

# **ANNUAL BUDGET PROSPECTUS**

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
**AREA AGENCY ON AGING (DHS/AAA)**



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June 14, 2024

## **2023 - 2024 Program Developments & 2024-2025 Budget Prospectus**

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging (DHS/AAA), a grantee of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA), provides programs and services that assist older adults, Sixty-plus (60+) years of age, to live independently in their homes and communities. It is one of Fifty-Two (52) such agencies, based in single or multiple counties, serving the needs of older adults throughout Pennsylvania. The DHS/AAA served approximately 41,034 unduplicated individuals during FY 22-23 through internally administered programs, and through contracts and agreements with approximate 80 community-based service providers (FY 23/24 data will be available after July 1, 2024). The agency and its provider network place the highest priority on quality and consumer-centered service delivery across all programs. DHS/AAA programs and services, along with their current-year and projected FY 24-25 individual funding are shown on page 9.

**Assessment** – The Aging Well Assessment network, of which Allegheny County AAA is a member, continued to perform the essential duty of assessing the level of care needs for individuals seeking Nursing Facility Placement, Personal Care Home Placement, or Medicaid-funded Community Based Services. This year the team was able to uphold its 99% compliance rate once again successfully with assessment completion timeframes, as well as exceed the required 95% quality compliance rate.

**Care Transitions Program** – In FY 23-24, Care Transitions has partnered with DHS’s analytics team and our payor to gather data to produce an ROI for the program. Through this work, the Program was able to reduce readmission rates and provide savings to the payor ongoing. The team also developed a dashboard to track performances and ensure contract compliance.

Care transitions is currently piloting a Behavioral Health Support Specialist for complex interventions. This will add an extension to the program and provide additional services.

In July 2023 Care Transitions presented at a national conference in Austin, Texas. The session spotlighted the work of the Care Transition program and how the program has been able to show the ROI's and sustainability over a ten-year period. The session was well received, and we were asked to provide a Webinar later. The program will also be presenting at the USAging national annual conference in July 2024.

**Caregiver Support Program** – The Caregiver Support Program has maintained the steady growth of caregivers over the last couple of years, the program is currently servicing 400 Caregivers. There has been an increase of Grandparent Caregivers.

Allegheny County partnered with A Second Chance, Inc. who specializes in Kinship care to address the growing need of Grandparents raising their grandchildren.

**Home Delivered Meals / Congregate Meals** – The Nutrition RFP submissions were received, reviewed and contracts were awarded to all Three (3) food providers submitting proposals. Nutrition Inc, Metz Culinary Management and Salem's Market and Grill.

The Nutrition RFP afforded the AAA with the opportunity to redesign the programs, separating Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meal service. Meal rates were increased to allow for higher quality food grade options and varied menu choices. Products and supplies will also be improved, to higher quality plates and cutlery for congregate meal service and heavier grade more attractive trays for frozen home delivered meals. Home delivered meals will be delivered frozen and congregate meals will be hot, except for lighter fare sandwiches and salads.

The Home Delivered Meal contract was awarded to Nutrition Inc. The AAA recognized that Nutrition Inc possessed the capacity and operational experience to work with the AAA and home delivered meal agencies to redesign the system with a concentration on efficient practices and positive consumer outcomes.

Salem's Market demonstrated a strong and fresh approach to food quality. The AAA, as well as the senior community centers, are looking forward to the possibility of Salem's Market and Grill providing an alternative to the traditional congregate meal service that will include lite fair meals, such as salads and wraps as well as holiday and festive meals (parties) to focal points across the County.

The Proposal from Metz Culinary Management demonstrated their familiarity with DHS and as well as their experience as a current provider of the service, emphasizing restaurant experience spanning across the Eastern part of the US. This experience led the AAA to award the contract for the primary congregate meal service for senior centers to Metz. The new Metz congregate meal menu has enhanced proteins and sides and includes fan favorites such as stuffed cabbage. Metz will also be providing a variety of soups. This is the first time that soups have been offered by one of the AAA congregate meal providers. Also, seasonal fruits, vegetables, and salad options.

**Farmers Market Nutrition Program** - The annual Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is available to eligible residents of Allegheny County who meet income and age guidelines. Eligible individuals may receive one set of vouchers worth \$50 (5 vouchers for \$10 each) to be spent at participating farmers markets.

Distribution of vouchers will be in-person on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, and managed by our contracted Senior Centers. Vouchers will be distributed until Sept. 30 on a first-come, first-served basis and must be redeemed by November 30. Only Home-Delivered Meal recipients will have the option of a mail-in application process.

For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Basic-Needs/Senior-Farmers-Market-Nutrition-Program.aspx>. You may also call the SeniorLine 412-350-5460, call your local senior center, or text the word “FARMER” to the number 987987.

**Older Adult Protective Services** - During FY 23-24, the AAA has increased staffing in our Older Adult Protective Services program to 45 investigators and 14 supervisors in order to better manage increasing case volumes. This Fiscal Year the program is projected to receive 7,393 Reports of Need. In the year to come, thanks to funding by DHS, the AAA aims to have 56 investigators. A reminder: Older Adult Protective Services investigates reports of elder abuse including physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglect / self-neglect and abandonment—the most common being self-neglect.

The program established a Protective Services-specific training department. The PS training department provides both mandated and elective trainings for PS staff at all levels in our County. The training is a mixture of both in-person and virtual trainings and makes use of both PS and external subject matter experts to deliver trainings to staff.

**Information & Assistance** - 48,500 projected calls this year, 4,039 contacts per month. The Five (5) most frequent call topics: In-home services, home and community-based programs, nutrition, public benefits, housing/utilities.

**ADRC** - In July of 2022, the Allegheny County DHS Area Agency on Aging assumed the contract for the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC serves as single point of entry into the long-term services and supports (LTSS) system for older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, veterans, and families. The vision behind ADRCs is to establish, in every community, highly visible and trusted sources of information where people of all incomes and ages can turn for the full range of long-term support options and smooth access to public long-term support programs and benefits. The ADRC believes in “No Wrong Door”. This year

the ADRC provided multiple trainings in support of the older adult and disability community. Some of the training topics included: substance use disorder, hoarding and medication assisted recovery.

**Ombudsman** – The Ombudsman celebrated its 25th year with the volunteer program. A recognition event was held in May to acknowledge the great work of the volunteers over the past 25 years.

The Ombudsman program was awarded a Two (2) year grant to increase visibility in personal care home settings, particularly personal care homes in rural areas of the county, and/or serve individuals of lower socioeconomic status. Through this grant the program has created a stipend program for the volunteers, is in process of a marketing campaign and has added interns to assist in growing the visibility of the program throughout the county.

Pennsylvania’s Empowered Expert Residents (PEER) are long-term care residents who are trained to self-advocate and empower their fellow residents to improve their quality of life and quality of care in long-term care facilities. PEER is a partnership between residents, facility staff, and the local ombudsman. This year the Ombudsman focused on building the PEER program. At the start of the year, we were in 8 facilities and had 32 PEERs and as of today we are in 14 facilities and have 63 PEERs a 97% increase in PEERs.

Unfortunately, in FY 23-24, we have seen the closure of Eight (8) long-term care facilities. There were Five (5) personal care facilities and Three (3) nursing homes that closed, which accounts for 648 long term care beds lost in the County.

**OPTIONS Care Management** – The number of active OPTIONS consumers in the program is currently 4,500. There has been an increase of Home Delivered Meals consumers and with this service in general as there has been an increase in food insecurity due to the economic downturn.

Care Managers are experiencing dealing with more complex consumers with prevalent issues like housing needs, Mental Health, and hoarding.

Many of the In-Home Providers of Personal Care and Home Support are still struggling with recruiting and retaining workers. As a result, at the beginning of FY 23/24 there were approximately 500 OPTIONS consumer on the Waiting List waiting for workers to become available.

Allegheny County initiated “Operation Boost” to increase Personal Care and Home Support utilization. Personal Care and Home Support Providers were:

- Incentivized to service OPTIONS consumers with Needs Assessment Score of 25 or higher.
- Incentivized to service OPTIONS consumers who live in a geographically challenging area.
- Consumer with lower NAS were encouraged to use the CAPABLE program, this unique program teaches consumers through Occupational Therapist and Register Nurse to self-manage and address own needs.

**Senior Centers** – Senior Center Administrators requested support from the AAA to help them with capacity building and strategic planning to innovate their services to better meet the needs of Older Adults into the future. In response, AAA has developed a year-long program supported through Aging Block Grant (ABG) and philanthropic funds for training and adaptive technology to successfully adapt to accelerated change in the Aging space.

This program dubbed, “institute for Senior Center Innovation Project” or (iSCIP), will have the following primary goals for Senior Center administrators and leaders:

1. To identify their organizational strengths and growth edges.
2. To identify innovations underway in other Senior Centers nationally and bring those back to our region.
3. To develop or enhance a resilient and flexible mindset able to adapt to the changing needs of modern and future seniors.
4. To bring new technologies into our work and make new tech accessible in Allegheny County's Centers.

These goals will be met through (a) Experiential learning opportunities; (b) Strategy and design sessions; and (c) funding for Technology proven to support the OAA's goals (i.e., reduce social isolation, increase wellness and ability for OA's to age in place).

Specifically, SCIP will provide the following: (I) Nonprofit Management (II) Change Management Leadership Training (III) Site Visit of two Innovative Senior Centers and (IV) Practical Application of Technology & Strategic Planning.

**Outreach** – FY 23-24, 23 Speakers Bureau presentations to 850+ attendees. Topic areas AAA Services, Housing Options for Older Adults, Alzheimer's Resources. Continued speaking partnerships with Carnegie Library Partners Program, Alzheimer's Association, UPMC Communities

The Blooming Health messaging platform is being utilized on a trial basis that allows AAA programs to transmit strategic program and event messages to lists of individuals interested in AAA services. Launched in mid-May, messages are distributed on SMS text, Voice Mail, and email. Messages have thus far been sent calling attention to Farmers Market Vouchers, Senior Centers, and Senior Companion Volunteering.

**Housing Initiatives** - Community Education continues around housing options for older adults, including Four (4) Carnegie Library branch presentations over the last quarter of FY 23-24. Messaging for housing programs will be released via Blooming Health on 6/14, and a primer on AAA's housing on the DHS Engage platform will be released prior to the end of June.

On 1/1/24, AAA signed a contract bringing the Shared Housing And Resource Exchange program (SHARE) to Allegheny County. SHARE provides a shared housing resource for individuals, an opportunity to expand available housing in communities, while providing the potential for passive income and community inclusion for older adult homeowners. A targeted recruitment campaign is in process to recruit host homes with a goal for readiness of July 1, 2024.

**Domiciliary Care** - PA Department of Aging released marketing statewide in May 2024 to raise awareness of the Dom Care program. We will be receiving printed marketing materials that will be distributed through the community. Digital ads are also appearing on media outlets.

PA Department of Aging is rewarding legacy Dom Care Providers with a \$2500 retention appreciation incentive for their service. Payment will be made upon execution through the County contracting department. PDA is also providing limited initial certification bonuses to new Dom Care Providers.

**Senior Companion** - A new class of Twelve (12) Senior Companion volunteers completed training on May 21, 2024

<b>FISCAL YEAR 24-25 BUDGET OUTLOOK</b>		
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>FY 23-24 Amended Budget</b>	<b>FY 24-25 Projections</b>
Home Delivered Meals	4,006,471	4,006,471
Congregate Meals	1,871,564	1,871,564
Senior Community Center Service	3,864,000	3,864,000
Volunteer Services	370,123	370,123
Passenger Transportation	939,820	939,820
Outreach	415,487	415,487
Legal Assistance	211,928	211,928
Ombudsman	871,183	871,183
Information and Referral	1,616,507	1,616,507
Home Health	1,558	1,558
Personal Care	1,434,165	1,434,165
Overnight Shelter/Supervisor	10,000	10,000
Environmental Modifications	1,033,420	1,033,420
Med. Equip/ Supp. Adaptive Devices	843,932	834,932
Home Support	1,960,922	1,960,922
Adult Day Care	9,363	9,363
Assessments	1,155,858	1,155,858
Care Management	5,522,003	5,522,003
Protective Services Intake/Investigation	5,174,162	5,174,162
Domiciliary Care	201,028	201,028
Guardianship	510,000	510,000
Consumer Reimbursement	839,088	839,088
Administration	5,036,652	5,036,652
Value of In-Kind Service Volunteers	1,142,170	1,142,170
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39,032,404</b>	<b>39,032,404</b>
<i>*24-25 projections are contingent on approval of PA State Budget</i>		

**Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

1.) To review or download the 2024-2025 Annual Budget Prospectus on the DHS web site, go to:

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Annual-Plans-and-Budgets>

2.) To receive a paper copy of the Annual Budget Prospectus, contact:

Cyndie Parzuhoski  
DHS/Area Agency on Aging  
2100 Wharton Street  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15203

E-mail: [cynthia.parzuhoski@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:cynthia.parzuhoski@alleghenycounty.us)

3.) To submit written testimony on the Annual Budget Prospectus, send via:

- Mail: Cyndie Parzuhoski  
DHS/Area Agency on Aging  
2100 Wharton Street  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15203
- E-mail: [cynthia.parzuhoski@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:cynthia.parzuhoski@alleghenycounty.us)
- Fax: 412-350-3193  
Attention: Cyndie Parzuhoski

**NOTE:** All written testimony on the Annual Budget Prospectus must be **received** at the Area Agency on Aging **no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, June 28, 2024.**