

# 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).

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# COMMISSION ON AGING ACTIVITY

The Commission on Aging is organized to study issues through engaging a diversity of stakeholders. The Commission communicates its findings through this report, issue briefs, the [AgingMatters](#) newsletter, [website](#) and social media, testimony before the legislature, meetings with state agencies, and more.

## Highlights (November 2023 – October 2024):

- Monthly Commission on Aging Meetings investigated issues of concern:

### November 2023

System of Care for Healthy Aging Implementation  
Direct Care Workforce Initiatives

### January 2024

NH Office of Professional Licensure  
Nursing Assistant Certification vs. Licensure  
NH Older Adults Advocacy Organization's Priorities

### February 2024

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias and the NH Continuum of Care – Supports for the home and in the community, Medical Management & primary care, nursing facility-based care.

### March 2024

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias and the NH Continuum of Care – Lived Experience of person with early onset, Hospital Dementia Operational Plans, potential future of treatment options on the horizon.

### April 2024

Intro to the Opportunity of a NH Multisector Plan for Aging

### May 2024

Research and Innovation in Aging in NH

### June 2024

NH Brain Health Awareness Campaign  
Mobility Management Network  
Introduction to Keep NH Moving Website  
End of Session Legislative Review

### August 2024

Long Term Care Summit: Barriers to Hospital Discharge, Financing Long Term Care, Overcoming Workforce Challenges,

### September 2024

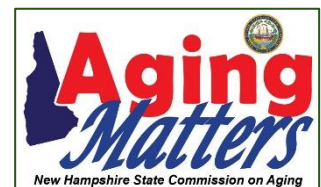
Long Term Care Summit Review of Findings  
COA Annual Report Development

### October 2024

Voting Rights and Access – NH Secretary of State's Office  
Annual Report Approval

\*Meeting Minutes are available on [COA website](#).

- Convened monthly **COA Task Force Meetings** diving deeper into issue areas.
- Convened **COA State House Team Meetings** – weekly during the session, monthly throughout the year. Organized COA guidance to the legislature and governor based on Commission findings.
- Provided written **testimony submitted on 23+ unique bills** during 2023 session.
- **Older Adult Volunteer Awards** – A recognition program honoring the contributions of older adults to their communities. Annual ceremony held with the Governor's Office during Older Americans Month.
- **Spoke during and/or participated in 20+ various community engagement events.**
- Published [Aging Matters](#) a **monthly newsletter** for older adults providing information on public policy discussions, programs and services, and other news people can use. Distributed to over 1200+ community members, service providers, elected officials, and others. Subscribers increase monthly.
- **Social media** further supports messaging and outreach.
- Engaged and informed media outlets, resulting in **media coverage of issues impacting older people.**
- **Led New Hampshire's participation in a learning collaborative** with other states focused on best practices for developing state level **Multisector Plans for Aging**. Convened by the Center for Health Care Strategies.
- Completed **two competitive bidding processes to contract** for a transportation study, community engagement activities, and planning towards the future development of a Multisector Plan for Aging in New Hampshire.



**State of New Hampshire**  
**Governor's Recommended Budget**  
**11050000-NH STATE COMMISSION ON AGING**

Class	FY24 Actual	FY25 Adj Auth	Agency Efficiency FY 26	Agency Prioritized Need FY 26	FY26 Gov Recommend	Agency Efficiency FY27	Agency Prioritized Need FY 27	FY27 Gov Recommend
<b>APPROPRIATION</b>								
010-Personal Services-Perm. Classi	103,209	104,820	110,766	56,043	110,766	113,646	58,443	113,646
018-Overtime	0	1	1	10	1	1	10	1
020-Current Expenses	1,274	1,050	1,355	250	1,355	1,311	250	1,311
022-Rents-Leases Other Than State	560	1,000	900	0	900	900	0	900
027-Transfers To OIT	2,289	7,176	8,198	0	8,198	7,013	0	7,013
028-Transfers to Plant & Prop	9,451	10,389	10,968	749	10,968	11,143	379	11,143
030-Equipment New/Replacement	50	1	500	2,500	500	1	0	1
037-Technology - Hardware	1,968	1	1	1,834	1	1	0	1
038-Technology - Software	0	1	1	641	1	1	852	1
039-Telecommunications	750	2,086	2,355	615	2,355	2,355	480	2,355
046-Consultants	3,500	2,500	7,000	2,500	7,000	3,500	6,000	3,500
049-Transfer to Other State Agencies	36	38	114	38	114	114	38	114
050-Personal Service-Temp/Appointed	29,683	63,604	54,800	8,806	54,822	55,981	8,876	55,981
057-Books, Periodicals, Subscriptions	630	1,980	2,195	1,000	2,195	2,415	1,000	2,415
060-Benefits	60,123	27,728	72,365	36,996	72,323	76,366	39,326	76,301
062-Workers Compensation	290	289	417	200	417	447	200	447
066-Employee training	770	2,000	2,000	1,000	2,000	1,800	1,000	1,800
070-In-State Travel Reimbursement	679	3,000	1,500	500	1,500	1,500	500	1,500
080-Out-Of State Travel	2,534	4,200	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700
089-Transfer to DAS Maintenance Fu	572	572	810	0	810	810	0	810
<b>FUNDING</b>								
00S-General Fund	(218,368)	(232,436)	278,968	116,382	(278,926)	282,005	114,654	(281,940)
<b>POSITION</b>								
FTE1-Permanent Classified	1	1			1			1

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# Highlights of SFY 26/27 Budget Presentation

## **Efficiency Budget:**

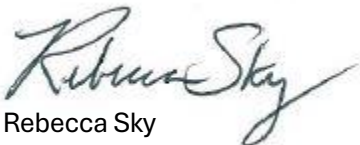
- By looking at the spreadsheet on the previous page, you can see we are a small agency with very basic office operations. 85% of FY25 budget is for salary and benefits. One full-time staff, 1 part-time at 20 hours per week, and one part-time at 16 hours per week.
- Class 60 – Benefits. This is the largest increase to this budget compared to previous years. Health Insurance benefits we inaccurately determined for the FY 24/25 biennium. These benefits a necessary part of the Commission’s budget. FY25 allocated \$27,728, and the FY26 Governor’s budget includes \$72,365, a difference of \$44,637.
- Regarding personnel expenses, the FY 26 efficiency budget reflects a loss of 5 hours/week of part-time assistance. This is a significant loss in a small office.
- Reviewing the remaining non-personnel parts of the FY 26 budget in comparison to FY 25, the increases except for class 46, the Consultants line, are the largely the cost of keeping the lights on and not controllable. Those increases were required by DAS. And it includes \$500 in FY26 for the purchase of an air-conditioner to replace and old unit. In-state and out-of-state travel in fact were reduced. The remaining parts of the budget display how decreases to budget lines were made when possible.
- The increase to the Consultants line is to make the Commission compliant with federal regulation in the ADA. Our meetings are public, and communication access is requirement. We have members of the public attend who are Deaf for whom ASL/English interpreters are needed. Given our audience, many of whom use hearing aids, CART reporting (Whereby spoken word is written and displayed in real time on a screen) is needed as well. \$7500 is needed for this purpose.
- FY 26 and FY27 budgets are not flat, but nearly so even with required salary increases. To achieve this, \$6,000 for communication access services just mentioned were put into the prioritized need request for FY27 that was not included in the Governor’s budget.

## **Impact of Governor’s Trailer Bill on COA Operations:**

Section 12 of the Governor’s Trailer Bill is a change to the Commission’s enabling statute:

The request is simply to lengthen the term of Governor Appointed members of the Commission from 2 years to 3 on a going forward basis. Commission members agree that the current terms are too short. Just as one gets up to speed, having learned enough to make significant contributions to the work, their term is up. It’s a small change that will make a big difference in the quality of the work the Commission produces.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Sky  
Executive Director  
New Hampshire State Commission on Aging