

2024-2028 Local Area Plan

Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services

PSA #33

Serving Lehigh County

October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2028



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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Area Agencies on Aging across the Commonwealth are experiencing a significant increase in the population of older adults we serve. Individuals born between 1946 and 1964 are considered to be the “Baby Boomers” generation. In 2011, the first of the baby boomers began to turn 65. By the end of 2029, all baby boomers will be 65 and older. Nationally by 2040, there will be about 82.5 million persons age 65 and older (a 66% increase from the year 2020). People age 65 and older represented 17.3% of the population in 2020. This is expected to grow to about 22% by the year 2040 (US Census). The regional area where Lehigh County is located is called the Lehigh Valley. The Lehigh Valley is comprised of both Lehigh and Northampton Counties. The number of people in the Lehigh Valley age 65 or older is expected to increase by approximately 52% from 124,777 in 2020 to an expected 189,444 in 2040, while the number of people in the Lehigh Valley age 75 or older is expected to increase by approximately 95% from 53,735 in 2020 to 104,704 in 2040 (Lehigh Valley Planning Commission). Indeed, the aging population presents a significant societal challenge that requires thoughtful and comprehensive solutions. As older adults live longer and healthier lives, it becomes crucial to develop and implement programs and services that support their independence.

Both the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) have put forth key topic areas and priorities, as an approach to ensure that older adults age within their communities in a way that “aligns with their preferences and needs, promotes independence, fosters inclusivity, and provides adequate support systems for older adults, caregivers, and care partners” (Aging Our Way, PA). Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services creates local area goals and objectives stemming from ACL and PDA focuses and based on an analysis of our own local needs assessment data.

Dealing with COVID-19 over the past several years has pushed this agency to think innovatively to serve the older adults in Lehigh County. It allowed agency staff to work closely to problem solve, reach out to the community and create pioneering ways to maintain the programs and services that help keep older adults at home and in their community. The agency worked closely with other organizations and professionals in the community to share information and resources to maintain a continuum of care. In the Aging Our Way, PA report, Governor Shapiro writes about the importance of collaboration, stating “No single entity can address the holistic needs of the aging population alone; this is a collective effort that relies on collaboration and partnerships”. Forging these relationships with other entities through the pandemic has made us stronger as a community.

There is a continued increase of Reports of Need (Elder Abuse Reports) for Protective Services. This is inevitable with the increasing number of older adults in Lehigh County. The US Census predicts individuals over age 60 will comprise 33% of the total Pennsylvania population by 2030. Creating partnerships to increase awareness of elder abuse is key for continued education throughout the community. An overarching focus for our agency, ACL and PDA is educating our community on elder abuse awareness, agency programming and community services to give older adults the ability to age with continued connections to their community.

ACL outlines its five core topic areas for National consideration to be:

1. A focus of the Core Programs of the Older Americans Act
2. Reducing loneliness and depression brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Ensuring equity in all aspects of our state and local plans
4. Expanding access to HCBS
5. Caregiving support.

Pennsylvania's priority areas are Unlocking Access, Aging in the Community, Gateways to Independence, Caregiver Support and Education & Navigation.

Similarly to other areas of Pennsylvania, the older adult population in Lehigh County is incredibly diverse- geographically, racially, and socio-economically. Preventative services are key to healthy aging. Collaboration with aging service providers, health organizations and community members is necessary to meet the needs of the growing aging population. Reaching out to low income adults and understanding the cultural differences in the community is important when planning activities to keep older adults healthy and safe. Lehigh County is home to 9,248 Hispanic adults 60 years and older (US Census). Due to this area's incredible diversity, it is important to tailor our programs to be equitable in areas that would serve the community at large and embrace its diversity.

Community Outreach & Needs Assessment

In Lehigh County, four listening sessions were conducted as part of Pennsylvania's Aging Our Way initiative. Lehigh County also worked with our voter registration office to send out 30,000 surveys randomly selected from a pool of approximately 120,000 registered voters age 50 and over, of which 964 were returned with comments.

In analyzing all the data, transportation, affordable housing, healthy aging, and access to information in the navigation of the aging resource system were of the greatest concern to older adults in our community. Our goals strive to address these concerns.

5 Goals

Goal 1: We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone and is understandable by all.

We will work towards two objectives under this goal; to collaborate more with community partners and to educate the public. In both areas, we see the need to collaborate and educate in areas of elder abuse, scams towards older adults, creating a dementia friendly community and overall education of all agency programs.

Goal 2: We will remediate barriers that prevent older adults from staying connected to their communities and promote opportunities to engage with their communities how they choose.

Under this goal, one of our objectives is to combat social isolation by utilizing already available technology and community partners. We will educate consumers and the public about available Smart

Home/Assistive Technology and social connection programs and products. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Service (LCAAA) assisted with the initial funding of a program called Senior Chat through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties. This program links volunteers to older adults who would like a weekly phone call to reduce social isolation. This is just one of the social connection programs that we want to continue to promote for older adults who are lonely or who would like to volunteer. Partnering more with local municipalities to promote our senior centers or provide additional programming in areas without a senior center are additional strategies for combatting social isolation. Additionally, we will utilize the resources within the Penn State Smart Home Research Initiative to learn about further options for home technology devices. This will not just allow older adults to remain safely at home, but will provide their loved ones peace of mind about their desire to continue to live within the community. In addition to connecting with Penn State, we will help to keep older adults connected to their community by promoting the use of Smart Home/Assistive Technology and making purposeful efforts to work together with the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living to promote their Reuse Equipment Exchange and Tech Owl program.

In an effort to connect older adults to the existing programs outside of our agency, we want to ensure that transportation is more readily available for older adults to Senior Centers. Transportation was identified as an area of concern in our local listening sessions. While our agency already sponsors paratransit rides for older adults to senior centers, many people are unaware of this service through our agency. We plan to share information about our sponsored transportation on social media, in senior apartment buildings and create a new Senior Center brochure that specifically lists our transportation sponsorship. We also plan to partner with the local paratransit company to distribute information to their riders directly.

A second objective is to incorporate behavior and mental health services more collaboratively with Lehigh County's aging network. We plan to do this by implementing the Healthy Ideas Program (an evidence-based program to treat depression and anxiety) and continuing to develop our Aging Behavioral Health Task Force. We will be training all LCAAA care managers in the Suicide Severity Rating Scale and trauma informed care.

Goal 3: We will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socioeconomic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

We plan to achieve this by promoting cultural accessibility in nutrition and language. As we begin a new Request for Proposal (RFP) process for providers for the contracting years of 2024-2029, ensuring that our meal providers can adjust meals for cultural considerations has been highlighted. We intend to increase providers for frozen meals which gives consumers additional options for their food choices. We plan to create opportunities for older adults to attend English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) programs through our Senior Centers and will focus on acquiring bi-lingual volunteers for the PA MEDI program.

Goal 4: We will promote HCBS to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose

Both affordable housing and connections to long term care programs help to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose. Our objective of addressing accessibility needs in housing is crucial to

older adult stability in our County. A recent article by Lehigh Valley Business states that the rent burden for Lehigh County is 50.5% (July 2023). Rent burden refers to the percentage of the population who is paying more than 30% of their income towards rent. This is significantly higher than the average of the Commonwealth at 44.9%. By focusing on the Shared Housing and Resource Exchange Program (SHARE) and also increasing housing assistance in the Person Centered Counseling (PCC) Program, we strategize to assist older adults with accessing affordable housing. However, affordability is not the only factor in helping older adults access the resources they need to continue to live in the community. We plan to assist all eligible consumers with access to HCBS by making sure that our staff are knowledgeable in this area. We will conduct an annual comprehensive training for all care management and information and referral staff about Community Health Choices. The training will consist of assisting a consumer through the enrollment process and answering any questions related to the CHC program.

Goal 5: We will provide further support for care partners by cultivating better support systems, education, and assistance to ensure more sustainable, competent, and exceptional care for older adults.

Caregivers are a truly unrecognized group of people who do so much of the hard work to keep our older adults safe and living within the community. We strive to continue to support them in several ways over the next four years. This goal encompasses two areas of focus: increasing public awareness about our Caregiver Support Program and linking caregivers to additional community resources.

In 2023, the Agency purchased and launched Trualta, a resource website specifically for Caregivers. This website acts as a source for local community programs and contains educational articles and videos specific to situations that caregivers encounter. Through additional marketing and outreach, we aim to increase the utilization of this website. To educate caregivers who may benefit from the Caregiver Support Program, we will promote the reimbursement of larger items such as durable medical equipment and home modifications. Similarly, we plan to distribute the Caregiver Tool Kit that is being created by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA). Lastly, we plan to launch our first in- person conference for caregivers.

Agency Overview

Mission Statement, Vision, and Values

Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services Mission: The Office of Aging and Adult Services is committed to supporting and empowering the well-being of adults of all ages, residing in Lehigh County. Information and assistance are provided to enable individuals to remain active, healthy, productive and independent in their community.

Values: The Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services has adopted 21 core principles, or values, to guide our practice within the office and especially in our service to older adults.

- Choose to think, speak and act from a positive place.
- Focus on what you can control.
- See the big picture.
- Practice no blame problem solving.
- Resolve to be part of the solution.
- Do what's best for the client.
- Deliver legendary customer service.

- Ask the right questions.
- Consider the impact on others and show respect.
- Implement innovative strategies.
- Address issues with the right person.
- Take ownership of your responsibilities and be accountable.
- Put in the extra effort. Do it right the first time.
- Always be learning.
- Honor commitments with integrity.
- Follow up on everything.
- Embrace change, remain flexible, and be adaptable.
- Thank and appreciate others for their contributions.
- Check your ego at the door.
- Remember there is no “I” in team.
- Approach everything in a helpful manner.

PDA Mission: The mission of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging is to promote independence, purpose and well-being in the lives of older adults through advocacy, service, and protection.

Vision: The 4-year state plan, in Coordination with Aging Our Way, PA, will guide PDA and the 52 AAAs in Pennsylvania’s Aging Network as we work collectively to provide older adults across the Commonwealth with the resources they need to age with dignity and respect and continue to be vital, active members of their communities. With these plans, we commit to creating a state in which every Pennsylvanian, and especially older adults, can experience happiness, dignity, and fulfillment.

Values:

- Diversity and inclusion strengthen us.
- Innovation drives us.
- We are passionate about the customer experience. We lead strategically to meet future needs.
- We listen and effectively communicate with consumers and partners.
- We act with integrity.
- We value our workforce.
- Partnership and collaboration enhance our capacity.
- We hold ourselves and our partners accountable for results.
- We manage resources entrusted to us responsibly.

Description of the AAA

The Lehigh County Area Agency on Aging began as the County Office of Aging in January 1973 with a budget of \$35,000 and a staff of three persons. The Office today is known as the Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services. It is the designated Area Agency on Aging for Lehigh County and merged in December 1996 with the Office of Adult and Residential Services serving younger adults 18 to 59 years of age who are primarily in need of services for the physically disabled, individuals who are homeless or near homeless, and other targeted at-risk younger adults.

The office consists of an Executive Director, a Deputy Director and staff totaling 49 full-time and 10 part-time (senior center managers). Additionally, the agency employs ten contracted staff; two nurses, three

health and wellness instructors, one Registered Dietitian, two licensed clinical psychologists, one Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight (PA MEDI) Coordinator and one accountant. Under the management of Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services is a 200-unit senior housing apartment building called Cedar View Apartments. Cedar View has six full time employees and one part time employee.

We have an advisory council that meets six times per year advocating for the continuing needs of Lehigh County's aging and adult population. The advisory council helps inform the community of our programs and services while advocating to local legislators about the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities in our community. The advisory council is also committed to the recruitment of volunteers and increasing awareness of agency programs and services. There are currently 15 advisory council members, 14 voting members and 1 honorary member. We are currently recruiting for one additional voting member. The advisory council members can run for two, four-year terms. Once their term has been fulfilled, they may stay on the council as an honorary member for one year without voting privileges. Our current council consists of professionals from the healthcare and long-term care settings, an elder law attorney, a pastor, a member with arts and videography expertise, and retirees with backgrounds in business and marketing.

For our agency programs, Lehigh County recruits service providers through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The agency has 42 contracted providers for the 2023/2024 fiscal year and all providers are monitored annually.

The agency maximizes funding to provide services to as many older adults and persons with disabilities as possible. Along with all other local AAA agencies across Pennsylvania, our agency's budget has increased over the last four fiscal years with the additional use of FFCRA, CARES, and ARPA funds. The flexibility of these additional funds has allowed us to remove consumers from the waiting list. In addition, funds have allowed an increased number of meals and additional programming at the Senior Centers to combat social isolation. This funding has allowed us to provide education about Senior Scams through material distribution and presentations and pay for specific advertisements on area billboards for Agency programs. Funds were utilized to provide additional training and materials for staff development. Below is the budget for our agency in the past four fiscal years.

An overview of the agency's annual budget:

2020/2021 - \$7,937,485 which includes \$899,057 for FFCRA and CARES monies

2021/2022 - \$7,466,193 which includes \$710,737 for CARES and ARPA Monies

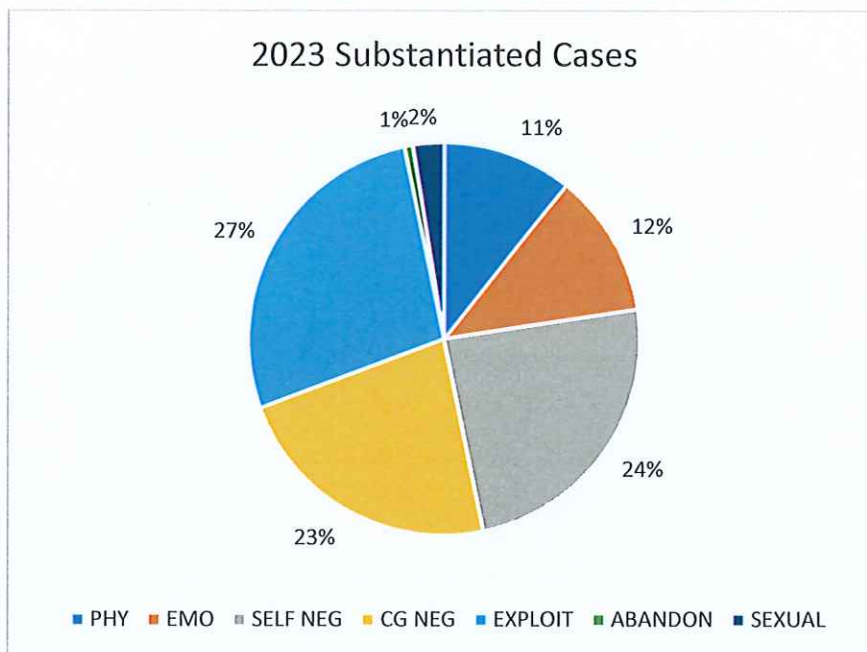
2022/2023 - \$8,422,687 which includes \$586,091 for ARPA monies

2023/2024 - \$8,540, 832 which includes \$421,287 for ARPA monies

PSA Demographics

According to the 2020 US Census Bureau, Lehigh County has 87,252 residents age 60 and older, with a total population of 374,557. Those age 60 and over are 23% of the County's population. 9623 referrals were made to the agency in 2023, an increase of 34% since 2019. A total of 4,479 assessments were completed in 2019. The number of assessments completed in 2023 had risen to 6,690. Administrative desk reviews were added to the assessment responsibilities within the past four years, which explains a portion of the increased assessment numbers.

Reports of Need are also increasing due to a rapidly growing aging population and increased community education about elder abuse and the need for reporting it. In 2023, there were a total of 1,034 reports investigated, a 21% increase from 2019. In Lehigh County, 27% of substantiated cases of protected services were for financial exploitation, 24% for self-neglect, 23% for caregiver neglect, 12% for emotional abuse, and the remaining for physical (11%), sexual (2%), and abandonment (1%).



The regional population of people with disabilities is also growing. The US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates show that in 2020, 50,251 of Lehigh County's population is living with a disability. This same American Community Survey shows that 20,178 of those living with a disability are seniors age 65 and older.

In Lehigh County, 25.7% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the majority at 20.1%. Although not calculated in the US Census, Allentown, the largest city of Lehigh County, has a large Syrian population.

According to the US Census, 8.2% of Lehigh County Residents 65 years of age and older have incomes at or below the poverty level.

Community Outreach & Needs Assessment

PDA, in partnership with the statewide network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A), sponsored virtual and in-person Listening Sessions to gather more input from individuals and groups that were directly impacted or affected by older adult and disability related services, programs, and infrastructures. Each listening session had a trained presenter and notetaker to take and share an accurate representation of each listening session. When

creating the framework for these sessions and the trainings, PDA utilized the 8 domains of age friendly communities, created by the World Health Organization and adapted for the United States by AARP. The 8 domains include: (1) Health Services and Social Supports (2) Transportation (3) Housing (4) Communication and Information (5) Social Participation (6) Respect and Social Inclusion (7) Civic Participation and Employment and (8) Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. This holistic approach allowed a greater understanding of the older adults' lives and their ability to age-in-community.

In Lehigh County, four listening sessions were conducted. We were purposeful in selecting venue locations that would attract people from various backgrounds that reflect the diversity of our community. The locations selected were a Hispanic senior center, a senior apartment building mostly made up of lower to mid-income individuals, a large senior center that has approximately 3,200 participators and the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living which serves individuals with disabilities. Information on the listening sessions was publicized in the local Newspaper, WFMZ radio station and website, Lehigh Valley Press, and also sent out by email through the LINK program mailing list.

The notes taken at each listening session were sent to the PDA team for analysis. Further analysis and synthesis of the data ultimately largely informed the 10-year strategic plan, Aging Our Way, PA. This data is also integral for the creation of both the local area plan on aging as well as the State 4 -year plan.

Additionally, PDA, through academic and community partners, including the University of Pittsburgh, issued a needs assessment to document the baseline for older adult and disability services, infrastructure, and programming and to identify clear gaps or barriers that need to be addressed by the plan. The needs assessment included a randomized, representative sample of older adults and older adults with disabilities to present a more objective understanding of perspectives and barriers related to older adult quality of life. An additional version of the needs assessment survey was available to stakeholders to complete at their discretion. This survey was made publicly available in digital and printed forms and distributed to community partners and their networks to broaden the understanding of perceived barriers to older adults accessing services and their thoughts regarding current community and aging related services and infrastructure. Lehigh County worked with our voter registration office to send out 30,000 surveys randomly selected from a pool of approximately 120,000 voters age 50 and over, of which 964 were returned with comments.

The specific local-data was distributed to the AAAs for use in their local area plans on aging. Analysis of this local data was used to find the most common threads of concern regarding aging in this community. We used this information to determine our four-year plan goals, aligning also with the focus areas of ACL and the Aging Our Way, PA.

Quality Management

This agency collects data annually from our current programs by comparing the increase in services over the past several years and projecting how many people we anticipate serving in the next few years. We conduct an annual public hearing whereby this information is provided to all who attend. Decisions are made based on how many referrals we are receiving and available funding.

In analyzing all the Aging Our Way, PA data for Lehigh County, transportation, affordable housing, healthy aging, and access to information in the navigation of the aging resource system were of the greatest concerns to older adults in our community. Our goals strive to address these gaps in services.

Our office has a designated staff person who performs quality management tasks monthly. Cases are selected randomly and evaluated for quality, documentation and accuracy. Our fiscal department also does a monthly review, comparing data from invoices and data from SAMS, our client management system, to ensure that we are providing adequate services. Both fiscal and program staff meet monthly to perform a fiscal analysis and discuss how we are meeting program goals based on consumer needs. We regularly mail out consumer surveys for additional first-hand feedback.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Outcome Measures

Goals

ACL outlines its five core topic areas for National consideration to be:

1. A focus of the Core Programs of the Older Americans Act
2. Reducing loneliness and depression brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Ensuring equity in all aspects of our state and local plans
4. Expanding access to HCBS
5. Caregiving support

Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services uses these five ACL topic areas as our focus. Similarly, the areas of greatest need described by the older adults within our community fall in line with these national topic areas.

Goal 1: We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone, and is understandable by all.

Goal 2: We will remediate barriers that prevent older adults from staying connected to their communities and promote opportunities to engage with their communities how they choose.

Goal 3: We will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socio economic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

Goal 4: We will promote HCBS to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.

Goal 5: We will provide further support for care partners by cultivating better systems of support, education, and assistance to ensure more sustainable, competent, and exceptional care for older adults.

Objectives & Strategies

Goal 1: We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone, and is understandable by all.

- Objective 1.1: Collaboration with community partners
 - Lehigh County Elder Abuse Task Force expansion
 - Dementia Friendly efforts
- Objective 1.2: Educating the Public
 - Scams Initiative

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- Increase public knowledge of our programs
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Goal 2: We will remediate barriers that prevent older adults from staying connected to their communities and promote opportunities to engage with their communities how they choose.

- Objective 2.1: Combatting social isolation by utilizing already available technology and community partners
 - Education about Smart Home/Assistive Technology and Social Connection programs
 - Agency sponsored transportation to Senior Centers
 - Partner with local municipalities
 - Objective 2.2: Incorporating behavior and mental health services more cohesively with the aging network
 - Implement Healthy Ideas Program
 - Continue development of Aging Behavioral Health Task Force
 - Provide cross trainings to staff on behavior health and aging services
 - Train all care managers in Suicide Severity Rating scale
 - Educate staff to provide trauma informed care
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Goal 3: We will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socio economic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

- Objective 3.1: Promoting cultural accessibility in nutrition and language
 - Ensure meals can be adjusted for cultural considerations
 - Increase provider options for frozen meals
 - Research and offer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Senior Centers
 - Acquire bi-lingual PA MEDI volunteers
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Goal 4: We will promote HCBS to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.

- Objective 4.1: Addressing accessibility needs in housing
 - Increase public knowledge and participation in the Shared Housing and Resource Exchange Program (SHARE)
 - Increase Person Centered Counseling program efforts in housing
 - Objective 4.2: Incorporating aging network services with HCBS
 - Conduct an annual training on CHC for staff
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Goal 5: We will provide further support for care partners by cultivating better systems of support, education, and assistance to ensure more sustainable, competent, and exceptional care for older adults.

- Objective 5.1: Support caregivers and care providers through education
 - Increase promotion of Lehigh County's Caregiver Portal, Trualta
 - Plan and execute an in-person Caregiver Conference
 - Objective 5.2: Increase utilization of the Caregiver Support Program (CSP) and caregiver connections to local resources
 - Promote CSP's home modification service
 - Distribute CSP brochures and information to durable medical equipment providers
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- Collect email address for all agency consumer, especially caregivers
 - Utilize the Caregiver tool kit developed by PDA for our caregivers
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Outcome Measures

Definition and description of outcome measures and target dates identified under each goal, objective, and strategy.

Goal 1: We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone, and is understandable by all		
Objective 1.1: Collaboration with community partners		
Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Expand the existing Lehigh County Elder Abuse Task Force (EATF) to increase their capacity in educating more of the public about elder abuse and increase the number of collaborative investigations.	Increased numbers	2026
Continue to collaborate with the Dementia Friendly Lehigh Valley Coalition by promoting programming to help those living with dementia be active, independent, and comfortable within our community as long as possible.	Number of community projects collaborated on with the Coalition	2028
Objective 1.2: Educating the Public		
Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Disseminate information and partner with community organizations to educate older adults about common scams and frauds, teaching them how to recognize and report them	Number of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertisements 2. distribution efforts 3. trainings 	2028
Increase public knowledge of our programs by expanding program videos, share videos and articles on social media, and increasing focused efforts in distribution of agency brochures	Increased number of referrals	2028

Goal 2: We will remediate barriers that prevent older adults from staying connected to their communities and promote opportunities to engage with their communities how they choose.

Objective 2.1: Combatting social isolation by utilizing already available technology and community partners.

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
We will educate our consumers and the public about available Smart Home/Assistive Technology and social connection programs and products.	Create a list of local programs and devices for Care Managers to discuss with consumers and disseminate	2028
We will educate and publicize specifically about the availability of agency sponsored transportation to Senior Centers	Increased number	2028
Partner with local municipalities to publicize our current Senior Center programming and the availability of agency sponsored transportation to the Senior Centers	Number of meetings scheduled and information shared	2028
Partner with local municipalities where we currently don't have senior centers to offer opportunities for socialization and distribute information about Agency programs	Number of meetings scheduled and information shared	2028

Objective 2.2: Incorporating behavior and mental health services more cohesively with the aging network

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Implement Healthy Ideas Program	Number of program participants	2025
Continue to develop the Aging Behavioral Health Task Force to work with complex cases	Number of complex case reviews	2028
Provide trainings to staff on Behavioral Health and Aging services to enhance staff awareness	Number of trainings	2026
Train all care managers in the Suicide Severity Rating scale and encourage utilization of the tool when appropriate	Number of current staff who completed the training	2026
In partnership with Resilient Lehigh Valley, all staff will be trained in providing trauma informed care	Number of staff who completed trainings	2026

Goal 3: We will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socio economic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

Objective 3.1: Promoting cultural accessibility in nutrition and language

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Ensure meals can be adjusted for cultural considerations	Meal providers will offer a Hispanic option	2028
Increase provider options for frozen meals	Number of contracted meal providers for frozen meal	2028
Research and offer an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in Senior Centers	Number of classes Number of class participants	2028
Acquire bi-lingual volunteers for the PA MEDI program, in order to offer certified counseling to Spanish speaking individuals, giving them the same opportunity to obtain better understanding of Medicare and Medicaid health coverage	Number of Spanish speaking volunteers	2026

Goal 4: We will promote HCBS to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.

Objective 4.1: Addressing accessibility needs in housing

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Increase public knowledge and participation in the Shared Housing and Resource Exchange Program (SHARE)	Number of program participants	2028
Increase Person Centered Counseling (PCC) program efforts in assisting older adults with access to affordable housing	Number of program participants accessing housing resources through PCC	2028

Objective 4.2: Incorporating aging network services with HCBS

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Conduct an annual comprehensive training for all care management staff about Community Health Choices and how to assist a consumer through the enrollment process	Number of staff who attend annual training	2026

Goal 5: We will provide further support for care partners by cultivating better systems of support, education, and assistance to ensure more sustainable, competent, and exceptional care for older adults.

Objective 5.1: Support caregivers and care providers through education

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Increase promotion of Trualta Caregiver portal	Increased number of enrollees and data showing increased usage	2026
Plan and execute an in-person Caregiver conference	Completed conference	2028

Objective 5.2: Increase utilization of Caregiver Support Program and caregiver connections to local resources

Strategies	Performance Measure	Target Date
Promote the Caregiver Support Program (CSP) home modification service in order to assist caregivers and care recipients to age in place	Number of contacts made to distribute information Marketing on this specific service	2026
Distribute CSP brochures and information to durable medical equipment providers	Number of DME contacts who received CSP information	2026
Collect email addresses for agency consumers and caregivers to circulate information and opportunities	Number of emails on email distribution lists	2028
We'll utilize the Caregiver tool kit developed by PDA for our caregivers	Number of caregivers who receive the tool kit	2028



Appendix 1: Assurance

AREA PLAN PART B

**Section 1. Signature Page/Standard Assurances Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Aging**

FY 2024-2028 Area Agency on Aging

Four-Year Area Plan on Aging

Signature Page

Area Agency on Aging Name and Address:

**Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services
17 South Seventh St. Allentown, PA 18101**

I/we certify that I/we are authorized to submit this Plan on behalf of the designated Area Agency on Aging and agree to abide by regulations issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. I/we further certify that the general public has had the opportunity to review and comment on this Plan through the public hearing process and that written policies, procedures or agreements, as appropriate, have been developed in accordance with Part A, Section 307 of the Older Americans Act, and are on file for review and approval, as appropriate, by Department of Aging officials.

I/we assure that services and programs of the Area Agency on Aging will be managed and delivered in accordance with the Plan submitted herewith. Any substantial changes to the Plan will be submitted to the Department of Aging for prior approval.

I/we hereby expressly, as a condition precedent to the receipt of State and Federal funds, assure:

That in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, as amended; and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance regulations):

- 1) I/we do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or handicap:
 - a) In providing services or employment, or in its relationship with other providers;
 - b) In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.

2) I/we will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination. I/we further hereby agree that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require contractors to comply with these same provisions.

I/we certify that the advisory council of the Area Agency on Aging has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as herewith submitted.

Signature(s) of Governing Authority
Official(s), e.g., Chairman of County
Commissioners or President, Board of Directors.

Signature	Title	Date
	County Executive	3/25/24
	Chairperson, Advisory Council	3/20/24
_____	_____	_____
	Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging	3/20/24

Name of Person to Contact Regarding the Contents of This Plan:

Clayton Reed Jr, Executive Director
Jessica Yaich, Program Analyst

(610) 782-3251
(610) 782-3096

Part B. Section 2

DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE AREA
AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

PSA NO. 33

NAME OF AAA: Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services

PLAN PERIOD FROM July 2024 TO June 2028

In accordance with 6 PA Code, Section 35.23, a.(1) and (2) and the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, I certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has had the opportunity to assist in the development of this Plan. I further certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has participated in at least one Public Hearing held on this Plan.

The Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council does recommend approval of this Plan.

Signature of the Chief Officer of the Area
Agency on Aging Advisory Council



Tracy Roman, Chairperson

3/20/2024
Date

Part B. Section 3

Listing of Plan Assurances and Required Activities

Older Americans Act, As Amended in 2016

ASSURANCES

The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, requires each Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to provide assurances that it will develop a Plan and carry out a program in accordance with the Plan. Each AAA must comply with the following provisions of the Act. Written policies, procedures, or agreements, as appropriate, must be on file in the AAA office and available for review and approval by Department of Aging officials.

Area Plans

- Assurances that an adequate proportion, as required under section 307(a)(2), of the amount allotted for part B to the planning and service area will be expended for the delivery of each of the following categories of services:
 - Services associated with access to services (transportation, health services (including mental and behavioral health services), outreach, information and assistance (which may include information and assistance to consumers on availability of services under part B and how to receive benefits under and participate in publicly supported programs for which the consumer may be eligible) and case management services
 - In-home services, including supportive services for families of older individuals who are victims of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction
 - Legal assistance
- Assurances that the AAA will report annually to the State agency in detail the amount of funds expended for each such category during the fiscal year most recently concluded
- Assurances that the AAA will:
 - Set specific objectives, consistent with State policy, for providing services to older individuals with greatest economic need, older individuals with greatest social need, and older individuals at risk for institutional placement
 - Include specific objectives for providing services to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas; and
 - Include proposed methods to achieve the objectives
- Assurances that the AAA will include in each agreement made with a provider of any service under this title, a requirement that such provider will:
 - Specify how the provider intends to satisfy the service needs of low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas in the area served by the provider
 - To the maximum extent feasible, provide services to low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas in accordance with their need for such services
 - Meet specific objectives established by the AAA, for providing services to low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas within the planning and service area

- Each AAA shall identify the number of low-income minority older individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas in the planning and service area, describe the methods used to satisfy the service needs of such minority older individuals, and provide information on the extent to which the AAA met the objectives described in clause (a)(4)(A)(i).
- Assurances that the AAA will use outreach efforts that will identify individuals eligible for assistance under this Act, with special emphasis on:
 - Older individuals residing in rural areas
 - Older individuals with greatest economic need (with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas)
 - Older individuals with greatest social need (with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas)
 - Older individuals with severe disabilities
 - Older individuals with limited English proficiency;
 - Older individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction (and the caretakers of such individuals)
 - Older individuals at risk for institutional placement
- Assurance that the AAA will ensure that each activity undertaken by the agency, including planning, advocacy, and systems development, will include a focus on the needs of low-income minority older individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas.
- Assurances that the AAA will coordinate planning, identification, assessment of needs, and provision of services for older individuals with disabilities, with particular attention to individuals with severe disabilities, and individuals at risk for institutional placement, with agencies that develop or provide services for individuals with disabilities
- Assurances that the AAA, in carrying out the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman program under section 307(a)(9), will expend not less than the total amount of funds appropriated under this Act and expended by the agency in fiscal year 2000 in carrying out such a program under this title.
- Information and assurances concerning services to older individuals who are Native Americans (referred to in this paragraph as "older Native Americans"), including:
 - Information concerning whether there is a significant population of older Native Americans in the planning and service area and if so, an assurance that the AAA will pursue activities
 - Outreach, to increase access of those older Native Americans to programs and benefits provided under this title
 - Assurance that the AAA will, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate the services the agency provides under this title with services provided under title VI
 - Assurance that the AAA will make services under the area plan available, to the same extent as such services are available to older individuals within the planning and service area, to older Native Americans.
- Assurances that the AAA will maintain the integrity and public purpose of services provided, and service providers, under this title in all contractual and commercial relationships.

- Assurances that the AAA will disclose to the Assistant Secretary and the State agency the identity of each nongovernmental entity with which such agency has a contract or commercial relationship relating to providing any service to older individuals; and the nature of such contract or such relationship.
- Assurances that the AAA will demonstrate that a loss or diminution in the quantity or quality of the services provided, or to be provided, under this title by such agency has not resulted and will not result from such contract or such relationship.
- Assurances that the AAA will demonstrate that the quantity or quality of the services to be provided under this title by such agency will be enhanced as a result of such contract or such relationship.
- Assurances that the area agency will, on the request of the Assistant Secretary or the State, for the purpose of monitoring compliance with this Act (including conducting an audit), disclose all sources and expenditures of funds such agency receives or expends to provide services to older individuals.
- Assurances that preference in receiving services under this title will not be given by the AAA to particular older individuals as a result of a contract or commercial relationship that is not carried out to implement this title.
- Assurances that funds received under this title will be used to provide benefits and services to older individuals, giving priority to older individuals identified in paragraph (4)(A)(i); and in compliance with the assurances specified in paragraph (13) and the limitations specified in section 212.