

GECAC AREA AGENCY on AGING

**Greater Erie Community Action Committee
(GECAC)
2024-2028 Local Area Plan Aging Services
Erie County, Pennsylvania**



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GREATER ERIE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

Helping People. Changing Lives.



**Planning Service Area #01
Erie County, PA**

October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2028

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Executive Summary

This plan for aging services in Erie County, Pennsylvania, through 2028 builds upon the experience and knowledge of GECAC as the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Erie County since 1974. As mandated under the federal *Older Americans Act*, GECAC AAA is the focal point in the community for seniors and caregivers to understand the services available to them, set forth in Pennsylvania Act 70. Through these state and federal laws, AAAs are mandated to identify and maximize resources and develop new methods of partnering and coordinating services with other providers and stakeholders while advocating for the needs of senior citizens.

GECAC strategically leverages programs, but also relies upon supportive and collaborative local community-based organizations and a robust network of private service providers, faith-based entities, paid and unpaid caregivers, non-profits, public funding, and individuals willing to volunteer. The strength of this network of services is community coordination, to provide continuous continuity of care options for older adults.

Active participation in local (Independent Council on Aging of Erie), state (PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging -P4A), and national organizations (USAging) who work together to address issues and policies that relate to and impact senior citizens, including National Council on Aging (NCOA); American Society on Aging (ASA); AARP; Alzheimer's Association, National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) and many others.

These organizations help to ensure a professional effort in meeting the needs of senior citizens throughout the service area. This coordinated network in Erie includes County and City of Erie, the Elder Abuse Task Force, hospitals, Long Term care, local law enforcement and the judicial system. **The primary challenge these systems face is the constant lack of enough resources to meet the ever-increasing service demands due to increasing number of older adults and those in need.**

Community Outreach & Needs Assessment

The Erie County AAA Plan uses responses gathered through seven community listening sessions held in fall 2023 for the **PA's Master Plan for Older Adults (*Aging Our Way*)**, as well as the input from two local public hearings held in February 2024. The areas of need most expressed by older adults include Property and School tax relief, simplification of accessing health and social services, nutrition, housing and knowing about locally available activities in which older adults

can participate. This 2024-2028 plan focuses on community coordination to provide services to seniors, thus aligning with state and federal efforts.

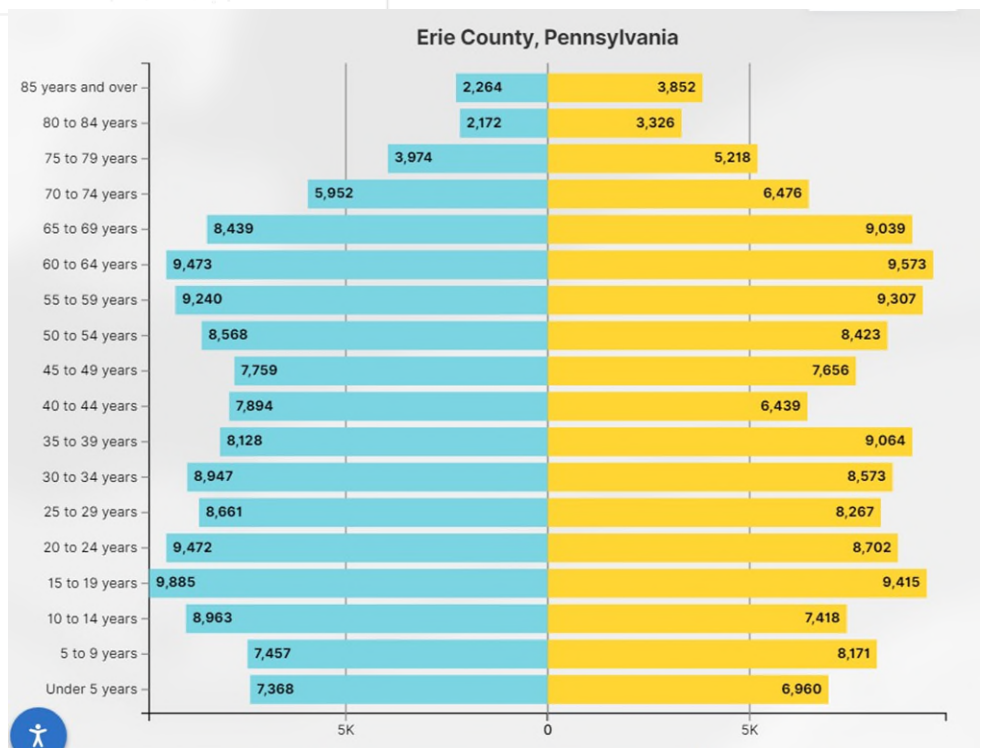
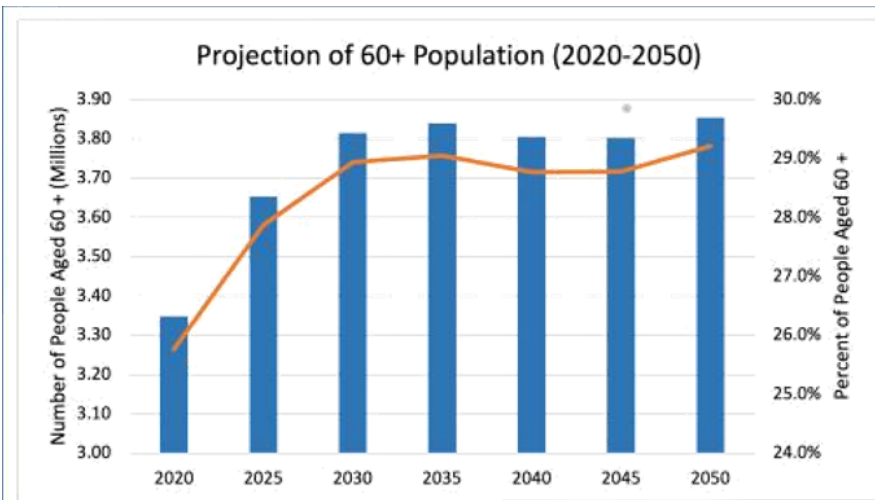
To most effectively serve the more than 70,000 older adults age 60 and better in Erie County, GECAC AAA proposes to focus on **prevention** through awareness, opportunities, education and evidence-based programs, and also **response** to crisis, and **service provision** to the neediest of the needy including impoverished, vulnerable and disenfranchised senior population.

Needs Assessment includes data from US census Erie County, PA Profile:

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Erie County, Pennsylvania?g=050XX00US42049](https://data.census.gov/profile/Erie%20County,%20Pennsylvania?g=050XX00US42049)

and also, PA State Data Prepared by the Pennsylvania State Data Center (PASDC)

FIPS	Geography	Total Population	60 years and over		60 to 84 years		85 years and over	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
000	Pennsylvania	12,964,056	3,381,658	26.1%	3,089,238	23.8%	292,420	2.3%
049	Erie County	269,011	70,693	26.3%	64,828	24.1%	5,865	2.2%



GECAC local Plan for 2024-2028 meets these Key topic Areas:

- **Older Americans Act Core Programs**
- **Prevent Social Isolation and access technology for information and assistance**
- **Equity through individual preferences and supportive cultural experiences including those living with HIV/AIDS**
- **Access to Home and Community Based services and coordination to navigate those services.**
- **Support for Caregiving and expanding caregivers .**

Under those key topic areas GECAC AAA Erie developed these overall goals:

Goal 1: GECAC AAA will coordinate community-based services for individuals through partnerships and written Memorandums of Understanding. We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone and is understandable by all, ensure timely and streamlined connection to assistance with any need, and resolve the challenging problems that older adults face in their daily lives.

Goal 2 : GECAC AAA will provide services to older adults through high quality care management to identify needs and assist with meeting those needs including core services such as nutrition, caregiver supports, senior community centers and protective services.

Goal 3: GECAC AAA will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socioeconomic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

Goal 4: GECAC AAA will promote Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.

Goal 5: Strengthen the direct care workforce and provide further support for care partners by cultivating better recruitment and support of retired older adults, new graduates and foreign-born populations to be informed, educated and connected to exceptional care giving experiences for older adults.

Communication and Information: Older Pennsylvanians and their caregivers know where to go to receive immediate, accurate information, warm referrals, help in navigating available resources, and ongoing support. Information reaches everyone, can be understood by anyone, and is offered in different forms to

meet the abilities, preferences, and needs of older Pennsylvanians. Older adults who choose to use technology can confidently use their favorite devices and securely access widespread broadband.

Respect and Social Inclusion: Pennsylvania is characterized by inclusivity and appreciation for the contributions, wisdom, and experiences of older adults. Stereotypes and prejudices will be actively challenged, ensuring that older Pennsylvanians of all backgrounds are valued members of their communities, free from discrimination based on age, ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other characteristics.

Housing: Older adults live where they choose, in well-maintained structures, universally functional quarters, in safe neighborhoods, and hospitable communities. Alternative options and adaptations are readily available to meet changing needs and desires for housing. Older adults can choose a housing option that includes appropriate housing design and close proximity to services and amenities such as grocery stores, libraries, and community centers. Affordable options are readily available to give older adults peace of mind and financial security.

Social Participation: A thriving cultural scene offers older Pennsylvanians numerous opportunities for social engagement and recreation. Essential community spaces host workshops, art exhibitions, games, and other options for socialization with people of the same and different ages and backgrounds. These opportunities help counter the loneliness and social isolation many older adults experience as part of their daily lives.

Health and Community Supports: Comprehensive, holistic healthcare services promote physical, behavioral, financial, social, and emotional wellness, prevention, and early intervention. The network of public and private providers offers high-quality community supports and health services that are affordable and readily available. Older adults and caregivers are informed and empowered to heal and thrive in the manner that they choose, that best suits their preferences and circumstances.



Agency Overview

Mission Statement, Vision, and Values

GECAC AAA Mission

To serve the physical, social, and emotional needs of the senior citizens of Erie County by providing various informal and formal supports in a cost-effective manner, enabling seniors to make informed choices, to remain independent and to be involved in the community. We believe that all seniors have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to maintain their chosen lifestyle in the least restrictive environment possible.

Vision

We believe that seniors should have a choice of their desired environment and be treated with respect and dignity. We strive for all seniors to have adequate access to the services and supports needed to meet their needs, including physical, mental, and social, when necessary, through the work of the AAA or other organization. We are committed to eliminating the neglect, abuse and exploitation of seniors.

Values

- We believe that services should be focused on consumers' needs and choices, that they should be treated with dignity and respect to allow person centered choice. We believe in cooperation and collaboration with other providers. We have a commitment and dedication to what we do.
- Consumers should not be shamed for needing help. We maintain cultural awareness and provide an equal opportunity for services. We do not discriminate or condone discrimination. We believe that seniors should not be neglected, abused, nor exploited.
- Our workers don't impose their values or judgments on consumers. We maintain confidentiality; we do not take advantage of our authority. We have a proactive approach to services and provide proactive outreach and preventative services to assist individuals avoid crisis situations. We do not turn clients away without trying to make a referral or help.

Description of the AAA

In 1974, the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) was designated as the local agency to manage the Erie County Area Agency on Aging in Pennsylvania Planning Service Area (PSA) #01. GECAC is also Erie County's designated Community Action Agency, formed in 1965. Services are provided through operational divisions offering coordinated assistance to

those in need across the continuum of ages. A combination of local, state and federal public and private monies are utilized to fund programs and activities.

GECAC Area Agency on Aging for Erie County is regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This department mandates program descriptions, policy and procedure manuals. Annual operational plans, monthly reports and various program audits are required to ensure uniform compliance with PDA regulations. In addition, GECAC, through Aging Well PA, coordinates Functional Eligibility Determination for Medical Assistance through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services / Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) to determine eligibility and assist access to Medicaid Long Term Care Services and Supports.

Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC)

Mission: The Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) will eliminate poverty in Erie County through empowerment, education and community partnership.

Vision: Empowering the community to foster a better life for all.

Commitment to Inclusion: We recognize that our employees, customers, partners, and volunteers are diverse not only in gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and age but also in life experiences, thoughts, and ideas. We value diversity and respect inclusion through our words and actions.

The Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) leverages base funding through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and its mandated tripartite Board of Directors to develop local plans and programs in response to the needs of Erie County, PA. This coordination focuses on the needs of the Erie County residents and establishes programs and supports to bring a comprehensive network of services and information to sustain older adults and their caregivers.

The GECAC Board of Directors maintains legal jurisdiction concerning personnel, fiscal accountability and overall operation of the GECAC Erie County Area Agency on Aging, with day-to-day operations managed by the Chief Executive Officer and executive management staff of the agency. In addition, the GECAC Erie County Area Agency on Aging has an independent Advisory Board, which meets on a regular basis. Advisory Board members include

representatives from local government, consumers, a member of the GECAC Board of Directors, and other community-based agencies.

The GECAC Erie County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is designed to secure and encourage maximum independence and dignity for persons capable of self-care, with appropriate supportive services for those less functional. GECAC AAA provides a continuum of community-based care services for individuals in the greatest social and economic need. The AAA informs each consumer of the services and programmatic processes that meet their needs, helps identify problematic issues, and offers suggestions and guidance to other supportive entities, such as PA Independent Enrollment Broker (PAIEB), LINK to Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC), LIFE NW PA, and other community partners to ensure appropriate service.

The strength of this network of services is **community coordination**, to provide continuous continuity of care options for our consumers. The GECAC Area Agency on Aging for Erie County actively participates in local (Independent Council on Aging of Erie), state (PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging -P4A), and national organizations (USAgging) who work together to address issues and policies that relate to and impact senior citizens, including National Council on Aging (NCOA); American Society on Aging (ASA); AARP; National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) and others.

These organizations help to ensure a professional effort in meeting the needs of senior citizens throughout the service area. This coordinated network in Erie includes the Erie County Department of Human Services, the Erie County Elder Abuse Task Force; periodic meetings with area hospital social services departments; nursing and other long term care facilities; and coordinated activities with the local law enforcement entities and the judicial system. The primary challenge of these current systems is the constant lack of appropriate resources to meet the ever-increasing service demands due to increasing number of older adults and those in need.



<https://www.gecac.org/work/aging>

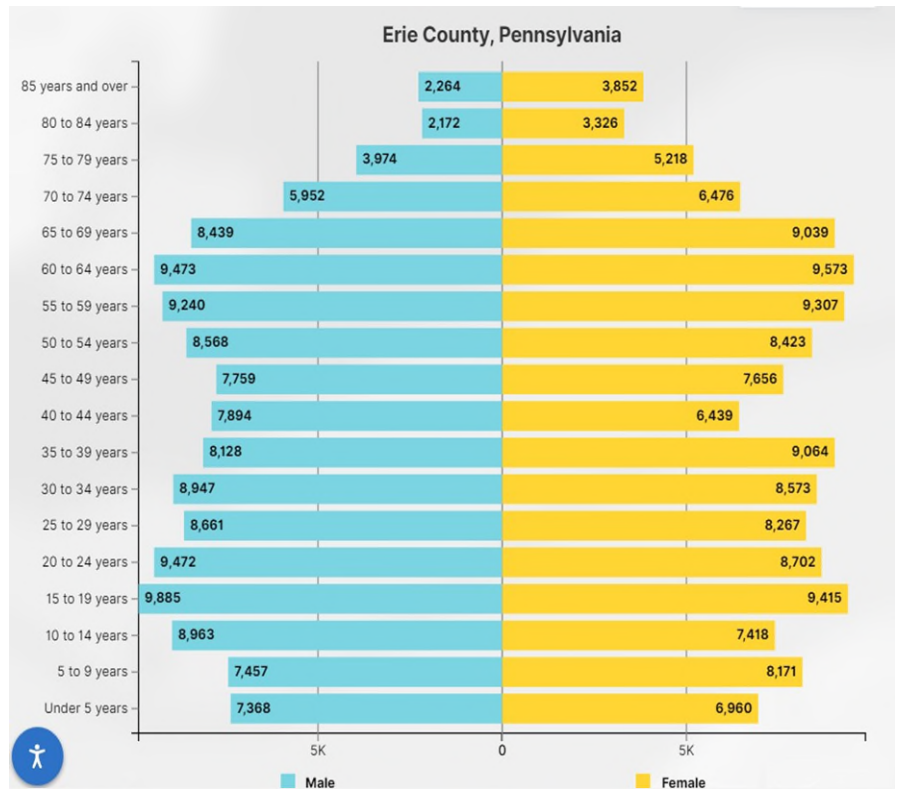
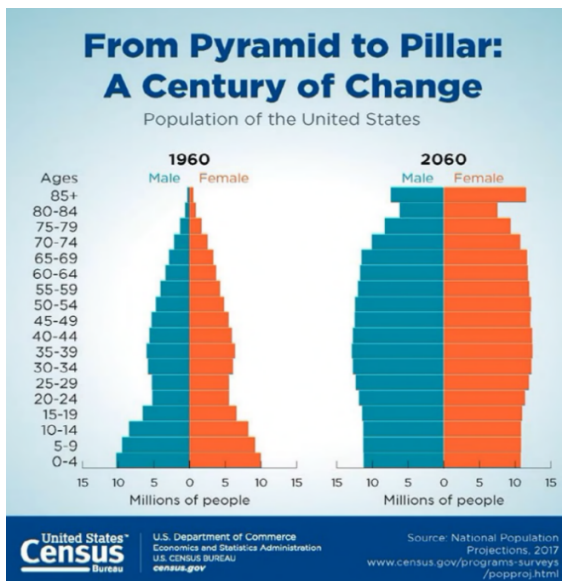
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Population pyramids tell the story

Erie County’s population is changing drastically to an older age populous due to a decreasing base of younger generations. This is the story of the state and the nation. As health care advances progress, including vaccinations, medical science and genomics, the longevity has continued to expand, meaning that more and more people have several decades of life experiences and more who have a century of life experience. This expansion of the wisest, most experienced of those amongst us, will continue in the US and Erie County through 2030.



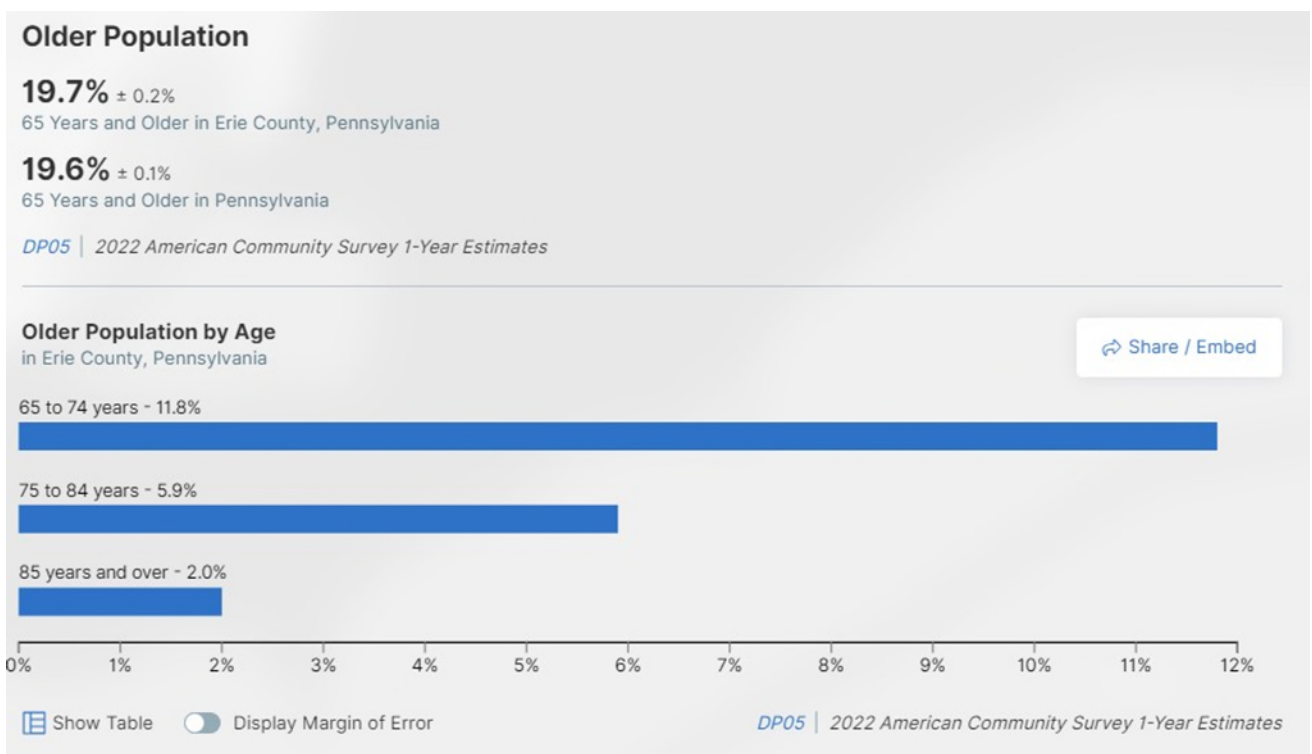
	2010 (baseline)	2020
Total Persons residing in Erie County	280,766	269,728
• persons age 60 and older	56,408	69,636
• persons age 65 and older	40,824	50,250
• age 75 and older	14,991	21,207

To address the ramifications of this dramatic change, Pennsylvania initiated a 10-year plan, entitled ***Aging Our Way***, released February 2024 that includes 156 tactics to meet the 8 domains of age-friendly society.

General Description

Erie County is located in northwestern Pennsylvania on the south shore of Lake Erie. The state of New York is its eastern boundary, and the state of Ohio is its western boundary. Crawford County, Pennsylvania lies to the south. The county has a total land area of 799 square miles. Forestland constitutes 36.5 percent of the land area, with crop and pastureland composing 26.8 and 7.7 percent respectively.

According to the 2020 US Census, Erie County's population is 269,728, showing that the county population has declined from the 2000 Census population of 280,843. Approximately eighty-one percent (81.2%) of the area's population is urban, residing chiefly in and around the city of Erie and a small urban cohort (6,208) in the city of Corry in southeastern Erie County. The 2019 estimates reported the City of Erie's population is 95,508, approximately 35.4% of the county population.



Out migration from the city to surrounding areas in the county has continued. The city of Erie has lost 15.9% of its population since 1980. The rest of Erie County has absorbed much of this loss. The general regional trend is that people are moving from the City of Erie to surrounding communities. This trend is taking away green space disproportionately with overall population growth.

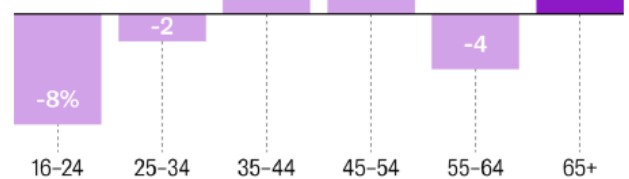
The population shift has resulted in inequities in tax collection and distribution consistent with sprawl. Ever-increasing taxes in the outlying areas support road, infrastructure and public safety network for a dispersed population. Meanwhile, the city, which serves the region as the employment, social, educational, cultural, social services and health care core of the region, is forced to rely on a diminishing tax base to support its population. Poverty and economic distress are concentrated in the city as a result.

The shrinking center city has a higher concentration of poor and senior citizens. This presents a challenge for the caregivers and the organizations that provide supportive services. A thriving community must include independence, dignity and health and well-being for our older residents. The economic situation of older adults, 50% of whom have zero in retirement savings beyond Social Security, means that older adults must increasingly look to supplement that Social Security income to obtain basic needs, food clothing and shelter.

The New Age of Aging

As the data here shows, people who are 65 or older now represent the fastest-growing segment of the labor force—by far. Companies will need to think in creative new ways about how to engage these workers and make the most of what they have to offer.

Labor-force growth, by age group, 2022-2032



Nearly 25% of seniors are still working in order to afford medicine, rent and food. Therefore, these seniors, mostly women, require job training and placement.

Another trend is the increase number of grandparents caring for grandchildren. The number of grandparents living with their own grandchildren under age 18 is 5,209 (increased from 4,996 in 2010).

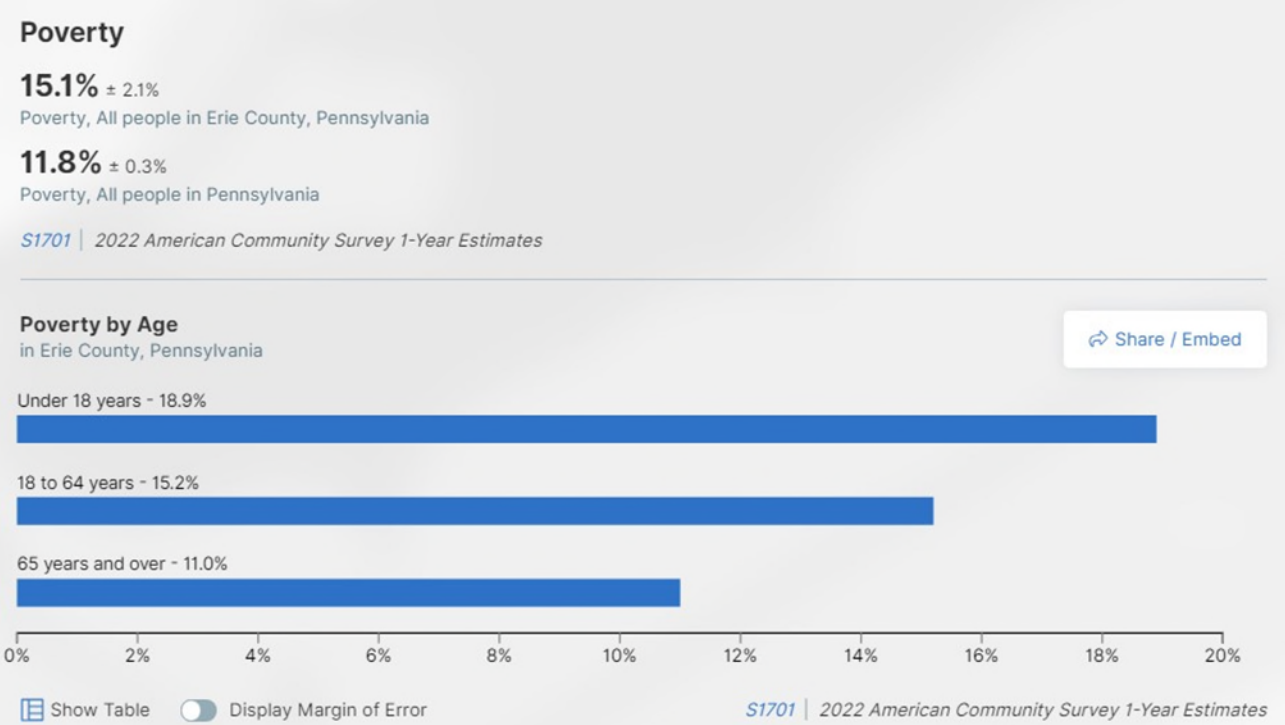
Data shows a continued disturbing trend in Erie County. The age cohorts between 0 and 34 have lost members since 1990. In a healthy community these cohorts would be expanding not contracting. The population loss in the 20 to 34 age group is especially troubling. This age group represents the future, so if it is shrinking, so will the overall population. Worse this age group represents the children of the still healthy 35-59 cohort. If the children have left the area the parents who have the resources will follow as they

reach retirement age to be near the children and grandchildren. **This will leave the Erie area population older, poorer and sicker.**

Poverty is very much a reality for young and old in Erie County. Over 43,438 residents of Erie County, or 15.3%, are below poverty standard. Only 8.6% of those over age 65 are below the poverty standard. In the City of Erie, the overall poverty rate is 26.4% and 14.3% for those over age 65. (B17001 ACS 2018). The poverty line is the level of income below which one cannot afford to purchase all the resources one requires to live. People who have an income below the poverty line have no discretionary disposable income, by definition.

GECAC has traditionally served those Erie seniors in the lower economic brackets. Twenty-five percent of the seniors responding to a survey by GECAC AAA reported household incomes below the poverty level. Fifty-two percent reported incomes below 150% of the poverty level. This is also evidenced by the low percentage of seniors who are cost sharing for services. Currently, less than 20% of all GECAC AAA consumers cost share for services.

Public Assistance / Medicaid enrollments have stayed steady in Erie County, changing only by tenths of percentages from month to month. **Erie County ranks second in the state for persons receiving cash assistance** as reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).



Home and Community Based Housing

Housing Age:

41.9% of Erie City housing stock (DP 04 Selected Housing Characteristics 20102014) is pre-WWII and as such needs more maintenance. Large numbers of these homes have little or no insulation as was the practice in those times. These inner-city homes are overwhelmingly occupied by low-income residents who have few resources to maintain or update their dwellings, including seniors. The cost to heat the homes puts a real strain on already tight budgets. Utility Assistance and Neighbor for Neighbor help to stabilize these families during the cold winter months, more needs to be done to help families conserve energy, preserve financial resources and have healthier and safer environments for their families.

Housing: Homeowners

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 81,679 owner occupied homes in Erie County area in 2020. Erie County saw only a 0.34 % change in occupied homes between 2000 and 2020. Comparatively, the Pennsylvania increase in owner occupied homes was 1.65 %.

Erie County wages and income per capita have been lackluster, and real income per capita (adjusted for inflation) actually fell a bit. Erieites are relying more and more on payments from governments for their income. Worst of all, those at the bottom end of the economic spectrum continue to struggle as poverty rates have risen and self-sufficiency rates have fallen. This puts pressure on all phases of the population, especially the lowest income brackets.

Population: Citizenship Status

The Erie area has a total of 5,847 non-citizens, or 2.08 % of the total population, in contrast to the Pennsylvania average of 2.9 % of the population being non-citizens and the national average of 7.1 % being non-citizens.

Long Term Institutional Care

The number of persons residing in Long Term Care Nursing Facilities in 2024 was 2,144, which is near the overall Erie County capacity of 2,144 nursing home beds in 18 licensed facilities. Additionally, Erie County has Personal Care Boarding homes for older adults, with a maximum capacity of 1,457 beds. Continuing Care Retirement Communities, Senior Living Communities

and other entities also abound in the Erie area to provide a continuum of care for seniors from independent living apartments, to supported care, personal care, assisted living, rehabilitative and nursing facilities. In a AAA Consumer Survey, respondents overwhelmingly said that there was "adequate choice of long-term care facilities in Erie County" as 78% agreed with this statement. Dementia/ Alzheimer beds however, are scarce and quickly becoming in demand as consumers live longer and the incidence of these afflictions become more prevalent.

*The local county operated nursing facility 2010 strategic plan indicates:
 "About 17 percent of long-stay residents have a primary diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia, or are in a special program for individuals with behavioral problems..." and
 "There are a number of statistics and leading indicators that the number of individuals with Alzheimer's disease will grow."*

Nursing (N) and Personal Care Home (PCH) Alzheimer / Dementia Facilities in Erie, PA

PA Soldiers and Sailors Home (N)
Pleasant Ridge Manor West (N)
Forest View (N)
LECOM Senior Living Center (N)
LECOM at Presque Isle (N)

St. Mary's at Asbury (N)
Bickford of Presque Isle Bay (PCH)
Sarah Reed (N)
Greenfield Western Reserve (N)
Walnut Creek Health and Rehab. (N)

Long Term Care Skilled Nursing Facilities:

BALL PAVILION	85
CORRY MANOR	121
EDINBORO MANOR	121
LECOM AT ELMWOOD GARDENS	51
FAIRVIEW MANOR	121
FORESTVIEW	80
LECOM AT PRESQUE ISLE	135
LECOM AT VILLAGE SQUARE	110
MANCHESTER COMMONS OF PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE	78
LECOM SENIOR LIVING	144
PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HOME	107
PLEASANT RIDGE MANOR WEST	300
SAINT MARY'S AT ASBURY RIDGE	80
NIGHTINGALE	139
SARAH REED SENIOR LIVING	106
TWINBROOK HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	118
WALNUT CREEK HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	115
GREENFIELD HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	135
Total Nursing Facility Census Erie County	1,961

Besides Nursing Facilities and Institutional Care there are multiple rehab and acute care facilities including: **St Vincent Health System/Allegheny Health Network**, , **UPMC-Hamot, Millcreek Community/LECOM, Erie Veterans Medical Center** and **Corry Hospitals**. Rehabilitation facilities include **Encompass Health, LECOM-at Presque Isle** and **Select Specialty**, along with the Transitional Care Unit at Millcreek Community Hospital.

Health Care: Persons Receiving Medicare

The total number of persons receiving Medicare is 60,657, with 29,082 in original Medicare, and 31,575 in Medicare Advantage and Other Plans. A large number of individuals in our society are aware that persons over 65 years of age receive Medicare; however, many of them are unaware that disabled persons also receive Medicare benefits.

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Medicare County Enrollment Report, 2012.

Public Transportation

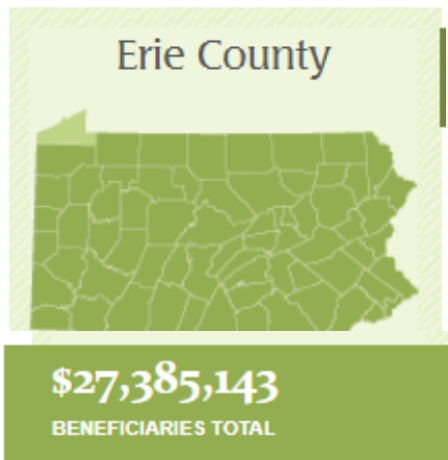
The "E", the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA) serves the city of Erie and the contiguous suburban areas. Although bus transportation is relatively inexpensive, busses do not provide the needed flexibility in routing and scheduling. The EMTA maintains a traditional, radial bus system with all routes running through downtown Erie. Only four (4) bus routes travel to communities in the county.

The LIFT is Erie County paratransit system. The mission is to provide integrated mobility solutions to safely connect people to places and contribute to the region's economic and environmental sustainability.

Different programs offered for LIFT funding include the Senior Citizen Program, Rural Transportation Program for Persons with Disabilities, Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), and Customers with Disabilities. Please note, for some programs, your medical condition must be verified by a professional. The application for each program, as well as a list of professionals who can verify your condition can be found at <https://ride-the-e.com/paratransit-service/> .

Quality Management

In Erie County, GECAC Area Agency on Aging provides many services. Services beginning with a referral or gathering information by contacting **GECAC Senior Helpline at 459-4581, ext. 400 or the gecac.org website**. Callers receive person centered counseling about the services provided. One of the services provided are the **Senior Community Centers**. GECAC operates 7 SCC throughout Erie County and supports 2 subcontracted centers (JFK and Mercy Hilltop). Our Senior Center Directors are very knowledgeable staff with a wealth of information, including Medicare counseling through PA-MEDI. We all know there are lots of choices for health insurance and this can be very confusing. Our knowledgeable staff will assist you and walk you through your individual choices.



There is also the **PA Property Tax/Rent Rebate** and in the summer months, the **Senior Farmer's Market Voucher Nutrition Program**. One of the most common needs expressed from older adults in Erie County was property tax / school tax relief. Almost half of the \$26 million dollars that benefit Erie County older adults from the PA Lottery goes towards Property Tax and Rent Rebates (PTRR). More than 17,000 of the 70,000 Erie County adults age 60 and better will benefit from PTRR.

PA Lottery benefits by County:

<https://www.palottery.state.pa.us/Benefits-Info/Benefits-Info.aspx>

Senior nutrition is the primary component of the Older Americans Act. Senior Community Centers provide 30,000+ **congregate meals** each year in Erie County to more than 1,000+ older adults at the 9 centers along with socialization/recreation activities and workshops. One of our goals is to keep seniors active so they may stay in their home as long as possible in the least restrictive environment.

Erie				
OPTIONS Enrolled & Served Consumers-All Service Categories				
	Enrolled	Service Orders	Service Deliveries	% Served (Service Deliveries/Enrolled)
Erie	745	533	519	69.7%
Statewide	46,000	41,105	37,839	82.3%

GECAC AAA **In-Home Services** include more than 100,000+ **Home Delivered Meals** delivered directly to the homes of older adults in Erie County. The meals are either prepared here at GECAC's Central Office or at various Senior Centers throughout Erie County. GECAC provides more than \$2 million of in-home services such as **Personal Care, Home Support, Home Health** and **Personal Safety** provided through the OPTIONS Program. Our **OPTIONS** Program provides care management to more than 1,300+ to assess need and coordinate responding services. A **personal care** attendant may come into the home and help with bathing and dressing. **Home Health** can help with medication set up, equipment and supplies. For personal safety, there is a **Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)** for a senior to get immediate help with the push of a button. This helps offer peace of mind, not only to the senior, but to the family and out of town relatives as well.

Other AAA programs are **Domiciliary (Dom) Care, Caregiver Support (CSP), Home PLUS** and **Older Adult Protective Services (OAPS)**.

Dom Care is an alternative to assisted living in a family home where room, board and support services are provided at lower cost. The **CSP** program offers reimbursement for caregivers of older adults or grandparents caring for grandchildren. **Home PLUS** provides staff on-site at local Housing Authority of City of Erie hi rises Friendship Apts. and Schmid Towers, two buildings operated and funded by Housing Authority of City of Erie. Remember to call the **Senior Hotline at (814) 459-4581, ext. 400** for help.

OAPS handles issues such as emotional and physical *abuse, neglect, abandonment* and *exploitation*. Unfortunately, these Reports of Need have increased about 10% nearly every year since 2017. From 365 reports in 2017 to now in 2023 where GECAC AAA receives almost 2,000 reports of older adults in need. GECAC takes **Adult Protective Service (APS)** reports 24 hours a day / 365 days a year. Our staff are trained specialists and will meet face to face with older adults age 60 or better who are in need. You can call GECAC (814) 459-4581 or (814) 451-1520 (after hours) or the Statewide Senior Hotline 1-800-490-8505 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to make a report of abuse.

GECAC Area Agency on Aging also has many volunteer opportunities for older adults. There is the **Ombudsman** program where you could be an advocate **for** residents of Long-Term Living Facilities who have any issues.

The **Foster Grandparent Program** helps low-income older adults age 55 or better placed in a day care or school setting that mentor and tutor children. They receive training and orientation with a \$4 an hour stipend. This is a win-win for the older adults and the children.

GECAC AAA also operates the **Retired Senior Volunteer Program** which does not have income restrictions. We currently have over 400 volunteers. There are a number of locations and volunteers can give us as much of their time as they have available.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Outcome Measures

Goals

Goal 1: Health and Community Supports: Comprehensive, holistic healthcare services promote physical, behavioral, financial, social, and emotional wellness, prevention, and early intervention. The network of public and private providers offers high-quality community supports and health services that are affordable and readily available. Older adults and caregivers are informed and empowered to heal and thrive in the manner that they choose, that best suits their preferences and circumstances.

Goal 2: Social Participation: A thriving cultural scene offers older Pennsylvanians numerous opportunities for social engagement and recreation. Essential community spaces host workshops, art exhibitions, games, and other options for socialization with people of the same and different ages and backgrounds. These opportunities help counter the loneliness and social isolation many older adults experience as part of their daily lives.

Goal 3: Respect and Social Inclusion: Pennsylvania is characterized by inclusivity and appreciation for the contributions, wisdom, and experiences of older adults. Stereotypes and prejudices will be actively challenged, ensuring that older Pennsylvanians of all backgrounds are valued members of their communities, free from discrimination based on age, ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other characteristics.

Goal 4: Communication and Information: Older Pennsylvanians and their caregivers know where to go to receive immediate, accurate information, warm referrals, help in navigating available resources, and ongoing support. Information reaches everyone, can be understood by anyone, and is offered in different forms to meet the abilities, preferences, and needs of older Pennsylvanians. Older adults who choose to use technology can confidently use their favorite devices and securely access widespread broadband.

Goal 5: Housing: Older adults live where they choose, in well-maintained structures, universally functional quarters, in safe neighborhoods, and hospitable communities. Alternative options and adaptations are readily available to meet changing needs and desires for housing. Older adults can choose a housing option that includes appropriate housing design and close proximity to services and amenities such as grocery stores, libraries, and community centers. Affordable options are readily availability to give older adults peace of mind and financial security.

Objectives & Strategies

Goal 1: GECAC AAA will coordinate community-based services for individuals through partnerships and written Memorandums of Understanding. We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone and is understandable by all, ensure timely and streamlined connection to assistance with any need, and resolve the challenging problems that older adults face in their daily lives.

- **Objective 1.1: Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network. And enable cross system referrals for community-based responses to the needs of older adults efficiently and expeditiously**

- Track the community support given to all intake and referral callers, including intervention provided and responsible agency.

- **Objective 1.2: Educating the public**

- Expand the health education of older adults through evidenced based preventative workshops and nutritional benefits through home delivered meals and congregate meals, as well as nutritional benefits to older adults

- Promote virtual engagement for older adults using technology and innovation.

Goal 2 : GECAC AAA will provide services to older adults through high quality care management to identify needs and assist with meeting those needs including core services such as nutrition, caregiver supports, senior community centers and protective services.

- **Objective 2.1: Combatting social isolation through evidence-based research and building community.**

- Improve services for older adults and the ability to advocate for them by using evidence-informed planning, committing to data integrity and being accountable for results.

- **Objective 2.2: Tap the resource of our active older adults by enhancing the time and talents of the nearly 70,000 adults over the age of 60 in Erie County and engage them into the community through meaningful and purposeful volunteer opportunities that help support the workforce to meet the needs of those with the greatest economic and social needs.**

- Provide supports to recruit more than 500 older adults in Erie to be involved in the community by creating a volunteer opportunity and placing an older adult into the opportunity to assist with children's education, local nonprofits and other entities beneficial to the community.

- **Objective 2.3: Advocate for the rights of older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect.**

- Ensure the welfare of the nearly 70,000 older adults including supports from every aspect of our community by provide a safety net for those in crisis and investigating concerns.
- Enhance the list of Erie area stakeholders in the Elder Abuse Taskforce There are many whose mission is focused on the medical physical health, many on the mental and spiritual health and still many others that are focused on the social health and quality of life for older adults. GECAC AAA will lead a community wide effort to ensure safety for older adults

Goal 3: GECAC AAA will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of

ability; socioeconomic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.

- **Objective 3.1: Ensure OAA programs are reaching diverse consumers, minorities, Limited English Proficient (LEP), socially isolated older adults, LGBTQ+ & those living with HIV/AIDS or a disability**
 - Work with local community partners to advance the goals and objectives of diversity and inclusion.
- **Objective 3.2: Promoting cultural tailored meals and events to celebrate diverse communities.**
 - Design nutritional programs that incorporate preferences of individuals by offering cultural and medical appropriate choices.

Goal 4: GECAC AAA will promote home and community based services to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.

Objective 4.1: Provide counseling and education of services available as evidenced by the number receiving Person Centered Counseling, Health Risk Assessment, Level of Care to document their awareness of the long-term services and supports available to them in the community and enable them to make an informed decision on how their needs are met, how they are paid for and how they are provided.

- In collaboration with ADRC LINK SA1, and other community partners to increase awareness of programs and community referrals.
- Develop a community standard network /referral system enhancing current local collaborations. Including incorporation of PA Navigate and Health Information Exchange to. Streamline and ease access to supports

Objective 4.2: Coordinate with Housing efforts so Older adults live where they choose, in safe structures, universally functional quarters, in neighborhoods, and age friendly communities. Alternatives and adaptations are readily available to meet changing needs and desires for housing. Older adults can choose a housing option that includes accessible design and close proximity to services and amenities such as grocery stores, libraries, and community centers. Affordable options are readily availability to give older adults peace of mind and financial security.

- Expand models that support aging in community by supporting the multi-discipline coordination living communities of various kinds to ensure that older adults at various income levels have options for downsizing or rightsizing their housing

Goal 5: GECAC AAA will strengthen the direct care workforce and provide further support for care partners by cultivating better recruitment and support of retired older adults , new graduates and foreign-born populations to be informed educated and connected to exceptional care giving experiences for older adults.

- **Objective 5.1: Supporting caregivers and care partners**
 - Expanding Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) to those interested in caregiving, those informal caregivers and existing Direct Care Workforce

Outcome Measures

Definition and description of outcome measures and target dates identified under each goal, objective and strategy.

<p>Goal 1: GECAC AAA will coordinate community-based services for individuals through partnerships and written Memorandums of Understanding. We will lead an extensive, coordinated network of community and academic partners to raise public awareness of services for older adults, provide information that reaches everyone and is understandable by all, ensure timely and streamlined connection to assistance with any need, and resolve the challenging problems that older adults face in their daily lives.</p>		
<p>Objective 1.1: Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network. And enable cross system referrals for community-based responses to the needs of older adults efficiently and expeditiously</p>		
<p>Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:</p>	<p>Performance Measure</p>	<p>Target Date</p>
<p>Track the community support given to all intake and referral callers, including intervention provided and responsible agency.</p>	<p>Of the estimated 5,000 inquiries made of the Erie County AAA each year, at least 30% (1,500) will be given successful counseling and education of services and supports available to them in the community</p>	<p>Complete end of each program year in June 2025-2028</p>
<p>Objective 1.2: Educating the public</p>		
<p>Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:</p>	<p>Performance Measure</p>	<p>Target Date</p>
<p>Expand the health education of older adults through evidenced based preventative workshops and nutritional benefits through home delivered meals and congregate meals, as well as nutritional benefits to older adults</p>	<p>At least 500 older adults each year complete an evidenced based or health information session, and at least 1,000 older adults gain social supports and increased connectedness as documented by AAA staff</p>	<p>Measured quarterly through 2028.</p>
<p>Promote virtual engagement for older adults using technology and innovation.</p>	<p>Monthly event and outreach initiated to promote virtual interactions and education.</p>	<p>Implementation begins 2024 and complete by end program year 2028.</p>

Goal 2: **Social Participation:** A thriving cultural scene offers older Pennsylvanians numerous opportunities for social engagement and recreation. Essential community spaces host workshops, art exhibitions, games, and other options for socialization with people of the same and different ages and backgrounds. These opportunities help counter the loneliness and social isolation many older adults experience as part of their daily lives.

Goal 2: GECAC AAA will provide services to older adults through high quality care management to identify needs and assist with meeting those needs including core services such as nutrition, caregiver supports, senior community centers and protective services.		
Objective 2.1: Combatting social isolation through evidence-based research and building community		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Performance Measure	Target Date
Improve services for older adults and the ability to advocate for them by using evidence-informed planning, committing to data integrity and being accountable for results.	Of the nearly 70,000 persons age 60 years and older in Erie County, at least 1,500 will be provided AAA service which enables them to remain independent in home and community-based setting for at least 90 days.	<i>Monitored quarterly using SAMS Wellsky Aging & Disabilities data and reported monthly to GECAC Board</i>
Promote virtual engagement for older adults using technology and innovation.	At least 1 monthly event and outreach initiated to promote virtual interactions and education.	Implementation begins 2024 and complete by end program year 2028.
Objective 2.2: Tap the resource of our active older adults by enhancing the time and talents of the nearly 70,000 adults over the age of 60 in Erie County and engage them into the community through meaningful and purposeful volunteer opportunities that help support the workforce to meet the needs of those with the greatest economic and social needs		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Strategies	Strategies
Provide supports to recruit more than 500 older adults in Erie to be involved in the community by creating a volunteer opportunity and placing an older adult into the opportunity to assist with children's education, local nonprofits and other entities beneficial to the community.	Of the nearly 70,000 persons age 60 years and older in Erie County, at least 500 will be placed each year into a meaningful volunteer opportunity through RSVP, FGP, Ombudsman PA-MEDI, or at senior community centers.	Bi-annual progress reports through AmeriCorps and other programs.

Objective 2.3: Advocate for the rights of older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect.		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Strategies	Strategies
Ensure the welfare of the nearly 70,000 older adults including supports from every aspect of our community by providing a safety net for those in crisis and investigating concerns.	Of the expected 1,000 Reports of Need for older adults taken each year by the AAA, and the anticipated one third of these typically result in a substantiated risk identified that a care plan will be implemented and the issues resolved as guided by the Older Adults Protective Services Act, thus alleviating and mitigating the crisis.	Ongoing 2024-2028, track annually.
Enhance the list of Erie area stakeholders in the Elder Abuse Taskforce There are many whose mission is focused on the medical physical health, many on the mental and spiritual health and still many others that are focused on the social health and quality of life for older adults. GECAC AAA will lead a community wide effort to ensure safety for older adults.	Measured by number of participants each year at annual elder Abuse task force conference to educate and share best practices in the local area.	Elder Abuse Taskforce conference each year 2025-2028.

Goal 3: We will design and offer equitable, affordable, and available options and opportunities that older adults may choose from for healthy and engaged lives, regardless of ability; socioeconomic status; racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds; or geographical location.		
Objective 3.1: Ensure OAA programs are reaching diverse consumers, minorities, Limited English Proficient (LEP), socially isolated older adults, LGBTQ+ & those living with HIV/AIDS or a disability.		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Performance Measure	Target Date
Work with local community partners to advance the goals and objectives of diversity and inclusion	Staff completing Sage and other specific training. GECAC will enter formal collaborations MOUs or new events to further diversity and inclusion, including at least 1 new MOU AND 1 diversity project each year.	Implementation begins 2024 and complete by end program year 2028.

Objective 3.2: Promoting cultural tailored meals and events to celebrate diverse communities.		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Performance Measure	Target Date
Design nutritional programs that incorporate preferences of individuals by offering cultural and medical appropriate choices.	100 individuals are provided choice each year for meals that meet their preferences and individual medical needs .	Meal contracts will be adapted beginning in 2025 to incorporate this strategy and complete goal by 2028 program year.

Goal 4: GECAC AAA will promote HCBS to ensure older adults can live where and how they choose.		
Objective 4.1: Provide counseling and education of services available as evidenced by the number receiving Person Centered Counseling, Health Risk Assessment, Level of Care to document their awareness of the long-term services and supports available to them in the community and enable them to make an informed decision on how their needs are met, how they are paid for and how they are provided.		
Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Performance Measure	Target Date
In collaboration with ADRC LINK SA1, and other community partners to increase awareness of programs and community referrals. Develop a community standard network refer system enhancing current local collaborations. Including incorporation of PA Navigate and Health Information Exchange to. Streamline and ease access to supports.	Track the satisfaction of the more than 5,000 intake callers to the GECAC Senior Helpline	Ongoing 2024-2028, track annually
Objective 4.2: Coordinate with Housing efforts so Older adults live where they choose, in safe structures, universally functional quarters, in neighborhoods, and age friendly communities. Alternatives and adaptations are readily available to meet changing needs and desires for housing. Older adults can choose a housing option that includes accessible design and close proximity to services and amenities such as grocery stores, libraries, and community centers. Affordable options are readily availability to give older adults peace of mind and financial security		
Expand models that support aging in community by supporting multi-discipline coordination living communities of various kinds to ensure that older adults at various income levels have options for downsizing or rightsizing their housing.	200 callers will be provided housing assistance through GECAC or other community supports including Home modification and housing choice.	Ongoing 2024-2028, track annually

Goal 5: Strengthen the direct care workforce and provide further support for care partners by cultivating better recruitment and support of retired older adults , new graduates and foreign-born populations to be informed educated and connected to exceptional care giving experiences for older adults.

Objective 5.1: Supporting caregivers and care partners.

Strategies GECAC AAA Erie will incorporate:	Performance Measure	Target Date
Expanding Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) to those interested in caregiving, those informal caregivers and existing Direct Care Workforce.	At least 50 individuals complete PTC and at least 2 AAA staff trained as facilitator.	Ongoing 2024-2028, track annually



PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING

AREA PLAN PART B

Section 1. Signature Page/Standard Assurances Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Aging

FY 2024-2028 Area Agency on Aging

Four-Year Area Plan on Aging

Signature Page

Area Agency on Aging Name and Address:

Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC)
Area Agency on Aging Erie County
18 West 9th Street
Erie, PA 16501

I/we certify that I/we are authorized to submit this Plan on behalf of the designated Area Agency on Aging and agree to abide by regulations issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. I/we further certify that the general public has had the opportunity to review and comment on this Plan through the public hearing process and that written policies, procedures or agreements, as appropriate, have been developed in accordance with Part A, Section 307 of the Older Americans Act, and are on file for review and approval, as appropriate, by Department of Aging officials.

I/we assure that services and programs of the Area Agency on Aging will be managed and delivered in accordance with the Plan submitted herewith. Any substantial changes to the Plan will be submitted to the Department of Aging for prior approval.

I/we hereby expressly, as a condition precedent to the receipt of State and Federal funds, assure:

That in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, as amended; and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance regulations):

- 1) I/we do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or handicap:
 - a) In providing services or employment, or in its relationship with other providers;

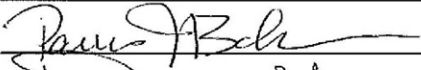

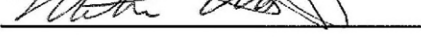
b) In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.

2) I/we will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

I/we further hereby agree that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require contractors to comply with these same provisions.

I/we certify that the advisory council of the Area Agency on Aging has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as herewith submitted.

Signature(s) of Governing Authority
Official(s), e.g., Chairman of County
Commissioners or President, Board of Directors.

	Title	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	GECAC Board Chair	<u>4-19-24</u>
	GECAC Chief Executive Officer	<u>4/22/24</u>
	AAA Division Manager	<u>4/19/2024</u>
(Signature of the Area Agency on Aging Director)	(Title)	(Date)

Name of Person to Contact Regarding the Contents of This Plan:

Matthew Trott (Name) (814) 459-4581 ext. 401 (Area Code and Telephone)

Part B. Section 2

DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE AREA
AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

PSA NO. 01

NAME OF AAA: GECAC AAA Erie

PLAN PERIOD FROM 10/1/2024 TO 9/30/2028

In accordance with 6 PA Code, Section 35.23, a.(1) and (2) and the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, I certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has had the opportunity to assist in the development of this Plan. I further certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has participated in at least one Public Hearing held on this Plan.

The Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council (does / does not) not recommend approval of this Plan.



Signature of the Chief Officer of the Area
Agency on Aging Advisory Council

Dr. Parris Baker

Typed Name and Title

4/19/2024

Date

Part B. Section 3

Listing of Plan Assurances and Required Activities

Older Americans Act, As Amended in 2016

ASSURANCES

The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, requires each Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to provide assurances that it will develop a Plan and carry out a program in accordance with the Plan. Each AAA must comply with the following provisions of the Act. Written policies, procedures, or agreements, as appropriate, must be on file in the AAA office and available for review and approval by Department of Aging officials.

Area Plans

- Assurances that an adequate proportion, as required under section 307(a)(2), of the amount allotted for part B to the planning and service area will be expended for the delivery of each of the following categories of services:
 - Services associated with access to services (transportation, health services (including mental and behavioral health services), outreach, information and assistance (which may include information and assistance to consumers on availability of services under part B and how to receive benefits under and participate in publicly supported programs for which the consumer may be eligible) and case management services
 - In-home services, including supportive services for families of older individuals who are victims of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction
 - Legal assistance
- Assurances that the AAA will report annually to the State agency in detail the amount of funds expended for each such category during the fiscal year most recently concluded
- Assurances that the AAA will:
 - Set specific objectives, consistent with State policy, for providing services to older individuals with greatest economic need, older individuals with greatest social need, and older individuals at risk for institutional placement
 - Include specific objectives for providing services to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas; and
 - Include proposed methods to achieve the objectives
- Assurances that the AAA will include in each agreement made with a provider of any service under this title, a requirement that such provider will:
 - Specify how the provider intends to satisfy the service needs of low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas in the area served by the provider
 - To the maximum extent feasible, provide services to low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas in accordance with their need for such services
 - Meet specific objectives established by the AAA, for providing services to low-income minority individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas within the planning and service area
- Each AAA shall identify the number of low-income minority older individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas in the planning and service area, describe the methods used to satisfy the service needs of such minority older individuals, and provide information on the extent to which the AAA met the objectives described in clause (a)(4)(A)(i).

- Assurances that the AAA will use outreach efforts that will identify individuals eligible for assistance under this Act, with special emphasis on:
 - Older individuals residing in rural areas
 - Older individuals with greatest economic need (with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas)
 - Older individuals with greatest social need (with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas)
 - Older individuals with severe disabilities
 - Older individuals with limited English proficiency;
 - Older individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction (and the caretakers of such individuals)
 - Older individuals at risk for institutional placement
- Assurance that the AAA will ensure that each activity undertaken by the agency, including planning, advocacy, and systems development, will include a focus on the needs of low-income minority older individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas.
- Assurances that the AAA will coordinate planning, identification, assessment of needs, and provision of services for older individuals with disabilities, with particular attention to individuals with severe disabilities, and individuals at risk for institutional placement, with agencies that develop or provide services for individuals with disabilities
- Assurances that the AAA, in carrying out the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman program under section 307(a)(9), will expend not less than the total amount of funds appropriated under this Act and expended by the agency in fiscal year 2000 in carrying out such a program under this title.
- Information and assurances concerning services to older individuals who are Native Americans (referred to in this paragraph as "older Native Americans"), including:
 - Information concerning whether there is a significant population of older Native Americans in the planning and service area and if so, an assurance that the AAA will pursue activities
 - Outreach, to increase access of those older Native Americans to programs and benefits provided under this title
 - Assurance that the AAA will, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate the services the agency provides under this title with services provided under title VI
 - Assurance that the AAA will make services under the area plan available, to the same extent as such services are available to older individuals within the planning and service area, to older Native Americans.
- Assurances that the AAA will maintain the integrity and public purpose of services provided, and service providers, under this title in all contractual and commercial relationships.
- Assurances that the AAA will disclose to the Assistant Secretary and the State agency the identity of each nongovernmental entity with which such agency has a contract or commercial relationship relating to providing any service to older individuals; and the nature of such contract or such relationship.
- Assurances that the AAA will demonstrate that a loss or diminution in the quantity or quality of the services provided, or to be provided, under this title by such agency has not resulted and will not result from such contract or such relationship.
- Assurances that the AAA will demonstrate that the quantity or quality of the services to be provided under this title by such agency will be enhanced as a result of such contract or such relationship.

- Assurances that the area agency will, on the request of the Assistant Secretary or the State, for the purpose of monitoring compliance with this Act (including conducting an audit), disclose all sources and expenditures of funds such agency receives or expends to provide services to older individuals.
- Assurances that preference in receiving services under this title will not be given by the AAA to particular older individuals as a result of a contract or commercial relationship that is not carried out to implement this title.
- Assurances that funds received under this title will be used to provide benefits and services to older individuals, giving priority to older individuals identified in paragraph (4)(A)(i); and in compliance with the assurances specified in paragraph (13) and the limitations specified in section 212.

Additional Appendices

Public Hearing Minutes (February 21 & 23, 2024)

GECAC AREA AGENCY ON AGING - PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

February 21, 2024 10:30am (North East Senior Community Center).

February 23, 2024 10:30am (R. Benjamin Wiley Central City Senior Activity Center).

Matt Trott, GECAC AAA Division Manager, introduced Area Agency on Aging and GECAC. Matt described the services offered in Erie County through GECAC Area Agency on Aging. **Please call the GECAC Senior Helpline at (814) 459-4581, ext. 400 for assistance and or information.**

Matt talked about Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid and The Older Americans Act. He explained about the PA Dept. of Aging, Aging Block Grant allocations and PA Lottery. There are more than 600 Area Agencies on Aging across the country. Here in PA, we have 52 AAA's covering all 67 counties. The PA Lottery has been a significant source of dollars for the Aging Block Grant which provides nearly \$6 million worth of AAA services and over \$26 million total to older adults in Erie County alone.

In Erie County, GECAC Area Agency on Aging provides many services. Remember, to get information, call **GECAC Senior Helpline at 459-4581, ext. 400**. By calling this number you will receive person centered counseling about the services provided. One of the services provided are the **Senior Community Centers**. GECAC operates 7 SCC throughout Erie County and supports 2 subcontracted centers (JFK and Mercy Hilltop). Our Senior Center Directors are very knowledgeable staff with a wealth of information, including Medicare counseling through PA-MEDI. We all know there are lots of choices for health insurance and this can be very confusing. Our knowledgeable staff will assist you and walk you through your individual choices.

There is also the **PA Property Tax/Rent Rebate** and in the summer months, the **Senior Farmer's Market Voucher Nutrition Program**. You can call our Senior Helpline at 459-4581, ext. 400, for more information or visit our website at www.GECAC.org. One of the most common needs expressed from older adults in Erie County was property tax / school tax relief. Almost half of the \$26 million dollars that benefit Erie County older adults from the PA Lottery goes towards Property Tax and Rent Rebates (PTRR). More than 17,000 of the 70,000 Erie County adults age 60 and better will benefit from PTRR.



Erie County

Beneficiaries Gallery

\$27,385,143
BENEFICIARIES TOTAL

PA Lottery benefits by County: <https://www.palottery.state.pa.us/Benefits-Info/Benefits-Info.aspx>

Senior nutrition is the primary component of the Older Americans Act. Senior Community Centers provide 30,000+ **congregate meals** each year in Erie County to more than 1,000+ older adults at the 9 centers along with socialization/recreation activities and workshops. One of our goals is to keep seniors active so they may stay in their home as long as possible in the least restrictive environment.

Erie				
OPTIONS Enrolled & Served Consumers-All Service Categories				
	Enrolled	Service Orders	Service Deliveries	% Served (Service Deliveries/Enrolled)
Erie	745	533	519	69.7%
Statewide	46,000	41,105	37,839	82.3%

Some of our **In-Home Services** include more than 100,000+ **Home Delivered Meals** delivered directly to the homes of older adults in Erie County. The meals are either prepared here at GECAC's Central Office or at various Senior Centers throughout Erie County. GECAC provides more than \$2 million of in-home services such as **Personal Care, Home Support, Home Health** and **Personal Safety** provided through the OPTIONS Program. Our **OPTIONS** Program provides care management to more than 1,300+ to assess need and coordinate responding services. A **personal care** attendant may come into the home and help with bathing and dressing. **Home Health** can help with medication set up, equipment and supplies. For personal safety, there is a **Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)** button in which a senior would push the button and it then calls for help. This helps offer peace of mind, not only to the senior, but to the family and out of town relatives as well.

Other AAA programs are **Domiciliary (Dom) Care, Caregiver Support (CSP), Home PLUS** and **Older Adult Protective Services (OAPS)**.

Dom Care is an alternative to assisted living in a family home where room, board and support services are provided at lower cost. The **CSP** program offers reimbursement for caregivers of older adults or grandparents caring for grandchildren. **Home PLUS provides** staff on-site at Friendship Apts. and

Schmid Towers, two buildings operated and funded by Housing Authority of City of Erie. Remember to call the **Senior Hotline at (814) 459-4581, ext. 400** for help.

OAPS handles issues such as emotional and physical *abuse, neglect, abandonment* and *exploitation*. Unfortunately, these Reports of Need have increased about 10% nearly every year since 2017. From 365 reports in 2017 to now in 2023 where GECAC AAA receives almost 2,000 reports of older adults in need. GECAC takes **Adult Protective Service (APS)** reports 24 hours a day / 365 days a year. Our staff are trained specialists and will meet face to face with older adults age 60 or better who are in need. You can call GECAC (814) 459-4581 or (814) 451-1520 (after hours) or the Statewide Senior Hotline 1-800-490-8505 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to make a report of abuse.

GECAC Area Agency on Aging also has many volunteer opportunities for older adults. There is the **Ombudsman** program where you could be an advocate **for** residents of Long-Term Living Facilities who have any issues.

The **Foster Grandparent Program** helps low-income older adults age 55 or better placed in a day care or school setting that mentor and tutor children. They receive training and orientation with a \$4 an hour stipend. This is a win-win for the older adults and the children.

We also have the **Retired Senior Volunteer Program** which does not have income restrictions. We currently have over 400 volunteers. There are a number of locations and volunteers can give us as much of their time as they have available. Please call the senior hotline, at 814-459-4581 ext. 400 with any questions or input you may have.

Matt explained how the GECAC Area Agency on Aging strived to meet the goals from the *2020-2024 Aging Four Year Plan*, although that plan was developed before the pandemic and GECAC AAA had to adjust many services in response to COVID.

GECAC Area Agency on Aging 2020-2024 Goals and Objectives

Goal # 1.: Strengthen aging network's capacity - promote innovation and best practices and build efficiencies to respond to the growing and diversifying aging population.

GECAC AAA continued to provide services through a network of more than 30 subcontracted community partners including home health agencies, meal provider, and professionals.

Goal #2: Improve services and ability to advocate for the seniors.

GECAC AAA adapted to continue to get over 100,000 meals and implemented technology enhancements to maintain all 70 AAA staff to maintain care management, continue responsive services and to meet contractual obligations throughout the ongoing pandemic.

Goal #3: Prevention- we want to support health living, reduce social isolation, have dementia friendly providers and expand education and technology.

GECAC AAA provided tablets and technology education to volunteers and assisted 1,300 older adults to get their needs met through consistent care management.

Goal #4: Provide outreach and individualize choices - making information and resources accessible and inclusive.

GECAC AAA handled over 4,000 calls and contacts to provide information and assistance and engaged 450 seniors in meaningful volunteer placements to help them provide assistance in the community.

Goal #5: Advocate for seniors rights and ensure their safety. Raise their awareness of incidents of abuse, injury, violence and neglect.

GECAC AAA responded to 1,969 Reports of Need and opened over 1,300 investigations, providing 890 older adults with services.

We would like to hear your feedback and or concerns for the 2024-2028 plan. Guided by the federal key priority areas: ***Nutrition, Social isolation, Cultural Equity, Community based Health, and Caregiving Support***, GECAC AAA will develop goals and objectives to focus on and drive services through 2028. Please call the senior helpline at 459-4581 ext. 400.

GECAC AAA Director Matt Trott concluded this public hearing at 11:15 p.m.

Appendix 2: Emergency Preparedness / Continuity Plan.

Due to the vulnerability of older people in crisis situations the following action plan has been established by the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) Erie County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in cooperation with the Erie County Emergency Management Agency (ECEMA). GECAC AAA follows the procedures as part of ***Ready.PA.gov***.

All programs operated by GECAC AAA prepares for disaster planning by maintaining a database of “at-risk consumers” identified for the entire AAA Division and available upon request for the Emergency Management Agencies.

All actions requiring AAA purchases of equipment, meals, and Public Service Announcements during an emergency for consumers, as it relates to this documentation, is based upon funding availability and approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) to utilize current Aging Block Grant funding for an alternate usage.

When appropriate, information received from the PDA will be incorporated into informational packets distributed by the Area Agency on Aging to identified consumers. The AAA continues, as an established practice, to alert consumers to take precautionary measures during times of extreme heat and cold. GECAC AAA distributes these informational flyers to our Home Delivered Meals on Wheels consumers each month from May to September, and from November to March.

GECAC maintains a Continuity of Operations Plan in case of emergencies. The plan is on file and available for review. The plan incorporates resources and responses to all forms of disasters. In the event of an emergency, GECAC stands ready to lend resources, infrastructure and expertise to support the community.

The GECAC Area Agency on Aging (AAA) works with local, state and federal partners to develop a comprehensive framework to effectively coordinate emergency preparedness activities and create a long-term emergency preparedness plan. This will be achieved through collaboration with local and state emergency response agencies, relief organizations, local and state governments, and other disaster relief service delivery institutions. The plan’s goal is to ensure that the older adult population needs are adequately identified and met during emergencies through timely, efficient, and coordinated efforts.

To achieve an effective long-range emergency preparedness plan, the AAA will conduct awareness campaigns to inform older adults and their caregivers about emergency preparedness measures. The GECAC AAA emergency plan outlines a structured approach to enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of GECAC and the AAA in collaboration with key partners. By prioritizing the needs of the older adult population and ensuring their inclusion in the planning and response activities, the established plan will mitigate the impact of emergencies on this population.