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the Aging**

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AGENCY TRANSPARENCY PLAN UPDATE: 2024
February 20, 2024

DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED SINCE 2021

Section IIIA – Improving General Aging Network Transparency

- **Action: NYSOFA will provide ongoing technical assistance to the AAAs in increasing the visibility of and participation remotely and/or in person at public events held by the AAAs [Area Agencies on Aging].**
- **Action: NYSOFA will provide technical assistance to the AAAs to increase the effectiveness of and participation in their need assessments. NYSOFA will assist with identifying best practices and effective strategies that will help generate increased public participation and awareness of the needs of older adults and their caregivers.**
- **Action: NYSOFA commits to elevating the visibility of both this input process and the resulting final plan via the agency's expanded online presence and stronger partnership with the Association on Aging in New York.**

- 1) POLCO Survey: In 2023, NYSOFA conducted the state's most comprehensive statewide community assessment process for older adults (POLCO Survey). The survey received over 26,000 responses from older adults in every county of the state, assessing core age-friendly

principles, including overall community quality and belonging, availability of information, productive activities, health and wellness, community design and land use, and more. The assessment provides a dashboard for NYSOFA and each county AAA to analyze county-specific trends across demographic groups to inform community-level planning of services and supports. This data was presented to the community during nine public outreach sessions related to NYSOFA's Four-Year Plan (eight in-person events and one livestream). The data has also been incorporated into NYSOFA's published Four Year Plan (publicly available on NYSOFA's website) and is further being incorporated into the Four Year Plans developed by AAAs.

Community Assessment Objectives:

- Identify community strengths to support successful aging.
- Identify specific needs of older adults in the community.
- Estimate contributions made by older adults to the community.
- Develop estimates and projections of resident needs in the future.

Community Assessment Methods:

- Random sample of older adult households.
- Multi-contact method of mail and online survey.
- Statistically weighted data to reflect older adult population.
- 26,474 surveys completed.

2) NYSOFA's Four-Year State Plan Public Hearings: In Spring 2023, NYSOFA executive management staff provided details on NYSOFA's Four Year Plan at eight public hearings and one livestream before the plan was finalized and submitted to the federal Administration on Community Living (ACL). This plan outlines the current state of aging in New York State and NYSOFA-administered aging services and then details NYSOFA's plan for providing programs and services in the coming four years. Each session was publicized, open to community members, and co-hosted locally by community partners. Dates and locations are below.

- Central New York: May 22, 2023; Upstate Oasis
- Long Island: May 23, 2023; LGBT Network Hauppauge Center
- Western New York: May 23, 2023; Amherst Senior Center
- Southern Tier: May 24, 2023; Broome West Senior Center
- Hudson Valley: May 25, 2023; Mount Saint Mary's College Auditorium
- Finger Lakes: May 25, 2023; Monroe Community Hospital Auditorium
- New York City: May 25, 2023; The Carter Burden/Leonard Covello Older Adult Program
- North Country: May 30, 2023; Gouverneur Community Center

3) NYSOFA promoted several collaborative activities for older New Yorkers through its social media platforms and utilized its executive team to expand partnerships with community and

governmental organizations to reach audiences across the state. These activities are summarized below.

- **Senior Games in Chemung County (June 2022).** This annual event, highlighting the vibrancy and athleticism of older adults, was attended by NYSOFA Director Greg Olsen. Over 300 adults, ranging in age from 50-98, took part in three weeks of competitive athletic games. The games represent a collaborative public/private effort which includes the Area Agency on Aging in Chemung County, partners in the field of health promotion and education, sponsors, and volunteers.
- **Citizen Preparedness Courses for Older Adults (Fall 2023).** NYSOFA successfully leveraged its digital impact, community partners, and executive management staff to advance disaster preparedness training for older New Yorkers. NYSOFA identified community partners in several regions of the state to host Citizen Preparedness Courses in partnership with the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. NYSOFA tapped into its social media presence to promote and link residents to the regional offerings. All the sessions, listed below, were attended by NYSOFA executive management staff.
 - September 11, 2023 – Congregation Beth Emeth, Albany
 - September 19, 2023 – American Legion Post 787, Cicero
 - September 20, 2023 – Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Rochester
 - September 21, 2023 – Tosh Collins Senior Center, Buffalo
 - September 28, 2023 – Mount Saint Mary’s College Auditorium, Newburgh
- **Seneca Nation Panel Discussion on Multi-Generational Trauma (March 3, 2023).** NYSOFA, in conjunction with Cattaraugus County Office for Aging and the Seneca Nation, utilized social media and NYSOFA’s digital reach to promote and participate in a presentation on the important and challenging issue of multi-generational trauma from the historically forced separation of children from their families and culture in tribal communities. Director Olsen moderated a panel session on engagement and outreach with indigenous leaders, service providers and residents of Cattaraugus County, including local initiatives to overcome disparities, collaborations with the Seneca Nation Health System, community-based organizations, and more. Multiple NYSOFA staff attended the event in-person, and the event was broadcast by NYSOFA utilizing its Facebook livestreaming capabilities to reach a wider audience.

Section III B – Interconnected Web-Based Pathways for Transparency

- **Action: NYSOFA will encourage each AAA to have a link on its website to the NYSOFA website and to also include a link to the My Benefits page and to our benefit tutorial videos to encourage increased participation in programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other federal, state, and local benefits. AAAs will also be encouraged to include links to other state agencies’ websites that would provide beneficial information for older adults and their caregivers. Interconnecting the state and local web-based pathways and resources in this way will increase access to programs and services.**

- 1) NYSOFA has encouraged AAAs to have links on their websites to My Benefits, tutorials videos, and other federal, state, and local benefits. To date, more than one-half (56%) of the AAA websites include a link to NYSOFA’s website. More than a one-third (36%) include a link to My Benefits, and approximately one-third (34%) include links to other state agency websites. NYSOFA will continue these efforts in 2024 so that older adults and caregivers are able to easily access and navigate to other resources that may be of benefit to them.

Section III C – Public Reporting of Data and Open Data NY

- **Action: NYSOFA will expand the information that it posts on Open Data NY to provide aggregate data and the numbers of people served, as well as the type of services requested for programs in the following categories: HIICAP [Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program], NY Connects, LTCOP [Long Term Care Ombudsman Program], NORCs [Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities].**
- 1) NYSOFA has begun efforts to post annual reports for HIICAP, NY Connects, LTCOP, and NORCS to Open Data.
 - 2) NYSOFA established and conducted a procedure for maintaining the “Directory of Aging and Disability Community Resources” data set with annual revisions (now current as of January 2024).
 - 3) NYSOFA is establishing validation of data for the “Office for the Aging Service Expenditures: Beginning Fiscal Year 2009” dataset, which will be uploaded after the close of SFY 2023-2024.

Section III D – General Website Transparency

- **Action: NYSOFA will expand the information that it posts on NYSOFA’s website:**
 - **Provide quarterly aggregate data – numbers of people served, as well as the type of services requested from programs, including NY Connects, HIICAP and LTCOP.**
 - **Additional data sets and findings – NYSOFA is identifying additional data sets and findings for potential public reporting and posting, including best-practices and recommendations generated by local Long Term Care Planning Councils.**
- 1) NYSOFA’s 2021 transparency plan committed to posting quarterly aggregate data related to NY Connects, HIICAP, and LTCOP. NYSOFA has developed a transparency page on its website (<https://aging.ny.gov/transparency>) featuring this quarterly data, along with other reports that include NYSOFA’s 2021 transparency plan, NYSOFA’s Four Year Plan, and other important resources.

- 2) In addition to quarterly reports on the number of people served and types of services, LTCOP has publicly posted transparency reports beyond those outlined in NYSOFA's 2021 Transparency Plan. These additional reports include legislative testimony from LTCOP, annual reports, and data reports on: facility visits per month, facilities with no visits, facility coverage, and complaints. These reports are all posted at <https://aging.ny.gov/transparency#long-term-care-ombudsman-program-reports>.
- 3) LTCOP has also increased the visibility of these reports on the NYSOFA website through recent website menu changes. These website menu changes have also increased the visibility of dedicated LTCOP webpages for general information about LTCOP (<https://aging.ny.gov/long-term-care-ombudsman-program>), local LTCOP program directory information (<https://aging.ny.gov/locationsearch/ombudsmen>), volunteer opportunities (<https://aging.ny.gov/ombudsman>), and documents that providers use to fulfill notification requirements about LTCOP (available in multiple languages at <https://aging.ny.gov/ltcop-facility-resources>).
- 4) NYSOFA is collecting and reviewing information from the AAA Long-Term Care Council (LTCC) meeting minutes to determine any additional information or data sets that could be shared on the agency's website.

Section III E – Social Media Transparency

- **Action: NYSOFA will continue to offer and build on this forum along with other digital tools for direct engagement with the public including posting on social media materials shared with the aging network to help enhance their operations.**

- 1) Since 2020, NYSOFA's livestreams have had an audience reach of over 625,000 on Facebook alone, providing an opportunity for participation and live engagement with NYSOFA's Director, NYSOFA's Nutrition Program team, and guest experts from other state agencies or partner organizations. Topics include help for people coping with Alzheimer's disease, resources for family caregivers, the signs and risks of sepsis, mental health resources for older adults, supports for individuals with low vision or blindness, and more. NYSOFA has also developed public outreach strategies (including video PSAs, social media, and news media outreach) to inform the public about important benefits and programs like the Medicare Savings Program, NY Connects, Medicare counseling through HIICAP, NY Connects, SNAP/HEAP benefits, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, and more.
- 2) NYSOFA has partnered with PBS stations throughout New York State as part of a state budget initiative to highlight services and supports for older adults. This initiative includes program spots, airing on PBS stations, featuring information about NY Connects, how to utilize this program, and ways to access other assistance programs, like myBenefits.ny.org. NYSOFA additionally includes information about NY Connects on social media and in all relevant news releases.
- 3) To further enhance LTCOP's visibility and opportunities for volunteer participation, LTCOP has engaged in several multi-phased public awareness and recruitment campaigns, from

December 2021 to December 2023, generating a cumulative 47.9 million impressions and 321,000 link clicks for LTCOP information. The recruitment portion of this campaign has yielded approximately 1,400 volunteer applications.

- 4) In 2021, NYSOFA began publishing a monthly newsletter for aging services providers called *Inside NYS Aging*. The newsletter (available in the NYSOFA pressroom at <https://aging.ny.gov/pressroom>) is designed to provide news as well as toolkits and other resources to help aging services providers in their public outreach efforts. Through this mechanism, and in other forums, Area Agencies on Aging and aging network partners are also encouraged to share public outreach resources that are posted regularly to NYSOFA's social media accounts, including Facebook (which had an audience reach of 1.3 million in 2023) and YouTube (which had 3.5 million views in 2023). NYSOFA has also begun utilizing the Next Door social media app to reach individuals about resources and public engagement events in their communities, including Master Plan for Aging Town Halls, recent winter assistance fairs and more.

Section III F – Records Transfer to the NYS Archives

- **Action: NYSOFA will continue to build upon its relationship with the New York State Archives to transfer pertinent documents, including those of historical significance to the State Archives.**

- 1) NYSOFA has identified a list of pertinent documents to archive. These materials have not yet been furnished to the New York State Archives, but NYSOFA is discussing a timeline for transfer of identified documents by the end of 2024.

INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024

- 1) NYSOFA will continue to encourage AAAs to include important links to resources on their websites so that older adults and caregivers are able to easily access and navigate to other resources that may be of benefit to them.
- 2) NYSOFA will furnish pertinent documents to the New York State Archive with a timeline to transfer identified documents by the end of 2024.
- 3) NYSOFA will upload the dataset for “Office for the Aging Service Expenditures: Beginning Fiscal Year 2009” after close of SFY 2023-2024.
- 4) NYSOFA will create an additional data file on Open Data NY reflecting client characteristics. This file will consist of aggregate data for each AAA, a total of 59 records, with client characteristics such as: total clients, median age, maximum age, total ethnicity, total by race categories, total for each service.

NYSOFA has resolved a barrier to posting the data below on Open Data NY and will proceed with this work in 2024. Aggregate data and the numbers of people served, as well as the type

of services requested for programs in the following categories, will be posted on Open Data NY:

- Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) – post data on the number of Medicare beneficiaries counseled, number of Medicare beneficiaries reached through education and training, and the number of Medicare beneficiaries aided with completion of lower-income financial assistance applications.
 - NY Connects – post annual quantitative summary data reports, which would include overall numbers of individuals that contacted NY Connects and types of services being requested.
 - Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) – post annual quantitative summary data reports, which would include overall numbers of individuals that contacted LTCOP, and types of services being requested.
 - Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) programs – post aggregate data of individuals served, and services provided as well as current contractors.
- 5) Continue to promote public engagement through New York’s Master Plan for Aging, including community engagement sessions and archives of public events and relevant reports.
- 6) NYSOFA's Four Year Plan additionally includes the following items related to data and reporting for consideration:
- Continue to improve listings in the statewide NY Connects Resource Directory, a web-based directory and system that enables older adults, individuals of all ages with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals to find information on available long term services and supports; links them to resources and applications for benefits and programs such as SNAP and HEAP; and continue to share information across systems to improve quality and reduce duplication.
 - Provide data to the public regarding the value of older New Yorkers to their families, caregivers, and communities. Provide data that demonstrates the value that older New Yorkers bring to their communities and the workforce through their income, volunteerism, civic engagement, and mentorship.
 - Monitor the reporting practices that the local MIPPA partners use to document outreach events on Medicare preventive and wellness benefits to Medicare beneficiaries and provide ongoing technical assistance to increase accuracy.
 - Collect caregiver outcome data using an evidence-based assessment tool. Continue the NYSOFA and partner working caregiver surveys and sharing the data with public and private organizations to help them better understand the impact of caregiving on the workplace.

- NYSOFA is working with AAAs to ensure data integrity by prioritizing data quality improvement and management activities and providing additional training (for both AAA staff and NYSOFA monitoring staff) on data quality and the role of data in strengthening oversight activities.
 - LTCOP is also working with Regional Programs to ensure data integrity by prioritizing data quality improvement and management activities and providing additional training on data quality and the role of data in strengthening oversight activities.
- 7) NYSOFA will continue to collect LTCC meeting minutes and determine additional information and datasets that could be shared on the agency's website.