



**State of Minnesota**  
**2022 Board on Aging Legislative Recommendation**

**(HF 4036, SF XXXX)**

*A bill to establish a task force to examine the aging demographic in Minnesota and conditions that would necessitate the creation of a Department on Aging within the executive branch to promote healthy aging in Minnesota and ensure that all aging related policies are inclusive of Minnesotans whose race, ethnicity, culture, geography, sexual orientation, abilities, and other characteristics reflect the full population of the state.*

**Key Messages**

**1. A Legislative Task Force is a first step toward a multi-decade Minnesota Plan for Aging that is measurable and accountable to aging families and older adults.**

**2. A Legislative Task Force will consider the following questions:**

- **Where and how do older Minnesotans want to live in communities as aging continues?**
- **What infrastructure, service, and support investments, available within every geographic region, will effectively meet the expressed needs as Minnesotans age?**

**3. Why is a Legislative Task Force necessary?**

- Aging and workforce demographics

On February 8, 2022, the Minnesota State Demographer projected Minnesota's population of persons aged 65+ will reach 1 million within the next year. In 8 years, projections show 300,000 adults over the age of seventy-five. While the largest concentration of those 65+ are in the seven-county metro area, the highest percentage of older adults live in Greater Minnesota. This demographic shift presents opportunities and challenges as decision-makers consider the financial security, housing, transportation, health care, employment, and social service needs of this population.

Current workforce challenges continue as the working-age population continues to decline, particularly in Greater Minnesota. The ongoing impact of labor force shortages projects labor force supply will not meet future demand. To date, the primary response from the State of MN to address these two currents and pending issues has centered on wage adjustments and initial efforts to create workforce pipelines. Alternative and innovative models to provide support are critical and needed immediately.

- Ongoing recognition of demographic shift to date  
*MN2030 Looking Forward*, "... builds on the momentum of the Long-Term Care Task Force (2000). *MN2030 Looking Forward* also uses the foundation of other state aging initiatives and one DHS-wide bi-partisan legislative proposal called *Reform 2020*." Aging 2030: <https://mn.gov/dhs/mn2030/background/>

To date, no specific division or Department within the State of MN has been accountable to implement and monitor the Aging 2030 Plans. As a result, Aging 2030 has not generated opportunities to stimulate a coordinated statewide approach for investments in infrastructure that will result in measurable returns (savings to families and communities when people are able to age safely in their communities).

- Leadership and accountability  
A Legislative Task Force as a first step toward a Minnesota plan for aging and implemented by a department on aging will acknowledge:
  - Minnesota's responsibility to participate in a statewide effort in planning and engaging communities in preparation for the future;
  - State accountability to optimize coordination and planning within the executive branch;
  - The critical role of the state to raise the visibility of our aging population and the major areas of the aging life experience (e.g., health, human services, housing, transportation, consumer affairs, employment and income security, business development) that require immediate attention.

Four focus areas necessary for healthy aging can be the initial priority for the work:

- Financial security: Identify and confirm access to public and private resources currently available to sustain the financial health of older Minnesota and their families.
- Health: Identify the range of health outcomes in relation to the barriers and opportunities that exist in finding affordable and accessible care.
- Ability to live in the community of one's choice:  
*People want to stay in their own communities as they age; according to an AARP "Home and Community Preferences Survey" (Nov, 2021). The data shows that **77 percent of adults fifty and older want to remain in their homes for the long term**—a number consistent for more than a decade.*  
Outline the prevalence and accessibility of supports needed--paid and unpaid care, transportation, and community-based services—to make this preference a reality.
- Quality of life: Recognizing many facets of healthy aging are intangible but valuable, examine outcomes and systems related to feelings of well-being, social connection, and safety.

- Planning and Economic Development for Aging: Building an Infrastructure  
Minnesota requires strategies encouraging integration of older adults into the economic development strategy of their communities. These strategies inform zoning initiatives, building projects, city services, business developments and philanthropic priorities. Prioritizing inter-generational infrastructure is a growing focus in community development.

To date, Minnesota's focus has been to fund older adult services and programs for the most financially needy and physically unhealthy. Middle-class older adults fend for themselves, until they've "spent down" their assets and can completely rely on federal and State funds for all their needs. The State can develop a planning model to drive significant and fundamental change in how to support aging Minnesotans.

The planning model could be comprised of private and public partnerships to attract long-term investments in time, attention, and resources to make communities welcome places for older adults to use their own resources to access affordable housing choices, transportation options and health care--all accessible with measurable benefits and cost savings over the long term.

To be successful, Minnesota communities must "reach scale" with every system that supports community life: the transportation system, community design and public works, health care and hospitals, aging and support services.

- Other State Initiatives  
Minnesota's reputation as a leader in aging services perches on the ongoing investments made in long-term support services, comprised of funding for facilities and community-based services for those who meet Federal poverty guidelines.

Other states are moving toward comprehensive planning efforts to address the ongoing demographic changes:

#### Colorado

In Colorado, understanding that quality, replicable data is essential to understanding long-term progress, needs and opportunities in the aging community. The State of Aging in Colorado has begun to develop a useful and powerful database.

<https://www.bellpolicy.org/2021/12/01/state-of-aging-in-colorado/>



### California

California's Master Plan (MPA) released on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, "the MPA outlines five bold goals and twenty-three strategies to build a California for All Ages by 2030...This is not a plan simply for today's older adults. Instead, the Master Plan is a blueprint for aging across the lifespan. The Master Plan calls on all California communities to build a California for All Ages: for older Californians currently living through the many different stages of the second half of life; for younger generations who can expect to live longer lives than their elders; for communities of all ages – family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and caregivers – surrounding older adults."

<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>

### Illinois

"The MISSION of the Illinois Department on Aging is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life."

[https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/AboutUs/Documents/Org\\_Chart.pdf](https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/AboutUs/Documents/Org_Chart.pdf)

### Ohio

We are a cabinet-level state agency. Our director is appointed by the governor. The U.S. Administration for Community Living designated us as Ohio's lead agency for Older Americans Act services. The Ohio Department of Medicaid contracts with us to administer certain Medicaid programs. <https://aging.ohio.gov/about-us>