

**2020 – 2024 Plan**  
**GECAC Area Agency on Aging**  
**PSA #01**  
**Erie County, Pennsylvania**



**GREATER ERIE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE**

*Helping People. Changing Lives.*  
**Area Agency on Aging**  
(814) 459-4581 x400 | [gecac.org](http://gecac.org)



2020 – 2024 Plan  
Area Agency on Aging  
PSA #01  
Erie County, Pennsylvania

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# 2020-2024 Area Agency on Aging Four Year Plan Erie County, PSA#01

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide for the older adults in Erie County, the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), was designated the **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** for Planning & Service Area #01 in 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.

This Plan for Aging Services in Erie County, Pennsylvania, for the years 2020-2024 builds upon **the experience and knowledge of GECAC** as the designated AAA for Erie County since 1974. The AAA Plan summarizes **the areas of need expressed by older Pennsylvanians, their families, advocates, and representatives of agencies serving older people and people with disabilities in the Erie area.** This 2020-2024 plan takes a community approach to providing services to seniors to include not only those provided by the AAA, but also supportive and collaborative local community-based organizations including a network of private service providers, faith-based entities, paid and unpaid caregivers, non-profits, public funded supports, and individuals willing to volunteer.



Over **37,000**  
**RIDES** to  
doctor's appointments,  
senior centers and other  
essential places  
subsidized per year

More than...  
**125,000**  
**MEALS** served  
in home and at  
neighborhood  
centers

**Area Agency on Aging  
Erie County,  
Pennsylvania**

Over **50**  
**THOUSAND**  
**HOURS** of  
in home  
services

The plan for the Area Agency on Aging for 2020 – 2024 focuses on five goals led by the PA Department of Aging (PDA) and the US Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the Administration on Aging (AOA):

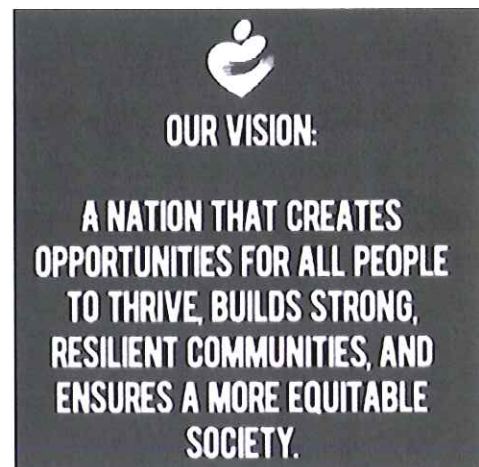
### 2020 - 2024 Goals – GECAC AAA Erie, PA:

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

The objectives of *goal #1*:

- Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network.
- Ensure AAA programs are reaching diverse consumers, minorities, Limited English (LEP), socially isolated older adults, LGBTQ+ and those living with a disability.
- Help older adults achieve better quality of life by ensuring those who seek assistance are connected to supportive programs and services.

Working with community partners and collaborative groups, such as Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, MultiCultural Community Resources, PA Centers for Independent Living, Independent Council on Aging (ICA) and Niagara Network, to enhance the services available to older adults throughout Erie County and to celebrate every diverse individual.





**Goal #2: 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.**

The objectives of the **goal #2**:

- Enable cross system referrals for community based responses to the needs of older adults efficiently and expeditiously.
- Ensure excellence in service delivery through data and analytics to assess the outcomes, quality and value of services provided to older adults
- Provide for proper care and supportive services in the home of older adults that enables individuals needing support to accomplish Activities of Daily Living / Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (ADL/ IADL) to live independently in the community and avoid institutionalization.



**Tapping CBOs to  
Reduce Medicare Costs**

## **Keep Older Adults Healthy**

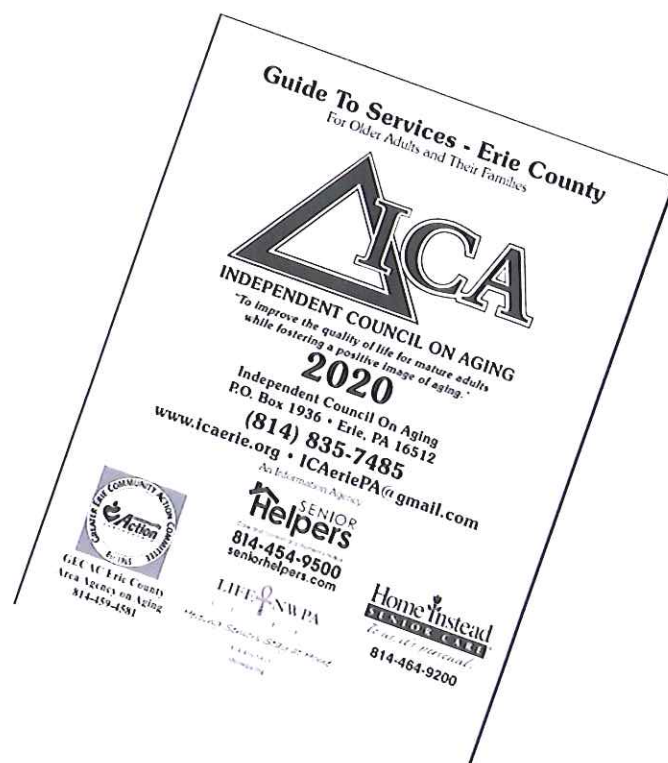
*In any health care reform proposals, recognize and protect the pivotal role that the Aging Network plays in bridging the gap between the acute care, behavioral health and long-term services and supports systems to improve health outcomes, quality of care and reduce health care costs.*

**Evidence-Based  
Prevention and Wellness**

**GOAL #3: Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older adults in Erie County.**

The objectives of the **goal #3:**

- Ensure a network of age and dementia-friendly providers for older adults in Erie County, Pennsylvania.
- Expand the availability and use of programs that reduce social isolation.
- 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 seniors.
- 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.

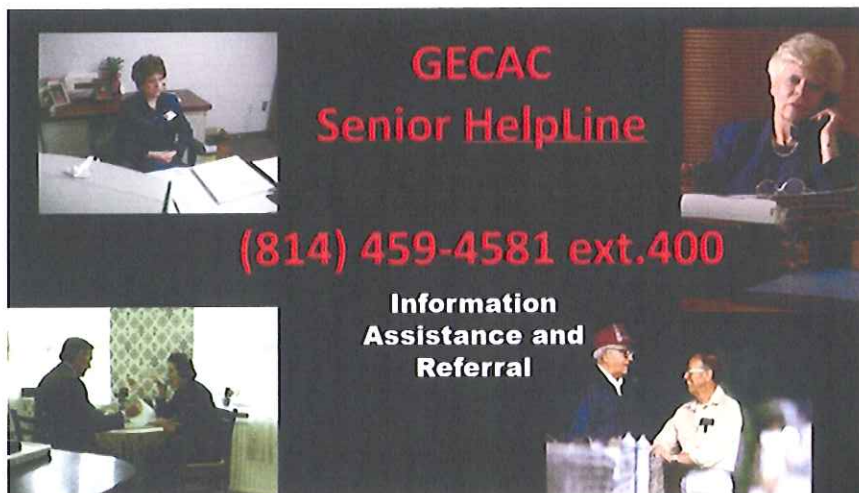




**Goal #4:** Emphasize a citizen-first culture that provides outreach, embraces diversity, and honors individual choice.

The objective of **goal #4**:

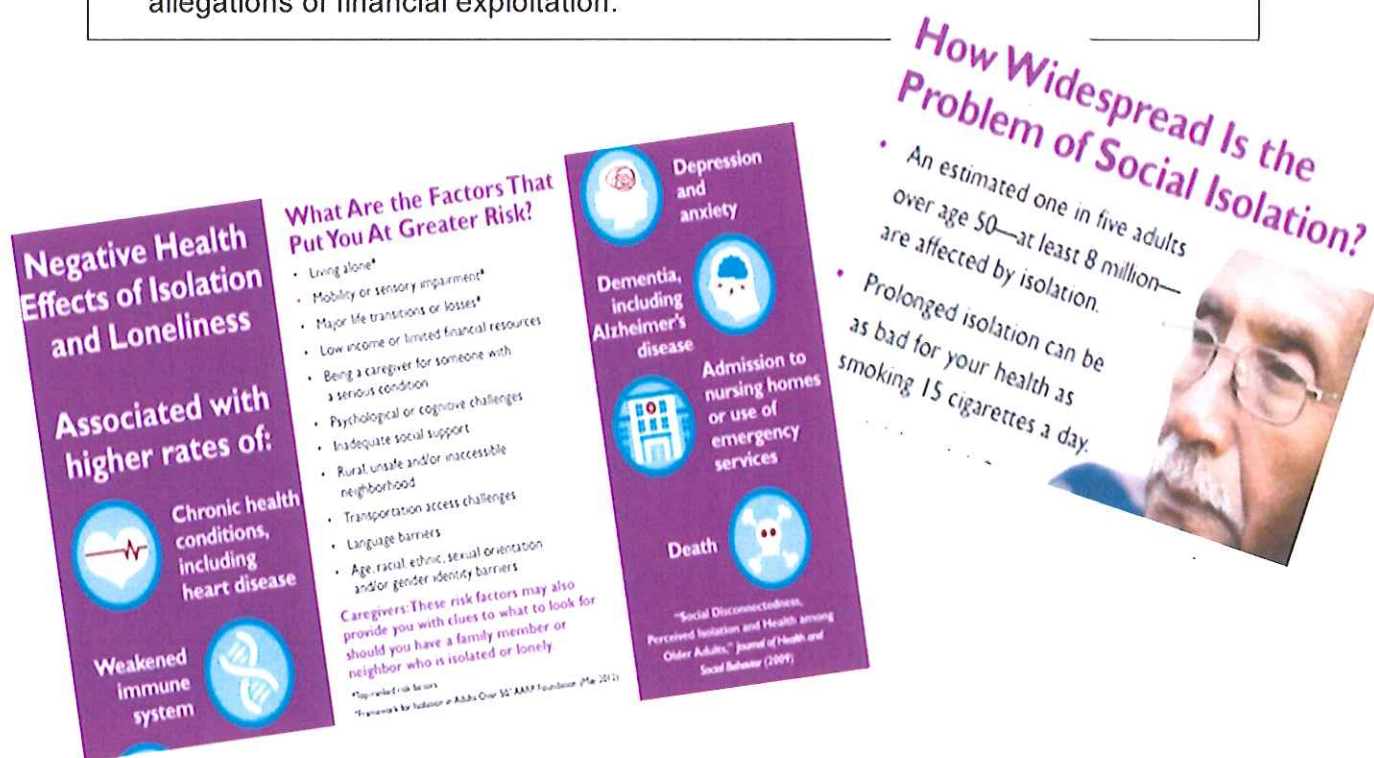
- Ensure aging services information and resources are accessible, inclusive, consistent and available through a variety of sources.
- Tap the resource of our active by enhancing the time and talents of the nearly 70,000 adults over the age of 60 in Erie County and engage them into the community through meaningful and purposeful volunteer opportunities that help support the workforce to meet the needs of those with the greatest economic and social needs.



**Goal #5: 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.**

The objectives of **goal #5:**

- Be a resource for ensuring safety and wellness of those vulnerable older adults who fall victim to abuse, neglect, abandonment or exploitation.
- Increase capacity and expertise in the ability to investigate and resolve allegations of financial exploitation.



These themes align with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging goals and objectives to ensure consistency and targeted action amongst Area Agencies on Aging for all older adults.

The Plan is also designed to align to national goals and initiatives including meeting the needs of those with the greatest economic and social need from the nearly 70,000 persons age 60 years or older in Erie County.



## 2. Erie AAA Agency Overview

### Mission, 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.

### GECAC and the AAA Organizational Structure

In 1974, the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) was designated as the umbrella agency to manage the Erie County Area Agency on Aging in Pennsylvania Public Service Area (PSA) #01. GECAC is Erie County's designated Community Action Agency, formed in 1965. Services are provided through operational divisions offering coordinated assistance 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 and procedure manuals. Annual operational plans, monthly reports and various program audits are required to ensure uniform compliance with PDA regulations. In addition, GECAC is a Medical Assistance provider through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services / Office of Long Term Living (OLTL), to provide 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 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 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 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 people in 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 coordination, which provides 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 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 insure 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, Aging and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) County Team; periodic meetings with area hospital social services departments; Nursing 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.

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING ERIE COUNTY, PA

Experts on all aspects of aging.

Call our Help Line (814) 459-4581 x400

WWW.GECAC.ORG



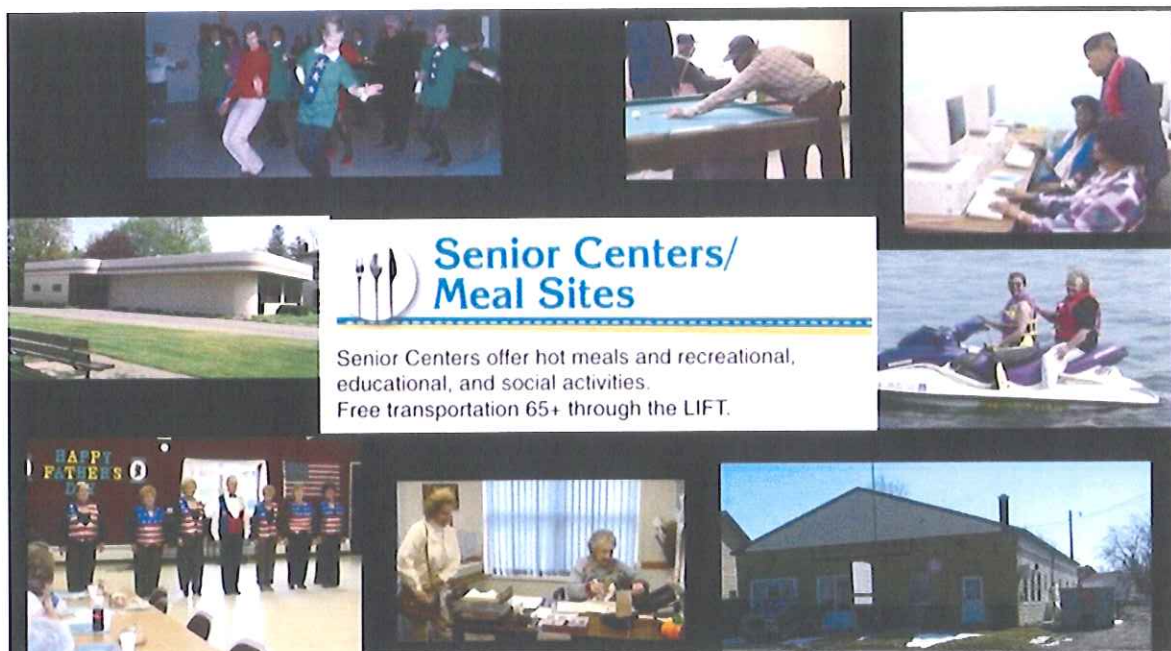
### GECAC AAA Services

The following chart details the number of services provided by the GECAC Area Agency on Aging during the 2019-2020 program year. These services were provided through the following programs: **Intake and Assistance/Referral, Pre-Admission Assessment, Aging Block Grant Options Services, Family Caregiver Support Program, Senior Community Centers, Congregate and Home Delivered Meals, Ombudsman, Senior Assistance, Older Adult Protective Services, and Domiciliary Care.**

#### Older Individuals Served Directly by GECAC Area Agency on Aging (AAA) (SAMS Data During the Period 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020)

Total Erie County Population		Unduplicated Consumers Served by GECAC AAA	
Age 60+	69,636	6,277	9.0% of total population
Age 80+	12,610	2,841	22.5% of total population





Senior Community Centers: The following senior centers operate in Erie County, PA and are funded through Aging Bock Grant dollars:

#### **GECAC Operated Senior Centers**

##### **CORRY SENIOR CTR.**

25 First Avenue Corry, PA 16407  
814-664-2477

##### **ERIE WEST SENIOR CTR.**

1210 West 8th St. Erie, PA 16502  
814-451-4563

##### **NORTHWESTERN SENIOR CTR.**

9 Academy St. Albion, PA 16401  
814-756-5373

##### **NORTH EAST SENIOR CTR.**

50 Main Street North East, PA 16428  
814-725-5195

##### **UNION CITY SENIOR CTR.**

27 Johnson St. Union City, PA 16438  
814-438-2146

##### **TRI-BORO SENIOR CTR.**

7555 West Main St. Fairview, PA 16415  
814-474-2211

##### **R. BENJAMIN WILEY CENTRAL CITY SENIOR CENTER.**

823 Peach St. Erie, PA 16501  
814-451-5633

#### **Non - GECAC Operated Senior Centers that receive funding through AAA:**

##### **LECOM ERIE CENTER HEALTHY AGING**

406 Peach St. Erie, PA. 16507  
814-453-5072

##### **MERCY HILLTOP CENTER**

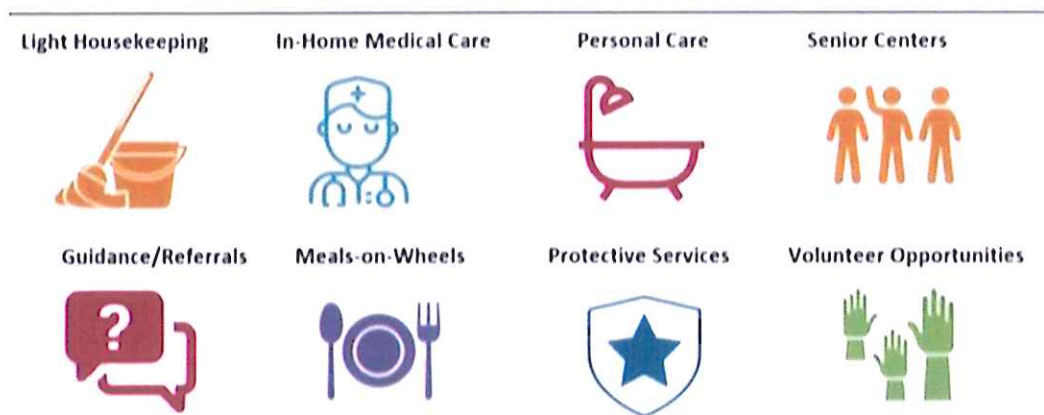
444 East Grandview Blvd. Erie, PA. 16504  
814-824-2214

##### **JOHN F. KENNEDY SENIOR CENTER**

2021 East 20th St. Erie, PA. 16510  
814-898-0400

GECAC AAA services include the following individuals served (unduplicated):

<b>Information &amp; Referral:</b>	<b>20,132</b>
<b>Care Management:</b>	<b>1,364</b>
<b>Senior Citizen Center:</b>	<b>1,317</b>
<b>Home Delivered Meals/MOW:</b>	<b>419</b>
<b>Adult Protective Services:</b>	<b>828</b>
<b>Volunteer Opportunities:</b>	<b>444</b>



## Demographics

### Persons Age 65 and Older as a Percentage of Total Population, 2018

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

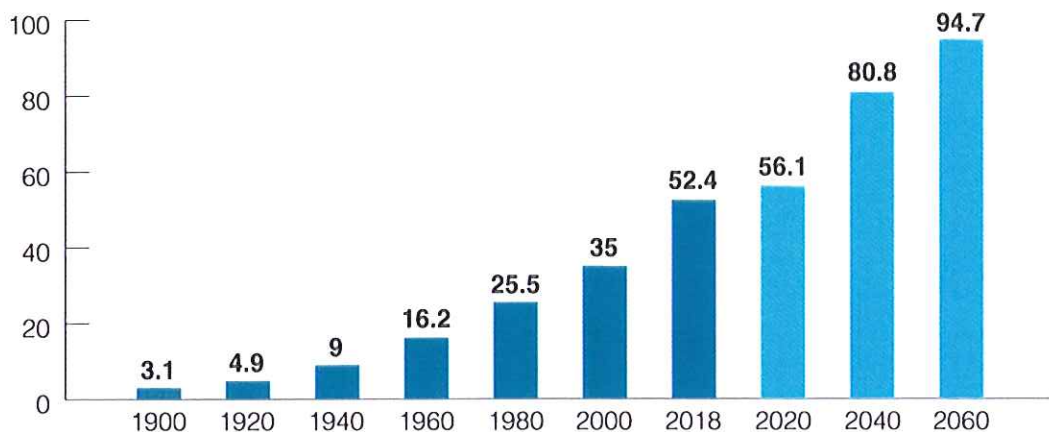
	State	Percent Age 65 and older of all Ages
1	Maine	21%
2	Florida	21%
3	West Virginia	20%
4	Vermont	19%
5	Delaware	19%
6	Montana	19%
7	Hawaii	18%
8	Pennsylvania	18%
9	New Hampshire	18%
10	South Carolina	18%



The 2019 Census estimates the following population in Erie County:

	<u>2010 (baseline)</u>	<u>2019 (est.)</u>
Total Persons residing in Erie County	<b>280,766</b>	<b>269,728</b>
• persons age 60 and older	<b>56,408</b>	<b>69,636</b>
• persons age 65 and older	<b>40,824</b>	<b>50,250</b>
• age 75 and older	<b>14,991</b>	<b>21,207</b>

### Number of Persons Age 65 and Older 1900 to 2060 (numbers in millions)



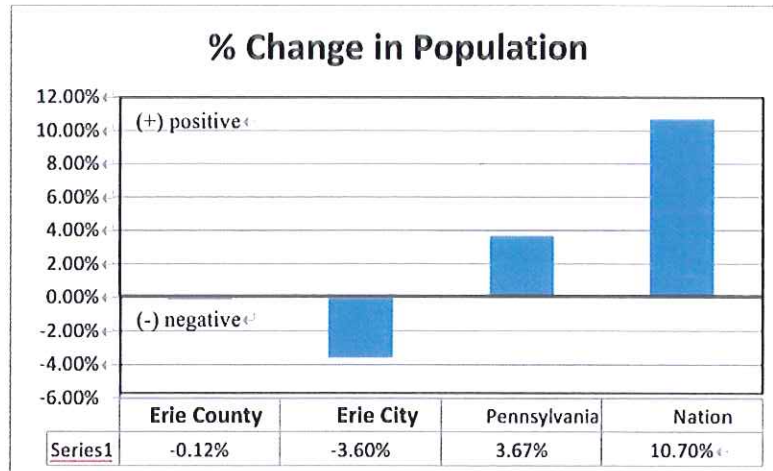
*Note: Increments in years are uneven. Lighter bars (2020, 2040, and 2060) indicate projections.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates and Projections*

### 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 2019 US Census population estimates, 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 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. **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.**

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. Sprawling development has also caused an increase in storm water runoff, which is affecting stream quality in several streams, many of which empty into Presque Isle Bay. 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.



## Population: Population Change

Population change in Erie county from 2000-2019 is shown in Table 1. During the nineteen-year period, total population estimates for the area declined by -0.12 percent, decreasing from 280,843 persons in 2000 to 280,518 persons in 2013. The City showed a -3.6 % change in the same period.

Table 1. Population Change 2000 - 2019

	1990 Population		2000 Population		2019 Population		Estimated Change	
							1990-2019	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0-19	82,322	29.8%	80,092	28.52%	65,604	24.3%	-16,718	-20.3%
20-34	64,717	23.50%	55,644	19.80%	52,654	19.5%	-12,069	-18.6%
35-59	77,506	28.10%	94,149	33.50%	65,761	24.3%	-11,745	-15.1%
60-64	13,002	4.70%	10,702	3.80%	19,386	7.1%	6,384	49.1%
65-74	23,034	8.40%	19,968	7.10%	29,043	10.7%	6,009	26.8%
75+	14,991	5.40%	20,288	7.20%	21,207	7.2%	6,208	41.3%
TOTAL	275,572	100.00%	280,843	100.00%	269,728	100.00%	5,844	- 2.1%

Source: [United States Census Bureau, Population Division, Census 2010. Release Date: February 2011](#) and [United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 Data Release.](#) The 2018 American Community Survey 5-year data is a 5-year average of data collected from 2013 through 2018.

## Population Trends

The above chart shows a 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 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.**

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).

## Poverty population

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 the most poor of Erie seniors. Twenty-five percent of the seniors responding to a survey of 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 % of all GECAC AAA consumers cost share for services.

Public Assistance 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). In December 2011, 6,992 (2.5%) Erie County residents received cash assistance benefits. Erie County's numbers are well above the Pennsylvania state average of 1.7%. (PA Department of Human Services, 2011)

## Home and Community Based Housing

### Housing Age:

41.9% of Erie City housing stock (DP 04 Selected Housing Characteristics 2010-2014) 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 73,729 owner occupied homes in Erie County area in 2000, and 73,979 owner occupied homes in the report area for the 5 year estimated period from 2009 - 2013. Erie County saw only a 0.34 % change in occupied homes between 2000 and 2013. 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 2019 was 1,961, which is near the overall Erie County capacity of 2,250 nursing home beds in 19 licensed facilities. Additionally, Erie County has 27 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)**

**Golden Living Western Reserve (N)**

**Golden Living Walnut Creek (N)**

ABINGTON CREST HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	44
BALL PAVILION	68
CORRY MANOR	104
EDINBORO MANOR	114
ELMWOOD GARDENS OF PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE NETWORK	48
FAIRVIEW MANOR	111
FORESTVIEW	78
LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AT PRESQUE ISLE	130
LECOM AT VILLAGE SQUARE	93
MANCHESTER COMMONS OF PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE	74
MILLCREEK MANOR	135
PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HOME	93
PLEASANT RIDGE MANOR WEST	255
SAINT MARY'S AT ASBURY RIDGE	77
SAINT MARY'S EAST	131
SARAH REED SENIOR LIVING	96
TWINBROOK HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	107
WALNUT CREEK HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	110
WESTERN RESERVE HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTER	93
<b>Total Nursing Facility Census Erie County</b>	<b>1,961</b>

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



Older Adult Day Care centers are increasing with Presbyterian Senior Care at Manchester and LECOM Adult Day Centers opening in 2019, in addition to the existing (St Mary's East Adult Day and 3 Barber National locations) and the NW PA LIFE Program all provide options for seniors to have their care needs met.

The total number of institutional Medicare and Medicaid providers, including hospitals, nursing facilities, federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics and community mental health centers for Erie County is shown in Table 3. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there were 77 active Medicare and Medicaid institutional service providers in the report area in 2014.

**Table 3. Institutional Medicare and Medicaid Providers, 2014**

County	Total Institutional Providers	Hospitals	Nursing Facilities	Federally Qualified Health Centers	Rural Health Clinics	Community Mental Health Centers
Erie	77	7	19	6	2	0
Pennsylvania	2,780	257	700	205	69	16

Source: [United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Provider of Services File, Second Quarter, 2014.](#)

### **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.

### Para-Transit

The LIFT services Erie County with a fleet of 44 paratransit accessible vehicles. These vehicles are used for transporting the elderly, the handicapped and the general public in over 203,417 passenger trips each year ~800 trips per day. Average trip length is eight miles and lasts one-half hour. The LIFT is a subsidized program that is available to any elderly or disabled resident in Erie County.

### Health Literacy

Erie County ranks poor in Healthy behaviors (57<sup>th</sup> out of 67 PA Counties\*). Primarily this is due to obesity, smoking, and physical inactivity. Interestingly, Erie County ranks high in the area of “Access to exercise opportunities” (with Presque Isle State park and other biking and jogging areas.) \* County Health Rankings 2019.

Those reporting the highest rates of poor health status include females (16%), those over the age of 65 (25%), those with less than a high school education (40%), and those earning less than \$25,000 a year (26%). As is the case with many health indicators, education and income levels have a strong influence on health status. As education and income increase, so does one's chances for better health status. Transversely, the lower one's education and income level, the more likely they will have poor health status.

Just over two-thirds of Erie County residents are overweight or obese according to the most recent data available from the Erie County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey. Erie residents have a higher rate than both Pennsylvania and the United States. Having 68 percent of residents overweight or obese is too high for good health, any way you look at it.

Obesity is an epidemic in our country. The cause for this exponential increase in weight gain across the country in the past decade is a combination of sedentary lifestyles coupled with unhealthy eating habits. There is a very simple solution to this problem: eat less and move more. And yet, the problem, along with waistlines, continues to grow. Those most likely to be overweight or obese include Erie County residents with less than a high school diploma, residents who earn less than \$25,000 a year, and males.



Erie County has traditionally had relatively high rates of smokers. Despite a dip in recent years the rate of smokers remains at 20% or 1 in 5 adults. This is concerning, since smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease and is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths.

Getting adequate regular physical activity continues to be a problem for adults in Erie County. In 2019 (the most recent data for this indicator), 24% of adults in Erie County reported being physically inactive, or 1 in 4. Those most likely to be physically inactive include those Erie County residents who are not high school graduates, who earn less than \$25,000 a year, and who are 65 and old.

Much of the data for the above Health Indicators come from *County Health Rankings* survey, and is included in Erie Vital Signs. <http://erievitalsigns.org>

### Local, political and economic conditions

The Erie Area has recently been home to numerous study groups and civic improvement movements all of which have reached out to the community to provide input to develop community wide plans. Rather than duplicate these efforts Greater Erie Community Action Committee has chosen to pull from these citizens based inputs to inform our Community Need Statement. These movements include Erie Together, Emerge 2040 and the City of Erie's new comprehensive plan.

#### Erie Together

Erie Together is a movement of hundreds of local individuals, organizations, and businesses working together in strategic ways to prevent and reduce poverty, elevate prosperity, and make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive.

In 2006, The Erie Community Foundation convened a panel to study the prevalence and impact of poverty in our community. After extensive research, in 2007 the group released its findings in a report entitled, **"The High Cost of Poverty: It Affects Us All"**.

Following the study, three organizations - The Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), United Way of Erie County and Mercyhurst University - came together to identify ways to address the issue. After extensive due diligence regarding best practices elsewhere in the United States and beyond, these three entities launched Erie Together in 2009.

In the spring of 2010, Erie Together convened several hundred local residents to further identify direction and goals related to poverty alleviation here in Erie County. It was at that time that Erie Together developed its aspiration statement, with the input of more than 650 people: "Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive."



Also in 2010, Erie Together formed four countywide action teams consisting of individuals from many different personal and professional backgrounds to bring their time, talent and expertise to the movement. These Action Teams are still active more than ten years later through ongoing participation.

## **Emerge 2040**

Emerge 2040 brought Erie County residents and leaders together to create a common vision and action plan to meet the challenges facing the region in the 21st century. The vision reflects the values of the community as collected in interviews, public meetings and forums throughout the process. The process focused on the issues, opportunities and connections between the housing, transportation, environment, infrastructure and economic systems, with a focus on implementation and capacity building in the region. The plan emphasizes Erie County and its 38 municipalities, while the economic growth component is broader in scope, encompassing Erie County as well as the four adjacent counties of Warren and Crawford Counties (PA), Chautauqua (NY) and Ashtabula (OH).

Community participation has driven the Emerge 2040 plan throughout the process. Public input has been sought at every step of the way and used to define the critical challenges facing the region, identify the assets on which the Erie region can build upon, create a vision for the future, and develop a strategy to achieve that vision. The process was guided by the Regional Consortium and Consortium Leadership Team. Work Groups were formed from the membership of the Consortium. The process was overseen by a steering committee. These are described below. Regional Consortium – The Consortium is made up of 72+ organizations from throughout the region to guide the development of the plan. It includes representatives from Erie County's townships, boroughs, and cities; economic and community development organizations; cultural and educational institutions; and environmental and community health organizations.

From its conception, the planning process has been driven by public input and its final recommendations have been shaped by ongoing public involvement. The process was led by a Regional Consortium comprised of more than 72 civic leaders and representatives of public, private, and nonprofit organizations and institutions across Erie County and beyond. Over the plan's three years, more than 4,000 people participated in close to 150 public meetings, workshops, focus groups and online forums to provide feedback at every stage of the plan's development and to shape the community's agenda. Work Groups consisting of dozens of local experts in their field were established around each of five areas of emphasis (Economy and Workforce, Housing and Neighborhoods, Environment, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Community Facilities). The Work Groups provided local expertise and context and provided feedback on the products at each stage of the process.

## **City of Erie Comprehensive Plan**

The citizens of Erie were engaged in numerous provocative public meeting where give and take was allowed and encouraged. The Citizens were challenged to think in new manners and to rise to the task of saving the city from continued decay. The comprehensive plan was prepared by Alexandria, Va.-based consulting firm CZB.

The plan addresses Erie's future needs in a number of areas, including housing, transportation, land use and economic development. The plan recommends, among other things, that the city of Erie should develop market-rate and mixed-use housing in

targeted areas; build consistent, high-quality downtown streetscapes; create an "iconic connection" between Erie's Bay front and its downtown; improve Erie's 12th Street industrial corridor via redevelopment of mixed-use spaces and strategies to lure new businesses there; establish more parks and green spaces along bay front neighborhoods; develop strategies to encourage homeowners to reinvest in their properties; and look for ways to attract private financial investment for various projects. "I think it's a good plan, although it might be tough to implement some of the things," said Planning Commission member Don Marinelli, a licensed real estate appraiser. "It's going to take a lot of people coming together." Erie Times-News April 10.

### Description of AAA needs assessment

The methodology for gathering public input into this 2020-2024 Aging Four Year Plan was impacted by the global pandemic of COVID-19 in early 2020. An initial survey was conducted and had over 500 respondents.

The results indicated the concerns of the day especially: related to emergency preparedness, maintaining social interactions, avoiding mental health issues due to social isolation, and nutrition access.

Due to COVID pandemic, a virtual public hearing was held via conference call or zoom meeting on August 17, 2020. The information was recorded and available on GECAC agency YouTube channel.

Through the survey and hearing, it has been determined that the needs of older persons in Erie County mimic those of the state and nation and include the following issues: **Health, Caregiving, Financial, Housing and Transportation.**



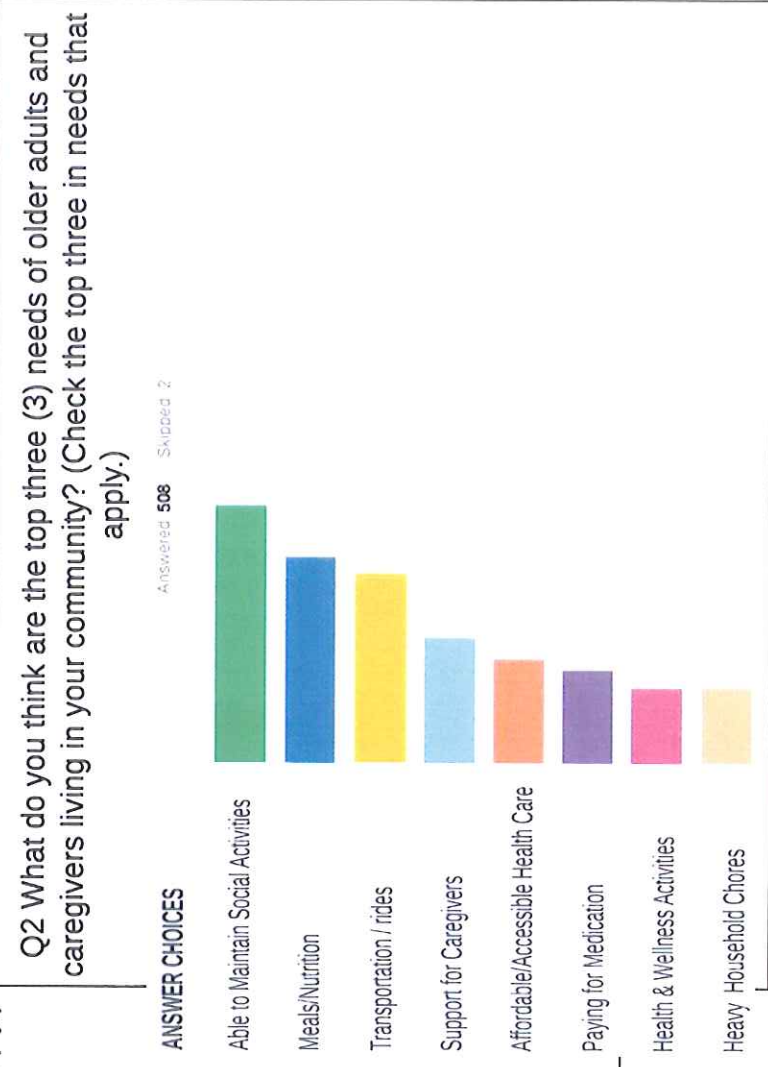
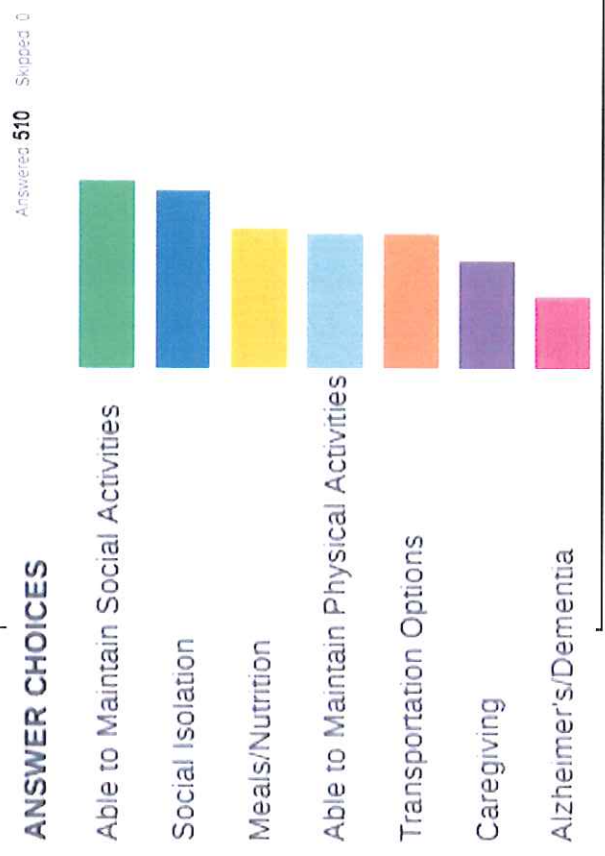
# Word Gram of GECAC AAA Community Survey Answers 8/13/2020

meals<sub>lift</sub> help<sub>options</sub> computer classes<sub>exercise</sub>

transportation<sub>home</sub> programs<sub>take</sub> care

Senior Centers

Q1 What do you think are the top three (3) issues or concerns of older adults and caregivers living in Erie County, PA community? (Check the top three issues/concerns that apply.)





As Pennsylvania adjusts to the Community Health Choices (CHC) model of long term services and supports implemented statewide in January 2020, Health Plans will be motivators for provider network development, community integration and collaboration and individual satisfaction on services.

The goal of GECAC area Agency on Aging is to reinforce the supports that family, friends and neighbors can provide so that community entities, such as faith-based organizations, non-profits and other public, private and non-profit organizations, have the common mission to assist older adults maintain independence, thrive in the community and live in decency and dignity.

There is also a unique focus on improving the health care of consumers in three main areas: Healthy Behavior due to awareness and health literacy education, technology that provides instant health data and connectedness, and game changing and revolutionary advances in medicine and longevity.

GECAC AAA can impact this area of health by continuing to provide what it always has and what it has seen as the most valuable resource and most impactful model on older adults: a trusted professional Caseworker, or Care Navigator who assist older adults, their families and fellow professionals in geriatric care, to tailor, align, coordinate and ensure access to needed services and supports. Over the long history of the Older Americans Act and AAA's, there has been no better outcome than having a skilled, trained and observant professional workforce to educate, right-size and follow up with proper services aligned to the level and care needs of older citizens. The professionals conduct in-home visits with consumers to know firsthand the individual situation, household and their primary needs. This same caseworker can not only document the situations, but provide very specific targeted services and supports to enhance the quality of life of individuals on their caseload. The continued Options (Aging Block Grant), Aging Well PA, Community Health Choices (Medical Assistance) and future innovative supports and services empowers the dedicated AAA staff to impact and properly address the needs efficiently and effectively for the ever-increasing number of individuals being served.

To support this goal, a robust network of volunteers should also be established using existing resources such as the neighborhood-located senior centers and Senior Corps programs - Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Volunteers can simultaneously reward themselves with the benefits of volunteerism as well as provide and maintain older adults through caregiving and other purposeful tasks that

help others. Volunteers will be critical as supports may not always be funded sufficiently or adapt quickly enough to new issues to meet the needs.

Although we realize that volunteers cannot do everything, volunteers certainly are vital to enable local agencies to continue to provide essential services while public funding diminishes.

### Overall, in Pennsylvania in 2015:

**28.0%** of residents volunteer,  
ranking them 22nd among the 50  
states and Washington, DC.

**3,044,110** volunteers

**31.8** volunteer hours per capita

**338.83** million hours of service

**\$7.7** billion of service contributed

**55.5%** of residents donate \$25 or  
more to charity



### 3. GOALS / OBJECTIVES

The progressive models of evidenced-based care that GECAC Area Agency on Aging promotes include the following tenets: Person Centered, Aging in Place, and communities that encourage the development of age friendly and naturally occurring retirement communities.

The goal is to reinforce the supports that family, friends and neighbors can provide so that community entities, such as faith-based organizations, non-profits and other public, private and non-profit organizations, have the common mission to assist older adults maintain independence, thrive in the community and live in decency and dignity.

To this goal GECAC provides supports through the local neighborhood-located senior centers and Senior Corps programs - Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) – that recruit more than 500 Erie older adults to be involved in the community to assist with children's education, local nonprofits and other entities beneficial to the community. Volunteers are vital to enable local agencies to continue to provide essential services while public funding diminishes and provide meaningful opportunities to older adults during retirement years, as well as, provide community based organizations with assistance from very experienced and dedicated older adults.

Older adults require protection from abuse and advocates that will assist them in obtaining services and benefits. To keep seniors living independently in their own homes, they require recreational and social activities as well as nutritional meals, safety checks and resources for caregivers.

#### 4. STRATEGIES / ACTION ITEMS/ PERFORMANCE MEASURES

September 1, 2020		
GECAC Area Agency on Aging 2020 – 2024 Plan Goals to Actions		
ACL Older Americans Act Core Programs Focus Area		
<b>Goal #1: : Strengthen aging network's capacity, promote innovation and best practices, and build efficiencies to respond to the growing and diversifying aging population.</b>		
<b>1. Leverage technology to improve quality and efficiency of aging services network.</b>		
<b>Strategies:</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Promote virtual engagement for older adults using technology and innovation.	Monthly event and projects initiated to promote virtual interactions.	PY 2021
Enroll GECAC AAA in Health Information Exchange to improve quality of care management interactions with health systems.	HIE enrollment and implementation.	Complete by end of FFY 2021
Develop and launch volunteer opportunities that take advantage of new innovations to enable virtual volunteering.	Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Retired Senior Volunteer program (RSVP) implementation of virtual opportunities.	Implementation begins 2020 and complete by PY 2021.
<b>2. Ensure OAA programs are reaching diverse consumers, minorities, Limited English Proficient (LEP), socially isolated older adults, LGBTQ+ &amp; those living with a disability.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Work with local community partners to advance the goals and objectives of diversity and inclusion.	GECAC will enter formal collaborations, MOU or combined events to further diversity and inclusion.	Completed by PY 2021.
<b>3. Help older adults achieve better quality of life by ensuring those who seek assistance are connected to supportive programs and services.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
In collaboration with ADRC LINK SA1, and other community partners to increase awareness of programs and offer services to those with Limited English Proficiency.	GECAC will enter formal collaborations, MOU or combined events to further access.	Completed by PY 2022.



**Goal #2: 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.**

**Strategies:**

**1. Enable cross system referrals for community based responses to the needs of older adults efficiently and expeditiously.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Track the community support given to all intake and referral callers, including intervention provided and responsible agency	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.	Complete by end of PY 2023.

**2. Ensure excellence in service delivery through use of data and analytics to assess the outcomes, quality and value of services provided to older adults.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Using Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA), establish outcomes for family, agency and community for each program area operated by GECAC AAA.	Each program area of AAA has outcomes that relate to the national Community Services Block Grant goals.	Began 2020, ongoing though PY 2022.
Work with funding sources, including PDA to develop measureable outcomes for specific AAA programs such as Protective Services. Related Disorders State Plan.	Implement PDA requirements for Protective Services.	Measured quarterly through 2024

**3. Provide for proper care and supportive services in the home of older adults that enables individuals identified with needing support to accomplish Activities of Daily Living / Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (ADL/ IADL) to live independently in the**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Provide home and community based services to those identified in a NAT to have need.	Keep at least 400 individuals a year in home community based settings and avoid institutionalization for long term care needs partnerships statewide each year.	Each year July 2020 – June 2024

**GOAL #3: Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older adults in Erie County.**

**Strategies:**

**1. Ensure a network of age and dementia-friendly providers for older adults in Erie County, Pennsylvania.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Establish Dementia Friendly Community and enhance Dementia Friends in Erie County.	Measure using Dementia Friendly initiative successes.	Measured quarterly through 2024

**2. Expand the availability and use of programs that reduce social isolation.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
In collaboration with community partners create meaningful interventions to decrease isolation by engaging older adults in opportunities for socialization and community involvement.	At least 1,000 older adults gain social supports and increased connectedness as documented by AAA staff in case notes.	Measured quarterly through 2024

**3. 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.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Increase Evidenced Based opportunities' for older adults in the community both through the AAA and community partners, including Chronic Disease Self-Management, Health Literacy, Falls Prevention and Arthritis workshops.	At least 500 older adults each year complete an evidenced based or health information session.	Measured quarterly through 2024

**4. 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.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
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.	Track the satisfaction of the more than 5,000 intake callers to the GECAC Senior Helpline.	Ongoing 2020-2024, track bi-annually.



**Goal #4:** Emphasize a citizen-first culture that provides outreach, embraces diversity, and honors individual choice.

**Strategies:**

**1. Ensure aging services information and resources are accessible, inclusive, consistent and available through a variety of sources.**

Actions	Goals/Measures	Target Dates
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.	Track the satisfaction of the more than 5,000 intake callers to the GECAC Senior Helpline.	Ongoing 2020-2024, track bi-annually.
<p><b>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</b></p>		
Actions	Goals/Measures	Target Dates
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 APPRISE, or at senior community centers.	Bi-annual progress reports through AmeriCorps and other programs.

**Goal #5 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:**

- 1. Be a resource for ensuring safety and wellness of those vulnerable older adults who fall victim to abuse, neglect, abandonment or exploitation.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
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.	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.	Measured annually through 2024
<b>2. Increase capacity and expertise in the ability to investigate and resolve allegations of abuse, neglect financial exploitation.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Goals/Measures</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
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 efforts to ensure safety for older adults.	Coordinate Elder Abuse Task Force meetings and provide a yearly conference to educate and share best practices in the local area.	Elder Abuse Taskforce conference each year 2021- 2024.



*B1. Signature Page***AREA PLAN PART B****Section 1. Signature Page/Standard Assurances Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Aging****FY 2020-24 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)18 West 9<sup>th</sup> StreetErie, 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
	Chief Executive Officer	9/24/2020
	Board Chairperson	9/24/2020
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(Signature of the Area Agency on  
 Aging Director)

(Title)

(Date)

 AAA Division Manager

9/17/2020

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

Matthew Trott, GECAC AAA Division Manager

(814) 870-5401

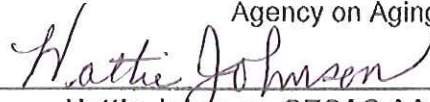


*B2. Advisory Council Participation***Part B. Section 2****DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE AREA  
AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL**PSA NO. 01NAME OF AAA: GECAC EriePLAN PERIOD FROM 10/1/2020 TO 9/30/2024

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) recommend approval of this Plan.

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



Hattie Johnson, GECAC AAA Advisory Chair

Typed Name and Title

9/21/2020

Date

*B3. Assurances***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.
  - 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.



*B4. Public Hearing Minutes (August 17, 2020)*

**GECAC AREA AGENCY ON AGING ~ VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

**August 17, 2020 1:00 p.m.**

Matt Trott, GECAC AAA Division Manager, welcomed the people of Erie County. He noted GECAC is here and ready to help during COVID pandemic. Even though the GECAC offices are closed to the public, staff are hard at work serving clients virtually, via email and phone. Matt noted the GECAC website has a page listed COVID-19 Guidance that will give more information on receiving services. Matt described the services offered here at GECAC Area Agency on Aging. **Please call the GECAC Senior Helpline at (814) 459-4581, ext. 400 for assistance and or information.** You may also call this number and leave feedback about this virtual hearing.

Matt talked about the Older Americans Act and the history behind it. He explained about the PA Dept. of Aging, Medicare and Medicaid. 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 lots of services for the Aging population.

Here in Erie County, GECAC Area Agency on Aging provides many services. Remember, the Senior Helpline at 459-4581, ext. 400. By calling this number you will receive person centered counseling to the services provided. Please remember, you may also leave feedback at this extension also. One of the services provided are the **Senior Community Centers**. Our Senior Center Directors are very knowledgeable and have a wealth of information. At this time, the centers are closed due to COVID-19, but you may still talk with staff on the phone.

They are available to help with **APPRISE**, Medicare Insurance Counseling which is part of the Pennsylvania State Health Insurance Program (SHIP). We all know there are lots of choices for health insurance and this can be very confusing. Our knowledgeable staff will walk you through your individual choices.

Currently there is also the **PA Property Tax/Rent Rebate** and 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](http://www.GECAC.org). There are even applications on line for the Senior Farmer's Market. After you've submitted your application, and it's been processed, you will receive vouchers through the mail and these can be used at local farmers markets. We can also assist you with the application for rent and property tax rebates.

Prior to COVID-19, our senior centers provided **congregate meals** at the centers along with 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. Since COVID-19, meals have been distributed through home delivery or pre-arranged drive through pick up at some Senior Centers. GECAC AAA has also handed out "care packages" for the seniors during these trying times.

Some of our **In-Home Services** include **Home Delivered Meals, Personal Care, Home Support, Home Health** and **Personal Safety**. There has been an increase in Home Delivered Meals since March. The meals are either prepared here at GECAC's Central Office or at various Senior Centers. Our **OPTIONS** Program provides the other services. A **personal care** attendant may come into the home and help with bathing and dressing. **Home Support** can help with the laundry for example, so the senior doesn't have to go up and down steps and risk falling. **Home Health** can help with medication set up. 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 if you fall. 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 environment where room, board and support services are provided at lower cost. The **CSP** program offers reimbursement for a caregiver of an older adult or a grandparent caring for grandchildren. **Home PLUS** has Case Managers located onsite at Friendship & Schmid Towers two local apartment building operated and funded by Housing Authority of City of Erie. Please remember to call the **Senior Hotline at (814) 459-4581, ext. 400** for help and also to leave feedback. **OAPS** handles issues such as emotional and physical abuse, neglect, abandonment and exploitation. Unfortunately, these Reports of Need are on the rise. 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 the person in need, even during this pandemic. You could call (814) 451-1520 24 hours a day/7 days a week to make a report of abuse.

GECAC Area Agency on Aging also has volunteer opportunities. There is the **Ombudsman** program where you could be an advocate for residents of Long Term Living Facilities if there was any



issues. For example, the stimulus check we received this year from the government due to COVID-19 belongs to the individual, not the facility. The **Foster Grandparent Program** helps low income older adults be placed in a day care or school setting and they mentor and tutor the children. They receive training and orientation with a \$3 an hour stipend. This is a win-win for the older adults and the children. We are looking into the possibility of going virtual due to COVID. 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. Right now many of these are on hold due to COVID. Please call the senior hotline, at 459-4581, ext. 400 with any questions or input you may have.

Matt explained how the GECAC Area Agency on Aging has met the goals of the 2016-2020 Aging Four Year plan. He also went over the Goals and Objectives for the 2020-2024 plan.

**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.
- Goal #2: Improve services and ability to advocate for the seniors.
- Goal #3: Prevention~ we want to support health living, reduce social isolation, have dementia friendly providers and expand education and technology.
- Goal #4: Provide outreach and individualize choices ~ making information and resources accessible and inclusive. Engage the seniors in citizenship and meaningful volunteer components.
- Goal #5: Advocate for seniors rights and ensure their safety. Raise their awareness of incidents of abuse, injury, violence and neglect.

We would like to hear your feedback and or concerns of this 2020-2024 plan. Please call the senior helpline at 459-4581, ext. 400. To close on this thought. There was a survey conducted of over 500 people. Seventy-five percent, 75%, of the people surveyed thought Erie is dementia friendly.

GECAC AAA Director Matt Trott concluded this virtual public hearing at 1:55 p.m.