



**AAAs and Homeless Continuums of Care:
Connecting the Dots to Housing Stabilization**

Molly French, Director, Housing and Services

Agenda

Homelessness: A Rising Priority – Molly French, USAging

Strategies for a Nationwide Concern – Erika Jones, US Interagency Council on Homelessness

Preventing and Responding to Homelessness

- Diane Slezak, AgeOptions
- Jody Michaelson, Multnomah County Aging Disability and Veteran Services

Participants' Questions and Perspectives

Wrap Up

FAST FACTS

AAA Housing and Homelessness Programs and Partnerships

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide a variety of supportive services that enable older adults to live independently at home, yet the root of that independence—stable housing—is a challenge for many older adults. In response, AAAs are increasingly providing housing and homelessness-related services. They are also developing innovative partnerships to help ensure that older adults have a place to call home.

Housing Challenges Facing Older Adults

AAAs regularly assess community needs and are positioned to understand local emerging housing challenges. AAAs see these as the top five “major challenges” facing older adults in their planning and service areas.

Top 5 Housing Challenges Facing Older Adults, Per AAAs



AAA Directors Say:

“A lack of safe and affordable housing is a growing issue across our state. Emergency homeless shelters specifically for older adults are needed.”

“The high cost of living in our mountain state impacts older adults in many ways. Older adults on fixed incomes cannot afford the increasing housing costs, and neither can the direct care workers who provide in-home services to our clients.”

“Within our rural region [in the Southwest], there is a lack of housing stock in general, and older adults are being priced out of their homes.”

FAST FACTS

Partnerships for Housing and Homelessness Services

AAAs partner with, on average, 14 types of organizations related to housing and homelessness services. Most of these are informal partnerships.

Top 10 Types of Partner Organizations, With Which More Than 75 Percent of AAAs Have a Formal or Informal Relationship, Include:



Emerging Opportunities for Formalized Partnerships

AAAs represent the varied needs of older adults when they engage in partnerships with housing sector agencies. Approximately five percent of AAAs have a **formal partnership** with one of the following housing and homelessness partners:

- Supportive housing
- Public or other subsidized housing
- Homelessness partners, including homeless or emergency shelters
- Affordable housing coalition
- Continuum of Care or Coordinated Entry Systems for housing instability or older adults experiencing homelessness



Case Examples: Homelessness Prevention and Response

USAgging

CASE STUDIES: Homelessness Prevention

Building the Capacity of the Aging Network to Preserve Homes for People at Risk of Homelessness

AgeOptions
Oak Park, IL
www.ageoptions.org

USAgging highlights successful programs and partnerships to provide inspiration for AAAs and other community-based organizations to advance their work in homelessness prevention. Find more case studies at www.usaging.org/research.

In response to rising housing instability and homelessness among older adults in its planning and service area (PSA), AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in suburban Cook County, IL, created a multi-faceted **Home Preservation Program**. The goals of this program are to help older adults remain in their homes and smooth the integration of recently homeless older adults into the Aging Network's support system. To that end, AgeOptions is building the local Aging Network's capacity to provide housing-related supportive services with grants, targeted funding, training and technical assistance, and partnership development.

Through the Home Preservation Program, AgeOptions provides grants to embed full-time housing specialists at local Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and other provider partners of the AAA. These team members focus on assisting individuals with varied housing issues who need help finding affordable housing, maintaining tenancy, preventing or mitigating evictions, addressing homelessness and accessing comprehensive benefits screening. Housing specialists also cultivate working relationships with affordable housing and homeless services providers within their areas.

Other aspects of the Home Preservation Program include:

- Meeting regularly with the county sheriff's office, which administers evictions. An outcome of these meetings is that wrap-around community supports, such as care coordination and access to local resources, can be offered to affected older adults.
- Funding legal assistance agencies to prevent evictions. This includes strengthening referrals and engaging in appropriate data sharing with Home Preservation grantees.
- Educating and training Aging Network professionals about homelessness and resources available in community development corporations (CDCs) and other housing agencies. The quarterly AgeOptions "office hour" sessions provide an informal forum for housing specialists to discuss issues and receive assistance.
- Super-charging the AAA's relationship with the local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC)—a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding designed to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. AgeOptions meets regularly with the CoC to coordinate homelessness prevention and response in the region.

USAgging

CASE STUDIES: Homelessness Prevention

AAA Expertise Can Support APS Clients' Housing Stability

California's Home Safe Program

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Older adults and people with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria for Adult Protective Services (APS) may need new housing to escape abuse, neglect and exploitation. In the availability of housing-related supports for this population, the Home Safe program run by county APS agencies with case managers from the Home Safe program, key features to describe characteristics of Home Safe programs, key features to describe characteristics of Home Safe programs, key features to describe characteristics of Home Safe programs.

Older adults and people with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria for APS agencies need their partners to take a proactive approach to housing-related issues. APS agencies need their partners to take a proactive approach to housing-related issues. APS agencies need their partners to take a proactive approach to housing-related issues.

- Housing-related financial assistance such as short-term month's rent, housing deposits or landlord incentives.
- Deep cleaning to maintain safe housing.
- Eviction mediation and
- Landlord mediation that facilitate mobility!
- Home modifications that facilitate mobility!

Counties have considerable flexibility with the program's local office to tailor the program to the specific needs of their community. This flexibility enables AAAs to become integral partners in the growing field.

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CASE STUDIES: Homelessness Prevention

Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Through Housekeeping Services and Mobile Community Outreach

Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veteran Services Division
Multnomah County, OR
www.multco.usdhs

USAgging highlights successful programs and partnerships to provide inspiration for AAAs and other community-based organizations to advance their work in homelessness prevention. Find more case studies at www.usaging.org/research.

In Multnomah County, OR, homelessness among older adults is increasing. The 2022 Point-in-Time (PIT) report indicated that nearly 25 percent of people experiencing homelessness were age 50 and older, up from 14 percent in 2015. Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veteran Services Division (ADVD) is serving the Portland area, operates several programs to support the economic and demographic factors of our local efforts. So ADVD, in partnership with Homeless Services (or HOS), the county's Continuum of Care, has implemented two new programs to address homelessness.

Preventing Homelessness Through Housekeeping Services

In 2022, the county commissioner requested a study to better understand the for people with disabilities residing in rental properties and how to improve housing stability for this population. The study identified common risk factors and services needed to support older adults at risk of rental housing due to tenant contract violations of cleanliness standards. ADVD and HOS developed a program for low-income older adults who are at risk of losing their rental housing. The County Board of Commissioners approved a one-year, \$75 program for low-income older adults who are at risk of losing their rental housing. The program provides 20 households, eligible households must include an adult age 55 or older and approximately 20 households.

The services offered under the housekeeping pilot program, conducted by ADVD and HOS, include cleaning, tidying possessions and support for pet care to help participants with their rental contracts. To further support aging in place, housekeeping services are provided to participants who are unable to pay for transportation and possible, paired with other ADVD programs such as bill paying, transportation and other services. At least 80 percent of participants will continue to be in the pilot program in 2023.

Mobile Outreach to Support Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness

For older adults currently experiencing homelessness, with the support of ADVD and HOS, a mobile team was created to provide support to participants who are unable to access services and supports (STS), including housing-related supports, assistance with benefits, and other supportive services. Using Metro Supportive Housing Funding, ADVD and HOS created a mobile team to provide support to participants who are unable to access services and supports. The team members who have culturally diverse backgrounds and experiences. These mobile team members will continue to provide support to participants who are unable to access services and supports.

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CASE STUDIES: Homelessness Prevention

On-Site Service Coordination Helps Older Adults Maintain Housing

Area Office on Aging of Northwest Ohio, Inc.
Tolledo, OH
www.ansafllcincaging.com

USAgging highlights successful programs and partnerships to provide inspiration for AAAs and other community-based organizations to advance their work in homelessness prevention. Find more case studies at www.usaging.org/research.

Area Office on Aging of Northwest Ohio, Inc. (AOA), the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in Toledo, OH, administers a housing service specialist program to help older adults to successfully age in place. The program is designed to help older adults to successfully age in place. The program is designed to help older adults to successfully age in place.

Service coordination through AOA's program is offered to every individual at risk of homelessness. About half of the building's residents utilize the service immediately, while others access the program only when they need assistance. Access to the program is also available through referrals at any time. Referrals come from the individual's family, case managers or health support staff, or the individual themselves.

The service coordinator conducts an initial assessment which identifies potential barriers to housing stability and the service coordinator uses this information to connect the individual to available resources, benefits and services. Support services include scheduling or advocacy, lawyer referral with housing counseling or renewals, and service delivery coordination. Additionally, the service coordinator may help mediate a dispute between neighbors, assist with discussions about reasonable accommodations or help to resolve landlord/tenant issues.

More broadly, AOA reports that service coordination supports social needs through programs such as nutrition, transportation and other services. Service coordination connects individuals to options that they can comfortably and safely.

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CASE STUDIES: Homelessness Prevention

Addressing Older Adult Homelessness Through a Community-Wide Prevention and Response Initiative

Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging
Hickory, NC
www.wppag.org/area-agency-on-aging

USAgging highlights successful programs and partnerships to provide inspiration for AAAs and other community-based organizations to advance their work in homelessness prevention. Find more case studies at www.usaging.org/research.

With older adult homelessness on the rise, the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) in North Carolina launched a homelessness prevention and response initiative in partnership with its Area Agency on Aging (Western Piedmont AAA), municipalities, towns and a wide array of community partners.

To determine the best approach, WPCOG conducted listening sessions with members of the public, municipal and local government officials, police departments and other stakeholders. The WPCOG and economic development departments. Because WPCOG also administers the public housing authority, community management departments, regional planning and code enforcement, service integration can be the boots on the ground for diverse individuals to the homelessness prevention and response team to serve as provide intensive case management. Team members include housing navigators equipped to the program and services that seek to help people find, keep and maintain their housing. The team works closely with the local Continuum of Care (CoC), a group of organizations and entities with a common goal to eliminate homelessness. This partnership enables team members to enter individual profiles into the Western Piedmont AAA's support system (HMS) and refer them to homelessness services and programs for programs. WPCOG AAA supports the homelessness prevention and response initiative through its services and programs. WPCOG AAA uses American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a community health worker who goes out into the field to connect the client to the services and supports they need to become stably housed. Other AAA efforts include the following:

- Options counselors ask questions related to housing stability during intake. If an individual is at risk of experiencing homelessness, a referral is made to the homelessness prevention and response team to provide intensive case management, housing navigation and housing stabilization support.
- Housing-related financial assistance is available to cover things like heating fuel or repairs to well-insulated homes, utility connection deposits, furniture and other household services.
- Service providers offer supportive services that help individuals engage with their community through community programs, obtain health insurance, file for disability assistance, locate and obtain food resources, access mental health professionals, and connect to other community resources.

USAging's Growing Partnerships on Housing and Homelessness

In addition to the HHS-HUD [Housing and Services Resource Center](#), USAging partners with

- Consumer Financial Protection Board
- Habitat for Humanity International
- Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies
- National Alliance to End Homelessness
- National Council of State Housing Agencies
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

Homelessness After Age 50 Is Rising

Here is what we can do to prevent older adults from losing homes

By [Jeff Olivet](#) and [Sandy Markwood](#) | April 19, 2024 | [Housing and Assisted Living](#)

SHARE   

Imagine you are 82 years old, barely making ends meet on a fixed Social Security check and getting a \$1,300 bill to fix a burst water pipe. Imagine being 51, years away from Social Security, and losing your low-wage job because a new medical diagnosis forces you to give up your driver's license in a place with no public transit. Or imagine being 70, experiencing memory loss and forgetting to pay your bills.



People aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing group of people experiencing homeless in the United States. They make up nearly half of the homeless population, and their numbers are estimated to triple by 2030. | Credit: Getty/via PBS

***All In:* The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**





About USICH

- Only federal agency solely **dedicated to ending homelessness**
- Coordinates federal response across **19 federal agencies**
- **Cabinet leadership** under Chair HHS Secretary Becerra
- Supports **all levels of government** + private sector and philanthropy to advance most efficient and effective strategies

What Is *All In*?

usich.gov/all-in

- Roadmap for **federal action**
- **Blueprint for communities** to develop local and systems-level plans
- **All-of-government** approach



UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

ALL IN: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

DECEMBER 2022

ALL IN: THE FEDERAL STRATEGIC PLAN

END HOMELESSNESS



SOLUTIONS

HOUSING AND SUPPORTS

CRISIS RESPONSE

PREVENTION

EQUITY

DATA AND EVIDENCE

COLLABORATION

FOUNDATIONS



Prevention Strategies

Reduce housing instability for:

- Households most at risk of experiencing homelessness by increasing availability of and access to meaningful and sustainable **employment, education, and other mainstream supportive services**, opportunities, and resources
- Households with former involvement with or who are directly **exiting from publicly funded institutional systems**
- **Older adults and people with disabilities**
- **Veterans** and service members transitioning from military to civilian life
- **American Indian and Alaska Native** communities living on and off tribal lands
- **Youth and young adults**
- **Survivors** of human trafficking, sexual assault, stalking, and domestic violence, including family and intimate partner violence



Strategy for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Strategy 3: Reduce housing instability among older adults and people with disabilities...by increasing access to home- and community-based services and housing that is affordable, accessible, and integrated.

This includes strengthening coordination between CoCs [homeless continuums of care], **Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)**, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Aging and Disability Resource Centers/No Wrong Door Systems, housing, Social Security, healthcare, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and homeless service providers to improve housing stability.

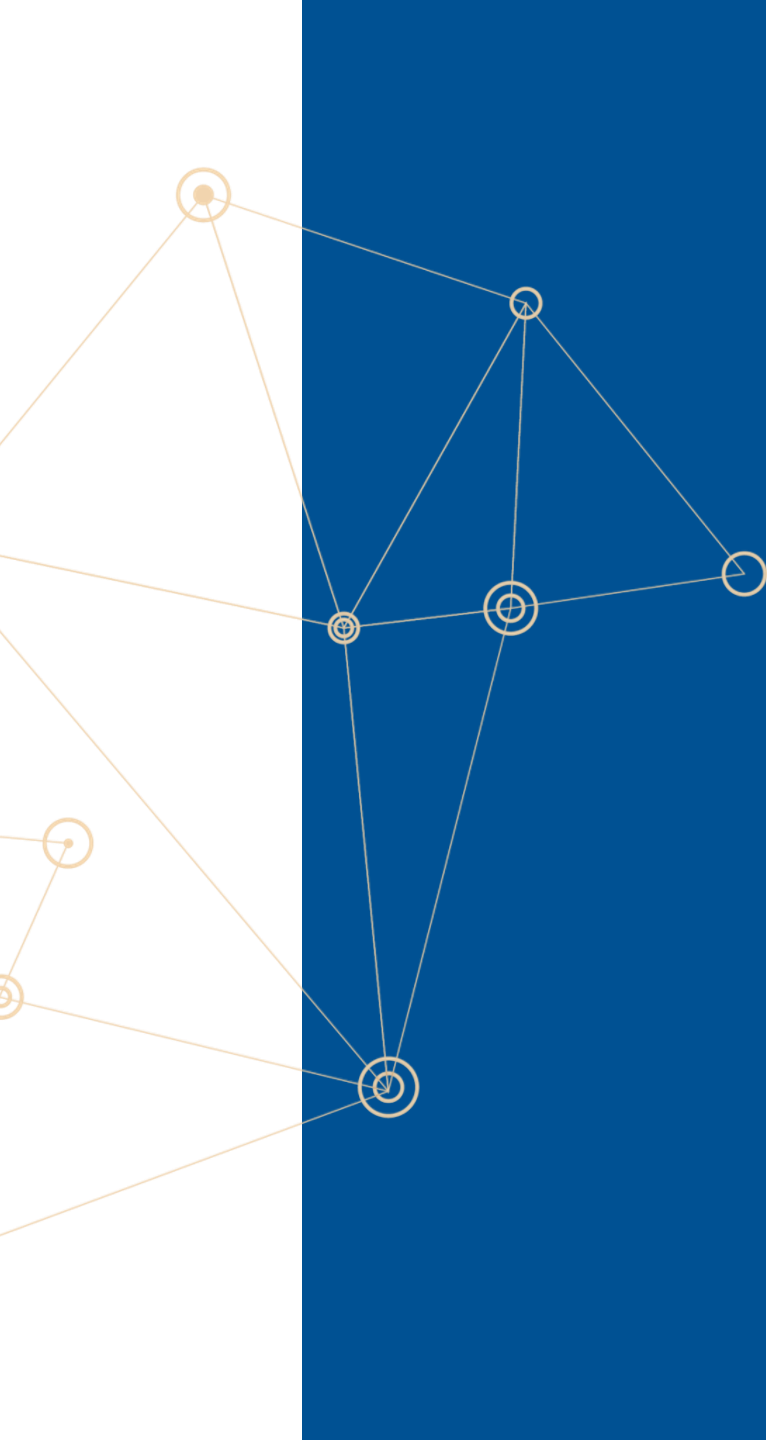


3 Steps to Stay Informed

1. Follow USICH on **LinkedIn/Facebook/Twitter**
2. Subscribe to the **USICH Newsletter**
3. Reach out to a **USICH Senior Regional Advisor**

usich.gov/all-in





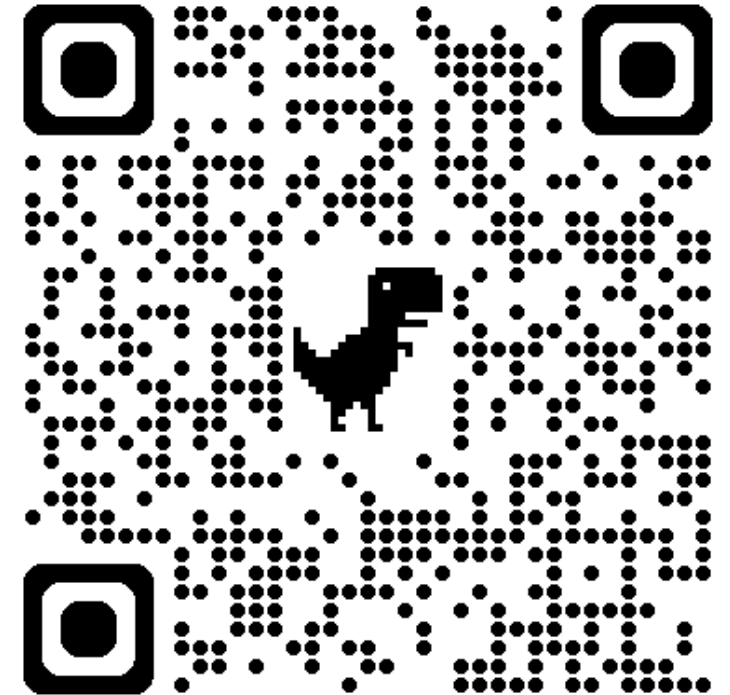
Home Preservation Pilot

USAgging Case Study

- Read more about our program in this USAgging case study:

<https://www.usaging.org/Files/Case-Study-Age-Options-508.pdf>

or scan QR code



The Problem – Why we started the program

AgeOptions created the ARPA Home Preservation Project in 2022

- Pandemic impact on housing – Expiring eviction moratoria
- Housing costs skyrocketing
- Increase in older adult evictions (as reported to us by our county sheriff's office and the Suburban Alliance for Homelessness)
- In listening sessions for planning use of ARPA funds, housing concerns were a major topic



The Problem – Current Statistics on Homelessness

The Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County leads the Cook County Continuum of Care, and in the past year, they provided homelessness and housing stability services to 12,822 individuals and **2,436 (19%) were age 55 or older.**



AgeOptions Home Preservation Project: Strategy/Program Goals

Primary Goal: Address the housing spectrum needs of older adults (60+) in suburban Cook County, IL (homeowners, renters or unhoused).

- Interventions to maintain housing (e.g. repairs or legal assistance);
- Assistance relocating to more affordable housing;
- Referrals to local continuum of care resources.



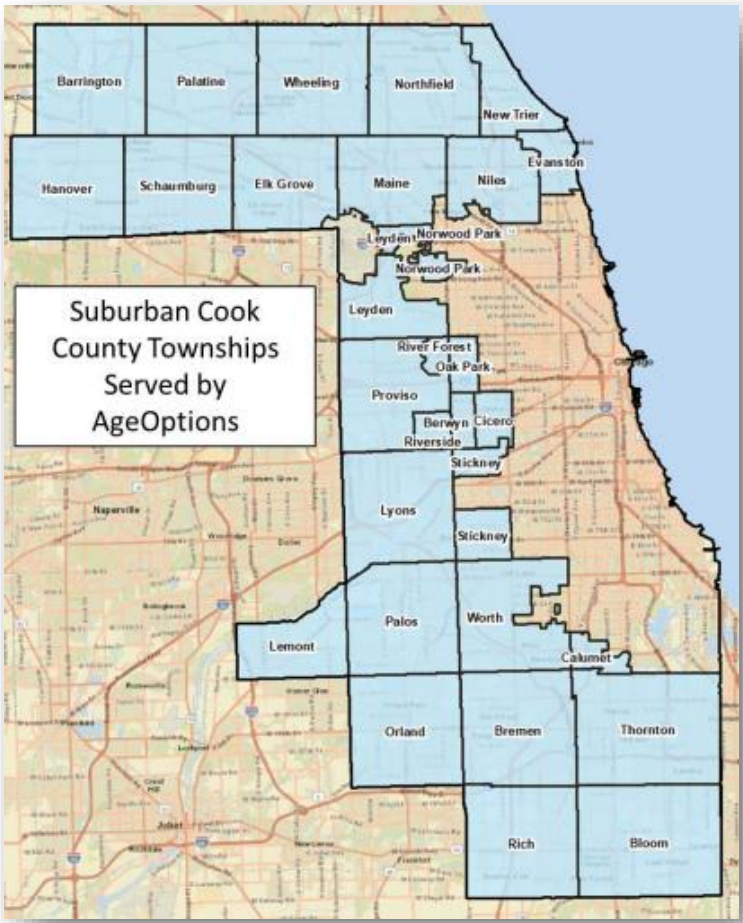
Strategy/Program Goals (Cont.)

Secondary Goals:

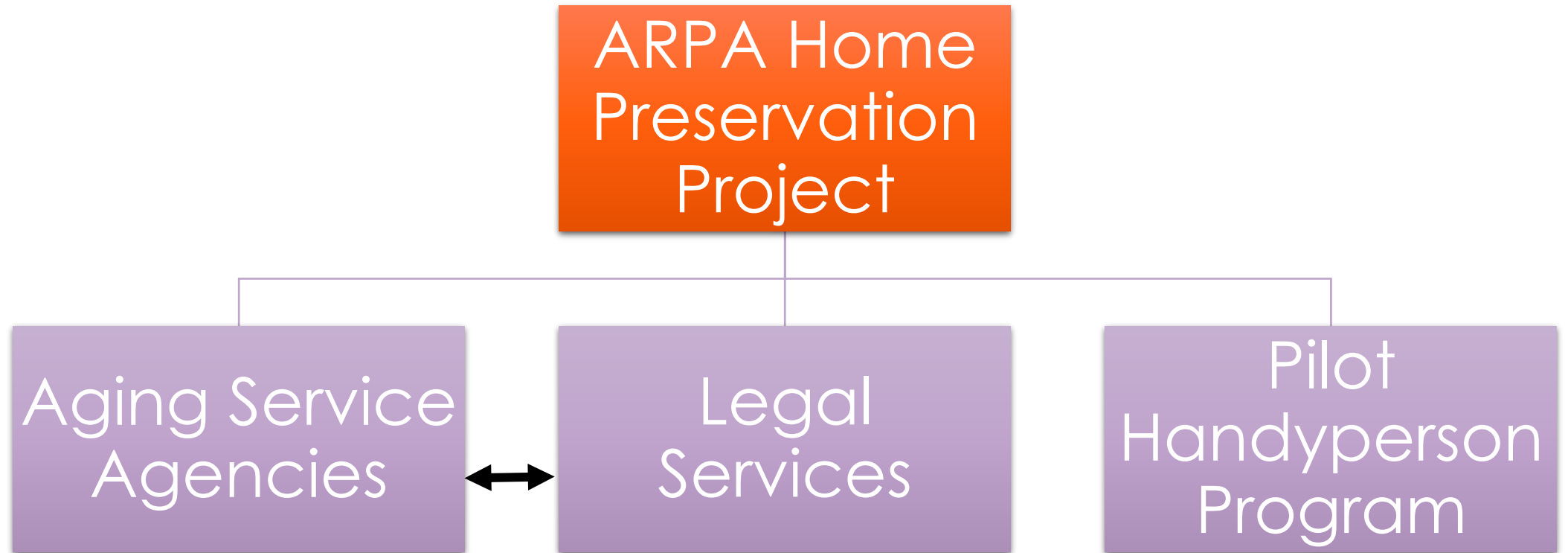
- Building network between aging service agencies, housing, law enforcement and legal services agencies
- Introduce and connect other network supports



ARPA Home Preservation Project



Three-Legged Approach



Our Partners – Aging Service Agencies

- 8 Aging Service Agencies covering all of suburban Cook County
 - Most are Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) - Find through your local AAA
 - Others are part of HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC)
- 2.5 years of funding to cover a full or part time housing specialist



Our Partners – Aging Service Agencies (Cont.)

- Each agency hired a housing specialist to assist older adults:
 - Motivational interviewing to identify primary housing needs & decision-making support to follow through on a plan of action
 - Connect and refer clients to resources (housing options, legal, repair, etc.)
 - Utilize gap filling funds, as needed and as appropriate, to help meet goals



Our Partners – Legal Aid Assistance

- Partnered with two local legal aid agencies
- Established a referral process that played to each legal org's expertise
- Encouraged referrals from aging service agencies OR clients could go to legal aid first



Our Partners – Repairs/Handyperson Pilot

- Partnered with an agency to serve south suburban area
- Small-scale housing repairs, general maintenance, or minor home accessibility installations for homeowners ages 65 and older.
- Clients from a 5-township area were eligible with particular focus on an identified city of need
 - City had several older adult homeowners, lower income
 - City agreed to waive certain fees and help promote



Lessons Learned: Repairs/Handyperson Pilot

- Time Constraints
 - Repair jobs take a long time (Permits, Estimates, Materials, Contractors)
 - Must know the community needs and connect with local government offices.
- Partner with other like-services to provide additional assistance (softens the blow for those who don't qualify)
 - Gas company (NICOR) or other utilities
 - Benefits check-up from AgeOptions

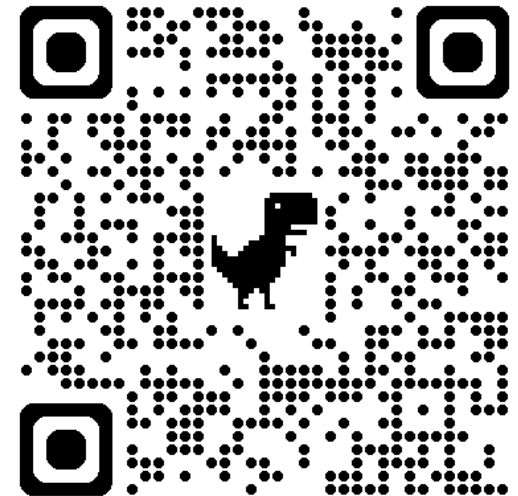


Thank you!

Diane Slezak, CEO
She/her/hers
AgeOptions

Diane.slezak@ageoptions.org
www.ageoptions.org

<https://www.usaging.org/Files/Case-Study-Age-Options-508.pdf>
or scan QR code



Homeless Mobile Intake Team

Jody Michaelson
Multnomah County, Or.



Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division

Homelessness in the Aging Population

In Multnomah County, over 25% of homeless people are over age 55* . (* Northwest Pilot Project, a partner and referrer)

A new report sheds light on this growing trend, [Toward Dignity](#)
Understanding Older Adult Homelessness.

In partnership with the Joint Office of Homeless Services and Metro Government, we are funded to assist individuals experiencing homelessness find Long Term Service and Supports.

Mobile Outreach Team

- Meet and assess consumers for Medicaid Long Term Care Services where they are living; shelters, centers, warming/cooling centers etc.
- Offer culturally specific service whenever possible.
- Person centered plan of their choice.



Outreach and Referral

Presentations and outreach to Partners with [information](#) and referral options.

Partners can send a referral directly to the team at our common email address hmit@multco.us.

Referrals triaged by manager, any with culturally specific considerations are assigned ASAP.

**Please note 'Hoteling' is a vital component for stabilization and needs to be budgeted for.*

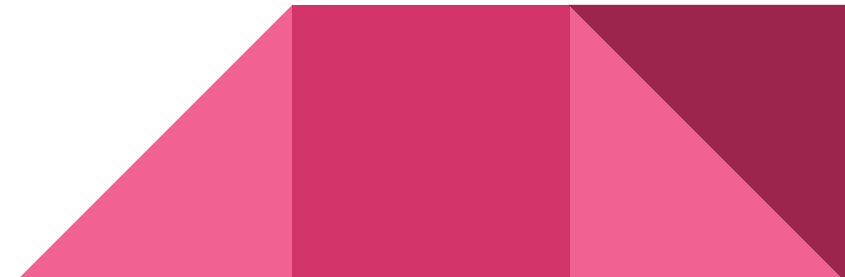


Client Assessment & Planning System

Mobile outreach completes thorough assessment of a consumer's ability to perform **Activities of Daily Living (ADL)**; mobility, eating, toileting, cognition.

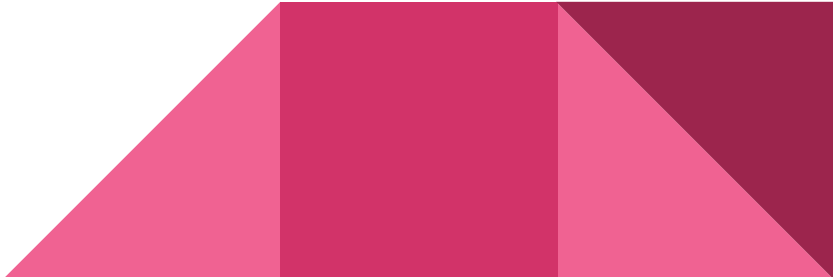
Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs); housekeeping, laundry, shopping, transportation, medication management and meal preparation.

** Once eligible the consumer is advised to their care options. Tours can be provided. Team is able to purchase furnishing, clothes, food etc. and other items needed to stabilize placement. These items should be budgeted for or otherwise sourced.*

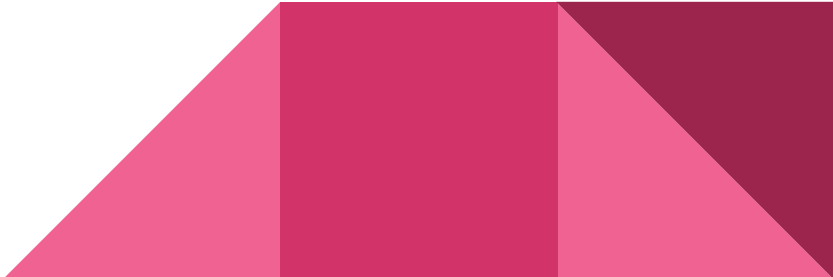


Service Options

If an individual is eligible for Medicaid LTSS, they are eligible to be served in various settings (as appropriate based on assessed care need and their preference).

- ❖ Nursing Facility
 - ❖ In Home with care
 - ❖ Adult Foster Home
 - ❖ Assisted Living Facility
 - ❖ Residential Care Facility
- 

Common Barriers to Placement & Services

- Vulnerable individuals have their Rights but also Responsibilities
 - Room and Board Payment and/or Service Liability payment (rep payee?)
 - Keeping Home Care Workers in their employ
 - Leaves placements, violates placement rules (smoking indoors, etc) possibly leading to eviction.
 - We have some tools and resources available, but we cannot compel people to accept services/benefits.
 - Behavioral Support Services
 - Behavioral Health referral
 - Lack of vacancies in care settings
- 

Working together

Community partners often have insight into needs that might not present/be shared during the assessment. It can be very helpful to share this information with the intake worker before the assessment.

This helps the intake worker ask appropriate follow up questions and helps ensure the assessment is as accurate as possible.





Panel Discussion and Q&A

Final Thoughts

- To reduce homelessness among older adults, communities need AAAs to bring their expertise on aging, networks, and programs/services to solutions.
- Partnerships are essential.
- Models exist to consider replicating, or you can be creative.
- Pilots are a way to get started.
 - Expect a learning curve that informs future improvements.
 - Collect data to understand/communicate outcomes.
 - Build the capacity of all partners.

Questions?

Models to Share?

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