

State Plan on Aging 2019 - 2022



Civic Engagement

GOAL: Recognize and value older adults' knowledge, social and economic contributions and establish opportunities for engagement in their communities.

Today's older adults are not only living longer, they desire to remain connected and involved in their communities longer. Research has shown that older adults benefit from civic engagement in a variety of ways, from increased mental and physical health, higher levels of well-being and less isolation and cognitive decline. Further, communities benefit by using the time and talents of older adults to address key societal concerns. Senior volunteers help fill service gaps in key areas such as home and community-based supports for fellow seniors, early childhood education, medical care, public safety and more. Volunteers allow public offices to reduce workforce costs while helping to meet the needs of their community members.

Older volunteers' interests are varied and growing beyond the opportunities historically offered. One area where this is particularly evident is in intergenerational programs that promote the transmission of cultural traditions and values from older to younger generations. These programs build a sense of personal and societal identity while encouraging tolerance and service. Intergenerational programs bring together diverse groups and networks and help dispel inaccurate and negative stereotypes.

In addition to volunteering, older Ohioans also play a larger part in the state's workforce today. For a variety of reasons, more older adults are choosing to remain in the workforce or return to the workforce after traditional retirement age. However, many older workers find navigating today's job market challenging, while many employers are discouraged by misconceptions about older workers.

The Ohio Department of Aging supports older Ohioans' desire and efforts to access rewarding employment, lifelong learning and volunteer opportunities that are skill-relevant and economically viable. This state plan goal focuses on promoting and empowering older adults to work, volunteer and engage in their communities. Key partnerships will leverage the use of volunteers in high-need areas. Strategies will focus on innovation and efficiency as solutions to priority issues facing our older adults by partnering with organizations across Ohio.

OBJECTIVES:

VOLUNTEERISM: Engage more older adults and Ohioans of all ages in volunteer activities that support both older adults and community needs.

EMPLOYMENT: Expand and enhance opportunities for older workers and job seekers to participate in and contribute to Ohio's workforce.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS: Promote intergenerational opportunities that benefit participants both personally and professionally.