

## **Aging Workgroup of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs: Recommendations for the 2020-2024 State Plan on Aging**

1. Older Americans Act Core Programs Focus Area – OAA core programs are encompassed in Titles III (supportive services, nutrition, disease prevention/health promotion and caregiver programs), VI (Native American programs), and VII (elder rights programs), and are the foundation of the national aging services network.

State Plan Requirements under this focus area are objectives and progress toward:

- Coordinating Title III programs with Title VI programs
- Strengthening/expanding Title III & VII services
- Supporting families and caregivers (ACL pillar)
- Improving coordination between SCSEP & other OAA programs
- Expanding employment opportunities (ACL pillar)
- Increasing the business acumen of the aging network partners (ACL pillar)
- Working toward integration of health, healthcare and social services systems, including efforts through contractual arrangements (ACL pillar)
- Integrating core programs with ACL's discretionary grants

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

### **Recommendations:**

Create guidance for the provider network to more effectively meet the growing needs of LGBTQ older adults and people living with HIV through training, resource-sharing, and collaboration:

- Build on 2019 SAGE training offered to Pennsylvania AAA leaders by expanding LGBTQ cultural competence/humility training opportunities for entire AAA network and all AAA-funded providers
  - Survey: 75% of LGBTQ respondents would be “much more likely” to use an organization's services if their staff had completed LGBTQ cultural competence/humility training
  - Survey: Barriers to completing cultural competence training cited by providers included lack of funding (13%), not being able to identify trainers (8%), and low commitment from administrators (5%). 39% of respondents had completed cultural competence training but still identified the need for further training and resources
  - Survey: 74% of respondents (provider and LGBTQ) prioritize requiring the aging network to receive cultural diversity training addresses issues facing LGBTQ older adults and people living with HIV - #2 priority in survey
- Obtain a Platinum SAGE credential for PDA and maintain it through ongoing training.
- Develop training opportunities and resources on the topic of HIV & Aging for AAA leadership, staff, and AAA-funded agencies

- Survey: 70% of provider respondents have not received any training on issues of HIV & Aging
- Survey: 45% of provider respondents requested training related to supporting older adults living with HIV
- Continue to develop relationships with the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs to support advocacy efforts for LGBTQ older Pennsylvanians
  - Survey: 83% of respondents (provider and LGBTQ) prioritize advocating for the passage of non-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression - #1 priority in survey

**PDA State Plan Goal: 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.**

**Recommendations:**

- Establish mechanisms for collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in all paperwork to understand how LGBTQ older adults are utilizing services. Provide training materials for aging services providers to learn how to ask questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. When conducting intake assessments, expand definitions of “family” to include non-biological family members.
  - Survey: 73% of provider respondents’ agencies do not collect data on sexual orientation
  - Survey: 75% of providers do not collect data on gender beyond the Male or Female binary

2. ACL Discretionary Grants & Other Funding Sources Focus Area – Included in this focus area are the Alzheimer’s Disease Program Initiative (ADPI), Evidence-Based Disease and Disability Prevention Programs, SHIP, MIPPA< Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), Nutrition Innovations, Lifespan Respite, No Wrong Door and other programs that support community living.

State Plan Requirements under this focus area are objectives and progress toward:

- Integrating ACL Discretionary Grants with OAA core programs
- Age and Dementia friendly efforts
- Social determinants of health efforts
- Incorporating aging network services with other home and community-based services

**PDA State Plan Goal: Establish and enhance efforts to support healthy living, active engagement and a sense of community for all older Pennsylvanians.**

**Recommendations:**

- Identify opportunities to partner and support LGBTQ affordable, inclusive housing initiatives/projects.

- According to a 2014 national study conducted by SAGE, 44% of LGBT older adults are “very or extremely interested” in residing in an affordable LGBT-friendly housing development at some point in the future (and 78% are at least “somewhat interested”). One in six (17%) LGBT older people is very or extremely concerned that they will be discriminated against if others in an assisted-living community know about their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Encourage collaborations between AAAs and LGBTQ-serving organizations to target OAA-funded programs to the LGBTQ community as a way to reduce health disparities for LGBTQ older adults
  - Survey: 81% of LGBTQ respondents reported not having utilized services from their AAA
- Develop and share resources related to LGBTQ aging that would provide information for providers and LGBTQ consumers
  - Survey: 54% of providers would utilize LGBTQ resources provided through PDA website
  - Survey: 46% of providers would share resources related to LGBTQ aging with their clients
- Develop and share resources related to HIV & Aging that would provide information for providers and older adults living with HIV
  - Survey: 53% of providers would utilize resources on HIV & Aging that were provided through PDA website
  - Survey: 48% of providers would share resources related to HIV & Aging with their clients
- Include social isolation as a social determinant of health. Develop a valid and reliable tool to screen for isolation and network with relevant community organizations who are providing mental health and community support services to identify best practices and community-based needs.
  - Findings from AARP and SAGE highlight severe health impacts of social isolation and loneliness, particularly among low-income, underserved and vulnerable subpopulations including LGBTQ, minority and immigrant older people.
- Advocate to reduce the digital divide. Mastering digital technology has become a key component of what it means to fully participate in society. Technology training should be embedded in existing community-based organizations, including senior centers and with greater involvement of technology companies and investors. This could expand usability, training, and access to broadband and devices.

3. Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning Focus Area – Includes making fundamental changes in state policies and programs which support consumer control and choice is recognized as a critical focus for State Plans. OAA Title VII programs and services are designed to support this effort. Opportunities also exist for maximizing consumer control and choice in Title III and VI programs. The plan should address activities to support these goals.

State Plan Requirements under this focus area are objectives and progress toward:

- Supporting participant- directed/person-centered planning for older adults and their caregivers across the spectrum of long term care services, including home, community and institutional settings
- Connecting people to resources (ACL pillar)

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

**Recommendations:**

- Protect and promote the availability of resources and services to all Pennsylvanians age 60+ regardless of citizenship or immigration status
- Designate LGBTQ older adults and older people living with HIV as populations of greatest social need under the Older Americans Act
  - In 2012, ACL declared that the groups delineated by Congress as greatest social needs populations effectively sets a floor, not a ceiling, and that states have the discretion to consider other populations, like LGBT older people, as greatest social needs populations
- Develop inclusive outreach and marketing efforts directed to LGBTQ older Pennsylvanians to educate about PDA services and resources
  - Survey: 46% of LGBTQ respondents were not familiar with services offered by PDA
  - Survey: 28% of LGBTQ respondents requested learning more about services available from PDA
- Support AAA network in developing LGBTQ-inclusive marketing materials and outreach strategies to help LGBTQ older adults connect with local services
  - Survey: 43% of LGBTQ respondents could not identify their AAA

4. Elder Justice Focus Area – focuses on coordinated programs and services for the protection of vulnerable adults under Title VII of the OAA.

State Plan Requirements under this focus area are objectives and progress toward:

- Preventing, detecting, assessing, intervening, and/or investigating elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation
- Protecting rights and preventing abuse (ACL pillar)
- Supporting and enhancing multi-disciplinary responses to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation involving adult protective services, LTC ombudsman programs, legal assistance programs, law enforcement, health care professionals, financial institutions, and other essential partners across the state

**PDA State Plan Goal: Protect older adults and ensure their safety and dignity by raising awareness of and responding effectively to incidences of abuse, injury, exploitation, violence and neglect.**

**Workgroup Recommendations:**

Enhance the ability of adult protective services system to respond to needs of LGBT community, particularly those who live alone or in long-term care settings:

- Continue to advocate for passage of legislation that would explicitly expand the protected classes of discrimination to include gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation to Pennsylvania's Human Relations Act, which currently protects people from discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, disability
- Mandate LGBTQ cultural competence/humility training for all AAA staff who work in Older Adult Protective Services
  - Survey: 58% of LGBTQ respondents worry about being able to find organizations that are LGBTQ-friendly
  - Survey: 75% of LGBTQ respondents would be “much more likely” to use an organization’s services if their staff had completed LGBTQ cultural competence/humility training
- Provide LGBTQ cultural competence/humility training and resources to LTC ombudsman staff and volunteers to support LGBTQ people in long-term care settings
- Develop and share resources for LGBTQ older adults and caregivers through the PDA website related to elder abuse, exploitation, and rights in long-term care settings
  - Survey: 54% of providers would utilize LGBTQ resources provided through PDA website
- Advance the creation of a Long-Term Care Bill of Rights that would prohibit anti-LGBTQ discrimination against residents and strengthen protections for LGBTQ people and people living with HIV in long-term care settings
  - Survey: 70% of respondents (provider and LGBTQ) prioritized the development of a Long-Term Care Bill of Rights that would provide specific protections for LGBTQ people and those living with HIV - #3 priority in survey