

Community Care for All



The five-year Community Care Plan will expand aging support services and help older New Yorkers age in place.

New York City is coming back strong and feels alive once again with plenty of community activities and celebrations. This June, we hosted the National Puerto Rican Day Parade and the NYC Pride Rally. We also had a primary election using ranked-choice voting for the first time and we educated older adults on this new election format. Earlier this month, we had the first large ticker tape parade since the pandemic to honor our essential workers who kept us safe and led the fight against the virus, including the many who serve older New Yorkers. They are the heroes in our community.

The pandemic has reminded us that we are strong, determined and can accomplish anything when we come together as a city – one that is resilient, age-inclusive, and connects to all its age diverse population.

Having said that, the Department for the Aging developed a five-year Community Care Plan dedicated to increasing older adult services and better addressing the needs of older adults to age in their homes among their loved ones and neighbors. We are very excited about this plan. Not only is it the largest new investment in 20

years, it also presents new possibilities for older adults to age in place.

With the initial \$48 million investment, this plan will include adding up to 25 additional older adult centers (OACs) or Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) in underserved communities with large aging populations to promote greater equity and meet the growing needs of our older adults. The plan will also include adding additional program staff to strengthen the existing network of services and increasing transportation options to connect older adults, especially those living in transit deserts, to services.

In years two through five of the Community Care Plan, DFTA has laid out a proposal for additional funding to enhance the transformative work done previously and create a seamless experience for older adults to age in place. With the increasing number of OACs and NORCs, as well as the anticipated overall growth in the older adult population, comes a higher demand for in-home services including case management, home-delivered meals, and homecare support that promote independence and well-being for older adults. In addition to meeting a higher demand, funding will also be added to increase the weekly hours of care support, which will help ensure the in-home support that older adults need to help delay or avoid institutionalization.

Another highlight of the plan is to allocate more resources to support our caregivers. Caregivers often struggle to balance their work and personal

lives with their caregiving responsibilities, and they might not have enough resources and community support. It is therefore important to provide guidance and respite support for caregivers to ensure they are well taken care of.

The pandemic made us realize we need to be able to adapt quickly. The final element of the Community Care Plan is to bring in more virtual programming and the required technical support. Virtual programs have proven to be a huge success with nearly 37,000 attendees, which helped keep older New Yorkers active and socially engaged during the pandemic. Subsequently, it is crucial to offer the Wi-Fi service, technological equipment, and trainings that older adults need to participate. To that, we have succeeded in obtaining an initial investment to provide 10,000 computer tablets to older adults who do not have devices. This will provide access to virtual programming, among other types of online services.

The Community Care Plan turns a new page for community care services and supports to our growing older population. It provides an opportunity for older adults to age in dignity and decency in the communities they call home. We can't wait to see this plan coming to life. Stay tuned.



**NYC Department for the Aging
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