregiving throughout Southwestern PA	By 2021, collaborate with at least 1 university on a grant-based initiative that impacts the Aging population in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

**Goal 3:**

Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older adult residents of Allegheny County.

<b>Objective 1:</b> Promote engagement in healthy aging, nutrition, education and prevention programs.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Utilize evidence-based programming to provide healthy aging programming in community settings throughout Allegheny County (i.e. church groups, public libraries, etc.)	By 2023, expand the Powerful Tools for Caregivers training currently offered throughout the Senior Center network into at least 2 community settings.
Participate in Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) grant partnership with University of Pittsburgh	In 2020, partner with University of Pittsburgh in the application process for the Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) grant.  Following grant award, collaborate with University of Pittsburgh on CAPABLE grant initiatives for the grant award period of 2020-2023.
Continue the expansion of the Area Agency on Aging Community Care Transitions Program throughout local area hospitals	By 2023, expand the Community Care Transitions Program to at least 1 new area hospital.

<b>Objective 2:</b> Advance efforts to reduce stigma associated with mental health disorders and disabilities and connect older adults with mental health care and disability resources.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Expand Area Agency on Aging implementation of evidence-based Mental Health First-Aid training across the aging network	By 2021, identify and train at least 1 additional co-trainer to support the administration and expansion of Mental Health First-Aid training.  By 2023, collaborate with Allegheny County DHS Office of Integrated Program Services to explore possible expansion opportunities for the Mental Health First-Aid training across the DHS network.
Develop cross training opportunities between the Area Agency on Aging and the Office of Behavioral Health	By 2023, collaborate with Allegheny County DHS Office of Behavioral Health to identify and implement at least 1 cross training opportunity.
Strengthen Area Agency on Aging relationships with community disability agencies	By 2020, recruit an Advisory Council Member that is a representative of the disability community to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council.

	<p>By 2023, perform targeted outreach to at least 3 stakeholders in the disability community to improve the intersection of DHS/AAA services with the disability community of Allegheny County.</p> <p>By 2024, collaborate with Allegheny County DHS Office of Intellectual Disabilities to explore opportunities to strengthen DHS/AAA relationships with community disability agencies and implement at least 1 cross training opportunity.</p>
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<b>Objective 3:</b>	
Ensure a network of age and dementia-friendly providers and communities throughout Allegheny County.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Strengthen Area Agency on Aging relationships throughout Allegheny County by performing targeted outreach and relationship building activities with age-friendly and dementia-friendly providers.	<p>By 2023, create and continue partnerships with at least 1 age-friendly and 1 dementia-friendly provider in Allegheny County.</p> <p>By 2024, recruit an Advisory Council member with dementia-friendly specialization.</p>

<b>Objective 4:</b>	
Expand the availability and use of programs that reduce social isolation	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Develop screening questions and referral process related to programs that focus on social isolation and wellness checks	<p>By 2021, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to develop and pilot screening questions within the Intake and Assistance referral process to identify older adults that will benefit from referrals to programs that combat social isolation.</p> <p>By 2022, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to perform an analysis of pilot screening questions, referrals and outcomes to guide decision making and planning related to combatting social isolation.</p>
Conduct focus groups/surveys related to the digital divide and technology needs of older adults and caregivers (religious services,	By 2024, partner with Young Men and Women’s Hebrew Association / Jewish Community Center to utilize the Virtual Senior Academy video

Facetime, telehealth, tele-counseling, virtual support groups, Virtual Senior Academy)	conferencing application for caregiver trainings and education.
Promote and educate the community on volunteer opportunities for and with older adults	Beginning in 2021, create at least one new PEER program location each calendar year. By 2024, expand the participant base of the Choose Home segment of the Senior Companion Program by 20%

**Goal 4:**

Strengthen aging network’s capacity, promote innovation, and best practices, and build efficiencies to respond to the growing and diversifying aging population.

<b>Objective 1:</b> Support families and friends who are caregivers to enable them to thrive in their caregiving roles.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Continue to provide training to agency staff and providers on how to support caregivers	By 2021, identify and train at least 1 additional staff to administer the Powerful Tools for Caregivers training program.  By 2022, expand the Powerful Tools for Caregivers training to include all 3 OPTIONS care management agencies.  By 2023, expand the Powerful Tools for Caregivers training to include at least 25% of the OPTIONS in-home service providers for personal care and home support.
Partner with community-based organizations to increase support, commitment, and resources for caregivers	By 2024, expand the participant base of the Caregiver Support Program by 10%.

<b>Objective 2:</b> Ensure Older Americans Act programs are reaching diverse, Limited English Proficiency and socially isolated older adults, including LGBTQ older adults & those living with a disability.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Utilize data and analytics tools to identify and guide efforts to increase services/outreach to traditionally underserved populations (Russian, Nepali, LGBTQ, disability community, etc.)	By 2023, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to perform data analysis on current service delivery to underserved ethnic populations.  By 2023, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to perform analysis of available data relevant to service delivery and needs within the LGBTQ population.  By 2023, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to perform analysis of available data relevant to service delivery and needs within the disability community.
Conduct targeted outreach to LGBTQ and disability community stakeholders	By 2024, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning and LGBTQ and

	disability community stakeholders to conduct a needs assessment revolving around Allegheny County’s older adult LGBTQ and disability community populations.
Expand Area Agency on Aging community outreach	<p>By 2021, identify an administrative staff to perform outreach to community leaders and stakeholders in the veteran, LGBTQ and immigrant populations of Allegheny County.</p> <p>By 2023, the identified staff will engage in outreach with community leaders and stakeholders representing at least 9 different organizations.</p>

<b>Objective 3:</b> Implement innovative approaches to Area Agency on Aging staff recruitment and hiring	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<p>Collaborate with DHS Office of Community Relations Talent Acquisition Specialist to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a recruitment section for the Area Agency on Aging webpage</li> <li>• Develop targeted recruitment materials for positions within SeniorLine, Assessment and Protective Services</li> <li>• Develop recruitment videos for SeniorLine, Assessment and Protective Services</li> <li>• Attend local area recruitment events on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging</li> </ul>	<p>By 2024, complete each item listed in the strategy.</p> <p>By 2024, all Area Agency on Aging posted positions will have a pool of applicants to interview.</p>

<b>Objective 4:</b> Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Implement innovative communication tools to provide more comprehensive access to the AAA for the older adult community in Allegheny County	By 2024, collaborate with DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning to explore the possibility of incorporating a user chat function to the Area Agency on Aging section of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services webpage.

<b>Objective 5:</b> Explore capacity-building opportunities for OPTIONS In-Home Services Direct Care Workers	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Research national trends impacting Direct Care Worker recruitment and retention and participate in any State-sponsored workgroups, initiatives or advocacy opportunities relative to capacity building for in-home service providers	From 20-24, perform annual research on the state of Direct Care Worker recruitment and retention nationwide, identify trends and provide updates to the OPTIONS In-Home Services Provider network.



## **Appendix 5.1 Focus Group Participants**

The AAA conducted three focus groups to inform the development of the 2020-2024 AAA Needs Assessment.

The first focus group involved members of the AAA Network, with the following areas of the AAA Network represented:

- Assessment
- The Caregiver Support Program
- Monitoring
- Information & Assistance/The SeniorLine
- The Ombudsman Program
- OPTIONS Care Management
- Familylinks (*AAA-contracted provider*)
- Wesley Family Services (*AAA-contracted provider*)
- OPTIONS In-home Services
- Eastern Area Adult Services (*AAA-contracted provider*)
- Older Adult Protective Services
- Ursuline Senior Services (*AAA-contracted provider*)
- Senior Centers/In-home Meal Services
- Macedonia Family & Community Enrichment Center (*AAA-contracted provider*)

The second and third focus groups conducted involved community stakeholders. The following stakeholder groups were represented:

- ACCESS
- Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh
- DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion
- DHS Office of Intellectual Disability
- Liberty Healthcare Corporation
- Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh
- Pittsburgh Bureau of Police

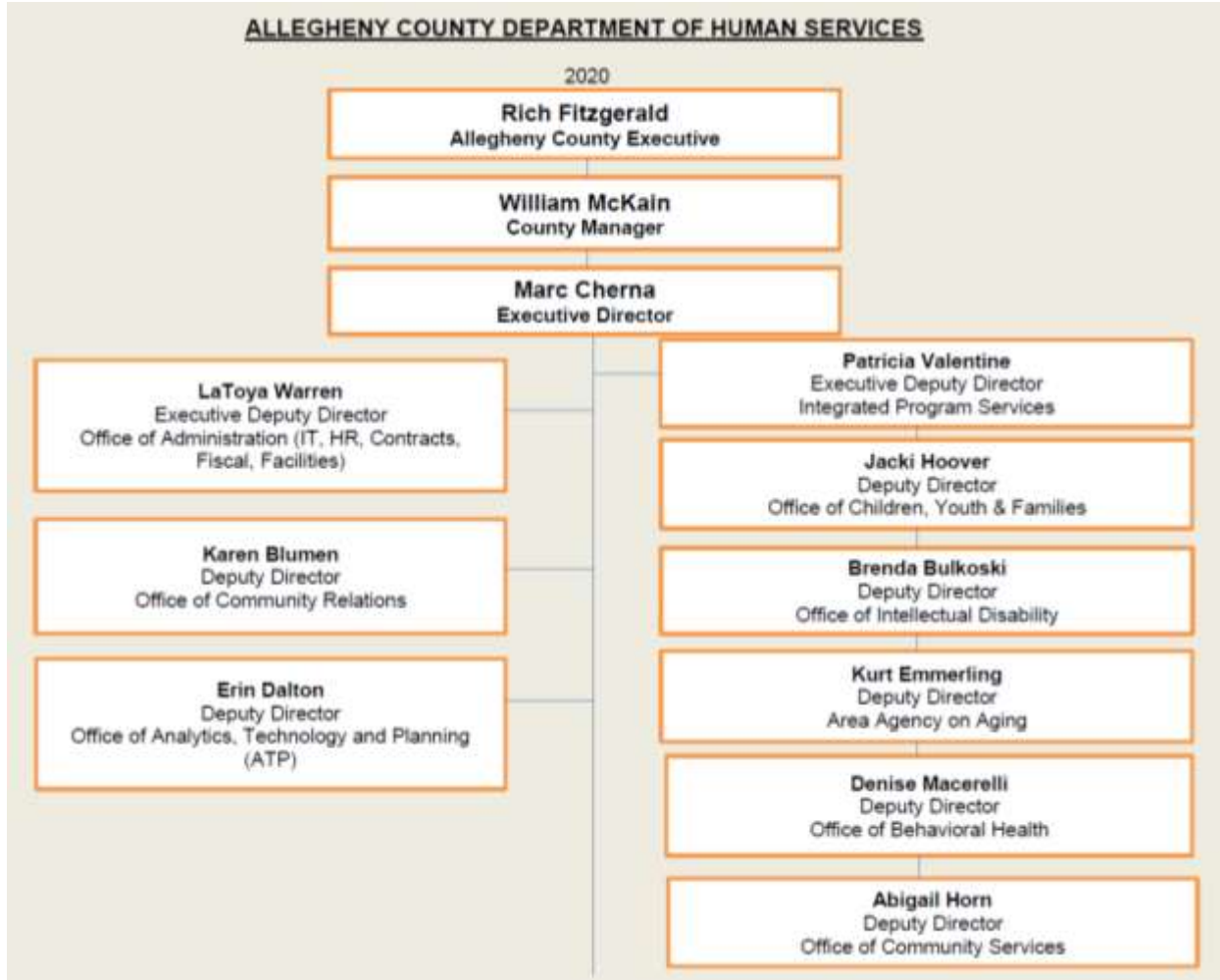
**Appendix 5.2**  
**AAA Network Focus Group Guide**

1. How might community awareness of AAA services and supports be enhanced?
  - a. ...among underserved and hard to reach populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, identifying as LGBTQ, with limited English proficiency)?
  - b. How could technology be leveraged to support this effort?
2. How might the AAA increase volunteer opportunities for and with older adults?
  - a. How might community awareness of volunteer opportunities be enhanced?
3. How might utilization of AAA Services and supports be promoted?
  - a. ...among underserved and hard to reach populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, identifying as LGBTQ, with limited English proficiency)?
  - b. How could technology be leveraged to support this effort?
4. What do you think are the greatest unmet needs among current and potential AAA participants?
  - a. ...unmet technological needs among current and potential AAA participants?
5. What are the major challenges you face with respect to the services and supports you currently provide?
  - a. How might those challenges be addressed?
6. How might relationships/partnerships between the various members of the Aging Network particularly dementia-friendly providers – be strengthened?

**Appendix 5.3**  
**AAA Community Stakeholder Focus Group Guide**

1. What gaps exist in the community with respect to aging services and supports?
  - a. How might those gaps be addressed?
2. What do you think are the greatest unmet technological needs among older adults and caregivers?
3. How might awareness of aging services and supports be enhanced?
  - a. ...among underserved and hard to reach populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, identifying as LGBTQ, with limited English proficiency)?
  - b. How could technology be leveraged to support this effort?
4. How might the AAA and the Aging Network increase volunteer opportunities for and with older adults?
  - a. How might community awareness of volunteer opportunities for and with older adults be enhanced?
5. How might utilization of aging services and supports be promoted?
  - a. ...among underserved and hard to reach populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, identifying as LGBTQ, with limited English proficiency)?
  - b. How could technology be leveraged to support this effort?
6. How might relationships/partnerships between the various members of the Aging Network particularly dementia-friendly providers – be strengthened?
7. What new strategic relationships/partnerships should be forged to *“increase support, commitment and resources for older adults and caregivers?”*
  - a. How might those relationships be cultivated?

**Appendix 5.4**  
**Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Organizational Chart**



## Appendix 5.5 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Organizational Chart



### Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging July 2020

