

Services for Older Adults

Overview

Fairfax County projects a significant increase in the older adult population. The older adult population is one of the fastest growing segments of the County population. More than 25 percent of County residents are aged 55 and older. Between 2020 and 2040, the County expects the 65 and over age group to increase by more than 40 percent. This dramatic increase in the older population led to Board of Supervisors to adopt The Fairfax County 50+ Community Action Plan (50+ Plan) in September 2014. The 50+ Plan was a five-year plan that successfully addressed services for older adults and family caregivers, safe and healthy communities, community engagement, transportation, and housing. The final summary report was approved by the Board of Supervisors in September 2019 ([Final Summary Report September 2019](#)). The County continues to address the challenges of the older adult population and has developed the [SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan](#), adopted by the Board in May 2023. SHAPE the Future of Aging is a strategic plan to make Fairfax County a better place to age, for older adults to live safely, independently, and with dignity. SHAPE is an acronym that includes five areas of focus:

- Services for Older Adults and Family Caregivers
- Housing and Neighborhood Supports
- Access to Mobility Options
- Personal Well-Being
- Economic Stability and Planning

Given this aging of the population, the County highlights services currently provided to older adults. It should be noted that the figures in the following table do not reflect the cost of all services provided to older adults, as only those services specifically designed for older adults, or those where participation by this population has been tracked or can be reasonably estimated, have been included. There are many general County services that are used extensively by the older adult population, such as Emergency Medical Services and cultural tours, but limited data on actual utilization rates makes it difficult to quantify those costs.

Given the rapid growth in the older adult population in the County, the increasing trend of older adults aging in place and the commensurate increase in demand for services, a large number of service delivery models have been undertaken in various County agencies in recent years. Following the adoption of the FY 2010 budget and at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, staff from agencies providing services to older adults, including the Department of Family Services, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Health Department and the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services have evaluated the continuum of older adult services – including, but not limited to, Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Care Centers – to ensure coordination of programs and opportunities for provision of more cost-efficient service delivery with the ultimate goal to promote long-term sustainability.

The table on the following pages details the cost of services provided specifically to older adults included in the [FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan](#). Following the table is a description of the programs, as well as utilization data by age if available. In FY 2025, services to older adults total \$106.6 million, or 2.0 percent of General Fund Disbursements of \$5.5 billion. Excluding the General Fund Transfers to Fairfax County Public Schools for School Operating, School Construction, and School Debt Service of \$2.8 billion, spending on services for older adults is approximately 4.0 percent of the remaining General Fund Disbursements.

Services for Older Adults

County Funded Programs for Older Adults¹

Name and Description of Service	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan
Facilities Management Department			
Lease for the Lorton Senior Center at Gunston Plaza (Operated by the Dept. of Neighborhood and Community Services) ²	\$60,391	\$0	\$0
Department of Neighborhood and Community Svcs. (NCS)			
Senior Centers for Active Adults and Support Services for Older Adults	\$4,546,754	\$4,512,217	\$4,766,132
Transportation Options, Programs, and Services (TOPS)	234,967	443,538	445,162
Adult Day Health Care and Long-Term Care Services	3,120,866	3,357,667	3,635,770
Subtotal NCS	\$7,902,587	\$8,313,422	\$8,847,064
Fairfax County Public Library			
Programs Primarily Used by Older Adults	\$118,338	\$733,061	\$733,061
Department of Tax Administration			
Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled	\$34,747,404	\$40,953,000	\$38,325,000
Department of Family Services			
Adult Protective Services	\$2,716,071	\$3,194,184	\$2,784,794
Adult and Aging Services	15,513,705	16,822,180	17,294,963
Subtotal Department of Family Services	\$18,229,776	\$20,016,364	\$20,079,757
Fire and Rescue Department			
Senior Safety Programs	\$83,157	\$84,628	\$88,995
Subtotal - General Fund	\$61,141,653	\$70,100,475	\$68,073,877

Services for Older Adults

County Funded Programs for Older Adults¹

Name and Description of Service	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan
Fund 50000, Federal-State Grants³			
Community-Based Social Services ⁴	\$1,379,082	\$1,689,598	\$1,444,260
Ombudsman ⁴	400,729	6,562	430,091
Homemaker/Fee for Service	284,241	74,165	303,322
Congregate Meals ⁴	1,330,317	2,501,364	1,295,013
Home-Delivered Meals ⁴	1,842,871	1,277,543	2,184,224
Care-Coordination	506,177	62,072	562,414
Family Caregiver ⁴	525,084	640,906	617,760
Respite Care	11,639	97,911	55,000
Virginia Arthritis Program ⁵	8,172	8,628	0
Adult Protective Services - COVID-19 Relief ^{4,5}	490,149	293,400	0
Vaccine Access ⁵	45,701	0	0
Preventative Health ⁵	0	2,000	0
Subtotal Fund 50000	\$6,824,162	\$6,654,149	\$6,892,084
Fund 40040, Community Services Board			
Countywide Older Adults and Families Program	\$2,102,651	\$2,548,841	\$2,583,041
Fund 10030, Contributories			
Birmingham Green Adult Care Residence	\$3,039,229	\$3,246,340	\$3,363,421
Fund 30000, Metro Operations and Construction			
MetroAccess	\$20,027,929	\$20,850,879	\$25,305,377
Fund 60030, Technology Infrastructure Services			
Computer Labs	\$346,012	\$356,254	\$359,853
Subtotal - General Fund Supported	\$32,339,983	\$33,656,463	\$38,503,776
TOTAL SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS	\$93,481,636	\$103,756,938	\$106,577,653

¹ This analysis reflects only those services included in General Fund and General Fund Supported agencies and does not include services supported by non-General Fund or non-appropriated funds, such as Channel 16 content aimed at older adults through Fund 40030, Cable Communications, or recreational activities provided by Fund 40050, Reston Community Center. Likewise, this analysis does not include capital projects funded in prior years, such as senior centers or adult day health care facilities. Capital expenses vary significantly from year to year and one year's data cannot serve as a proxy for "average" capital expenditures in a particular service area.

² Beginning in FY 2024, the Lorton Senior Center located at Gunston Plaza was moved to the new Lorton Community Center which opened in October 2022; therefore, this lease is no longer needed. It will be removed from the table beginning in FY 2026.

³ The FY 2025 funding level represents anticipated funding; actual funding received may be different.

⁴ Includes one-time funding received to help address the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁵ One-time funding that has been received in support of the older adult community.

The following provides a brief description of the programs, as well as utilization data if available, included in the Services for Older Adults table on the previous two pages. For additional information please refer to the specific agency narrative in Volume 1 and Volume 2.

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

Senior Centers for Active Adults and Support Services for Older Adults

Senior Centers for Active Adults offer opportunities to make friends, stay on the move, and learn new things. Fairfax County residents ages 50 and over may join any of the 14 senior centers sponsored by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Additionally, each center provides a level of inclusive support services assisting older adults with minor cognitive and physical disabilities to actively participate in the day-to-day activities at Senior Centers. These support services provide case management for participants and their families when a member can no longer successfully participate at the centers with reasonable accommodations and requires transition to a higher level of services along the continuum of care.

Transportation Options, Programs, and Services

Transportation Options, Programs, and Services (TOPS) is a transportation fare subsidy program for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents of Fairfax County utilizing debit card technology. Eligible participants have expanded options available to them to travel affordably, safely, and independently using a travel method of their choice. These methods include fixed-route buses, Metrorail, Transportation Navigation Companies such as Uber and Lyft as well as taxis. Through December 2023, approximately 72 percent (1,726 individuals) of all TOPS program participants were 50 years of age and older.

Adult Day Health Care and Long-Term Care Services

The Adult Day Health Care program provides therapeutic recreational activities, supervision, and health care to meet the needs of adults, 18 years and older who have physical and/or cognitive disabilities in four centers. Services are provided on a sliding fee scale. In FY 2023, services were provided to 122 older adults with 77 percent of participants meeting the criteria for institutional level of care, but their participation in the program enables them to continue to live at home in the community. The Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) staff also provide transition support to individuals needing a higher level of care. The County partners with Insight Memory Care Center (IMCC), which is a community provider of specialized day services for people with Alzheimer's type illnesses as well as respite, support, and education for their care giving families. Through this partnership, funds are provided to reduce the cost for County residents receiving care at IMCC. The Coordinating Council on Aging & Adults with Disabilities, formerly known as the Long-Term Care Coordinating Council, works with residents, advocates, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, businesses, local governments, and faith communities to provide a foundation so that Fairfax area residents are able to remain in their own community as they age and be able to participate in community life to the fullest.

Fairfax County Public Library

Programs Primarily Used by Older Adults

The Fairfax County Public Library offers several programs and services which, although not limited to the older adult population, are primarily used by older adults. These include the Talking Books Program; Home Delivery Service; book collections maintained at older adult residences, nursing homes, and adult day care centers; large print books; outreach and trainings; book clubs; assistive technologies; BiFolkal multi-media memory activity kits; Aging, Disability and Accessibility focused reference collection; Braille Awareness kits; and self-help groups for adults who are coping with vision loss.

Department of Tax Administration

Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled

Tax relief is provided to adults 65 and older and disabled persons on a graduated scale depending upon the level of income and net assets, which must not exceed \$90,000 and \$400,000, respectively. In FY 2023, 6,998 people participated in the program.

Department of Family Services

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services provides mandated investigations of situations of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation involving older adults aged 60 and older and incapacitated adults aged 18 and older, as well as case management services to provide protection for at-risk adults in the community and in public and private facilities. In FY 2023, 1,052 investigations were conducted.

Adult Services and Aging Services

Adult Services and Aging Services provides case management, including needs assessment, care plans, coordination/authorization of services, and follow-up for adults aged 60 and older and adults aged 18 and older with disabilities. The principal program which positively impacts clients' ability to age in place is the Home-Based Care program. This program provides contracted in-home bathing, laundry, and light housekeeping services. Some services may have functional and financial eligibility requirements. In FY 2023, a total of 3,564 clients were served across all programs.

Fire and Rescue Department

Senior Safety Programs

The Fire and Rescue Department offers various older adult safety programs for individuals 55 and older, including Basic Fire Safety, Emergency Preparedness for the Older Adult, Life Safety Education Seniors Program, Caregiver and Staff Training for those who care for older adults, "Smoke Alarm Program" which provides free smoke alarm batteries, and the "File of Life" Program which is an educational program that stresses the importance of maintaining current medication dosages and current physician information. The department plans to reach 10,000 older adults in FY 2025.

Fund 50000, Federal-State Grants

Community-Based Services

Community-Based Services provides services to adults aged 60 and older to enable them to live as independently as possible in the community. This includes assisted transportation, information and referral, volunteer and contracted home services, insurance counseling, and other related services. In FY 2023, 20,474 callers, walk-ins, or persons making email inquiries to the Adult and Aging Division within the Department of Family Services received information and referral services and/or access to the services.

Ombudsman

The Ombudsman Program, serving the City of Alexandria and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun, improves quality of life for the more than 12,349 residents in 140 nursing and assisted living facilities by educating residents and care providers about patient rights and by resolving complaints against nursing and assisted living facilities, as well as home care agencies, through counseling, negotiation, and investigation. In FY 2023, 37 trained volunteers provided 4,938 volunteer hours to support this program. The program also provides information about long-term care providers and educates the community about long-term care issues.

Homemaker

Homemaker provides services to adults aged 60 and older to enable them to remain in their homes rather than in more restrictive settings. Services are primarily targeted towards those older adults who are frail, isolated, or in economic need. Programs include money management, adult day care respite, and in-home services. In FY 2023, five caregivers received 702 hours of respite care, six clients were served through bathing services for a total of 408 hours, and 34 clients received 1,445 hours of Money Management support.

Congregate Meals

Congregate Meals are available at 25 sites countywide, including senior and Adult Day Health Care centers, private senior centers, and other locations for older adults. Although some centers operated below full capacity in the first three months of FY 2023, the Congregate Meals Program served 1,768 participants and provided 197,185 meals.

Home-Delivered Meals

Home-Delivered Meals provides meals to frail, homebound, low-income residents aged 60 and older who cannot prepare their own meals. In FY 2023, 335,607 meals were provided to 928 older adults and adults with disabilities. Meals are delivered through a vendor delivery model.

Caregiver Support

Caregiver Support provides education and support services to caregivers of persons 60 and older, or older adults caring for grandchildren. Services include scholarships for respite care, gap-filling respite and bathing services, assisted transportation (which is also reflected in Community-Based Services), assistance paying for supplies and services, and other activities that contribute to the well-being of older adults and help to relieve caregiver stress. In FY 2023, 26 clients were supported through the Discretionary Fund to purchase equipment such as grab bars, and 22 clients received assisted transportation services, taking 515 one-way trips. Also in FY 2023, the Golden Gazette, an aging newsletter, had an average of 7,369 monthly email subscribers and an average of 13,890 monthly mailed copies.

Fund 40040, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Countywide Older Adults and Families Program

The Older Adults and Families Program of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) provides strengths-based, person-centered, and solution-focused mental health outpatient treatment and case management services for older adults. Services support recovery and independence appropriate to the individual's physical and cognitive abilities and are provided in either an office or community-based setting, as appropriate. To address the unique needs of older adults, services include psychiatric evaluation, medication management, case management and supportive counseling, with linkage to and coordination of services with other community agencies, health care providers and family caregivers. In FY 2023, the program served 657 older adults aged 60 and over for a total of 17,316 service hours.

Fund 10030, Contributories

Northern Virginia Healthcare Center/Birmingham Green Adult Care Residence

This facility is owned by the Counties of Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William, and the City of Alexandria as tenants in common. During FY 2023, 149 Fairfax County residents were served in the facility (90 in the nursing facility and 59 in assisted living). To be eligible for admission to the nursing and assisted living facilities, older adults and adults with disabilities must meet income, resource, and functional requirements. The Department of Family Services' Self Sufficiency Division accepts and processes applications for Medicaid and auxiliary grants, and the Department of Family Services' Adult and Aging Division assesses functional eligibility.

Fund 30000, Metro Operations and Construction

MetroAccess

MetroAccess is a door-to-door paratransit service for people with disabilities who are not able to use fixed-route forms (bus and rail) of public transportation due to functional limitations that relate to their disability. MetroAccess provided approximately 135,076 completed stops for Fairfax County residents in FY 2023. This is an increase over FY 2022, but still well below pre-pandemic levels of ridership. An estimated 62.5 percent of MetroAccess customers residing in Fairfax County are over age 55.

Fund 60030, Technology Infrastructure Services

Computer Labs

The Department of Information Technology supports computer labs at libraries and recreation/senior centers that are used by residents, many of whom are older adults.