

## North Central Texas Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging

### Area Plan Fiscal Years 2017-2019

#### Executive Summary

Persons age 60 and over account for an increasing share of North Central Texas' population. Between 2017 and 2024 the number of older North Central Texans will increase by 34%, from 573,265 to 765,239, compared to a 12.7% increase in the general population. Although population aging presents many opportunities (e.g., older residents are more likely than younger residents to be property owners, have disposable income, and volunteer their time), it creates challenges as well. With increasing age comes greater likelihood of experiencing disability and requiring long-term services and supports (LTSS). Approximately 70% of those age 65 and older will need LTSS at some point in their lives, for an average of three years. One in five will require LTSS for at least five years.

The majority of older Americans in need of LTSS are ill-equipped to pay privately for in-home and institutional care and rely on a patchwork of informal and formal care. Medicaid is the primary funding source for LTSS, but available only to persons with very low incomes and very limited resources (i.e., less than \$2,000 for single individuals). The Area Agencies on Aging, formed by the Older Americans Act of 1965, are secondary providers of LTSS. They have broad mandates—to provide a continuum of care to people age 60 and over and their family caregivers—but funding that has remained stagnant or decreased at the same time that the number of eligible persons has skyrocketed.

The North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging (NCTAAA) has an ambitious mission: to use its limited resources in a manner that's fair, consistent, and effective. It does so by investing in aging programs that are most needed by older persons in North Central Texas, demonstrate a return on investment, avoid duplicating other program benefits, and promote independent living.

During Fiscal Years 2017-2019 the Agency's strategic priorities are as follows:

1. Place primary emphasis on home-delivered meals as the Agency's "signature" program.
2. Place secondary emphasis on congregate meals as a vital means of good nutrition and socialization.
3. Continue to fund demand-response transportation as a core service in each county, and work with the NCTCOG transportation planners to develop innovative solutions to regional transportation needs.
4. Assist residents of nursing facilities in identifying and accessing community-based services as less restrictive alternatives to institutional care.
5. Provide quality, comprehensive information, referral and assistance services that connect persons with disabilities and their caregivers with a broad range of federal, state, and local resources.
6. Provide a comprehensive array of benefits counseling services through outreach, group education, and individual counseling.
7. Help community-dwelling older adults access quality in-home services.
8. Advocate for higher quality care in nursing facilities.

9. Advocate for the rights of persons who live in assisted living facilities.
10. Help vulnerable Texans access vital health care services.
11. Educate older adults about practical strategies they may use to diminish their fear of falling and reduce their fall risk.
12. Assist persons with chronic disease in better managing their health conditions.
13. Identify and resolve drug interactions among vulnerable older adults.
14. Support caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's.
15. Improve home accessibility for community-dwelling older adults at risk of premature nursing home placement.
16. Help older North Central Texans and adults with disabilities in accessing affordable housing.
17. Improve care transitions for individuals at risk of potentially preventable re-hospitalizations.
18. Improve coordination between the NCTAAA and organizations serving veterans, to provide a more coordinated network of care to at-risk veterans.
19. Assist grandparents raising grandchildren.
20. Protect consumers of the agency from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
21. Offer Medical Nutrition Therapy to diabetes self-management program participants.
22. Provide volunteer opportunities that enrich volunteers' lives and expand services to vulnerable older adults.
23. Assist low-income consumers of the agency in ensuring their basic needs are met.
24. More consistently identify consumers with behavioral health needs and, to the extent possible, connect them with resources that support their mental health goals.
25. Catalogue programs that provide assistance with dental health and connect consumers in need with appropriate resources.

During the three year planning cycle the NCTAAA intends to make the following changes to its service array:

- Fund personal assistance services as a complement of or substitute for homemaker services
- Fund transportation voucher services
- Fund health screening services

In addition, it intends to seek revenue sources other than the Older Americans Act that support its mission and provide it greater flexibility to serve persons of all ages with disabilities and their family caregivers.