

# State Plan on Aging 2019 - 2022



## Caregiving

**GOAL: Ohio's caregivers have access to resources and services to enable them to continue to provide care for their loved ones.**

Family caregivers are the backbone of Ohio's long-term care services and supports system, providing care that, if provided by paid caregivers, would cost \$16.5 billion each year. We expect the importance of family caregivers to only grow as our aging population places increasing strain on our health care and long-term care systems.

Family caregivers are crucial in keeping older adults connected to their communities and ensuring they receive care that meets their needs and matches their values and priorities. Studies have shown that family caregivers reduce the likelihood of their loved ones being hospitalized and delay or prevent the need for more intensive paid care, like that available in a nursing home or assisted living facility.

Over the years, family sizes have gradually decreased and traditional family structures have changed, meaning that there are fewer potential family caregivers at a time when the need for them is increasing. As a result, the pool of potential caregivers is growing to include neighbors, friends and others, in addition to family members.

Despite their importance in providing the majority of care for their loved ones, family caregivers often have little training or support in their caregiver roles. Further, many caregivers juggle their family responsibilities with their work obligations and other roles, such as being a parent. Many have had to adjust their work schedules, sacrifice work performance or leave work entirely because of their caregiving responsibilities.

In addition to adults of many ages taking care of older loved ones, family caregiving also includes older adults who, for varying reasons, serve as primary caregivers to their grandchildren or other young relatives. Ohio's widespread opioid epidemic is one of the largest contributors to this trend. Many of these kinship caregivers face significant obstacles, including poverty, disability and legal barriers.

Acknowledging and investing in all caregivers' needs is a vital component of Ohio's overall approach to providing long-term services and supports. This state plan goal builds resources and supports to enable caregivers to continue to provide person-centered, informed care to their loved ones. Strategies focus on education and awareness, development of respite, resources and supports for working caregivers and kinship caregivers.

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## Caregiving *(Continued)*

### OBJECTIVES:

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT:** Provide meaningful education and heighten awareness on caregiving issues.

**WORKING CAREGIVERS:** Encourage employers' adoption of best-practice policy reforms that support caregivers in the workplace.

**KINSHIP CARE:** Support older adults in kinship situations to better care for themselves and their young loved ones.

### Dementia and the State Plan on Aging

Dementia is an area of population health that is addressed throughout the state plan. Hundreds of thousands of older Ohioans struggle with the day-to-day challenges of living with or caring for someone with dementia. While many states have a stand-alone dementia plan, Ohio includes dementia strategies in our comprehensive state plan on aging. Doing so allows us to leverage progress in other areas of the plan, such as caregiver support, access to information, aging in place and even civic engagement for a more integrated approach.