

# New Hampshire Commission on Aging 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT Executive Summary



People aged  
**65+**

**NH census\***  
**2020**  
**= 19%**

**NH**  
**projections\***  
**2030**  
**= 27%**

The aging of New Hampshire is not a crisis, but an enormous opportunity. Older adults are healthier, better educated, and more productive than ever. It's time to start seeing New Hampshire's older adults as a valuable natural resource to our state.

We can amplify this opportunity by reforming our systems of care, employment models, housing and transportation options, and harnessing the economic engine and talents of our increasingly capable older residents. **The Commission on Aging calls for policy leaders to think systemically and innovate to support productivity and engagement and the extension of resources over the course of longer lifespans.**

Longer lives result in people living each stage and age differently than before. Adapting and modernizing our public policies, systems, and community environments will make New Hampshire an even better place to age.

[\\*www.nheconomy.com/getmedia/0205c62d-9c30-4b00-9c9e-d81d8f17b8b3/NH-Population-Projections-2020-2050-Final-Report-092022.pdf](http://www.nheconomy.com/getmedia/0205c62d-9c30-4b00-9c9e-d81d8f17b8b3/NH-Population-Projections-2020-2050-Final-Report-092022.pdf)

# 4 PRIORITIES FOR NH:

- **Develop a Multisector Plan for Aging – AgeWellNH**
- **Strengthen systems of care for healthy aging**
- **Grow the direct care workforce**
- **Advance age friendly policies, systems and environments**

The New Hampshire State Commission on Aging, unanimously voted to approve the 2024 Annual Report, reiterating its commitment to four priority recommendations with detailed policy proposals in each area. This report was presented November 1, 2024, to the Governor, members of the legislature, and other stakeholders.

## Calling for a Multisector Plan for Aging

We ask state leadership, either the Governor and/or the Legislature, to call for the development of a Multisector Plan for Aging - an AgeWellNH plan. The goal of this plan is a 10-year vision for New Hampshire's future with a timeline for changes that will ensure our state's strength and resiliency as we undergo the rapid demographic shift already happening. An AgeWellNH plan, developed in partnership with policy leaders, will drive the achievement of the Commission priorities enumerated in this report.

Steps have been taken over the last year towards the development of an AgeWellNH plan. The Commission on Aging with other stakeholders participated in a national learning collaborative with nine other states to learn about best practices for developing a state level multisector plan for aging. Funding was secured to conduct a community transportation needs assessment and initiate community engagement for a AgeWellNH Plan.

### What are the goals for an **AgeWellNH** Plan?

- **A 10-year blueprint for restructuring state policies across sectors to address the needs of an older aged population.**
- A unified vision that promotes healthy aging, independent living, and social engagement, tackling issues of transportation, housing, affording aging and more.
- Builds on priorities and goals of the Governor, Legislature, State Agencies and develops a consensus.
- Reflects extensive input from the community.
- Considers systemic inequities that lead to avoidable disparities in aging.
- Guides policies, programs, and funding.

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## Other Commission on Aging Priorities:

### Strengthen systems of care for healthy aging

Shifting reliance on Long-term Supports & Services (LTSS) facility-based care to more home- and community-based care is essential. Progress was made in making this shift, but more must be done. **Investing in programs and services that aim to keep people in their homes longer can improve quality of life while avoiding unnecessary spending.** Expanding housing modification programs, increasing nutrition services, and enhancing social connections for older adults in the community can make a difference. Improving information, referral, and other navigation and care coordination supports are needed as well.

### Grow the direct care workforce

Direct care workers, who assist older adults and people with disabilities with daily tasks, are a vital link to maintain health, monitor changes, prevent injury and provide social interaction. NH will need approximately 24,400 more direct care workers by 2028. **The healthcare workforce challenge is not a passing phenomenon. It requires structural changes to reverse a trend that, left unaddressed, will result in unmet needs and adverse health outcomes.**

The report recommends a variety of measures: reduce training and licensing barriers while maintaining quality of providers; more support for workforce pipeline; and strengthening oversight of staff placement agencies. The development of the direct care workforce – a low-wage workforce – also depends on improving access to affordable housing, childcare services, and transportation options.

### Advance age friendly policies, systems and environments

Policies, systems, and environments supported by state government and other entities should reflect the community they serve. The Commission is well placed to help state policies and practices evolve to ensure all residents can thrive while growing older. **This priority area presents recommendations for developing age-friendly workplaces, housing, transportation options, fostering civic engagement, decreasing social isolation, and improving access to the Internet and age tech.**

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## Additional Resources in the Report:

**ABOUT US** The vision, mission and values of the Commission; membership and meeting recaps.

**PROGRESS** Progress made over the year through legislation, executive actions, or by other entities.

**LTSS FUNDING** Making the case for improving how long term services and supports are financed.

**DATA** A snapshot of demographic trends and poverty rates for New Hampshire's older adults.

## Commission Members:

### Governor Appointees

Susan Ruka, Chair  
Laurie Duff, Vice Chair  
Roxie Severance, Clerk  
Beverly Bjorklund  
Honorable Polly Campion  
Suzanne Demers  
Carissa Elphick  
Margaret Franckhauser  
Daniel Marcek  
Doug McNutt  
David Ross  
Beth Quarm Todgham  
Honorable Joanne Ward  
Representative Lucy Weber

### Designated Members

Senator William Gannon  
Representative James MacKay  
Representative Charles McMahon  
Wendi Aultman, Department of Health and Human Services  
Danielle Albert, Department of Labor  
Richard Lavers, Department of Employment Security  
Brandy Cassada, Department of Safety  
Shelley Winters, Department of Transportation  
Sunny Mulligan Shea, Office of the Attorney General  
Jack Ruderman, NH Housing Finance Authority  
Susan Buxton, Long Term Care Ombudsman

### Executive Director

Rebecca Sky

## Full Report:

The full report can be accessed via the Commission on Aging website: [www.nhcoa.nh.gov](http://www.nhcoa.nh.gov).