

# Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022)

COMMITTED TO AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY  
WHERE OLDER ADULTS ARE **SAFE, WELL AND ENGAGED**



Presented to the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

By the Aging Coordinating Consortium

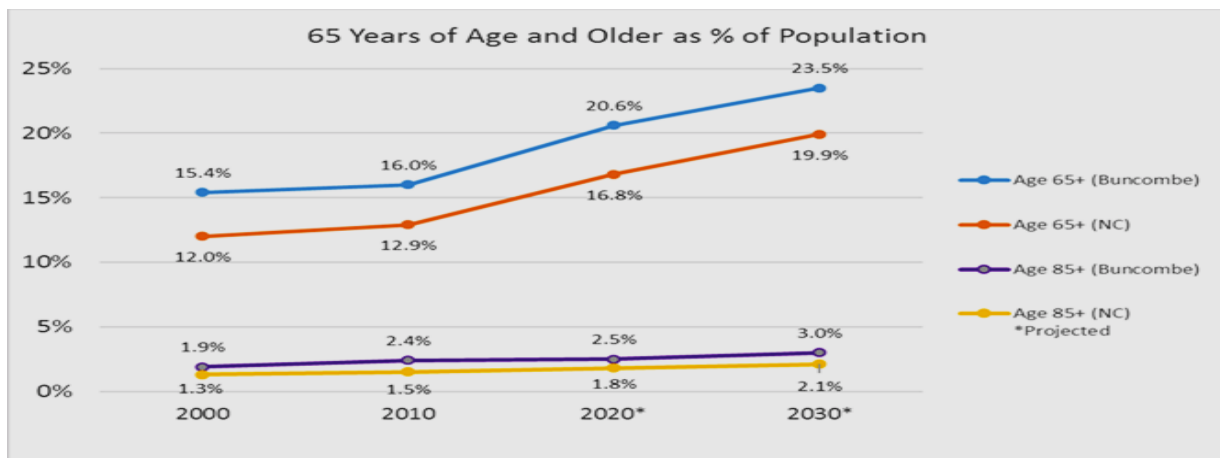
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***“The challenge we are facing is not population aging, but outdated and ineffective policies and practices.”*** Salzburg Global Seminar session “Aging Societies: Advancing Innovation and Equity,” 2015.

**Introduction**

In just a few years, one in five residents of Buncombe County will be age 65 or older. In fewer than twenty years (by 2035) projections suggest this ratio will be closer to one in four. North Carolina ranks 9<sup>th</sup> nationally in the number of people ages 65+ (see Table 1). Buncombe County has one of North Carolina’s fastest growing older adult populations; and, its age 65+ population is already greater in numbers, *and* as a percentage of the population, than its ages 0-17 population.

Table 1. Buncombe vs. NC People Ages 65+ and 85+ as a Percentage of the Population



The Buncombe County Aging Plan for 2018-2022 builds on the successes and lessons learned over a decade of age-friendly community planning and implementation work guided by the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC), the County’s entity that is charged with overseeing the provision of services to older adults and the identification of service priorities and issues affecting older adults.

The goals and strategies within this plan are the culmination of a comprehensive review of available secondary local, regional, and state data and reports. The goals and strategies also reflect responses to two surveys conducted during the summer of 2017: the Community Aging Plan Survey, completed by over 1150 Buncombe County residents age 50+; and the Providers and Professionals Aging Plan Survey, completed by over 100 service providers and professionals who work with older adults in Buncombe County.

This Aging Plan reflects the **vision** of an age-friendly community where older adults are **safe, well** and **engaged**. This vision aims to answer the big question, “Why an aging plan?” and even, “Why an age-friendly community?” It is our hope with this vision that priorities and resources may be

better focused and targeted toward demonstrable results. This plan also reflects a set of **values** established by the ACC to help guide its work, including how it allocates Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funds and other limited resources.

We value:

- All older adults in Buncombe County, regardless of income or education level, race, ethnicity or nationality, ability, health or cognitive status, gender identity or sexual orientation, veteran status or religious affiliation.
- A systems perspective to help us understand and address the many complex challenges we face with changing demographics.
- A multi-dimensional definition of “livable, age-friendly community.”
- The term of a five-year plan allows Buncombe County sufficient time to engage many organizations and institutions in the creation and implementation of a sustained process of improvement toward becoming an age-friendly community.

This Aging Plan coincides with Buncombe County joining the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) and launching a 5-year program, which will run parallel with this Aging Plan. In May 2017, the Commissioners resolved to join the Network, affirming that:

*An “age-friendly community” has policies, services, and structures that facilitate older adults staying healthy, participating in economic growth, remaining socially active, and living in security. Communities in which older adults can “successfully age” are more likely to mitigate the challenges and enjoy the opportunities related to their older citizens. Actions leading to “age-friendly communities” lead to happier, healthier residents of all ages.*

Resolution Authorizing Buncombe County to Join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities;” Consent Agenda; Buncombe County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting, May 2, 2017

The WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Community (AFC) framework contains 8 domains of livability that influence the quality of life for older adults: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community and health services. Whereas earlier aging plans set goals and made recommendations within specific areas similar to the AFC domains (e.g., “social engagement,” or “financial wellbeing”), in this plan the goals stand independent of any particular domain assignment, recognizing that to truly improve the livability of a community for older adults, we must enable a diversity of community entities to forge strategic partnerships across silos. Within any given domain there exist multiple dimensions and stakeholders, thus to achieve the goals of this Aging Plan will require effort across many sectors.

As new and diverse stakeholders become engaged in the Age-Friendly Community initiative, it will be important for the ACC to evolve to accommodate the necessary growth and expansion into a truly community-wide coordinating body that accomplishes its mission. Thus, this Aging Plan includes specific recommendations regarding strengthening the capacity of the ACC.

## Goals and Strategies

The vision for this (2018-2022) Aging Plan – of an age-friendly community where older adults are *safe, well* and *engaged* – is articulated into a set of goals and strategies (see Table 2).

The goals were selected through a review of available data. They reflect pressing needs and have the potential to be effectively realized through a community-wide, collective effort led by the ACC.

The strategies communicate clearly and simply how the ACC will work toward achieving the goals over the next five years.

For each strategy, the ACC will identify performance measures, develop an action plan, and create a dashboard, enabling the ACC to monitor progress toward desired results and to course-correct along the way.

Through collective and targeted efforts over the next five years, the Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium will demonstrably move Buncombe County closer toward its vision of an **age-friendly community** where older adults are **safe, well** and **engaged**.

**Table 2. Safe, Well and Engaged: Goals and Strategies**

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Example Strategies</b>
<b>SAFE</b>	<b>1.1 Prevent abuse and neglect of older adults</b>	Increase the numbers of vulnerable older adults who accept supportive services
		Increase numbers of Adult Care Home staff and administrators reached through training and support.
	<b>1.2 Increase awareness of fraud, scam and financial exploitation among older adults</b>	Increase formats and distribution of fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education
		Increase numbers of older adults reached through fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education
<b>WELL</b>	<b>2.1 Improve health and wellness among older adults</b>	Increase healthy behaviors among older adults
		Reduce rate of injuries due to falls
	<b>2.2 Support financial wellbeing among older adults</b>	Increase numbers of older adults enrolled in economic support programs for which they are eligible
		Increase numbers of older adults reached through financial literacy outreach and education
	<b>2.3 Support caregivers providing care to older adults</b>	Increase numbers of caregivers reached through support groups and programs
	<b>ENGAGED</b>	<b>3.1 Increase older adults' access to transportation</b>
<b>3.2 Improve older adults' access to services and supports</b>		Increase awareness among older adults of how to access information about services and supports
<b>3.3 Increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County</b>		Join WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities
		Increase the number of businesses and organizations designated as age- and/or dementia-friendly
		Increase numbers of frontline County employees and first responders who participate in dementia-friendly training



## **Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC): Goals and Strategies**

With this (2018-2022) Aging Plan, and the concurrent launch of the Age-Friendly Community (AFC) initiative, it is imperative that the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC) strengthen its capacity to serve as the coordinating body for increasingly more complex and cross-sector efforts to realize the vision of this plan and make Buncombe County an age-friendly community where older adults are **safe, well** and **engaged**.

**Goal 4.1:** Strengthen the capacity of the ACC to encompass the Age-Friendly Communities initiative and lead the implementation of this 2018-2022 Aging Plan effectively.

### **Example Strategies:**

- a. Revise the structure of the ACC to lead and monitor implementation of the 2018-22 Aging Plan.
- b. Establish a strong executive committee to direct the activities of the ACC and monitor the implementation and progress/results of the Aging Plan.
- c. Clarify the functions of the ACC and restructure meetings to effectively accomplish them.
- d. Utilize the Governance Committee to create meaningful membership categories, facilitate an annual membership process including orientation, and revise the bylaws to reflect the restructure of the ACC.
- e. Replace the Planning and Implementation Committee with work groups that set targets and create and implement annual actions plans for the Aging Plan's goals and strategies.
- f. Expand the scope and charge of the Allocations Committee to include resource development.
  - (1) Identify and seek new sources of funding.
  - (2) Develop decision-making matrix to align funding allocations with Aging Plan goals and values (e.g., evidence based/informed; interagency collaboration; equity and inclusion).
  - (3) Designate five percent County supplemental funds to invest in new solutions.
  - (4) Consider increasing amount of money set aside for this fund based upon demonstrable results.
- g. Closely align Advocacy and Awareness Committee activities with the Aging Plan's goals.
- h. Establish the Age-Friendly Community Steering Team, as called for in the Commissioners' May resolution, as a committee of the ACC.
  - (1) Recruit ACC volunteers/individual members to lead this initiative.
  - (2) Engage diverse stakeholders from across the community to participate in this initiative.
  - (3) Recruit increased participation by older Buncombe County residents.
- i. Use Results-Based accountability to monitor the Aging Plan and its progress.
  - (1) Build scorecard development into funding application process.
  - (2) Provide training and support for programs to develop appropriate scorecards.
  - (3) Establish bi-annual scorecard update reports to monitor progress and results.
- j. Encourage partnering between existing organizations, initiatives and community entities to collaboratively achieve the goals of the Aging Plan.
- k. Employ technology to advance the goals of the Aging Plan and to create systems for improved coordination among services, organizations and other community entities.

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