

Creating a Cabinet for Older New Yorkers



Creating policies and programs that have a positive impact on people's lives means bringing together the experts to identify solutions, and those with the resources to make them become reality. That is exactly what Mayor Eric Adams requested when he recently launched the New York City Cabinet for Older New Yorkers. In 2005, the World Health Organization launched the Age Friendly Cities framework, with the goal of identifying and addressing barriers to the well-being and participation of older people. I am proud that we were one of the first cities to sign on to this framework and launch a public-private partnership led by Age Friendly New York City. Now, we are expanding upon this work with the first of its kind Cabinet for Older New Yorkers.

The Cabinet for Older New Yorkers is a multiagency collaborative comprised of

19 City agencies that will work together to address the needs of older adults today and in the future to ensure New York continues to be a model age-inclusive city. The Cabinet will be building upon the Community Care Plan, whose goal is to provide New Yorkers the supports and resources needed to age-in-place with dignity. The Department for the Aging will chair the Cabinet, which is composed of City agencies that cover a variety of services including housing, physical and mental health, public safety, social services, education, workforce and youth services. Members of the Cabinet will collaborate on eliminating age-related barriers and inequities in services and develop cross-agency solutions to address challenges facing older residents.

This could not have come at a more important time. By 2040, it is projected that there will be 1.8 million older adults living in the five boroughs. That is more than the population of school-aged children projected for the same period. The policies and legislative action proposed by the Cabinet will have a direct effect on how current and future residents live, because

one day -if we're lucky- all of us will enjoy the gift of long life in this great City.

I personally could not be more excited to be working with my fellow Commissioners to identify and remove the siloes that can hamper progress, and together we will create impactful and streamlined services to residents. In the words of Mayor Eric Adams, we will look for "upstream solutions that prevent or mitigate long standing problems."

We currently have successful collaborative models with many City agencies, and we will build and expand these models through the Cabinet. For instance, Department for the Aging has worked with the Department of Transportation on their Pedestrian Safety Plan to improve street safety for older adults. During the pandemic we worked with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to bring COVID-19 vaccines to communities that have had long term economic and health inequities, by bringing mobile vaccine vans to older adult centers.

The Cabinet also includes City agencies you may not think of when it comes to

aging services either, including the Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development. That is because part of creating an age-inclusive city also means creating more opportunities for our youth to learn from older New Yorkers' experiences, and for older adults to learn from our youth. Both will benefit from understanding ageism, how it manifests itself and the negative impact it has on both older adults and others.

Ageism is one of the last discriminatory acts that needs to be removed from our society, it serves no one and hurts far too many.

The Cabinet for Older New Yorkers will be meeting periodically throughout the year to prepare for the unique needs of aging New Yorkers, and we look forward to putting the recommendations into action.



**NYC Department for the Aging
Commissioner
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