

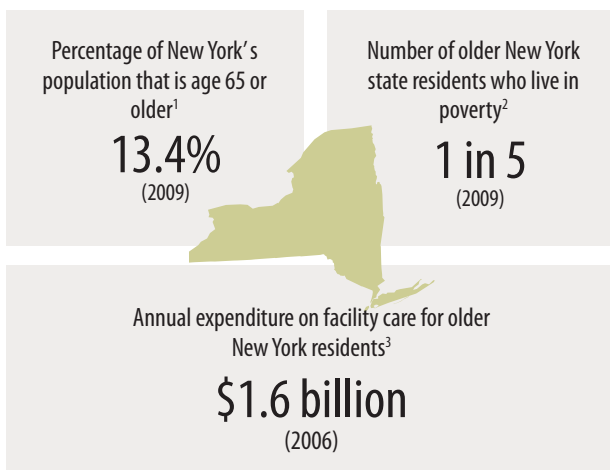
NEW YORK

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The state report is a resource to inform donors and funders about the local context of social issues affecting at-risk populations. This report can be used to better understand the social and economic situation in which the issue exists as well as statewide initiatives and trends in private and government funding directed

to address the issue. This state level research complements the related social issue report that provides an overview of the issue and approaches to address it and the guide to giving that provides criteria to evaluate organizations working to address the issue.

FACTS: HEALTHY AGING IN NEW YORK



SOCIAL ISSUE INDICATORS

Presently, no single indicator defines healthy aging effectively for all seniors. Individuals who age-in-community require different service matrices to support a variety of needs. Such services may be grouped into three broad categories: physical and mental health, social engagement, and personal independence. Measuring successful supports for physical and mental health proves challenging. While changes in medical test results, frequency of physician visits, and number of hospital stays may serve as proxies, no single, holistic measure of physical or mental well-being exists. Similarly, social engagement is difficult to evaluate, as no one level of involvement can be applied to all individuals. As with health and engagement, only certain aspects of personal independence, such as public safety or economic security, can be evaluated. Although indicators that describe all aspects of healthy aging do not exist at this time, nonprofit organizations are developing specific measures to evaluate the services they offer.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NEW YORK

STATE STRUCTURE

Created in 1961, the New York State Office for the Aging was one of the first state entities developed to provide aging services. The office coordinates programs that facilitate healthy aging throughout the state, including overseeing 59 Local Offices for the Aging. Each county has its own aging office, and there are local offices in New York City and the St. Regis Mohawk, Cattaraugus and Allegany Seneca Reservations.⁴ The reservation-based offices are especially unique, as they are the only such entities located east of the Mississippi River that provide assistance specifically to aging Native Americans.

The local offices also serve as New York's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), created at the national level by the 1965 Older Americans Act to provide support for community-based services and related needs of older Americans at the city and county levels.⁵ The range of services offered at AAAs varies based on local needs, and these agencies may also contract with other local service providers. All AAAs provide programs that address physical and mental health needs, social engagement, and personal independence.

New York City's Department for the Aging, the AAA for the NYC metropolitan area, has implemented several programs specific to the needs of vulnerable seniors, including the BigAppleRx

prescription discount program. The department has also partnered with NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Office to launch a citywide aging initiative entitled *Age-Friendly NYC: Enhancing Our City's Livability for Older New Yorkers*.⁶ The initiative includes plans to expand services provided by senior centers, provide more affordable housing for older New Yorkers, improve access to public transportation, and increase access to social services that improve health and well-being.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 2002, 36 state government agencies embarked on Project 2015, a nine-month strategic planning initiative to address the changing needs of New York's population.⁷ The underlying goals of Project 2015 were to increase awareness of the state's changing demographics, address the needs of aging and culturally diverse New Yorkers, and increase communication across agencies.

The 2005 progress report indicated that New York has the third-largest population of persons age 65 and older in the nation. Accordingly, the original goals of Project 2015 were expanded to include community involvement at the local level so that state agencies, local offices, and the general public would be involved

in helping to address the needs of aging New Yorkers. Some of the initiatives undertaken by Project 2015 to date include the following:

- The designation of special personnel within the Department of Insurance to help seniors navigate Medicare
- The creation of a new council to address the mental health needs of older New Yorkers
- An increase in accessibility to outdoor parks and recreation areas across the state
- An expansion of education programs for seniors offered in English and Spanish
- The restructuring of state hospitals and nursing homes to reduce dependence on facility care.⁸

The expected result of the intergovernmental and organizational collaboration is increased access to services for aging New Yorkers, especially those who are low-income, minority, immigrant, and rural-dwelling. Additionally, organizations

throughout the state have aligned with the initiative by contracting to provide needed services, especially targeting low-income, minority, and immigrant seniors.

In 2009, the New York State Office for the Aging conducted a survey and report concerning informal caregivers who provide assistance, such as preparing meals and helping with activities of daily living to aging individuals.⁹ Informal caregivers, who are often the children of aging adults, receive no salary or compensation for their efforts, yet they save the formal eldercare system billions of dollars each year. Through this survey, New York policymakers discovered that informal caregivers may benefit from additional state support. Some proposed methods of support include increased respite care services to give informal caregivers more breaks or encouragement of flexible work schedules that allow informal caregivers to continue assisting aging New Yorkers without penalties from their employers. These services are particularly important for lower-income populations.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

| ORGANIZATION | WEBSITE |
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| New York State Office for the Aging | www.aging.ny.gov/ |
| New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging | www.nysaaaa.org/ |
| New York City Department for the Aging | www.nyc.gov/html/dfta |
| Individual towns also have Agencies on Aging | |

ABOUT SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

Social Impact Research (SIR) is the independent research department of Root Cause, a research and consulting firm dedicated to mobilizing the nonprofit, public, and business sectors to work collaboratively in a new social impact market. Modeled after private sector equity research firms, SIR conducts

research on social issues and independent analysis of program performance to provide leaders and funders with the rigorous, actionable information they need to make strategic decisions about creating and investing in social impact.

ENDNOTES

1. United States Census Bureau. State & County Quickfacts: New York. (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36000.html> (accessed July 3, 2011).
2. United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey Subject Tables: New York. (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_S0103&-ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_-tree_id=5309&-redoLog=true&-_caller=geoselect&-geo_id=04000US36&-format=&-lang=en (accessed July 3, 2011).
3. Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century. Appendix 4: Briefing on Long Term Care Reimbursement and Non-Institutional Care Models. (New York, NY: Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, 2006), www.nyhealthcarecommission.org/2Fdocs%2Ffinal%2Fappendix4-briefingonltcreimbursement.pdf&rt=j&q=%22billion%22%20spent%20per%20year%20on%20long%20term%20care%20in%20new%20york&ei=Jm8STpubB6j30gGt-8CMDg&usg=AFQjCNELsq2sMTDDhL1VfVIXgNCZD8rAYw&cad=rja (accessed July 3, 2011).
4. New York State Office for the Aging. About NYSOFA. (Albany, NY: NYSOFA, 2009), <http://www.aging.ny.gov/NYSOFA/AboutNYSOFA.cfm> (accessed July 3, 2011).
5. York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging. AAA Fact Sheet (Albany, NY: NYSAAAA, 2009), http://www.nysaaaa.org/AAA_Fact_Sheet/aaa_fact_sheet.htm (accessed July 3, 2011).
6. City of New York Office of the Mayor. Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn, and the New York Academy of Medicine Unveil Blueprint to Enhance City's Livability for Older New Yorkers. (New York City, NY: Office of the Mayor, 2009). http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/downloads/pdf/all_ages_initiatives.pdf
7. New York State Office for the Aging. Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York. (Albany, NY: NYSOFA, 2006), <http://www.aging.ny.gov/2015/ToolkitIndex.cfm> (accessed July 3, 2011).
8. New York State Office for the Aging. Project 2015: State Agencies Status Report 2005. (Albany, NY: NYSOFA, 2006), <http://www.aging.ny.gov/2015/index.cfm> (accessed July 3, 2011).
9. New York State Office for the Aging. New York State Caregiver Support Programs Participants Survey. (Albany, NY: NYSOFA, 2009), <http://www.aging.ny.gov/ReportsAndData/Index.cfm> (accessed July 3, 2011).