

# Age-friendly NYC

## New Commitments for a City for All Ages



Bill de Blasio  
NYC Mayor

Richard R. Buery Jr.  
Deputy Mayor for Strategic  
Policy Initiatives

**NYC™**  
Department for  
the Aging

Donna M. Corrado, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

AGE  
FRIENDLY  
NYC





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THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

Dear Friends:

In less than a quarter century, an estimated one in five New Yorkers will be at least 60 years old. That is a profound change for our city, which will strengthen us, yet presents a challenge. We must ensure those who built this city can remain here in comfort and dignity.

My administration is fighting to make this a better and fairer place for all New Yorkers and that is what our Age-Friendly NYC initiative is all about. We are helping seniors stay in their neighborhoods by building or preserving 200,000 affordable apartments. Through Vision Zero, we are making our streets safer for seniors. We are also addressing isolation and other mental health issues through ThriveNYC. From transportation to cultural options, we have streamlined and improved existing programs to make sure they reach seniors in a more effective way.

History tells us New York City is great because anyone can make it here. My urgent mission is to uphold this legacy by keeping New York a place for all people, regardless of age.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor





Greetings,

As Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives, I work to help Mayor Bill de Blasio achieve his vision: that all New Yorkers can lead happy, healthy and productive lives.

Working with the NYC Department for the Aging, we have made it a priority for this vision to apply equally to older New Yorkers – so that they may be able to thrive as they age, in good health; safe and secure in their homes; and able to enjoy all that New York City has to offer.

Age Friendly NYC was first launched in 2007 to assess the needs of older adults using the World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities framework. As a result, several programs were developed to respond to those needs. We have made extraordinary progress in making the City work for older New Yorkers.

But, on the 10th anniversary of the Age Friendly initiative, the time has come to renew that commitment and move our work forward.

That is why I am so proud that the de Blasio administration is releasing Age Friendly NYC: New Commitments for a City For All Ages this year. The 2017 report describes our updated vision for an age-friendly city. It includes 86 initiatives spanning health and social services, housing, public spaces and transportation, public safety, communication and information, and community and civic participation.

The wisdom and experience of older adults enrich our communities and anchor our neighborhoods. With more people reaching and living beyond age 60 than ever before, it has become increasingly important to make sure this growing population has the supports and resources they need to thrive in the City they have helped to make great.

When the City becomes fairer and more inclusive, we all benefit.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Buery, Jr.,  
Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives





THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO  
SPEAKER

TELEPHONE  
(212) 788-7210

Dear New Yorker:

The New York City Council, together with Mayor Bill De Blasio, the New York Academy of Medicine and the Age-friendly Commission, has made substantial headway toward the creation of an age-friendly New York City. In recent years, the City Council has spearheaded key legislation designed to support older adults and their families, and allow seniors to age in place in their homes and communities.

As New York's senior population continues to increase, it is critical that the necessary resources are available so seniors can remain in the City. By passing the "Year of the Senior Budget" in Fiscal Year 2018, the City made a strong investment in achieving this goal. The Department for the Aging's Fiscal Year 2018 budget includes a base-lined \$23 million increase that will allow the Department to right-size its senior center budgets, eliminate the persistent waitlists for case management and homecare services, launch a new caregiver respite program, and provide weekend meals to seniors. The City Council also included \$21.8 million to extend and enhance the City's senior services, including NORCs, immigrant senior centers and social adult day care centers.

Another key component of an age-friendly New York is ensuring that seniors can age in place in safe and functional homes. To that end, the City Council passed a law requiring the Department for the Aging, in consultation with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, to create and distribute an aging in place guide for building owners. The guide, published in 2016, offers recommendations for ways building owners can make structural modifications that promote the health and well-being of senior residents and residents of all ages. In addition, the City Council has supported handy person services for seniors again in the Fiscal 2018 Budget.

Vital to allowing older adults to age in place is the role that unpaid caregivers play in their lives. Unpaid caregivers provide critical emotional, physical, and financial support to seniors, often to the detriment of their own needs. These invisible workers act as a lifeline for many seniors in the City. In 2016, the City Council passed legislation to gain a better understanding of who these caregivers are and how the City can best support them. The results of the survey, due later this summer, will be used to create a comprehensive plan to address the needs of unpaid caregivers.

Despite the progress the City Council has made, there is still more work to do. The City Council remains committed to making New York City a city where seniors thrive. With the help of our public and private partners in the City, we intend to ensure that seniors, now and in the years to come, can continue to call New York City home.

Sincerely,

MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO  
Speaker, NYC Council

MARGARET CHIN  
Chair, Committee on Aging





To Our Fellow New Yorkers:

We have been honored to serve as the co-chairs of the Age-friendly NYC Commission, a multi-sector group of esteemed leaders representing government, business, architecture, law, arts and culture, technology, academia, health care, and social services, charged with making the City the best possible place to live and work as we age. Appointed in 2010 and then reelected in 2015 by Mayor Bill de Blasio and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, the Age-friendly NYC Commission has helped New York City become a global leader in the age-friendly cities movement through the development of an array of innovative pilot projects to promote healthy aging and maximize physical, social and economic participation throughout the life course.

With support from the New York Academy of Medicine, the Commission identifies priorities grounded in feedback from older New Yorkers and forms working groups to address these priorities informed by the best available evidence. Past working groups launched the Age-friendly Local Business and Age-friendly Neighborhoods initiatives, which have been replicated around the world and are often cited as best practices, as well as Agefriendly-college.org, a searchable database of educational and cultural opportunities at NYC-area colleges and universities.

The Age-friendly NYC Commission's current priorities include:

- Housing: improving access to home modifications to maintain independence and safety;
- Primary Care: increasing utilization of preventive services among older people and enhancing the delivery of primary care to address the broader determinants of healthy aging;
- Financial Wellness: promoting financial wellness as a core component of healthy aging;
- Public Safety: bridging formal and informal support networks to build community and improve perceptions of safety;
- Media, Arts, and Culture: catalyzing new opportunities for involvement in arts and culture and challenging ageist assumptions.

As we work to achieve these goals, we strive to:

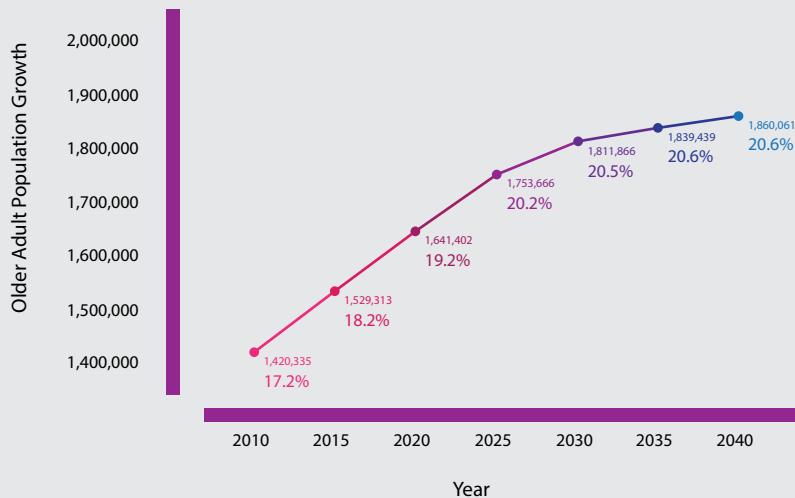
- Maximize intergenerational engagement
- Ensure the equitable deployment of resources
- Include people with dementia and their caregivers
- Leverage emerging technology where appropriate

We look forward to continued success with our City partners and hope to see an age-friendly initiative in every community district in the near future. We invite you to consider how your personal and professional networks and activities might help to advance our efforts to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Ed Lewis and Audrey Weiner

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is "Ed Lewis" and the signature on the right is "Audrey Weiner".

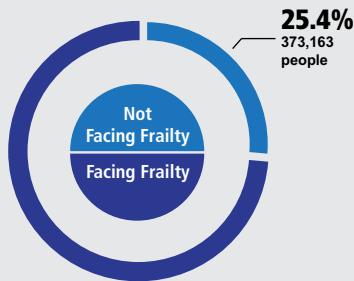
## Age-Friendly Projections



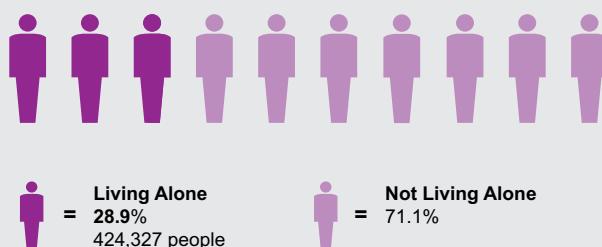
## Gender



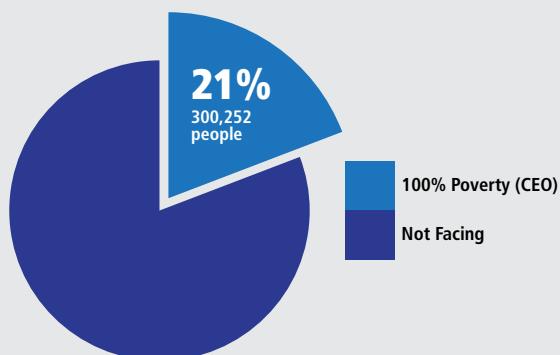
## Facing Frailty



## Living Alone



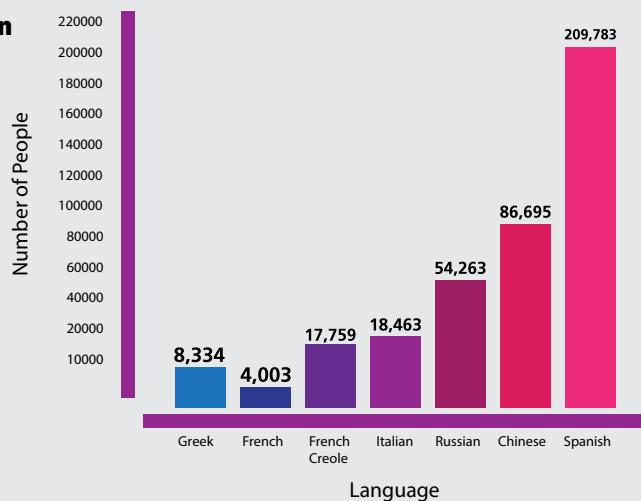
## Facing Poverty



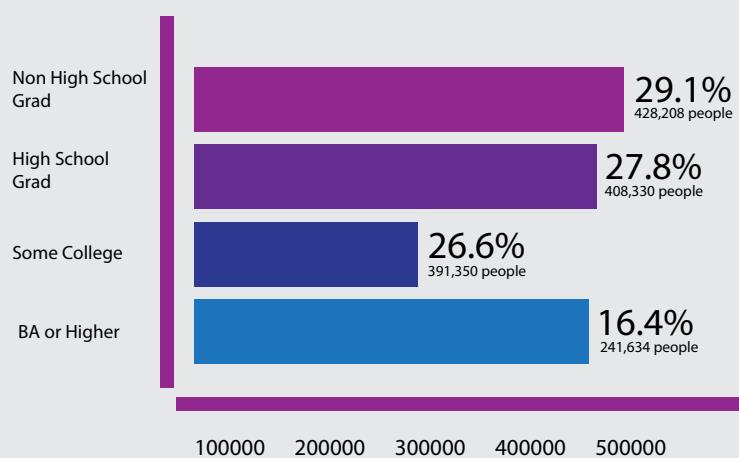
## Employment Status



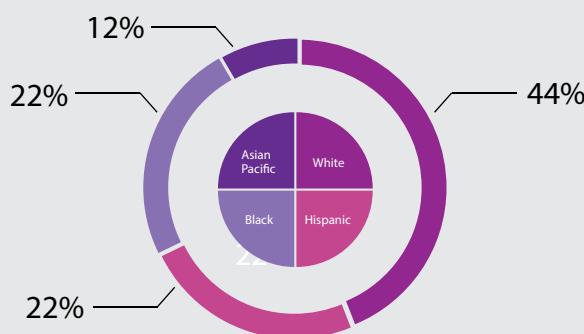
## Top Non-English Languages Spoken



## Education Level



## Race/Ethnicity





# **Introduction & History of Age-friendly NYC**



## INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City has invested significantly in innovative programs and supports for older New Yorkers that truly make New York a city for all ages.

As New Yorkers live longer, their hard-won wisdom, experience, skills, knowledge, productivity, energy, and insights are valuable and growing resources that are helping to support our families, improve our workplaces, and strengthen communities in all five boroughs. Ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse, older New Yorkers are a vital part of the mosaic of the City. Ensuring that New Yorkers can thrive as they age benefits everyone.

The de Blasio Administration has increased funding for aging services by more than 58 percent. That is an overall increase in the baseline City Tax Levy funding of more than \$82 million. This increased funding has benefited senior centers, case management services that help homebound seniors, home-delivered meals, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) that are not age-restricted housing locations that are home to significant concentrations of older adults who have aged in place, elder abuse programs, transportation services, and many other important services.

**These critically important investments will help older residents live healthier and more fulfilling lives as they age in the City they love, continuing to contribute in myriad ways to making New York a better place to grow up and grow old.**

These critically important investments will help older residents live healthier and more fulfilling lives as they age in the City they love, continuing to contribute in myriad ways to making New York a better place to grow up and grow old. By 2040, one in every five New Yorkers will be 60 or older. Supporting needed and cutting edge solutions that promote healthy aging today will enable the City to reap all of the benefits that tomorrow's older residents have to offer.

## HISTORY OF AGE-FRIENDLY NYC

Age-friendly NYC was launched in the fall of 2007 as a collaboration between the Mayor's Office, the New York City Council (Council), and the New York Academy of Medicine (Academy). Age-friendly NYC has made great strides toward assessing the City's responsiveness to the needs of older New Yorkers, developing recommendations, and implementing strategies that allow New York to enhance its status as an age-friendly city.

Age-friendly NYC builds on the work of the World Health Organization's Global Age-friendly Cities initiative, which engages

older adults and other stakeholders in cities around the world to identify the core features of an age-friendly city. Using the Global Age-friendly Cities framework, the City and the Academy conducted a comprehensive assessment of the age-friendliness of New York City. Throughout 2008 and 2009, the City and the Academy engaged older New Yorkers, City agencies, and leaders from the private, non-profit, and academic sectors to learn how the City could improve the quality of life of older residents. In August 2009, in response to their findings, the City announced 59 initiatives to make New York City more age-friendly.

The City joined with the Academy to seat the Age-friendly NYC Commission in 2010. The Commission—comprised of leaders in the business, education, civic, and non-profit sectors, among others—was charged with making recommendations on how the City might partner with these sectors and leverage their resources to enhance our age-friendly efforts. In 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced the seating of 22 new members of the Age-friendly NYC Commission. Through this public-private partnership, Age-friendly NYC builds upon continuing initiatives, such as the City’s CityBench program to increase the amount of public seating on NYC streets and Senior Splash that reserves public pool hours exclusively for older adults and offers water exercise classes geared toward seniors.

Age-friendly NYC has been recognized globally: In July 2010, the World Health Organization named New York City the first Age-friendly City under its new certification process. In 2013, Age-friendly NYC was awarded “Best Existing Age-friendly Initiative in the World” by the International Federation on Ageing.

Our new report, *Age-friendly NYC: New Commitments for a City for All Ages*, encompasses 86 initiatives that update our age-friendly plan. It communicates our ongoing success implementing initiatives launched in the 2009 plan and describes new endeavors to support New York City’s seniors.

# City Initiatives



## HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

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**The overall increase of more than \$82 million between the last year of the prior Administration and the FY '18 budget represents a 58 percent rise in funding for aging services under the de Blasio Administration.**

### 1) INCREASE FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL AGING SERVICES

Mayor Bill de Blasio has made a strong commitment to aging services, as demonstrated by significant increases in baseline City Tax Levy funding for programs to support older New Yorkers. The overall increase of more than \$82 million between the last year of the prior Administration and the FY '18 budget represents a 58 percent rise in funding for aging services under the de Blasio Administration. This includes an increase of more than \$27 million for the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA), the City's lead agency supporting older New Yorkers. This funding includes:

- \$10.7 million to address the home-care waitlist, a program that provides services including personal care and housekeeping for functionally impaired older adults;
- \$10 million to adjust rates for senior centers to improve service quality and accountability;
- \$4 million to establish a new program to support caregivers of older adults;
- \$1.2 million to address the case management waitlist, providing seniors who need assistance in developing a care plan and arranging for them to receive supportive DFTA-funded services; and
- \$1.2 million to provide weekend meals to senior center participants or home-delivered meals recipients.

In addition to this increased funding, Mayor de Blasio has made numerous additional investments that will directly benefit older New Yorkers. For example, he has fought to expand the affordable senior housing commitment to 15,000 units and to raise the household income eligibility level for the Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption (SCHE) from \$37,400 to \$58,400, contingent upon legislative approval. The SCHE program provides a property tax exemption for senior citizens who own one, two, or three family homes, condominiums, or cooperative apartments. This alone would benefit approximately 30,000 households in New York City.

The NYC Council has also allocated more than \$20 million in discretionary funding annually in recent fiscal years to various initiatives to improve the lives of older people, such as enriching senior center programs serving immigrant populations, providing services to older LGBT residents in every borough, increasing arts



opportunities for senior center participants, and expanding Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) services. NORCs are residential locations—single buildings, housing developments, or clusters of buildings within a neighborhood—that are neither age-restricted nor built specifically for older adults, but have become home to significant concentrations of older adults.

## **2) SUPPORT KINSHIP CAREGIVER FAMILIES WITH HIGH NEEDS**

The Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), launched in July 2014, is a coordinated effort between 10 different City agencies to improve public safety for residents at the 15 NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments with some of the highest rates of violent crime in our City, all of which house senior tenants. As part of this effort, DFTA’s Grandparent Resource Center (GRC) provides information, assistance, and supportive services to those older adults who are raising grandchildren and other young relatives in the 15 NYCHA developments. Through this initiative, GRC Community Advocates work with residents and kinship caregivers for children under 18 years old, providing information, education, trainings, and peer support. The program also serves as a resource link for senior NYCHA residents to access services for older adults. The GRC Community Advocates establish support groups, conduct workshops on safety and senior issues, and provide case assistance to NYCHA senior residents. About 760 seniors and caregivers living in the NYCHA developments have already attended workshops on community safety, mental health awareness, senior scams, nutrition, falls prevention, and child/elder abuse.

MAP, led by the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, is based on the premise that while law enforcement and police are a critical first response in reducing violent crime, improving safety is also about improving infrastructure, matching effective programs to individuals and families most in need, and strengthening our neighborhoods. The NYCHA developments included in this initiative are Butler, Castle Hill, and Patterson in the Bronx; Boulevard, Brownsville, Bushwick, Ingersoll, Red Hook, Tompkins, and Van Dyke in Brooklyn; Polo Grounds, St. Nicholas, and Wagner in Manhattan; Queensbridge in Queens; and Stapleton in Staten Island.

## **3) PRESERVE FEDERAL TITLE XX FUNDING FOR CRITICAL SENIOR CENTER PROGRAMS**

The de Blasio Administration joined with elected officials and senior advocates in successfully leading opposition to a proposed reduction



in Federal Title XX funding that would have had devastating consequences for senior center programs that are a lifeline for many older New Yorkers. Federal Title XX funding refers to Title XX of the Social Security Act, also referred to as the Social Services Block Grant, and allows for federal funds to be made available to states to provide community-based care for the elderly, the disabled, and children.

New York State (NYS) receives \$98 million in Federal Title XX funding annually, which is allocated to counties. Of this amount, \$66 million funds Adult Protective and Domestic Violence Services, \$5 million supports training activities for County and State staff, and \$27 million is allocated to all other services, which counties can use at their discretion to fund a variety of allowable programs. The NYS Executive Budget for State FY '18 proposed requiring that the entire \$27 million in Title XX discretionary funding be used to support child care subsidy costs. As a result, DFTA would have lost its Title XX discretionary allocation of \$17 million. In New York City, Title XX funding supports critical senior center programs, including congregate meals, case assistance, information services, health promotion activities, education and recreation programs, and transportation. The reduction of Title XX funding would have had a serious impact on older New Yorkers: 65 neighborhood senior centers across the City – representing 26 percent of the DFTA senior center network – were at risk, and 6,000 seniors per day would have lost vital nutrition, health promotion, and socialization services. As a result of strong opposition, the proposed reduction in Title XX funding did not pass in the final NYS Executive Budget for State FY '18.

**The first bill Mayor de Blasio signed into law in 2014 extended the right to paid sick leave to half a million more New Yorkers.**

#### **4) EXPAND THE RIGHT TO PAID SICK LEAVE**

The first bill Mayor de Blasio signed into law in 2014 extended the right to paid sick leave to half a million more New Yorkers. The law took effect on April 1, 2014 and applies to all workers at businesses with five or more employees, encompassing many excluded under the previous legislation that applied to businesses with 15 or more workers. Under the expanded Paid Sick Leave Law, grandparents, grandchildren, and siblings were added to the definition of family members whom workers can legally care for using paid sick time. Also, the Paid Sick Leave Law eliminated the previous phase-in period, which would have delayed coverage to workers at businesses that employ between 15 and 20 workers. As a result, 140,000 people who would have waited until mid-2015 for coverage had the right to paid sick leave as of April 2014. Approximately 85,000 of those 140,000 workers did not have a single paid sick day prior to the enactment of the expanded legislation. The NYC Department of Consumer Affairs



(DCA) enforces the Paid Sick Leave Law and launched a multi-phased public education and outreach campaign to help employers and employees understand their responsibilities and rights. The Paid Sick Leave Law is a lifeline for New Yorkers caring for an aging relative, or for aging New Yorkers caring for a relative.



### 5) SURVEY THE NEEDS OF UNPAID CAREGIVERS

In New York City, approximately 1.3 million individuals are unpaid caregivers, providing care for family members who are chronically ill, disabled, or aged.<sup>2</sup> This number could be much larger, given that people often do not think of themselves as caregivers when they assist family members by running errands, paying bills, preparing meals, picking up medications, helping with dressing, and more. The average time spent in providing care is more than 24 hours per week: essentially, a second job.<sup>3</sup> Nearly one in four caregivers spends 41 hours or more per week providing care.<sup>4</sup> The economic value of these unpaid caregivers—should these services be provided by paid caregivers—is an estimated \$470 billion per year.

In August 2016, Mayor de Blasio signed legislation requiring DFTA to survey unpaid caregivers and caregiver service providers throughout New York City to help inform a comprehensive plan to address the needs of unpaid caregivers in the City. The legislation, Local Law 97, was introduced by NYC Council Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin, Council Member Debi Rose, and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. Westat, a research firm, was hired to conduct the survey by collecting information from caregivers of the frail elderly, adults with



disabilities, and dependent young relatives. DFTA, the Mayor's Office of Operations, and Westat have met with providers who represent the specified caregiver populations. DFTA developed the survey with Westat, based on input from the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), the NYC Administration for Children's Services, and community providers. Surveys were administered this spring and findings and recommendations will be issued this summer. The comprehensive plan will be developed in consultation with the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA), MOPD, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), academic experts, service providers, advocates, and other stakeholders.

## **6) ENSURE QUALITY SOCIAL ADULT DAY CARE PROGRAMMING**

Social adult day care (SADC) is a structured program that offers a protective setting to functionally impaired individuals with either a cognitive or physical frailty. Generally, these programs provide socialization opportunities, structured activities, personal care, meals, supervision, and monitoring. Additional SADC services may include activities designed to maintain and improve daily living skills, transportation, caregiver assistance, and case coordination. The environment for operating SADC programs has changed recently. The authorization of social adult day care as a Medicaid-covered benefit available through Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) plans has led to many new SADC programs opening throughout the five boroughs. DFTA currently monitors 10 social adult day care programs that are supported by Council discretionary funding. The vast majority of SADC providers, however, are being paid by MLTC plans through the State Medicaid program. Thus, the NYS Department of Health and not DFTA, has oversight over most SADC programs.

Local Law 9 of 2015, introduced by NYC Council Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin, required all SADC programs operating within New York City to register with DFTA, established civil penalties for violations of NYS Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) social adult day program regulations, and designated DFTA as the SADC Ombuds Office to receive comments and complaints with respect to SADCs. Since July 2015, DFTA began accepting SADC registrations and, as of June 2017, more than 330 sites have registered. In order to implement this law, DFTA has successfully developed relationships with relevant governmental entities. On the City level, these agencies include the Fire Department (FDNY), the Department of Buildings, the Department of Transportation (DOT), DOHMH, and the Human Rights Commission (CCHR). Partners on the State level include NYSOFA, the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General, the



**Senior center participants reported improved physical and mental health, increased participation in health programs, frequent exercising, and positive behavior change in monitoring weight and keeping physically active.<sup>7</sup> Participation in a senior center also helped to reduce social isolation.**

Department of Health, and the Office of the Attorney General. Our intergovernmental partners have worked closely with DFTA's SADC Ombuds Office, as their assistance is key in addressing complaints received outside of DFTA's purview and expertise.



## 7) CONDUCT AN IMPACT ANALYSIS OF SENIOR CENTER PARTICIPATION

DFTA commissioned Fordham University to conduct an impact analysis to understand whether and how participation in senior center activities impacts the overall health and well-being of older New Yorkers. The 2016 study followed older adults who were participants in Neighborhood Senior Centers (NCs) and Innovative Senior Centers (ISCs), as well as older adults who had not participated in a senior center for at least one year. The NC is a type of senior center model that provides congregate meals; recreational, cultural, and health promotion activities; social services counseling; and benefits assistance. The ISC model is a more enhanced senior center model that provides robust health and wellness programming, mental health support, educational and socialization activities, and cultural and technology opportunities. In addition, some ISCs are designed to meet the needs of visually impaired older adults and LGBT seniors. Findings indicated that both ISC and NC members are achieving positive outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Senior center participants reported improved physical and mental health, increased participation in health programs, frequent exercising, and positive behavior change in monitoring weight and keeping physically active.<sup>7</sup> Participation in a senior center also helped to reduce social isolation.<sup>8</sup> The study also found that participants often have the lowest incomes, the fewest resources, the poorest health, the greatest social isolation, and the most need for services.<sup>9</sup> These senior center members experience improved physical and mental



health not only in the time period after joining a senior center but even one year later.<sup>10</sup> This is a very important finding, given the decline in health and social activity in this age group, especially among those with low incomes.<sup>11</sup> Participants cited socialization, educational programs, congregate meals, recreational activities, and exercise programs as the most common reasons for attending senior centers.<sup>12</sup>

#### **8) RIGHT-SIZE SENIOR CENTERS**

We are also working to ensure that all senior centers, which currently operate with varied levels of funding, have the resources they need to provide the kind and quality of programs that lead to these positive impacts. The impact analysis of senior center participation conducted by Fordham University in 2016 is one key dimension of this effort. The agency's objective is to make each of its 246 senior centers and 29 affiliated satellites a center of excellence. To accomplish this goal, DFTA is performing an extensive analysis with the NYC Office of Management of Budget to determine how to achieve greater funding parity among senior centers while promoting uniformly strong programming over time.

#### **9) EXPAND THE INNOVATIVE SENIOR CENTER NETWORK**

In 2014, the ISC network expanded from 10 to 16 programs citywide, providing a tremendous enhancement to the infrastructure of community-based senior services. The 16 ISCs include the nation's first-ever senior centers with programming specifically for the LGBT and visually impaired communities. Beginning in FY'15, the Administration baselined a \$2.3 million increase in funding for the six additional ISCs. ISCs have demonstrated the capacity of the senior center system to meet the demand for more comprehensive programming within the communities they serve. With additional hours, expansion of programming, use of technology, community partnerships, and shared resources, ISC services have reached a broader, more diverse audience of older New Yorkers, including those on the younger end of the spectrum.

**LGBT older adults are often isolated from their families since coming out, and are half as likely to have close relatives to depend on for help. As a result, about 25 percent of LGBT older people do not have a support system in case of an emergency.**

#### **10) ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF LGBT OLDER ADULTS**

LGBT older adults remain one of the most invisible and at-risk populations in the nation – they are often severely isolated and disconnected from services.<sup>13</sup> Statistics indicate that LGBT older people are twice as likely to live alone as other seniors; half as likely to have life partners or significant others; and more than four times more likely to have no children to help them.<sup>14</sup> LGBT older adults are often isolated from their families since coming out, and are half as



likely to have close relatives to depend on for help.<sup>15</sup> As a result, about 25 percent of LGBT older people do not have a support system in case of an emergency.<sup>16</sup> Because of their lack of support networks, LGBT older adults are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to rely on service providers for care and assistance as they age.<sup>17</sup> And they are more likely to face discrimination in relation to their sexual orientation and gender identity when accessing health care and social services.<sup>18</sup>

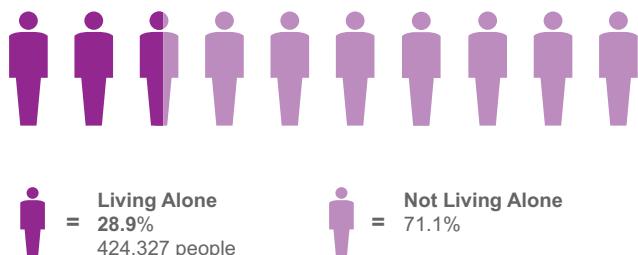
DFTA has done much work to address the needs of LGBT older adults. In addition to sponsoring the first senior center in the nation that provides services specifically for the LGBT population, DFTA conducts trainings for case management, senior center, and NORC program staff on working with LGBT older adults. The NYC Council, spearheaded by Council Member Ritchie Torres, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and the LGBT Caucus, funded Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders to expand LGBT senior center programming throughout the five boroughs of New York City. In addition, DFTA funds a citywide program that serves the LGBT caregiving community.

## 11) EMBED MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS IN SENIOR CENTERS

First Lady Chirlane McCray released ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All, the most comprehensive mental health plan of any city or state in the nation, in November 2015. As part of ThriveNYC, mental health practitioners were embedded in 15 DFTA-sponsored senior centers citywide. Each month, between 1,500 and 2,200 seniors attend engagement activities, such as mindfulness meditation sessions and psychoeducational groups at the 15 senior centers. Geriatric mental health services will expand to 10 more sites starting in July 2017.

**An estimated one in five adults over the age of 50 is affected by social isolation.**

### Living Alone



## 12) COMBAT SOCIAL ISOLATION THROUGH FRIENDLY VISITING

An estimated one in five adults over the age of 50 is affected by social isolation,<sup>19</sup> and recent research shows that the negative health consequences of chronic isolation and loneliness may be especially harmful for older adults.<sup>20</sup> As part of ThriveNYC, DFTA established



a Friendly Visiting Program within its contracted case management agencies. DFTA oversees 21 case management contracts covering all 59 Community Districts. Through the Friendly Visiting Program, services are available to case management contracts through two paths:

- 1) The launch of new programs, operated directly by case management agencies; and
- 2) The expansion of the existing City meals on Wheels friendly visiting program.

This program aims to reduce social isolation and enhance vital social connections. It also seeks to help identify more intensive physical and mental health needs, in which case, the program will connect clients to higher level intervention. Case management clients who are socially isolated are paired with trained volunteers who visit the clients regularly. Volunteer coordinators at case management programs recruit, train, and supervise volunteers. Additionally, separate guides were developed and distributed to assist both Friendly Visiting Program administrators and volunteers. Currently, more than 450 homebound older adults are receiving friendly visiting services and more than 1,000 visits have occurred.

**Providing Options to Elderly Clients Together (PROTECT) is a program that supports victims of elder abuse and neglect and helps them address their mental health issues, which in turn makes it more likely that the clients are able to deal successfully with abusive situations.**



### **13) ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF ELDER ABUSE VICTIMS**

Elder abuse victims have among the highest rates of severe depression and anxiety, and these mental health challenges often reduce the ability of victims to take steps necessary to seek help for elder abuse and neglect. Providing Options to Elderly Clients Together (PROTECT) is a program



that supports victims of elder abuse and neglect. Developed by DFTA and Weill Cornell Medical Center, PROTECT helps victims address their mental health issues, which in turn makes it more likely that the clients are able to deal successfully with abusive situations. DFTA, in coordination with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), will work with its elder abuse services and other providers to identify people in need, and services will be available in English and Spanish, the languages spoken by the majority of identified elder abuse victims. OCDV and DFTA are also partners on the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, launched by Mayor de Blasio in November 2016, and PROTECT is included in the recommendations issued by the task force. The FY '18 budget for DFTA includes an additional \$225,000 in baseline funding for PROTECT.

#### **14) INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO HOMEBOUND OLDER ADULTS**

In an effort to increase the availability of geriatric mental health services, outreach models of care were developed to provide services where older adults reside or spend a significant amount of time, such as the Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS), designed by researchers at the University of Washington. In 2016, nine contracts were awarded to New York City organizations to deploy the evidence-based PEARLS model of depression care in the City. PEARLS providers work with people aged 65 and older with a special focus on those who are homebound. The key components of the PEARLS approach are problem solving treatment, social and physical activation, and pleasant activity scheduling. Depression often remains undiagnosed and untreated in older people, leading to a loss of physical, social, and mental functioning and increasing levels of disability. Evidence has shown that PEARLS reduces depressive symptoms and improves quality of life in older adults during six to eight in-home sessions. PEARLS services are free of charge.

#### **15) IMPLEMENT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR SENIOR SERVICES STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a groundbreaking public education program designed to equip non-mental health professionals with the knowledge needed to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse challenges and crises. Through DOHMH, several DFTA staff have been trained in this technique. In turn, they are providing Mental Health First Aid training to case managers, senior center staff, and volunteers within DFTA's provider network. Participants have attested to the value of the training in improving their ability to spot potentially crippling mental health issues. DFTA will require the staff of its contracted service providers to receive Mental Health First Aid training.





## 16) ENHANCE THE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Enhancing the case management system has been a priority for the de Blasio Administration. Case management is the entry point for DFTA-funded, in-home services such as home-delivered meals and home care. All clients receiving an in-home service funded by DFTA receive a comprehensive assessment from a case management agency. Case managers provide assessments to identify the strengths and needs of older persons, and work with clients to plan and coordinate services and resources on their behalf. In FY '16, nearly 33,000 older New Yorkers received 535,000 hours of case management, an increase of 17 percent compared to the previous year. This was the result of an investment in expanded case management staffing in order to meet the high demand for services.

An additional \$2.6 million was baselined in FY '15 to strengthen the case management system and to support the reduction of caseloads. A 2014 Fordham University study, commissioned by DFTA, determined that caseload sizes should average 65 per case manager and this funding has helped bring caseloads down to an average of 65 per case manager from nearly 80 per case manager. Also, the Administration added \$4.8 million in FY '17 and \$7.3 million starting in FY '18 to stabilize staffing for case management programs by significantly raising salaries of case managers and their supervisors. This increased funding has resulted in more competitive salaries, which helps reduce high turnover rates and improves service delivery by hiring and retaining professionally qualified staff to ensure greater continuity of care.



## **17) ASSIST LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULTS WITH BILL PAYMENT TASKS**

Many case management clients face eviction, utility shut-offs, or financial exploitation. In response, DFTA instituted a Bill Payer Program to improve the financial security of frail, low-income seniors. Modeled after LiveOn NY's five-year demonstration project, the program screens and trains volunteers to assist low-income older adults with monthly bill payment tasks. The volunteers meet one-on-one with seniors in their own homes to help them organize documents, create and follow a budget, balance their checkbooks, and write checks. The participating seniors sign the checks and make all financial decisions. Seniors served by the Bill Payer Program typically live alone and without regular supports. Some are also visually impaired. The program accepts referrals from DFTA-funded case management agencies as well as other community-based organizations, NORC programs. Bill Payer Program staff also follow up as needed to coordinate services with assigned case managers or social workers and to support the volunteers.

**The home-delivered meals (HDML) program sponsored by DFTA provides approximately 18,000 meals per day to homebound older adults.**

## **18) ASSESS THE HOME-DELIVERED MEALS PROGRAM**

The home-delivered meals (HDML) program sponsored by DFTA provides approximately 18,000 meals per day to homebound older adults through 23 contracts with 17 community-based organizations. DFTA is partnering with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to identify how the City can improve the efficiency and quality of the program. The vision is to build capacity and improve food service delivery across the City by broadening menu options, improving consumer choice, increasing program efficiency, controlling costs, leveraging technology, and meeting the nutritional needs of diverse constituents. PwC engaged HDML stakeholders in New York City and nationally to pinpoint what works well and what needs improvement. After extensive interviews, analysis, and fieldwork, PwC presented its findings to DFTA. DFTA is analyzing these results, which will inform the retooling of the HDML program.

## **19) ADDRESS THE DIETARY NEEDS OF SENIORS**

To help senior centers and home-delivered meal programs create nutritious meals that are tailored to meet the diverse needs of older New Yorkers, DFTA developed the Simple Servings online tool. Simple Servings is a database of more than 1,000 recipes – and growing – that meet City and State nutritional standards and are culturally relevant to participants. DFTA is working on enhancements to Simple Servings to allow the creation of menus that address the specialized dietary needs of older adults with health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension.



**According to HRA, nearly 25 percent of the 1.7 million New Yorkers currently receiving SNAP are over 60 years old. Nationally, 42 percent of all older adults participate in the SNAP program. Among older New Yorkers, however, that figure has now climbed to approximately 70 percent.**



## **20) IMPROVE OLDER NEW YORKERS' ACCESS TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Poverty among older adults is a deeply entrenched problem in New York City. Although more than 700,000 New Yorkers over the age of 55 have incomes low enough to qualify for public benefits that help meet their basic needs, these programs are chronically underutilized. As a result, each year vulnerable older adults are leaving millions of dollars on the table that could help them achieve stability. In September 2014, Benefits Data Trust (BDT) launched the NY Benefits Center in partnership with The Robin Hood Foundation and HRA to increase low-income seniors' access to public benefits across all five boroughs. Initially, the campaign focused just on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and in 2015 it expanded to include multiple benefits, including Medicaid, Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption. In the nearly three years since its inception, the NY Benefits Center has achieved significant success: To date, BDT has mailed outreach letters to 249,000 individual older adult households and has helped more than 26,500 low-income older New Yorkers apply for one or more benefits, including nearly 20,000 applications for SNAP.



According to HRA, nearly 25 percent of the 1.7 million New Yorkers currently receiving SNAP are over 60 years old. Nationally, 42 percent of all older adults participate in the SNAP program. Among older New Yorkers, however, that figure has now climbed to approximately 70 percent.

Since the start of HRA's SNAP Helps campaign in April 2015 and its companion website FoodHelp.nyc, approximately 117,000 clients have received assistance. The SNAP Helps campaign encourages New Yorkers struggling to afford food to seek help, targeting low-income older adults and immigrants. FoodHelp.nyc redirects potential clients to ACCESS NYC where they are able to determine if they qualify for more than 30 different City, State, and Federal benefits.

## **21) PROVIDE UNIQUE FOOD SERVICE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO SENIORS**

The NYC Department of Probation (DOP), in partnership with Food Bank For New York City and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, currently operates Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) Nutrition Kitchens in each of the five boroughs. NeON is a network of community organizations, government agencies, local businesses, and community residents focused on connecting probation clients who live in the target neighborhood to opportunities, resources, and services. The high cost of food, utilities, and rent can be crippling, causing more and more households and individuals, including older New Yorkers, to seek emergency food. For people on probation in need, pride and stigmatization often discourage them from seeking help at community-based soup kitchens and food pantries. Yet, they feel comfortable coming to NeON Nutrition Kitchens. These kitchens provide healthy recipes, nutrition information, and cooking demonstrations. They also distribute food to DOP clients to improve clients' understanding of a healthy lifestyle and connect our communities to a critical service. This response has grown into a community-wide initiative and a sustainable solution to combat food poverty, and many older adults have participated in NeON Nutrition Kitchens.

## **22) AMPLIFY AWARENESS OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

DFTA, together with the NYC Office of the Director of Food Policy, has focused on the pressing issue of food insecurity among older adults. Many older New Yorkers are forced to choose between paying for food, rent, medication, and other necessities. The Aging in New York Fund—the non-profit arm of DFTA—has organized public forums in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens to raise awareness about food insecurity among older New Yorkers and to recommend



**21% of older New Yorkers are facing poverty.**

#### Facing Poverty



 = Facing Poverty  
21%  
300,252 people

 = Not Facing Poverty  
79%

### 23) INCREASE EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH PROGRAMMING IN THE AGING SERVICES NETWORK

Senior centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities citywide now offer national evidence-based programs that promote health and reduce the prevalence of disease among older adults. These programs are based on research and provide documented health benefits. Such programs include: A Matter of Balance, to prevent falls; Tai Chi for Arthritis, to improve movement, balance, and strength; Stay Active and Independent for Life, to reduce fall risk factors; and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, to build self-confidence in participants to maintain their health and manage their chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Additionally, approximately 300 older adults conduct health promotion programming for their peers at senior centers and other venues throughout the City each month. An average of 20,000 individuals per month participate in volunteer-led health programs, such as the STAY WELL exercise program to improve balance, cardiovascular health, and muscle strength; and the Keep on Track blood pressure monitoring program.

### 24) FACILITATE ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

The New York Academy of Medicine is coordinating the Age-friendly NYC Commission's Primary Care Working Group, which has launched an educational campaign to promote the Annual Wellness Visit – an underutilized Medicare benefit – in partnership with the Medicare Rights Center. For Medicare beneficiaries, the Annual Wellness Visit is a yearly doctor's visit to create a personalized prevention plan to help older adults stay healthy. This free visit includes vaccinations, screenings, falls risk assessments, and advice and referrals to maintain health and wellness. The working group is also organizing a symposium in partnership with Healthfirst, which will address how



**NYC Health + Hospitals is the largest public health care system in the nation, serving more than 1 million New Yorkers annually, including many older adults, in approximately 70 patient care locations citywide.**

age-friendly primary care and a focus on wellness can help to address the broader determinants of health for older people and improve health outcomes.

## **25) PROVIDE EVIDENCE-BASED GERIATRIC CARE**

NYC Health + Hospitals is the largest public health care system in the nation, serving more than 1 million New Yorkers annually, including many older adults, in approximately 70 patient care locations citywide. It is comprised of a network of 11 hospitals, trauma centers, neighborhood health centers, nursing homes, and post-acute care centers. Each of NYC Health + Hospitals' 11 acute care hospitals has received Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) designation. NICHE is the leading nurse-driven program designed to address the complex needs of older adults. The program provides the principles, education, and tools to support health care systems in transforming and achieving patient-centered care. Each hospital in the NYC Health + Hospitals network went through an extensive education and training process. Across the system, more than 500 registered nurses have been trained to enhance their geriatric care skills and knowledge. Sites must continue to show how they are advancing the care provided to older adults and other programmatic improvements to sustain designation. There are four NICHE program implementation levels – Early, Progressive, Senior Friendly, and Exemplar – and hospitals under NYC Health + Hospitals range from Early to Exemplar. This exemplifies the City's commitment to improving care to meet the needs of older adults across the care continuum.

## **26) LAUNCH STATE-OF-THE-ART ACUTE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY HOSPITAL UNIT**

In 2017, NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem will open the Dr. Muriel Petioni Geriatrics Center of Excellence. This state-of-the-art Acute Care for the Elderly unit, designed to meet the special needs of older adults, will provide a coordinated continuum of medical and support services for older adults. The Center will be staffed by specially trained providers and will have eight inpatient beds, a community activity/therapy room, and a rehabilitation gym for physical therapy. The unit has safety features including safety hand rails to prevent falls and color-signed hallways to encourage walking and help people find their way. Patient rooms have special lighting to ease anxiety and reduce glare. Beds will have low-height settings and bathrooms will accommodate walkers and wheelchairs and provide commodes with elevated seating.



The inpatient day room is equipped with comfortable seating to encourage socialization and participation in activity-based therapy sessions such as art, music, and other programs designed to promote cognitive functioning and prevent functional decline. Similarly, the Rehabilitation Medicine gym will be equipped to provide older adult patients with physical therapy to prevent deconditioning and muscle atrophy during their hospital stays. The gym will also be used for activities, classes, and programs designed to increase activity among older adults. The programs and activities include an Alzheimer's caregiver program, a walking club for older adults, Tai Chi and Qigong workshops, and a dance program.

## 27) REDUCE AVOIDABLE HOSPITAL READMISSIONS

DFTA partnered with NYC Health + Hospitals for its Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP) initiative, which is part of the NYS Medicaid Reform effort. The key DSRIP objective is to reduce avoidable hospital readmissions by 25 percent over five years. DFTA's role is to provide support and monitoring of the two providers for the care transitions program: New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, paired with NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, and Selfhelp Community Services, paired with NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens. The two providers will follow and support patients at high risk for readmission for 30 days after they are discharged. In spring 2017, both teams started working at their assigned hospitals and visiting patients in the community.

Falls are common among older New Yorkers and are a leading cause of hospitalizations

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of Vital Statistics death records 2012-2014



## 28) LEAD CITYWIDE FALLS PREVENTION INITIATIVE

Falls are common among older New Yorkers and are a leading cause of hospitalizations.<sup>21</sup> In light of this fact, the NYC Falls Prevention Coalition was established, co-led by DOHMH and DFTA. The coalition aims to promote and implement proven and promising strategies to reduce the incidence and burden of falls among older adults. The coalition regularly convenes multi-sectoral partners to foster collaborations and leverage resources toward achieving shared goals; serves as an information and resource hub for evidence-based falls prevention tools and programs for all New Yorkers, including



health and wellness professionals, older adults, and the communities where they live and work; and advocates for research, resources, programming, and policy that reduces the incidence or burden of falls. The coalition also spearheads activities and actions in support of National Falls Prevention Awareness Day.

## 29) CONNECT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO AGING SERVICES PROVIDERS

In an effort to forge connections between the health care provider network and the aging provider network, DFTA has completed its blueprint for a program to begin drawing health care funds to expand aging services. The agency's Management Services Organization (MSO) was established in 2016 to offer health care providers more holistic options to better address the needs of patients through programming, such as falls prevention and chronic disease self-management classes. Through the MSO, connections between health care providers and DFTA-funded community services are facilitated with the goal of supporting older adults in living longer, healthier lives.

The MSO is beginning to market falls prevention programming to health care providers. Presently, there are 10 MSO members, all of whom are DFTA-funded aging services providers. The plan is for the MSO members to provide evidence-based falls prevention classes to health care consumers and receive a fee from the health care organizations or health plans for this work, which the aging services organizations can then reinvest in expanded and enriched services. DFTA anticipates the first inflow of health care funds to the 10 MSO members by the end of 2017 and is also determining additional products to market. The plan is to expand MSO membership in 2018 and beyond.

**Through the MSO, connections between health care providers and DFTA-funded community services are facilitated with the goal of supporting older adults in living longer, healthier lives.**



### **30) ESTABLISH HEALTHY AGING FELLOWS SECTION**

In June 2017, the New York Academy of Medicine launched a Healthy Aging section of the Academy Fellows to improve the health, well-being, and engagement of older people in cities through inter-professional communication and networks; community/public advocacy; leadership development; and education, research, and policy involvement. Academy Fellows are distinguished professionals in medical and health professions and other disciplines affecting health, who embody the highest levels of achievement and leadership in urban health, elected by their peers. Fellows span a wide range of disciplines including medicine, nursing, social work, public health, administration, health policy, pharmacy, dentistry, law, and government, and are academics, practitioners, and policy makers in their fields. This Fellows section brings together physicians, nurses, social workers, dentists, pharmacists, nutritionists, and other professionals working with older people, to collaborate with Age-friendly NYC.

### **31) SUPPORT SENIORS LIVING IN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

The NYC Department of Youth and Community Development administers the Federal Community Services Block Grant program to combat poverty and provide services to low-income people that empower them to become self-sufficient. The program targets funds to low-income communities it designates as Neighborhood Development Areas (NDAs). The NDA Initiative fosters community-level engagement to ensure that services address the most pressing needs of each community.

NDA programs that serve New Yorkers aged 60 and older provide a variety of support services, including social and recreational activities, exercise and nutrition programs, medical assistance and community services. Activities include social, cultural and recreational services. Programs may also offer activities such as family budgeting and consumer education; friendly visiting; health/nutrition instruction; homebound services; individual/family counseling; intergenerational interaction; respite services; and transportation services. Older New Yorkers who participate attain needed benefits and services and demonstrate positive physical, psychological, and social well-being. Participants are required to be NYC residents who meet the definition of low-income in federal income guidelines. At least 80 percent or more of participants must live within the boundaries of each NDA. Using a strength-based approach, programs work in partnership with participants to build upon existing assets to reach goals. NDA programs engage a case manager to meet periodically



**A NY Connects office is located in each borough. Through NY Connects, from October 2015 through December 2016, more than 16,000 contacts were made citywide.**

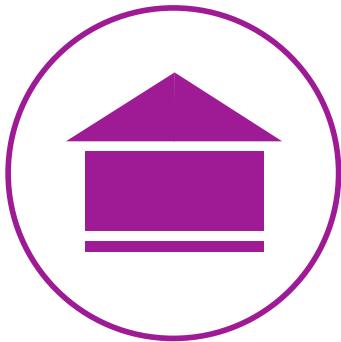
with participants and refer participants, as needed. This year, NDA programs for older adults will serve about 3,600 persons in targeted neighborhoods across the City.

### **32) IMPLEMENT NY CONNECTS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES**

NY Connects is a statewide system that provides free, objective, and comprehensive information on long-term care services and supports regardless of age, income, disability, or diagnosis. As the Local Administrative Agency for NY Connects in NYC, which launched in September 2015, DFTA is responsible for its oversight and monitoring. In this role, DFTA works with HRA, MOPD, and other stakeholders. Services provided by NY Connects include connecting clients' families to other City and State agencies, providers, and programs; providing person-centered counseling; screening for Medicaid and assisting with benefits applications such as SNAP, the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), and Veterans Benefits; translation services; and making home visits if the client is homebound. A NY Connects office is located in each borough. Through NY Connects, from October 2015 through December 2016, more than 16,000 contacts were made citywide. Approximately 10,000 of these contacts were from individuals seeking services, and 4,000 contacts were from either caregivers or professionals seeking assistance for clients. Thirty percent of the contacts were for housing-related issues, such as access to assisted living and to shelters, eviction prevention, application assistance for public and other subsidized housing, and SCRIE, and other inquiries related to obtaining food, receiving home care and personal care assistance, health care benefits, and legal assistance.



## HOUSING



The City's senior housing commitment has substantially increased under the de Blasio Administration.

### 33) SUPPORT AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING

Older adults represent the fastest growing segment of the NYC population, and increasing the supply of affordable housing to meet their needs will become ever more important. The City has taken actions to promote a more secure housing future for older New Yorkers through the increased production of senior housing, in addition to enhanced housing supports and services. The Mayor's Housing New York five-borough, 10-year strategy includes a plan to create or preserve 10,000 units of affordable senior housing for New Yorkers. The fixed incomes of both older adults and veterans have made it difficult for these vulnerable populations to keep pace with rising rents. Under the new benchmark announced in the Mayor's 2017 State of the City address, the number of apartments in the Mayor's housing program dedicated to those earning between zero and \$40,000 per year will increase by 10,000, from 40,000 units to 50,000 units. Of the 10,000 additional units, 5,000 will house older New Yorkers and 500 will serve veterans. As a result of the new benchmark, the City's senior housing commitment has increased by 5,000, to 15,000 units of the 200,000 total units in the Housing New York plan. To date, the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the NYC Housing Development Corporation have financed more than 4,000 senior housing units under Housing New York. In addition, the City launched the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments program in 2014 to provide financing for the construction and renovation of affordable housing for low-income older adults. The City is also funding services for older adults



through a forthcoming request for proposals, which will be issued by HRA. HPD and NYCHA are partnering to develop senior housing on NYCHA campuses. At present, three senior housing projects have been awarded through joint HPD-NYCHA procurements.

Two important City initiatives have gone through the public review process and were approved in 2016 through the tireless efforts of the NYC Council, Borough Presidents, and Community Boards: Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) and Zoning for Quality and Affordability (ZQA). MIH is a pioneering initiative to ensure that affordable housing is mandatory and permanent wherever new housing capacity is approved through land use actions. Together with the Housing New York plan, it will yield tens of thousands of affordable apartments in high-quality neighborhoods, while stabilizing those neighborhoods for years to come. ZQA enables the construction of affordable senior housing that can never be converted to market-rate housing. By modifying requirements that once favored parking lots over affordable housing, ZQA makes buildings for older New Yorkers more financially feasible and allows for improved community and outdoor spaces for tenants.

**Access to free legal services to prevent evictions will be critical for older tenants, given that approximately 40 percent of older New Yorkers are at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level.<sup>22</sup>**



#### **34) EXPAND ACCESS TO CIVIL JUSTICE AND TENANT LEGAL SERVICES FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS**

In 2017, Mayor de Blasio and NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito announced plans for New York City to become the first city in the United States to implement a universal access to counsel program for all tenants facing eviction in Housing Court. When fully implemented in five years, the City will have the largest tenant legal services program



**The NYC Rent Freeze Program, otherwise known as the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), freezes the rent for approximately 70,000 seniors and people with disabilities.**

anywhere in the country. Over the next five years, the program, led by the NYC Department of Social Services, will provide expanded services to stop unlawful evictions and prevent the displacement of individuals and families; serve an estimated 400,000 New Yorkers annually by providing universal access to legal assistance for all tenants facing eviction; and continue to pursue cases in communities throughout the City where tenants are most at risk of harassment and disseminate information about available legal services. Tenants facing eviction with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level will receive full representation, while those earning more will receive legal advice and assistance. Access to free legal services to prevent evictions will be critical for older tenants, given that approximately 40 percent of older New Yorkers are at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level.<sup>22</sup>

### **35) INCREASE OUTREACH FOR THE SENIOR CITIZEN RENT INCREASE EXEMPTION PROGRAM**

The NYC Rent Freeze Program, otherwise known as the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), freezes the rent for approximately 70,000 seniors and people with disabilities. In 2014, Mayor de Blasio signed Local Laws 19 and 39, which raised the income eligibility limit for SCRIE/DRIE recipients to \$50,000 from \$29,000, authorized in the State FY '15 budget. As the enabling State legislation was scheduled to sunset, the State FY '17 budget authorized the City to continue offering SCRIE/DRIE benefits to eligible individuals earning up to \$50,000 through 2020. In 2017, the Mayor signed Local Law 24 to extend the current income eligibility limits of \$50,000 for SCRIE and DRIE until 2020.

Several other local laws were enacted to establish ombudspersons for the SCRIE and DRIE programs; provide notice to SCRIE/DRIE tenants regarding legal regulated and preferential rents; and disseminate SCRIE information with other City agency applications to older adults. The NYC Department of Finance (DOF) also worked to pass important State legislation that allows current SCRIE/DRIE recipients to be grandfathered in for renewal applications, and permits household members to take over the benefit of a deceased tenant or a tenant who permanently leaves the household.

DOF has been focused on providing exceptional customer service for these programs, improving the application process, and enrolling as many qualified tenants into the program as possible. DOF has raised awareness of the program by rebranding it as the NYC Rent Freeze Program. In partnership with elected officials, community groups, and faith-based organizations, DOF has promoted these programs



and educated people about program requirements and how to apply. DOF has overhauled all of the department's applications to make them easier to understand and complete. As a result, processing time is down to three to five days for initial applications and six to seven days for renewal applications. Along with increased outreach and the development of simpler application forms, DOF expanded the Manhattan walk-in center and is committed to ensuring all of the agency's applications and worksites are more ADA compliant, including DOF's SCRIE/DRIE walk-in centers in the Bronx and Brooklyn, which are scheduled to open soon.

### **36) REDEVELOP SITES FOR AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING**

The NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) works to cultivate dynamic, resilient communities across all five boroughs. As part of its mission is to create shared prosperity throughout NYC by strengthening neighborhoods, NYCEDC is working on redeveloping two sites for senior housing projects. One project, Baychester Senior Living, is located in the Bronx. This 12-acre site, which has been primarily vacant and underutilized for more than a century, will be redeveloped subject to all necessary approvals and will transform into an exciting new development with approximately 180 units of affordable senior housing. These units will be integrated into a pedestrian-oriented, outdoor urban retail complex complemented by more than 2.5 acres of publicly accessible open space, as well as health, fitness, business, and workforce amenities. The other NYCEDC senior housing project is Landmark Colony on Staten Island. The 44-acre site, which provided room and board to economically disadvantaged populations until 1975, is slated to be redeveloped into a 344-unit, senior housing project that includes affordable units, ancillary retail, and community space. Existing historic structures will either be rehabilitated or stabilized as arrested ruins. The project will be designed to connect to the Staten Island Greenbelt, a 2,800-acre network of open spaces. Redevelopment will transform this longtime vacant property into productive use as housing for older adults, the fastest growing segment of Staten Island's population. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2018.

**The City is working to increase LGBT-friendly housing and care options to ensure that LGBT older adults are treated with dignity and respect.**

### **37) BROADEN ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LGBT SENIORS**

The City is working to increase LGBT-friendly housing and care options to ensure that LGBT older adults are treated with dignity and respect. There are two LGBT-friendly affordable senior projects in development at HPD, one in the Bronx and another in Brooklyn. Looking ahead, HPD will continue to encourage the development of affordable LGBT-friendly senior housing.



To promote fair and equal access to housing, CCHR collaborates with HPD on annual fair housing forums, community events, and tenant resource fairs to inform the public, including older adults, about disability access rights, combating tenant harassment, and lawful source of income discrimination.

### **38) EDUCATE OLDER TENANTS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS TO FAIR HOUSING**

The NYC Commission on Human Rights is charged with the enforcement of the NYC Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), which is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. The NYCHRL provides protections in employment, housing, and public accommodation from discrimination based on an individual's actual or perceived membership in a protected class, including race, color, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, among others. CCHR is also responsible for educating the public on their rights and responsibilities under the law and conducting public outreach to combat discrimination, promote understanding, and encourage positive community relations. The work of CCHR focuses on key areas of the NYC Human Rights Law, including fair and equal access to housing. Under the NYCHRL, discrimination in private and public housing, land, and commercial spaces in New York City is prohibited. Any person selling, renting, or leasing – including landlords, superintendents, building managers, brokers, and realtors – cannot discriminate because of a person's actual or perceived protected status under the law, which includes protections for individuals from discrimination based on lawful source of income. Lawful source of income includes any Federal, State, or City public or housing assistance toward the payment of rent, such as Supplemental Security Income, Section 8, Veterans' GI Bill, and others.

To promote fair and equal access to housing, CCHR collaborates with HPD on annual fair housing forums, community events, and tenant resource fairs to inform the public, including older adults, about disability access rights, combating tenant harassment, and lawful source of income discrimination. In addition, as part of its comprehensive public education efforts, CCHR does citywide media outreach, produces multilingual publications and materials, and conducts regular workshops on housing discrimination to landlords, real estate agents, and owners, as well as individuals, housing advocacy organizations, and community groups. CCHR's Project Equal Access also works with community members to ensure their buildings are accessible for people with disabilities, and partners with other City agencies and local non-profits on various programs to raise awareness and educate residents about their rights.

### **39) EXPAND ACCESS TO THE SENIOR CITIZEN HOME OWNER EXEMPTION**

The Mayor and DOF have done much work to assist seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities who are homeowners through the Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption (SCHE) and the Disability Homeowner Exemption (DHE). This is the first renewal for these



DFTA-funded NORC programs are structured to promote shared responsibility and participation in program design and operation through a partnership among older NORC residents, the NORC housing entity, a social services provider, and a healthcare provider.

exemptions in 10 years. In advance of the application renewal deadline of March 15, 2017, DOF sent three reminder notices to all current program participants. As with any renewal process, however, some people may no longer qualify, and income may be a challenge for eligibility. In light of this, DOF is working to mitigate the impact through the passage of State legislation (S4628/A7463) sponsored by State Senator Diane Savino and Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, which would increase the income ceiling for SCHE and DHE from \$37,400 to \$58,400. The Mayor announced his support for this legislation and proposed resources for this expansion in the FY '18 budget. As a result, DOF anticipates that more than 32,000 older adult homeowners and homeowners with disabilities would experience an average tax reduction of \$1,752 from the expansion of SCHE and DHE programs.

#### **40) ENRICH NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS**

Throughout the past two decades, a number of NORCs have received funding from City and State programs and private foundations to provide supportive services to older residents. These programs are called NORC Supportive Service Programs, or NORC programs. The NORC movement began right here in New York City.

DFTA-funded NORC programs are structured to promote shared responsibility and participation in program design and operation through a partnership among older NORC residents, the NORC housing entity, a social services provider, and a healthcare provider. There are five primary objectives for DFTA-funded NORC programs. All NORC programs should:

- 1) provide supportive environments that allow older adults independence as they age in place;
- 2) engage residents and facilitate connections within the community;
- 3) assess the needs of older residents;
- 4) offer supportive services based on assessments; and
- 5) build strong and meaningful communities that cultivate new roles for community members.

In 2014, DFTA awarded 28 NORC contracts in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens; the DFTA budget for these NORC programs is \$6.7 million. These communities are located in public housing, low- to moderate-income co-ops, and low- to moderate-income



private rentals. The NORC contract awards included funding to enhance services, such as case management for homebound and non-homebound seniors, assistance with accessing public benefits, and an increased emphasis on wellness, chronic disease risk assessments, and healthcare management. In addition, the NYC Council allocated a total of \$3.85 million in FY '18 to fund NORC programs, including \$1.9 million for horizontal Neighborhood NORCs, which are typically found in an age-integrated neighborhood of one- and two-family homes as opposed to the classic NORC model that may be a single age-integrated apartment building, or a housing complex with multiple buildings.

#### **41) DEVELOP THE CITY'S FIRST HEALTH FOCUSED COMMUNITY**

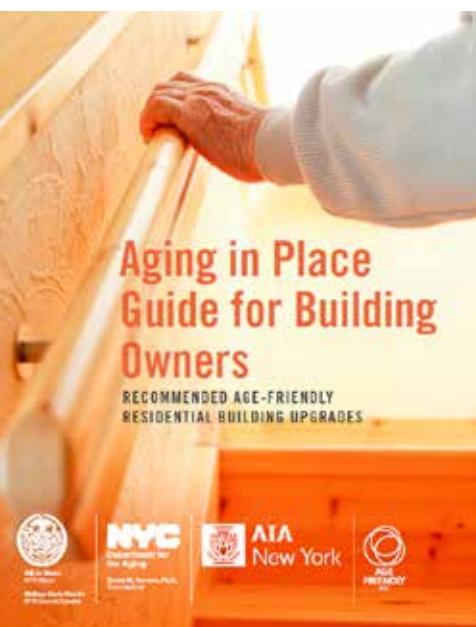
The historic Sea View Hospital campus on Staten Island will be the City's first health-focused, mixed-use, master-planned community to prevent or ameliorate chronic disease. The residential portion of the plan will include units set aside for older adults. The City received bids this spring in response to a Request for Expressions of Interest to redevelop the site in keeping with four evidence-based principles of healthy design: 1) providing access to healthy, locally sourced foods, 2) promoting physical activity, 3) encouraging social interaction, and 4) providing easy access to nature. This project follows the legacy of Sea View Hospital as the City's first large-scale, full-service tuberculosis hospital, regarded both for the boldness of its scale and for the significant clinical contributions it made to the ultimate widespread cure of the disease.

#### **42) PUBLISH AN AGING IN PLACE GUIDE TO RECOMMEND AGE-FRIENDLY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING UPGRADES**

Local Law 51 of 2015 – introduced by NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin – required the development of a guide for building owners regarding aging in place. “Aging in place” describes individuals who continue to live in their homes as they age rather than relocating. Research suggests that a majority of older people prefer to age in place<sup>23</sup> and in New York City, 96 percent of older adults are currently aging in place in non-institutional settings.<sup>24</sup> As people age, they become predisposed to multiple chronic conditions that can lead to diminished functional capacity. For older people to remain independent, their housing must accommodate their changes in ability.

DFTA issued the “Aging in Place Guide for Building Owners: Recommended Age-friendly Residential Building Upgrades” in 2016

**“Aging in place” describes individuals who continue to live in their homes as they age rather than relocating.**



through a collaboration with the American Institute of Architects New York Design for Aging Committee. The guide recommends residential building modifications to accommodate older tenants. By making these improvements, building owners can help residents remain in their homes as they age – safely, comfortably, and independently. While the recommendations are made with older adults in mind, many of the suggested improvements would make buildings and apartments more livable for residents of all ages. As provided in Local Law 51, the guide was developed in consultation with the NYC Department of Buildings, HPD, MOPD, and relevant housing experts from the private and non-profit sector. In addition, the Age-friendly NYC Commission’s Housing Working Group, coordinated by the New York Academy of Medicine, is assessing how older adults can access a number of the improvements identified in the “Aging in Place Guide for Building Owners.”

#### **43) REDUCE HOUSING RELATED FALL HAZARDS FOR OLDER ADULTS**

By 2030, all City contracts for providing home-based services for older adults will require an assessment for fall hazards, as per the recommendation of DOHMH. For new construction, the City will promote the adoption of universal design elements, such as grab bars, hand rails, slip-resistant floors, and lighting that reduces the risks of falls. Similarly, for existing buildings, the City will provide incentives for in-place retrofits for measures aimed at promoting safe home environments and preventing falls among older adults.

#### **44) TRAIN PROVIDERS ON HOME-BASED HEALTH AND SAFETY TOPICS FOR OLDER ADULTS**

DOHMH will offer a Healthy Homes for Older Adults training program on older adult-specific risk factors for injury and illness, and best practices for prevention. Topics include fire, falls, pests, heat illness, and medication safety. The training will be offered to health and social services providers who work with older adults in the home in order to improve their understanding of the burden of home environmental risks.

#### **45) INSTITUTE THE HOME WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME OLDER NEW YORKERS**

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) implemented the Home Water Assistance Program, which is an initiative to make water and sewer bills more affordable for low-income homeowners, including older adults. DEP worked with HRA to select 12,500 qualified one- to four-family homeowners who received the Home Energy Assistance Program Regular Heating



Benefit for the heating season. DEP later expanded the program to include recipients of a Regular Heating Benefit or a Senior Citizens Homeowners Exemption or a Disabled Homeowners Exemption. DEP partnered with HRA and DOF to identify more than 51,700 qualified one- to four-family homeowners who received a \$115 credit.

#### **46) ASSIST SENIOR HOMEOWNERS THROUGH THE BUILD IT BACK PROGRAM**

Build It Back was launched in 2013 to assist homeowners whose properties were damaged by Hurricane Sandy. Build It Back is funded by Federal Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funding, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and is intended to serve homeowners with recovery needs that have not been met by other disaster assistance resources. Adults aged 65 and older comprise approximately 12 percent of the Build It Back applicant pool. However, older adults accounted for 20 percent of residents in three of the most affected areas.

Build It Back launched a series of targeted campaigns to encourage homeowners with property damaged by Sandy to apply for the program and remain engaged. Older adult, low-income, and special needs households were the key target groups. In collaboration with DFTA and its non-profit partners, Build it Back went door- to-door to re-engage older applicants who dropped out of the program. A Disaster Case Manager was assigned to help applicants complete the necessary paperwork and remove any obstacles to participation. Working with the Center for NYC Neighborhoods, Build It Back stationed counselors in its offices to help homeowners with a range of legal and housing financial challenges related to their housing recovery. The counselors helped applicants with financial planning, avoiding accruing debt burdens, cancelling loans received after the storm that were never used, reconciling recovery benefits, and addressing mortgage payment delinquency to prevent foreclosure. Nearly 4,500 applicants have received counseling, and more than 60 percent of applicants counseled were over 55 years of age. Build It Back offers a range of services to help homeowners obtain temporary housing while their homes are being elevated or rebuilt. Many of Build It Back's older applicants require specialized support offered by the program, which includes apartment leasing, direct rent payments, and assistance moving back in. In addition, Build It Back worked with the New York Disaster Interfaith Service Unmet Needs Roundtable



to help fill gaps in federal disaster recovery funding for older adults on fixed incomes and other under-resourced households. Overall, the Unmet Needs Roundtable provided funding to more than 2,000 residents affected by Sandy.

#### **47) ENGAGE HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS IN BEST PRACTICES**

The NYC Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) distributes a tip sheet that provides recommendations for home improvement contractors to consider the special needs and circumstances of older adults when making repairs, and how they can help older New Yorkers live more safely at home. It is available online in English and Spanish. DCA also distributes the tip sheet as part of the Home Improvement Contractor license application packet at the DCA Licensing Center and NYC Small Business Support Center.



## PUBLIC SPACES & TRANSPORTATION



### 48) PROMOTE USER-FRIENDLY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities released the Inclusive Design Guidelines, New York City, Second Edition (IDG) in 2017, in collaboration with the International Code Council. The aim of the IDG is to create more user-friendly and safe buildings and landscapes that improve the quality of life for everyone – including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The IDG offers technical guidance to help designers produce multisensory enhanced environments that accommodate the diverse range of physical and mental abilities of people of all ages. Recommendations in the IDG can be applied for all use and occupancy classifications, particularly residential and commercial buildings. The second edition of the IDG is an expansion and refinement of the first edition published in 2010. Recommendations in the second edition of the IDG include an emphasis on automation, accessible pedestrian systems, scooter usage, and active design.



### 49) EXPAND TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR SENIORS

Working with DOT, DFTA and MOPD have received a grant of \$1.8 million over three years from the Federal Transportation Administration to test an innovative program for older people and adults with disabilities. This pilot program will provide easily accessible door-to-door transportation to meet participants' wide range of transportation needs while helping them to avoid social isolation. Eligible riders in three target areas of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens will be able to use a transportation app to access a car



**In 2014, TLC created a proposal to introduce wheelchair accessible green and yellow taxis into the City's fleet over time.**

service 24/7 to travel anywhere in the City. Each rider is eligible for up to \$1,000 in rides spread over a year. Riders can also access the service through a dispatcher if they prefer. DFTA is testing whether a customer-sensitive travel option can be offered cost-effectively while expanding the riders' access to the type of transportation that they need, when they need it. DFTA will conduct the three-year pilot between 2018 and 2021.

**50) ENSURE NEW YORKERS WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS CAN EASILY ACCESS FOR-HIRE VEHICLE SERVICE**

Increasing access to the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission's (TLC's) fleet of more than 110,000 licensed vehicles is an important step to make New York City truly accessible to all of our residents and visitors, including those who use wheelchairs. In 2014, TLC created a proposal to introduce wheelchair accessible green and yellow taxis into the City's fleet over time. To reach the for-hire vehicle (FHV) sector (liveries, car services, and luxury limousines)—which today transports at least 400,000 passengers each day—TLC has proposed a new accessible service requirement. Over the course of several years, FHV companies, which include popular ride-hailing apps, would be required to dispatch a gradually increasing share of trips to wheelchair accessible vehicles until they reach at least 25% of trips. This program would help ensure accessible vehicles are regularly on the road and available to pick up passengers who use wheelchairs in a reliable and timely manner. Following a public comment period and hearing, the TLC Board of Commissioners will vote on the new service requirement.

**51) ENABLE NEW YORKERS WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS ANYWHERE IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS TO HAVE A TAXI DISPATCHED TO THEIR DOORSTEP**

TLC launched Accessible Dispatch as a 24/7 accessibility program to connect New Yorkers who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids with accessible taxis. The program allows passengers to book a taxi for on-demand or reservation-based service by either calling the dispatcher directly, calling the City's 311 system, or by using a web booker, text messaging, or a smartphone app. Passengers pay the metered fare for the trip with no extra costs. The Accessible Dispatch program accounts for more than 6,000 trips every month and continues to grow.

Currently the program dispatches taxis to passengers for trips that begin in Manhattan. Later this year, TLC will expand service by launching the Citywide Accessible Dispatch program, which would enable passengers who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids to



**Parks Without Borders will create more welcoming entrances, make park boundaries greener and more comfortable, and enhance sight lines to improve safety and accessibility for all, including older adults.**

request trips in yellow and green taxis originating anywhere in the five boroughs. With this expanded coverage area and additional accessible vehicles, New Yorkers and visitors who use mobility aids will be able to access the City like never before.

## **52) IMPROVE OLDER ADULT ACCESS TO PARKS**

The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) is the steward of nearly 30,000 acres of land – 14 percent of New York City – including more than 5,000 individual properties ranging from beaches and parks to community gardens and Greenstreets. Parks Without Borders is a new vision to better connect parks and public spaces to their communities. This approach redesigns the areas where parks meet streets and sidewalks. Parks Without Borders will create more welcoming entrances, make park boundaries greener and more comfortable, and enhance sight lines to improve safety and accessibility for all, including older adults. Rethinking and redesigning these spaces will create new centers of community activity out of the underused areas next to parks. With input from thousands of New Yorkers, NYC Parks selected eight showcase projects in May 2016. These eight sites will share \$40 million in capital funds to fulfill the Parks Without Borders vision. An additional \$10 million will be used to incorporate these designs into ongoing projects. In the coming years, NYC Parks will incorporate the Parks Without Borders into the design process for all new and renovated sites.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

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### 53) EXPAND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS TO RESPOND TO COMPLEX ELDER ABUSE CASES

Multi-Disciplinary Teams, or MDTs, include groups of professionals from diverse disciplines who together provide comprehensive assessments and consultation on elder abuse cases. Currently, Weill Cornell Medical Center, which has been a leader in the development of the MDT model, operates teams in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The teams have shown great success in addressing particularly complex elder abuse cases that involve coordination among multiple organizations, including District Attorneys, the NYC Police Department (NYPD), DFTA, OCDV, HRA's Adult Protective Services (APS), medical centers, financial institutions, and a myriad of community-based organizations that include legal providers and elder abuse programs. The teams meet regularly and develop solutions to individual cases using a coordinated, community-based approach to handling elder abuse. Beginning in FY '17, \$1.5 million was baselined in the DFTA budget to expand MDTs from the current two boroughs to all five boroughs by FY '19. This expansion will vastly strengthen the City's ability to address complex cases in a coordinated fashion, which is essential to resolving the interrelated social, financial, criminal, and legal challenges found in these most complicated of elder abuse cases.

**The Vision Zero action plan is the City's blueprint for preventing traffic related injuries and deaths on our streets. While older adults aged 60 and older comprise 18 percent of the City's population, they account for almost half of pedestrian fatalities.**

### 54) IMPLEMENT VISION ZERO INITIATIVES THAT FOCUS ON OLDER NEW YORKERS

The Vision Zero action plan is the City's blueprint for preventing traffic related injuries and deaths on our streets. While older adults aged 60 and older comprise 18 percent of the City's population,<sup>25</sup> they account for almost half of pedestrian fatalities.<sup>26</sup> The disproportionate burden of pedestrian fatalities among older adults contributed to an increase in education and enforcement efforts focused on older adult safety. Vision Zero initiatives include partnering with senior centers to obtain specific feedback from older adults about street safety improvements, and launching a senior outreach and enforcement campaign.

### 55) INCREASE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TO COMBAT ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is an issue that presents particular challenges, given that it involves the violation of a trusted relationship. Like domestic violence, elder abuse is difficult to combat because it often remains hidden. To address these challenges, the NYPD has designated precinct-based Domestic Violence Units to be the community liaisons in response to elder abuse. The Domestic Violence Unit within each

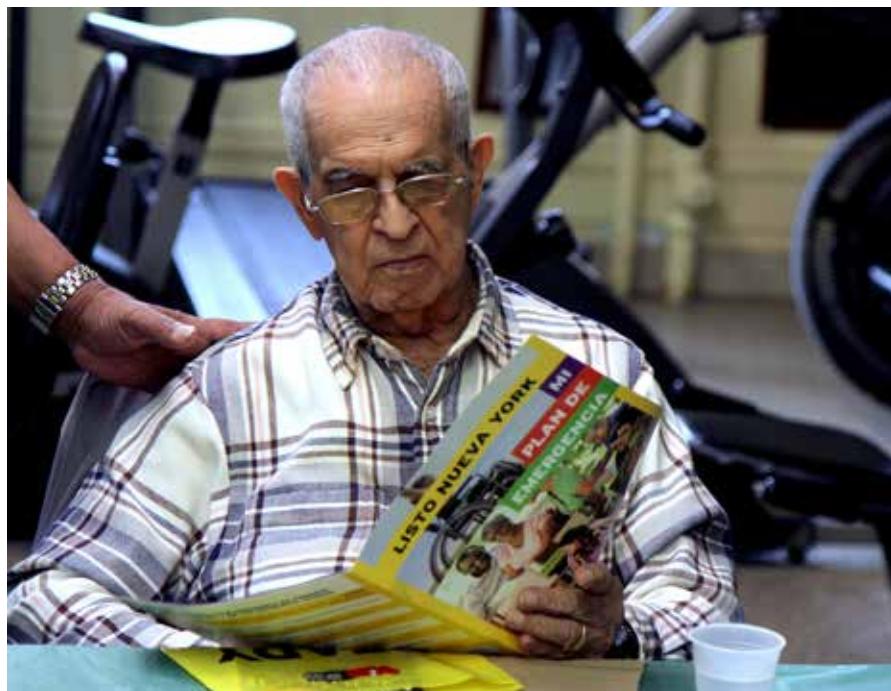


precinct serves as the precinct-based point of contact for APS, DFTA, elder abuse services providers, and the public.

The NYPD has informed police officers about the roles and resources of APS and DFTA as partners of law enforcement. Additionally, the NYPD is working with elder abuse prevention advocates to create a roll call training video to assist police officers in identifying the common signs of elder abuse.

#### **56) ENHANCE PROCESS OF LOCATING SENIORS WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING**

Silver Alert, borne out of an age-friendly collaboration between DFTA, the NYPD, NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM), and the NYC Council, is a public notification system for missing older adults with certain cognitive impairments. When a person aged 65 and older with a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's disease is reported missing and deemed to be in imminent danger of physical injury or death, the NYPD initiates a protocol through which a wide audience, including media outlets, senior services providers, medical facilities, and community organizations, is notified so the public may assist police in searching for the missing older adult. Notifications are also sent to subscribers of the City's Notify NYC emergency notification system. Additionally, the NYPD is exploring the use of GPS and other technology to enhance the process of locating older adults who are reported missing.



## **57) FOCUS ON OLDER ADULTS DURING EMERGENCY PLANNING**

NYCEM plans and prepares for emergencies, educates the public about preparedness, coordinates emergency response and recovery, and collects and disseminates emergency information. Every year, NYCEM organizes a symposium that focuses on emergency planning for people with access and functional needs, including older adults and people with disabilities. The symposium brings together service providers, consumers, advocates, and community stakeholders to specifically address planning for people who require a higher level of support during emergencies. In addition, NYCEM hosts quarterly Access and Functional Needs Working Group meetings, which cover updates specific to this population, fostering a mindful and inclusive approach to emergency planning for all.

## **58) PROMOTE FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

The NYC Fire Department is the largest fire department in the United States, responding to more than a million emergencies every year. Since its inception, the FDNY has helped lead efforts to make NYC the safest big city in the nation. The FDNY also works to continually educate the public in fire safety, life safety, and disaster preparedness. In 2016, the FDNY recorded 48 fire deaths – the lowest number in NYC history. Of those deaths, 21 – or more than 40 percent – were older New Yorkers aged 65 or older. Older adults are disproportionately likely to suffer as a result of a household fire in comparison to the overall population. The FDNY is committed to disseminating life-saving knowledge to communities, and particularly older adults, about fire prevention and emergency preparedness through the Fire Safety Education program. In 2016, the FDNY provided more than 260 older adult-focused Fire Safety Education events, seminars, and workshops, reaching more than 40,000 individuals aged 65 and older. The Fire Safety Education presentations cover various topics, including smoke alarm installation and maintenance, emergency preparedness, and cooking safety. More information about the FDNY's fire and life safety education program is available at <http://www.fdnysmart.org>.

## **59) PROTECT OLDER ADULTS FROM EXTREME HEAT**

Heat adaptation is a key priority for the de Blasio Administration, and the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR) continues to develop strategies to mitigate the effects of rising temperatures in our communities. More Americans die from heat waves every year than from all other natural disasters combined.<sup>27</sup> Each summer, NYC experiences



an average of 450 heat-related emergency department visits, 150 heat-related hospital admissions, 13 heat-stroke deaths, and about 115 excess deaths from natural causes exacerbated by heat.<sup>28</sup> Variation in our densely built environment results in disparate local-level heat risks, which are disproportionately borne by our most vulnerable New Yorkers, including older adults, those with poor health, and those who do not have access to air conditioning. DOHMH developed a Heat Vulnerability Index and the resulting map has given the Mayor a charge to mitigate heat citywide, with a thoughtful targeting of those most at-risk.



**Home Health Aides (HHAs) play a critical role in protecting our City's most vulnerable residents by providing critical health services inside their homes and are important partners in the City's efforts to protect at-risk New Yorkers.**

In 2017, NYCEM launched the Community Emergency Planning Toolkit. The toolkit has been introduced to local community organizations, including aging services providers, throughout the five boroughs and outreach about the toolkit is ongoing. The toolkit addresses various hazards, including extreme heat, and provides guidance on ways communities can mitigate the negative effects of these hazards at the local level. In addition, NYCEM is working with DOHMH as well as DFTA to launch an extreme heat awareness campaign. The campaign, through local outreach and print ads, will feature older adults and will highlight heat safety tips, and is targeted to launch in summer 2017.

## **60) LAUNCH CLIMATE RISK TRAINING FOR HOME HEALTH AIDES**

Hot and humid summer weather can cause heat illness and even death. In New York City, DOHMH examined death records from 2008-2011 and found that about 85 percent of NYC heat-stroke deaths happened after exposure to heat inside the home. Many victims were exposed to heat inside homes that lacked access to or did not use air conditioning. Older adults, those with chronic medical conditions or mental health conditions, and certain other groups are most vulnerable. Those who are socially isolated or homebound are also at risk. Cooling centers are open across the City during serious heat waves. However, published studies and City data suggest that many New Yorkers, including those most vulnerable to heat illness, prefer to stay at home during hot weather even if they cannot stay cool there, instead of visiting a cool place like a library, a friend's home with air conditioning, or a City cooling center. Due to current and future risks in light of our changing climate, the City needs strategies to reach heat-vulnerable populations inside their homes. Studies show that indoor home temperatures can be 20°F higher than outdoor temperatures in the absence of air conditioning, and that indoor exposures to heat exceed the comfort range among older adult occupants.

Home Health Aides (HHAs) play a critical role in protecting our City's most vulnerable residents by providing critical health services inside their homes and are important partners in the City's efforts to protect at-risk New Yorkers. Due to established relationships between aides and clients, HHAs can be trusted messengers in communicating health risks and promoting protective measures inside the home. Starting in 2017, the City is partnering with home care agencies to promote heat-health messages to New Yorkers and engage HHAs as key players in building climate resiliency. To this end, the City developed a heat-health module for continuing education trainers that will be offered as part of the standard curriculum by three key home care employers.



Through these employers, the City's continuing education curriculum aims to reach nearly 8,000 HHAs, who will be trained to identify clients that are at highest risk, understand that medicines can affect the body's ability to respond to heat, and understand ways to prevent heat-related illness and death. Most importantly, HHAs will learn to identify barriers that prevent their clients from staying cool and can connect the most vulnerable New Yorkers to the array of City services.

#### **61) ENCOURAGE NEW YORKERS TO CHECK ON OLDER ADULTS AND OTHER AT-RISK NEIGHBORS THROUGH BE A BUDDY NYC**

Be a Buddy NYC is a community-led preparedness model that promotes social cohesion. The City is investing \$930,000 to launch this health-based initiative, which is a two-year pilot that will promote community resiliency during extreme heat and other weather emergencies in key heat-vulnerable communities. South Bronx neighborhoods have among the highest rates of heat illness and death in New York City.<sup>29</sup> Central Brooklyn and Central and East Harlem are also highly vulnerable to heat impacts.<sup>30</sup> Be a Buddy NYC is an interagency partnership between DOHMH, ORR, and NYCEM to address heat-related health impacts by enhancing the response capacity, climate preparedness, and communication tools of local community-based organizations, while increasing neighborhood volunteerism through the creation of buddy systems. The City will work with each neighborhood to foster buddy systems between social service and community organizations, volunteers, and vulnerable New Yorkers, to be deployed during emergencies to conduct telephone and, if necessary, door-to-door and building level checks on vulnerable individuals.

Over the next two years, Be a Buddy NYC will implement protective measures against heat-related illnesses by:

- 1) Training community organizations and volunteers on emergency protective measures and ways to assist vulnerable adults; and
- 2) Engaging communities to identify alternative neighborhood resources for staying cool and to communicate protective health messages to hard-to-reach populations via trusted messengers.

#### **62) PROMOTE FINANCIAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

The Age-friendly NYC Commission's Financial Health and Wellbeing Working Group, coordinated by the New York Academy of Medicine, is organizing a symposium in early 2018 in partnership with the Global Coalition on Aging and AARP. The symposium will focus on the role of business, government, and the community in ensuring financial security and promoting financial literacy and wellness in later life.



### **63) ESTABLISH A RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES**

Mayor de Blasio, in partnership with NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Public Advocate Letitia James, announced that New York City is working to become the first city in the country to create a retirement savings program for private sector employees. Fewer than half of all working New Yorkers have access to a retirement savings plan, and individuals who are low-income earners, immigrants, people of color, and women are disproportionately affected by this gap.<sup>31</sup> Even those who have started to save do not have much: 40 percent of New Yorkers between the ages of 50 and 64 have less than \$10,000 saved for retirement.<sup>32</sup> To simply live at poverty level for a 15-year retirement, a New Yorker would need approximately \$215,000 in savings.<sup>33</sup>

Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito, and Public Advocate James have partnered on legislation that would enable any New Yorker working at a business with 10 or more employees to enroll in an employee-funded retirement plan. Contributions would be exclusively from employees and made through payroll based on a default rate. Employees would have the ability to change their rate or opt out of the program. Also, employees would be able to transfer the savings account from job to job. Council Member Ben Kallos and Public Advocate James introduced legislation to implement the retirement savings program for public sector employees, as well as establish a retirement savings board to oversee this program.

### **64) EDUCATE OLDER NEW YORKERS ABOUT FRAUD**

The NYC Department of Consumer Affairs protects and enhances the daily economic lives of New Yorkers. Given the unique consumer challenges older adults face, DCA has worked to educate older New Yorkers about common frauds and financial issues and where they can turn for help. In partnership with DFTA, DCA distributes a “Be a Savvy Senior” guide. This guide offers tips to help protect older adults from identity theft, frauds, scams, and deceptive advertising practices. Topics include reverse mortgages, home improvement scams, and sales schemes. It is available online in English at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/consumers/Senior-Savvy-Tips.pdf>. In addition, DCA distributed the guide to more than 800 attendees at events geared to older adults in 2016.

Local Law 100 of 2016, introduced by NYC Council Member Chaim Deutsch, required DCA to provide older adults with outreach and education regarding consumer protection issues. As provided in the legislation, DCA collaborated with DFTA to create “Consumer

**Given the unique consumer challenges older adults face, DCA has worked to educate older New Yorkers about common frauds and financial issues and where they can turn for help.**



Protection Tips for Older Adults,” which is available online in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/consumers/older-adults.page>. DCA also distributed this educational material to more than 700 older adults at outreach events in 2017.

## **65) TARGET EQUITABLE AND LOCALIZED DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULTS**

The Age-friendly NYC Commission’s Public Safety Working Group is overseeing a new collaboration between the New York Academy of Medicine and the City University of New York Center for Urban Research to create IMAGE-NYC, an open-source interactive map of the current and projected aging population in NYC. Funded by the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, this map will facilitate more informed planning and more equitable and localized deployment of resources for older people by government agencies, elected officials, health care and supportive service providers, researchers, and funders in New York City. In addition, by providing location-specific, relevant information, this map will help to catalyze connections within and between sectors, institutions, and individuals leading to increased social cohesion, which supports aging in place and community resilience.

**While the Vision Zero action plan seeks to prevent traffic-related injuries and deaths across all age groups, the fact that people aged 60 or older account for almost half of pedestrian fatalities contributed to increased education and enforcement efforts in senior centers, NORCs, and other places that serve older New Yorkers.**

## **66) CONDUCT OUTREACH TO OLDER ADULTS ABOUT TRAFFIC SAFETY**

While the Vision Zero action plan seeks to prevent traffic-related injuries and deaths across all age groups, the fact that people aged 60 or older account for almost half of pedestrian fatalities contributed to increased education and enforcement efforts in senior centers, NORCs, and other places that serve older New Yorkers. According to data, older adults are not more likely to be struck while walking than other pedestrians. However, if an older pedestrian is struck by a vehicle, the individual is more likely to be severely injured or killed.<sup>34</sup> Also, older New Yorkers walk much more than older adults living elsewhere in the nation, and their pedestrian fatality rate is four times that of younger New Yorkers.<sup>35</sup> In light of this data, older adults are key in highlighting areas where real engineering changes are needed. The DOT Safety Education team works with approximately 100 locations each year to do outreach to older New Yorkers and gather information about street safety improvements. DOT also issues a safety magazine geared toward older adults.

Under Vision Zero, priority locations are identified based on data regarding the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured at those locations. In areas with high crash histories and high concentrations



of pedestrians and drivers, a two-pronged effort is implemented. Members of DOT's Street Team target people using all modes of transportation in specific geographic locations, distributing flyers and engaging the public about the initiative. The NYPD is involved in providing foot patrol during the education effort. This is followed by a period of enforcement by the NYPD, which targets the most common driving and cycling violations. NYPD and DOT Street Teams visited more than 350 priority locations since the launch of Vision Zero and distributed 1.7 million educational flyers. In the third year of the Vision Zero Street Teams effort in 2016, DOT and NYPD focused on areas with high concentrations of older New Yorkers and along truck routes. DOT Safety Education also visited nearly 200 senior centers at priority locations as part of Vision Zero outreach. Additionally, DOT and DFTA collaborated and developed "Streetwise," an educational program featuring older adults in their communities, which includes a discussion of how to prevent dangerous driving within their neighborhoods.

#### **67) FOCUS ENFORCEMENT AGAINST DANGEROUS DRIVING BEHAVIOR IN AREAS WITH HIGH POPULATIONS OF OLDER ADULTS**

NYPD officers target enforcement against motorists observed committing Vision Zero hazardous offenses, and in particular, failure to yield. This enforcement is concentrated within areas with high populations of older residents, based on data provided by DFTA. These efforts are preceded by outreach to participants at local senior centers to identify locations where high rates of violations are observed. The NYPD's focus on consistent and predictable enforcement deters reckless driving, prevents crashes, and saves lives. In 2016, 60 percent of all traffic violations that NYPD issued were for Vision Zero hazardous violations.<sup>36</sup> More than 42,000 summonses were issued to motorists who failed to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk, a marked increase from the time prior to Vision Zero. NYPD officers issued approximately 137,000 speeding summonses in 2016. They also issued 1,900 summonses and made nearly 40 arrests of drivers who struck a pedestrian or cyclist in violation of the Right of Way law.

#### **68) REDESIGN SAFER STREETS FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS**

The comprehensive Vision Zero strategy is intended to address the safety of older adults. For instance, the Left Turn Study DOT issued in 2016 found that half of those who are killed by a left-turning vehicle are aged 67 or older. DOT launched the Left Turn Traffic Calming pilot at more than 100 locations across the City in 2016. The Left Turn Traffic Calming treatments have proven effective at slowing vehicle turns, which improves safety for all pedestrians, especially older





pedestrians who are more likely to be severely injured or killed if struck by a vehicle. In addition, DOT began testing raised crosswalks at two intersections in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Raised crosswalks increase the profile and visibility of all pedestrians at intersections, providing a particular benefit to older New Yorkers, children, and people who use wheelchairs. Also, raised crosswalks force motorists to slow down before entering intersections, providing a safety benefit to everyone. DOT is monitoring the effectiveness of this treatment to determine whether it would be effective at other City locations.

Completing more than 240 safety engineering projects since January 2014, DOT has achieved unprecedented progress under Vision Zero. These redesigns make streets safer by simplifying complex intersections, narrowing lanes, making pedestrians and cyclists more visible, and shortening pedestrian crossing distances. In 2016, DOT implemented more than 100 of these safety engineering projects – more than ever before. DOT also installed approximately 770 leading pedestrian intervals in 2016, resulting in a total of nearly 1,250 intersections made safer under Vision Zero, allowing pedestrians extra dedicated time to cross the street before traffic is released.

#### **69) ANALYZE PATTERNS OF TRAFFIC-RELATED RISK AND INJURY AMONG OLDER NEW YORKERS**

DOHMH produces and publishes Epi Data Briefs, short publications that highlight data findings from varying agency programs and topics. In March 2017, DOHMH issued three NYC traffic safety-related Epi Data Briefs. The topics were motor vehicle occupant fatalities,



pedestrian fatalities, and driving and self-reported dangerous driving behaviors. According to the Epi Data Brief on pedestrian fatalities in NYC between 2012 and 2014, older adults aged 65 and older had the highest pedestrian fatality rate (5.7 per 100,000 population) compared with children and adults aged 18 to 64.<sup>37</sup> Among older adults, the fatality rate was higher among males than among females.<sup>38</sup> Asian/Pacific Islander older adults had the highest fatality rate among all race and ethnicity groups.<sup>39</sup> By borough, the fatality rate was highest among older adults living in Brooklyn.<sup>40</sup> More than half (57 percent) of older adult pedestrian fatalities resulted from a crash that occurred within 10 blocks of home.<sup>41</sup> DOHMH will continue to analyze patterns of traffic-related risk and injury among older New Yorkers.



## COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION



### 70) PROTECT EMPLOYEES WITH CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES FROM WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Local Law 1 of 2016, introduced by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and NYC Council Member Debi Rose, prohibits in New York City employment discrimination based on an individual's actual or perceived status as a caregiver. The law provides protections against discrimination in the workplace for:

- 1) People providing direct and ongoing care to children under the age of 18;
- 2) People caring for parents, siblings, spouses, grandparents, or grandchildren, among other relatives, with a disability who rely on them for medical care or to meet their needs of daily living; or
- 3) People caring for people with disabilities who live with them and rely on them for medical care or to meet their needs of daily living.

The law applies to employers with four or more employees and protects job applicants with caregiving responsibilities as well as current employees. For New Yorkers caring for the 1.8 million children under the age of 18, 1 million people aged 65 and older, and approximately 900,000 people with disabilities,<sup>42</sup> the law makes it easier to file workplace discrimination claims under the NYC Human Rights Law. Previously, employees who were discriminated against for having caregiving responsibilities had to file a claim of gender discrimination, based on unlawful stereotypes regarding the caregiving responsibilities of members of a particular gender. Now, those employees are directly protected under one of the strongest human rights laws in the country. Charged with enforcing the NYC Human Rights Law and educating the public about protections under the law, the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) created educational materials for both employers ([http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/materials/Caregiver\\_FactSheet-Employer.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/materials/Caregiver_FactSheet-Employer.pdf)) and employees ([http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/materials/Caregiver\\_FactSheet-Employee.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/materials/Caregiver_FactSheet-Employee.pdf)) to raise awareness about the new caregiver protections.

### 71) ENSURE ACCESS TO AGING SERVICES FOR ALL OLDER NEW YORKERS

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and DFTA issued a joint open letter, available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/>



[about/open\\_letter.shtml](#), reiterating the de Blasio Administration's commitment to ensuring all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, continue to have access to DFTA and City services. The Administration has strong policies to protect the participants' privacy in programs sponsored by the City and DFTA. Aging services providers may not ask about immigration status except to assess eligibility for benefits, and responses are completely voluntary. Also, providers can still assist with obtaining services for which immigration status is not applicable.

**IDNYC is the largest municipal identification program in the country, and it serves a critical need given that approximately half of NYC residents aged 16 and older do not have a NYS Driver License.**



## 72) OUTREACH TO OLDER ADULTS FOR IDNYC ENROLLMENT

IDNYC is the largest municipal identification program in the country, and it serves a critical need given that approximately half of NYC residents aged 16 and older do not have a NYS Driver License.<sup>43</sup> MOIA is committed to making IDNYC as effective and inclusive as possible, so that every New Yorker has access to the opportunities and security that come with having government-issued photo identification. IDNYC benefits every NYC community, including the most vulnerable communities, such as older adults. The IDNYC card is widely accepted across the City and provides eligibility for City services, entry to City buildings and schools, recognition by City agencies, such as the NYPD, and opportunity to open bank accounts at certain financial institutions. To supplement the value of the IDNYC card as a form of identification, the City has developed a set of key partnerships with libraries, cultural institutions, and other organizations.

MOIA's team of multilingual organizers has been actively engaging older immigrant New Yorkers to facilitate access to IDNYC enrollments and to spread information regarding City services and programs. To this end, MOIA's staff members have conducted mobile IDNYC enrollments for older adults at more than nine different



locations. Organizers have conducted presentations at schools, parent association meetings, community boards, and other venues serving immigrants and older adults, delivering information about IDNYC and City services. MOIA is actively seeking to expand access to IDNYC by bringing temporary enrollment sites to more locations, such as the Sherpa Temple in Jackson Heights serving Himalayan older adults, and a number of other sites that older New Yorkers attend. Organizers have also engaged NORCs and are planning upcoming additional bulk enrollments, presentations, and forums.



### 73) INCREASE OLDER ADULT ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

An internet connection is vital tool to pursue a career after retirement, trim a household budget, access City services, and engage in your community. When connected to the internet, older adults can maintain close personal connections with loved ones no matter where they live. The inability to go online can compound health problems or social isolation given that medical information and personal communication are increasingly digital.

The City has set a goal that every NYC resident and business will have affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband service by 2025. Currently, 30 percent of New Yorkers over the age of 60 do not have internet service at home, compared to a citywide rate of 20 percent. And close to half of New Yorkers over 60 years old who live in poverty have no home internet connection. The cost of service and a lack of



digital skills can present major challenges for older New Yorkers. In 2016, the City successfully advocated for modernization of the Federal Lifeline subsidy program to apply to internet service, making internet access more affordable for many older adults. The City is defending this program from the new policy reversals and budget cutbacks coming out of Washington, while working on other ways to make internet service affordable for all New Yorkers.

Through DFTA and its contracted community service partners, the City supports 120 computer labs in senior centers across the five boroughs. These labs provide computer workstations, broadband connectivity, digital literacy training, and a supportive environment tailored to the needs and interests of older adults. Together, these computer centers serve approximately 17,000 older New Yorkers annually. The City has also established a first-of-its-kind technology education center for older adults, via DFTA and its non-profit partner organization, Older Adults Technology Services (OATS). The Senior Planet Exploration Center offers older New Yorkers free classes on a broad range of technology subjects, as well as workshops, talks, and social events — all aimed at supporting older adults in expanding their access to the digital world. Also, through the NYC Connected Communities program, which expands the availability and capacity of public computer centers in the highest poverty areas in the City, OATS is implementing a technology initiative at the NYCHA Queensbridge development, funded by DFTA. As part of this program, seniors take courses in computer literacy, finance management, social media, and health and fitness.

**The DFTA website, together with those of other City agencies, are being redesigned in collaboration with the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) to improve access for screen reading software for the visually impaired, as well as for general accessibility.**

#### **74) REDESIGN THE DFTA WEBSITE TO IMPROVE ACCESS**

The DFTA website, together with those of other City agencies, are being redesigned in collaboration with the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) to improve access for screen reading software for the visually impaired, as well as for general accessibility. Enhancements include improving the mobile viewing experience and providing on-screen translations in multiple languages. The redesign also focuses on content, assisting City agencies in publicizing valuable information in an accessible manner. Older adults are increasingly obtaining information online, and the City is working to remove technological barriers that prevent access.

#### **75) LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES OLDER ADULTS FACE**

NYC BigApps is an annual competition sponsored by the NYC Economic Development Corporation that leverages the City's tech, creative, and civic communities to develop technologies that address civic



and urban challenges. This year, NYCEDC partnered with Civic Hall Labs to produce the BigApps 2017 competition with a special focus on addressing pressing challenges faced by NYC youth (ages 13-18), older adults (aged 65+), and immigrants, including transportation, access to information, and community resiliency. DFTA was a co-sponsor of the BigApps 2017 competition and helped mentor competitors. The winners received cash awards, marketing and promotion, acceptance into Civic Hall Labs' civic accelerator program, and their solutions are eligible for a pilot on the LinkNYC communication network citywide, which provides free public Wi-Fi and phone service, among other amenities.

**In 2017, OATH established the Court's Education for Seniors program or CourtESy. The CourtESy program brings information about OATH and the hearing process directly to older adults. CourtESy forums focus on OATH's remote hearing methods, which give recipients of summonses the ability to contest summonses without having to attend OATH hearings in person.**



#### **76) EDUCATE OLDER ADULTS ABOUT SUMMONSES AND REMOTE HEARING PROCESSES**

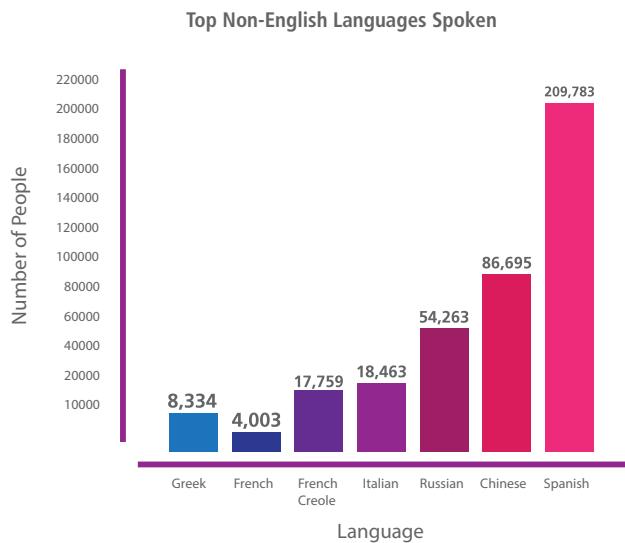
The Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) is an independent administrative law court that conducts nearly 300,000 hearings on a diverse range of issues each year. Under the de Blasio Administration, OATH has instituted changes to rules and procedures in an effort to make the administrative justice process more equal and fair for New Yorkers who receive summonses. By consolidating the previously separate divisions that oversaw Environmental Control Board hearings, Taxi and Vehicle for Hire hearings, and Health hearings into one Hearings Division, the City is making the hearing process easier to navigate. All summonses are now subject to the same hearing procedures, rules, and deadlines, regardless of which City enforcement agency issues the summons.



In 2017, OATH established the Court's Education for Seniors program or CourtESy. The CourtESy program brings information about OATH and the hearing process directly to older adults. CourtESy forums focus on OATH's remote hearing methods, which give recipients of summonses the ability to contest summonses without having to attend OATH hearings in person. In addition, OATH's Administrative Law Court's Community Education Services (ACCES) program seeks to connect residents, including older adults, with information from OATH about how to respond to a summons issued by a NYC enforcement agency. To promote the CourtESy and ACCES programs in 2017, OATH has held events with NYC Council Aging Committee Chair Margaret Chin, Council Member Ben Kallos, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.

## 77) PARTNER WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON AGING SERVICES OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs (International Affairs) works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and NYC agencies and local neighborhoods. International Affairs focuses on sharing the City's policies and best practices globally, as well as responding to requests from foreign governments, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. International Affairs advises City agencies on diplomatic and consular matters, and provides guidance to the diplomatic and consular community on City-related issues. International Affairs has worked with DFTA to coordinate visits from many foreign governments interested in learning about aging services in New York City. DFTA has met with government officials from New Zealand, Spain, Australia, Hong Kong, Brazil, and Mexico, among others.



## COMMUNITY & CIVIC PARTICIPATION



A landmark study showed that older adults who are actively engaged in creative activities suffered less from depression, required fewer doctor visits, and took less medication.



### 78) RECRUIT ARTISTS TO CONDUCT PROGRAMS IN SENIOR CENTERS

SU-CASA is a community arts engagement program sponsored by the NYC Council, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), and DFTA. The SU-CASA program builds upon study findings that correlate creative expression with healthy aging. A landmark study conducted in New York City and other cities by Dr. Gene Cohen, an American psychiatrist who pioneered research in geriatric mental health, showed that older adults who are actively engaged in creative activities suffered less from depression, required fewer doctor visits, and took less medication than control group participants. The work of Dr. Cohen supported the capability of seniors functioning at high levels of creativity and intellectual rigor, and that involvement in the arts late in life leads to a lower incidence of illness and injury.

Through the SU-CASA initiative, artists and non-profit arts organizations are placed in residence at senior centers across the five boroughs to provide arts programming for older adults. Artistic partners work in a wide variety of disciplines, including music, theater, dance, poetry, ceramics, photography, writing, and many more. Each SU-CASA program engages participating older adults in an art project or a series of cultural programs throughout the course of a six-month residency. Each residency culminates with a program at the senior center, which is open to the public, such as exhibits, readings, performances, open houses, and other cultural interactions. Continuing in the tradition of the highly successful Seniors Partnering with Artists Citywide program, SU-CASA greatly expanded arts opportunities for older adults. As a result of a more than \$2 million allocation from the NYC Council in FY '17, 153 artists and arts organizations were placed in senior centers, which is the highest number of placements in the history of the program. In FY '18, the Council increased funding for SU-CASA to more than \$2.5 million.



## 79) FOCUS ON OLDER ADULTS IN THE CREATE NYC CULTURAL PLAN

Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 46 of 2015, introduced by NYC Council Member Stephen Levin, requiring the City to produce a cultural plan to serve as a guide for the future of arts and culture in New York City. Starting in 2016, DCLA worked with artists, cultural organizations, NYC agencies, arts and culture experts, and community residents to collect data and public input to inform the plan, known as CreateNYC. The agency made a particular effort to solicit the feedback of organizations working in the field of creative aging as well as older adults who are artists, cultural workers, consumers of culture, and residents of New York City.

**By building on existing strengths while acknowledging gaps in services and strategies for improvement, CreateNYC lays out a path toward a cultural community that is more inclusive of older New Yorkers.**

In one of the public sessions hosted for CreateNYC, older artists were invited to share their recommendations and challenges related to affordability, remaining in their own neighborhoods, and retirement after a career as an artist or cultural worker. Public input also demonstrated a need for greater engagement with older immigrant New Yorkers to increase their inclusion in the City's cultural life, and a need to better understand their value as repositories of cultural heritage in many communities. DCLA convened a CreateNYC focus group of professionals working in organizations that serve older adults where participants discussed professional training, funding for creative aging programs, and capacity-building for arts organizations and social service partners.

As a result of this open process, several goals in the CreateNYC cultural plan directly address the needs of older New Yorkers. Recommendations include:

- Building on DCLA's creative aging programs by working with partner agencies and organizations;
- Supporting these programs citywide in both age-neutral and senior focused spaces; and
- Encouraging arts organizations to provide accessible accommodations for older adults.

The cultural plan, which will be released in summer 2017, also notes existing support for programs providing services to older artists and cultural workers. By building on existing strengths while acknowledging gaps in services and strategies for improvement, CreateNYC lays out a path toward a cultural community that is more inclusive of older New Yorkers – both as artists and audiences – and acknowledges the incredible source of talent, innovation, and experience within older New Yorkers.



## **80) INSPIRE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION**

The Age-friendly NYC Commission's Media, Arts, and Culture Working Group is developing a digital and printed toolkit to inspire new opportunities for arts and cultural participation, foster social engagement, build community, and reduce isolation. The toolkit provides evidence to support the value of older people in communities and the value of arts and culture as we age; socio-demographic data; no and low-cost strategies to attract and cater to a multigenerational audience; examples of arts and cultural organizations welcoming older people; aging services organizations bringing in arts and culture; and organizations using public space to create community-based arts programs inclusive of people of all ages.



## **81) INCREASE RECRUITMENT OF OLDER ADULTS TO THE MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE**

The de Blasio Administration strives to recruit multicultural and multi-generational populations that historically have not been well-represented in our workforce. The NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) has attended several events in recent years specifically targeting older adults, including the DFTA Senior Community Services Employment Program Job Fair and the Annual Military Retiree Appreciation Day Resources Fair. From FY '13 to FY '15, the number of new hires aged 60 and older more than doubled, to more than 500. The City agencies that employ the highest number of employees aged 60 and older vary in their scope and mission, including NYC Health + Hospitals (18 percent), HRA (17.5 percent), and DOHMH (17 percent).



In addition, DCAS offers trainings that focus on intergenerational issues, age discrimination, reasonable accommodations for employment candidates and employees, and the impact of unconscious bias in the selection process. More than 60,000 municipal employees across many agencies have participated since 2014. DCAS employees represent a full spectrum of diverse backgrounds (i.e., cultural, ethnic, generational, religious, etc.) that mirror the community at large. The City is committed to creating an innovative and inclusive environment. Training objectives include developing inclusive behaviors and leadership skills that will create an environment where all employees feel valued, included, and engaged; utilizing unique skill sets to better serve the vast diversity in all NYC communities; and drawing upon personal experiences to gain insight about inclusion.

## **82) PROVIDE NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS**

In partnership with NYC Service, the DFTA Volunteer Resource Center (VRC) promotes volunteerism by recruiting volunteers for programs that serve older adults. Since its launch in January 2015, more than 500 volunteers have come to the VRC to provide service to older New Yorkers. Hailing from diverse backgrounds and ranging in age from college students to older adults, they have helped older New Yorkers pay their bills, counsel older adults about Medicare options, lead health and wellness programming, and more. According to VRC surveys of the DFTA provider network, these contract agencies are using large numbers of volunteers to help them meet their goals and provide services to older New Yorkers. DFTA contract agencies provided an estimated 1.1 million hours of service to older adults in New York City, and more than half of that total was provided by older adult volunteers. Now in its third year, the VRC continues its work to recruit and refer volunteers, and leads a Senior Support Coalition of contract providers to collaborate on strategies to increase volunteerism for and by older New Yorkers.

## **83) CULTIVATE AGE-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS**

First introduced by the Age-friendly NYC Commission as “Aging Improvement Districts,” the “Age-friendly Neighborhoods” model leverages the City’s organizational infrastructure, specifically the 51 NYC Council Districts and 70 Business Improvement Districts, to advance neighborhood-level, age-friendly priorities through community and economic development efforts. In partnership with the Council, Age-friendly NYC has connected with more than 3,000 older New Yorkers across 19 neighborhoods citywide through community consultations, focus groups, interviews, and surveys. The data was collected in four languages (English, Spanish,



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Chinese, and Russian). In response to the consultation findings, Neighborhood Action Plans were created, leading to innovation at the neighborhood level. One example is the Age-friendly Ambassadors Program in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where older people focus on making improvements to local retail, connecting residents to benefits and entitlements, planning social events, and volunteering to help youth. Another is the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, which works to incorporate the needs of older consumers into its business attraction and retention strategies. Age-friendly NYC is now working to scale this initiative to the borough level beginning with Brooklyn in partnership with Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.

#### **84) OFFER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS**

NYC Parks is responsible for 600,000 street trees and 2 million more in parks. The NYC Parks Stewardship Program offers opportunities for older New Yorkers to stay engaged in their communities and care for our local natural resources. Older New Yorkers can join public volunteer events or coordinate their own local event via the NYC Parks Request a Project page at <https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/volunteer/stewardship/request-a-project>. Events can include planting, invasive species removal, aerating and mulching street tree beds, and wetland clean-up projects. In addition, the Super Stewards Program offers the opportunity for older adults to gain hands-on training in the care of natural areas and street trees. These independent Stewards can work on their own, lead other volunteers, host projects, apply for mini-grants, network with other volunteers, and get a sneak peek at the inner workings of NYC Parks. Through the agency's place-based Green Neighborhoods program, NYC Parks interacts with local senior centers as part of its community assessment process and is actively working to engage older adults as a vital part of the Green Neighborhoods effort.





### 85) SUPPORT AGING IN PLACE VILLAGES

Aging in Place villages represent an emerging consumer-driven, social support model that aims to enhance the social engagement, independence, and well-being of community-dwelling older adults through a combination of social activities, volunteer opportunities, service referral, and direct assistance. In December 2016, the Age-friendly NYC Commission's Public Safety Working Group, with support from AARP, convened for the first time representatives currently implementing or considering an aging in place initiative in New York City. The purpose was to share experiences, promising practices, and new thinking on how to expand and scale the model to help older New Yorkers age in their community. The challenges of these aging in place efforts include lack of space, lack of administrative capacity, and in some cases, sustainability, since they are primarily voluntary. All of the representatives expressed a need for more formal connection to resources. A LISTSERV was created to help them share information and to provide them with information and resources. For example, there has been targeted outreach using NYCEM's new toolkit for Community Emergency Planning to address emergency preparedness. In addition, one group was connected with a pro bono attorney and received information about fiscal sponsorship. Collectively, these groups engage approximately 2,000 seniors, many of whom have mobilized around age-friendly businesses and outreach to promote the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption. Age-friendly NYC is continuing to explore how to leverage these efforts to spread age-friendly activity and how to promote the creation of more self-directed groups in other parts of the City.



**Functioning as centers of learning and civic engagement, the City's three library systems spanning all five boroughs offer free, quality services to older adults, students, families, job seekers, and anyone in need of information or assistance.**

## **86) MAXIMIZE LIBRARIES FOR OLDER ADULT PROGRAMMING**

Functioning as centers of learning and civic engagement, the City's three library systems spanning all five boroughs offer free, quality services to older adults, students, families, job seekers, and anyone in need of information or assistance. In addition to their important traditional services of circulating millions of books and supporting research, libraries are expanding their roles and working in increasingly close partnership with the City to support the changing needs of NYC neighborhoods and residents.

All three library systems provide robust programming for older adults. The New York Public Library (NYPL) organizes a regular arts series, Art for a Lifetime, which offers workshops in painting, drawing, collage, and other art forms. These are available in many locations across the library network. NYPL provides free technology courses and programs for older adults in 80 locations through TechConnect. TechConnect classes assist older adults with sharpening Microsoft Office skills, mastering online shopping and banking, communicating online with family and friends around the world, and learning advanced skills, such as coding and Photoshop editing. In addition, NYPL offers workshops for older adults on fitness, pedestrian safety, and consumer fraud scams.

The Brooklyn Public Library's (BPL) Services for Older Adults offers inclusive programming and services tailored to patrons aged 50 and older, including lectures, films, performances, and educational courses that reflect the broad interests of older adults. The Creative Aging program at BPL offers multi-session art workshops for older adults, led by a professional teaching artist. Through Library Lane at BPL, older adults learn how to bowl virtually and compete during monthly tournaments. Classes at every BPL branch connect older adults to technology. BPL also has an ongoing oral history project, Our Streets, Our Stories, which explores Brooklyn through the words of older adult residents. In addition, BPL offers teleconference and online courses for those who are homebound and hosts cultural events and presentations at programs for older adults.

Queens Library has a wealth of free programs and resources for older adults, such as book discussion groups, live performances and readings, talks and panel discussions, film screenings, drama clubs, chess clubs, arts and crafts workshops, and health and wellness programs. A range of technology classes for older adult learners is offered at the Cyber Center at Queens Central Library and other select locations. The Adult Learner Program at Queens Library provides



services and lifelong learning opportunities, including English language classes, through Adult Learning Centers in the network. HealthLink and ConnectCare offer educational programs and health screenings at Queens Library locations. Queens Library also offers lectures, classes, book discussions, music, theater, debates, and chats by teleconference, video, and Livestream. Additionally, each of the library systems provide books and other collection materials by mail to the homebound.



# **Age-friendly NYC Commission**





**AGE-FRIENDLY NEW YORK CITY COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP ROSTER  
2015-2017**

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**Audrey Weiner, DSW, MPH (Co-Chair)**

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## ENDNOTES

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