

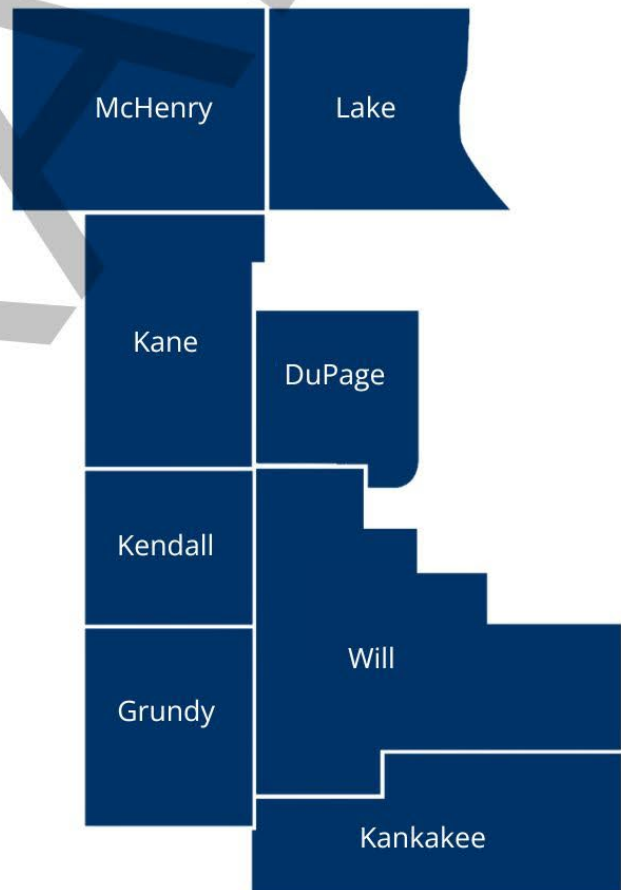


Public Information Document

FY26 AMENDMENT

Mission of AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois

At AgeGuide, it is our mission to be a vital resource and advocate for people as we age by providing thoughtful guidance, supportive services and meaningful connections.



Serving Older Americans in Northeastern Illinois: DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties
(Planning and Service Area - 02)

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Purpose of the Public Information Document and the Public Hearings

The purpose of this Public Information Document is to provide a summary of the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging's (AgeGuide) proposed service design, delivery, and the associated fund distributions, and other activities in which AgeGuide anticipates involvement. This Public Information Document provides an update for the second year of the three-year AgeGuide Area Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2027. This document is intended to outline AgeGuide's plan for allocating funds so the public can review this plan and provide comments and questions at the public hearing.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to provide an open forum for the public to comment on proposed services, expenditures, and other activities as outlined in this document and anticipated to be carried out during Fiscal Year 2025 through 2027 Area Plan Cycle. The Public Hearings provide information about AgeGuide's proposed plans, budget, funding formula, and priorities for funding community-based services for older adults and family caregivers.

Public Hearings will be held in person and virtually on the following dates:
Register here: <https://bit.ly/ageguide-public-hearings-2025>

In-Person

Thursday, April 3, 2025
1:00-3:00p
AgeGuide Training Room
1910 S. Highland Ave, Lombard, IL

Virtual

Friday, April 4, 2025
10:00a-12:00p

If you need special assistance, a translator, closed captioning, or other accommodation, please contact Cristine Ben at (630) 293-5990 prior to the hearing. If you are unable to attend a hearing and would like to comment on this proposed plan, written statements will be received through **April 11, 2025, at 4:00p**. Comments may be faxed, e-mailed, or mailed to the following address:

AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois

Attention: Marla Fronczak, Chief Executive Officer
1910 S. Highland Ave, Suite 100, Lombard, IL 60148
Fax: 630-293-7488; e-mail: info@ageguide.org

A Message from our Chief Executive Officer

In 2024, AgeGuide commemorated a half-century of dedicated service and innovation. While this is nothing short of extraordinary, we are now preparing for the new realities older adults and caregivers encounter on their aging journey.

That's why AgeGuide's comprehensive area plan not only addresses current needs but also anticipates future ones. In collaboration with our funded partners, the focus is on strategically rebuilding social connections among older adults and caregivers.

Former Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, reported that our great deficiency of connectivity has led to a poor prognosis for America's overall health and well-being. He offered us a prescription to cultivate a strong sense of community to help ourselves and others. Dr. Murthy highlighted that building community creates fulfillment, and three key elements make it possible: *connection with others through relationships, acts of service, and a sense of purpose.*

Research shows that being socially disconnected increases our risk of heart disease, dementia, depression, anxiety, and premature death. Alarming, one-third of adults and 50% of young people report experiencing loneliness.

Fortunately, there is good news! Sixty years ago in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society enacted innovative policies that addressed these societal issues. The Medicare program offered affordable access to healthcare for older adults. The Medicaid program provided low-income older adults with access to long-term care services and support. But the best news came with the passage of the Older Americans Act (OAA). ***The OAA boldly authorized programs to improve the quality of life for older adults by offering opportunities to:***

- Experience financial security
- Secure employment without discrimination
- Participate fully in the community
- Access services, including transportation, housing, elder justice, and caregiver support

AgeGuide continues to uphold these bold promises through collaborative and innovative strategies including:

The Illinois Multisector Plan on Aging: The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA), the Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging (I4A), the aging network, older adults, caregivers, and many state departments will come together to create a coordinated strategy to improve the aging journey for everyone in Illinois.

Addressing Ageism: AgeGuide is focused on promoting age-friendly employment practices to ensure people can work regardless of their age. We ensure access to civic engagement by creating Age and Dementia Friendly inclusive communities that promote social connection. Our podcast **The Age Guide** launched a new series, *Aging Unfiltered*, to address ageism and break down the myths associated with growing older.

Social Connection: AgeGuide and our funded partners promote social connection in a variety of ways through education and recreation programs, community dining, friendly visits, transportation, and a variety of volunteer opportunities. We also collaborate with our eight local county health departments to make social connection for older adults a health priority.

Brain Health: As a leading advocate for older adults, AgeGuide is engaged in vital discussions about the science, strategies, and solutions that support life-long cognitive vitality. The 4th Annual Aging Summit, *Mind Matters: A Lifespan Approach to Brain Health* will bring together older adults, caregivers, community leaders, and professionals across the aging network uniting us all in a shared mission to create a world that values and supports brain health at every stage of life.

Advocacy: Area Agencies advocate to ensure policies like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security financially support older adults. The Older Americans Act requires reauthorization every five years and is subject to annual appropriations. The Act is currently up for reauthorization. For all the reasons we just shared, we need your help and advocacy to get this done now!

Together, let's make a lasting impact for the next 50 years!

Sincerely,

Marla Fronczak
CEO, AgeGuide

WHO WE ARE

Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging (AgeGuide), began in 1972 as a model project and was formally designated by the Illinois Department on Aging in 1974. There are over 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) nationwide. AgeGuide is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) governed by a Board of Directors. The Board sets policy and makes decisions about programs and is advised by an Advisory Council. Volunteers from the eight-county planning and service area (PSA) comprise both the Board and Advisory Council, and the majority of both bodies' members are age 60 years and older.



AgeGuide is one of 13 Area Agencies in Illinois and operates within the aging network which includes the federal Administration on Community Living (ACL), the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA), and local community-based organizations who work together to serve older adults.

AgeGuide is engaged in its leadership role of developing and enhancing a comprehensive and coordinated community-based service system for older adults, including Elder Rights services and the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2022, 751,392 persons age 60 years of age and older live in AgeGuide's region. Over 78,161 older adults and their caregivers received OAA services in AgeGuide's eight county PSA in Fiscal Year 2024.



A WIDE RANGE OF LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO CONSUMERS IN THEIR LOCAL PLANNING & SERVICE AREA (PSA)

WHAT WE DO



ADVOCACY

AgeGuide advocates for older adults, weighing in on policymaking at the local, state, and national level. We advocate to effect policy change that supports aging at home and in the community with maximum health, independence, and well-being. Our advocacy activities are designed to induce a change in attitude and stereotypes, legislation, and policies around older adults, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them. As advocates for services and funding at the federal and state levels, AgeGuide informs older adults, caregivers, and legislators of the impact of proposed legislation on people and services.



COORDINATION

AgeGuide builds working relationships with other local non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and aging network partners to develop a comprehensive and integrated service delivery system. We seek input from the communities we serve through our Advisory Council, and participation in community-based collaborations. Organizations funded by AgeGuide provide guidance on services and the changing needs of their communities.



PLANNING & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

AgeGuide leverages federal dollars, building on Older Americans Act (OAA) funding to expand economic support for Home and Community Based Services. The U.S. Administration on Aging estimates that for every \$1 of federal OAA investment, an additional \$3 is leveraged. AgeGuide understands that bringing services to people where they live in their communities helps them save their own resources and government dollars, making this a more sensible approach from a fiscal and human perspective. AgeGuide conducts a tri-annual community needs assessment that informs our planning and program development processes. We assess the needs of older adults, their caregivers and families and use this information to create, improve and/or expand OAA services.



ADMINISTRATION

AgeGuide administers federal and state funding for Older Americans Act services that are available to any person aged 60 or older, their caregivers and families. These services are targeted to older adults in greatest social and economic need. AgeGuide closely monitors service delivery to ensure that funded partners provide quality outcomes and funding is spent appropriately. AgeGuide awards more than \$28 million annually in federal and state funding to more than 44 community-based service organizations. AgeGuide expends no more than the allowed 10% of administration funding to preserve maximum funding for direct service-related costs.

THE PLANNING PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOMES

Summary of the AgeGuide's Planning Process and its Outcomes

In FY24, AgeGuide prepared for the FY2025-2027 Area Plan Cycle by engaging in a 5-step planning process to assess the needs of older adults, caregivers, and their families. The steps, activities, and analysis are outlined below.

Five Step Planning Process

Step 1: Assess the needs of Older Adults, Caregivers, & Their Families

Step 2: Evaluate the Existing Service System

Step 3: Determine Availability of Resources to Meet Needs and Alternative Approaches Available

Step 4: Support Area Plan Initiatives and Service Priorities

Step 5: Modification and Refinement

Step 1: Assess the needs of Older Adults, Caregivers, & Their Families

Community Stakeholders and Partners

AgeGuide enlisted the assistance of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council, staff, and community stakeholders to help develop the Area Plan, which is our guide to distributing federal and state funding to deliver Older Americans Act services to older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. While the list below is extensive, it is just a sample of the AgeGuide partnerships across our region.

<p>Advocate Good Shepard Advocate Health Aurora American Society on Aging Aurora Township Senior Citizens Service Committee Aetna Better Health Member Advisory Council American Association of Retired Asians (AARA) American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Antioch Area Health Care Accessibility Alliance (AAHAA) Association for Individual Development Alzheimer’s Disease Advisory Committee Alzheimer’s Association Greater Illinois Chapter AMITA Health, Saint Joseph Hospital Elgin Aurora Community Resource Team Barrington Area Council on Aging Blue Cross Blue Shield Stakeholders Care for the Underserved Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet Chicago Food Justice Rhizome Network Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Coalition of Limited English-Speaking Elders Community Services Council of Will Co.</p>	<p>Dorr Township Downers Grove Township Dundee Township DuPage Hunger Network The DuPage Federation DuPage Co. Health Department Ela Township Elgin Human Services Council Fox Valley Community Services Gail Borden Public Library Geneva Township Senior Center Glen Ellyn Senior Center Grundy Co. Senior Provider Group Grundy Co. Health Dept. Hanul Harvard Senior Center Healthcare and Snr Advisory Council (Rep Hass) Illinois Aging Together Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging Illinois Coalition on Mental Health and Aging Illinois Cognitive Resource Network Illinois Economic Security Project Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition Illinois Migrant Council Illinois Public Health Institute Illinois SNAP Advocates Illinois State Medicaid Policy Illinois State Tax Credit Coalition Kane Co. Health Department Kankakee Co. Health Dept.</p>	<p>Kendall Co. Senior Provider Group Kendall Co. Health Dept. Kinship Navigator Task Force Lake Co. Health Dept. and Community Health Center Metropolitan Asian Family Servs Metropolitan Mayors Caucus McHenry Co. Dept. of Health McHenry Co. Task Force on Aging Milton Township Northern Illinois Food Bank Open Safe Illinois Coalition Oswego Senior Center Pembroke Township Riverwalk Adult Day Center SAGECare Second Baptist Church, Joliet Spanish Community Center Senior Services Associates, Kane, Kendall & McHenry Cos. Senior Services Coalition Lake Co. Senior Services of Will County Senior Advisory Committee (Senator Villa) Senior Advisory Council (Rep Ness) TRIADs USAging Waukegan Township Will Co. Health Dept. Will Grundy Medical Clinic</p>
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Step 2: Evaluate the Existing Service System

Needs Assessment Activities

Methodology & Design

In planning for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2027 Area Plan, AgeGuide completed an extensive Needs Assessment of the community to inform service design and delivery throughout the preceding three-year planning period. AgeGuide took into consideration older adults with low incomes, and those with the greatest economic and social need with particular attention to low-income minority older adults and those with limited English proficiency. In addition, AgeGuide prioritized diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) to examine the ease at which diverse older adults can access services. To apply this inclusive lens, AgeGuide utilized a template from an award-winning needs assessment model as well as input and guidance from the AgeGuide DEIA Steering Committee and Soar Strategies, our DEIA consultants. The goal was to develop survey and interview instruments to best capture the input of communities of color, non-English speakers, and LGBTQ+ communities. The listening session and survey questions were designed to gain insight on the impact of accessibility of services, healthcare access, and income. Service categories were based on Older Americans Act programs and included:

- Caregiving Support
- Food (Nutrition)
- Housing
- Information
- Social Connectedness
- Transportation

Listening Sessions

In 2023, AgeGuide held 17 community listening sessions, which included over 600 participants, a 130% increase over our previous needs assessment sessions. Overall, AgeGuide spent a total of 26 hours listening to the community. We hosted 4 listening sessions in each of the largest counties, 2 in the next largest, and 1 in smaller counties. We also met with stakeholders both region-wide and in Grundy County. We went into communities to connect with our target audiences - those with the greatest social & economic need. We met at churches, township senior centers, restaurants, and other community sites to reach Limited English-Speakers and people from specific racial and ethnic groups. In addition, AgeGuide held 5 specific listening sessions to capture input from non-English speaking older adults. AgeGuide contracted with Northern Illinois University, Center of Governmental Studies to analyze the data gathered from the listening sessions and surveys. After all the data is compiled, AgeGuide will publish a Community Needs Assessment Findings Report and host a virtual findings presentation on March 6, 2024.

Surveys

AgeGuide also designed and distributed a survey in 2023 to inform the three-year planning process. The survey was specifically constructed to be inclusive and equitable to capture results from our diverse region. The survey was translated into the six most common languages spoken in our region after English. We partnered with diverse community leaders and the Coalition for Limited English-Speaking Elderly (CLESE) to distribute surveys. As a result, over 150 participants completed the translated versions of the survey. Overall, the survey captured input from 1,137 older adult participants, and 76 stakeholders totaling 1,213. This is a 164% increase over the previous needs assessment survey collection.

Participant demographics were as follows:

Survey Respondents Characteristics	
94%	Aged 60+
55%	Live Alone
6%	Veterans
22%	Caregivers
78%	Female
30%	Non-White (12% Asian American, 9% Black, 7% Hispanic/Latino, <1% Native American/Alaska Native, 1% More Than 1 Race)
21%	Speak a Language Other Than English
2%	LGBTQ+

Between the listening sessions and the survey, AgeGuide received over 1,810 responses to the Needs Assessment.

Results

Findings from our community needs assessment indicate that stakeholders, older adults, and caregivers rank healthcare, income, food, and housing as the most important needs. A summary of preliminary findings follows:

Healthcare

More than one-third (35%) of older adults have experienced a challenge in paying for dental or vision care. Stakeholders think one of the biggest challenges related to healthcare for older adults is not being able to pay for medications (66%).

Stakeholders and older adults mention there is a need for assistance with navigating Medicare. Older adults comment that the cost of healthcare is a challenge and that Medicare costs keep going up. Stakeholders state there is a need for dental and vision coverage for older adults. More than one-third (34.6%) of older adults have experienced a challenge in

paying for dental or vision care. 16.4% of older adults have gone without some medication in the last 12 months (8.9%, less than once a month; 4.5% once a month; 1.3% once a week; 1.7% more than once a week).

Income

Almost all (97%) stakeholders think one of the biggest challenges related to income for older adults is not having enough money saved for retirement. Almost half of older adult respondents said they do not have enough money saved for retirement and almost one-third do not have access to retirement planning services or a retirement account.

Many older adults face challenges with debt as 22.5% of older adults have experienced debt repayment challenges.

Food

68.5% of stakeholders believe one of the biggest challenges related to food is the cost. 42.3% of older adults surveyed said they experienced a challenge with the cost of food. Older adult focus group participants also said that the rising cost of food has been a challenge. More than one-half of older adults said they used at least one food assistance program in the last 12 months.

Stakeholders expressed concern that with SNAP funding cuts and the prices in grocery stores “skyrocketing”. Some older adults are not getting enough food. In fact, 10.8% of older adults reported going without food in the last 12 months (5.5%, less than once a month; 2.9%, once a month; 1.3% once a week; 1.1% less than once a week). One-half (49.6%) of older adults reported they usually eat less than three meals a day.

Housing

45% of older adults indicate they have experienced a challenge with housing costs. Most often cited challenges include the high cost of housing including rent, property taxes, lack of affordable housing, accessibility challenges of existing homes, and lack of subsidized housing.

Older adults and stakeholders indicate that subsidized housing is insufficient. They say there are long wait lists, and it sometimes takes several years to get subsidized housing. The majority (88.3%) of older adults agree with the statement “I prefer to live in my home for as long as I can.”

Caregiver Support

More than one-half of stakeholders identify financial challenges (57.3%), lack of affordable home care (54.7%), and caregiver stress (50.7%) as the biggest challenges related to caregiving.

In terms of caregiving demographics, 21.7% of older adults report providing unpaid assistance or care to a family member, friend, or someone who has a health condition or disability. 27.1% of older adults receive assistance or care because of a health condition or disability. 40.7% receive care from a relative and 27.1% receive care from a professional caregiver. 68.0% receive care less than 20 hours per week.

Accessibility

Overall, older adult focus group participants are satisfied with the organization providing aging assistance services. The majority (89.6%) of older adults and caregivers agree (61.3%, strongly agree; 28.3% somewhat agree) they are treated fairly and equitably by the organization providing aging assistance services. Stakeholders state that agencies need more diverse staff that look like the clients, speak the language of the clients, and understand the clients' culture.

Information

More than one-half (52.2%) of older adults get information about services and events from family, friends, and neighbors. 38.8% get information from a senior service agency and 36.7% get information from a senior center.

Stakeholders think one of the biggest challenges related to information for older adults is that information is only available online (56.2%). Stakeholders also believe there isn't enough awareness of available services. Older adults report that increasing awareness of the available community services and resources is an extremely important need. They suggest information about services should be distributed in print format since "not everyone is tech savvy."

Social Connectedness

Physical limitations were one of the biggest identified barriers to social connection. 46.8% of those older adults who identify with a physical/mobility impairment have experienced social isolation and lack of connection to others. Stakeholders mention some older adults are "scared to go out" and do not have technology. According to survey responses, the majority of older adults leave their home often or sometimes to do activities asked about in the survey.

Transportation

More than one-half (52.0%) of older adults and caregivers and 41.1% of stakeholders identify car expenses, such as gas and insurance, as a challenge. Respondents state that the currently available transportation options are not adequate; not available in all areas, not reliable, not accessible, and there are not enough drivers/vehicles. Many of the older adults report they rely on family members for transportation.

The majority of older adults have never missed a medical appointment (79.7%) or been unable to participate in activities (71.7%) in the last 12 months because of transportation issues.

Stakeholder and older adult focus group participants mention that transportation is a particular need in rural areas. Wheelchair accessible transportation was also cited as a significant need.

Other Challenges

Stakeholders, survey respondents, and focus group participants comment that older adults or caregivers face the following challenges:

- Lack of knowledge on how to use technology
- Mental health awareness/acceptance
- Inability to fill out forms on their own or lack of assistance with forms needed to apply for services

For more detailed findings, please see the full Community Needs Assessment Findings Report at www.ageguide.org under "Publications".

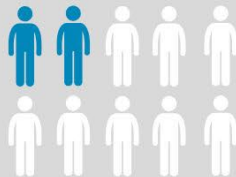
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PSA02

AGEGUIDE'S EIGHT COUNTY REGIONAL POPULATION IS RAPIDLY GROWING

751,392

OLDER ADULTS

25% of the State's
population of older
adults reside in
PSA02



18% INCREASE

in the population of
older adults in
PSA02 from 2018 to
2023



Within the eight counties:

28 %

of older adults are age 75+ (208,959)

23%

of older adults age 60+ are minorities (172,244)

LIVING ALONE

150,465



20% of older
adults age 60+ are
living alone.

POVERTY

48,054



6% of older adults
age 60+ live at or
below the poverty
line.

Step 3: Determine Availability of Resources to Meet Needs and Alternative Approaches Available to Meet Needs

AgeGuide will continue to perform the following activities to weigh the need and to identify resource availability:

- Continue to seek input from stakeholders (service providers, older adults, older adults with disabilities, family caregivers and relatives raising children, Advisory Council/Board, and other constituents).
- Review alternative approaches to improve the efficacy and effectiveness of OAA service provision and delivery in our service area.
- Determine the appropriateness of a service in helping older adults in greatest economic and social need (i.e., older adults with one or more of the characteristics in the regional funding formula), most at risk of loss of independence, or most in need of protection of their basic rights.
- Gauge the adequacy of funds to support a level of service that addresses the need effectively and at an acceptable cost.
- Assess the ability of other service providers or systems to address unmet needs.

Step 4: Support for State & Local Initiatives

Staff assembled and reviewed the data derived from the FY24 needs assessment process to form the foundation for the FY25-27 Area Plan. Information garnered from Steps 1, 2, and 3 of these activities and from the individual counties was thoughtfully compiled into a regional perspective to arrive at the following area plan initiatives and service priorities.

Statewide Initiatives

Three statewide initiatives will be prioritized for the FY2025-2027 Area Plan period. The initiatives were chosen based on input and feedback received from older adult community members and caregivers, challenges and priorities raised by the Aging network, community stakeholders, and community needs and priorities identified by IDoA. The AAA must provide a detailed planning, delivery, and/or monitoring plan that meets each Statewide Initiative. Additionally, the plans are required to include how the program development and funded service activities will continue to be targeted to those in “greatest economic and social need.”

Initiative #1: Increase statewide visibility of the Aging Network to connect Illinoisans with supports and services that encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life as we age.

The mission of the AAAs as defined by the Older Americans Act is in part to:

“Be the leader relative to all aging issues on behalf of all older people in the planning and service area. This means that the area agency shall proactively carry out, under the leadership and direction of the State agency, a wide range of functions related to advocacy, planning, coordination, inter-agency linkages, information sharing, brokering, monitoring, and evaluation, designed to lead to the development or enhancement of comprehensive and coordinated community-based systems in, or serving, each community in the planning and service area. These systems shall be designed to assist older people in leading independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their own homes and communities as long as possible.” (45 CFR 1321.53)

To build upon the mission statement, IDoA has selected increasing public visibility as a Statewide Initiative with a focus on raising awareness and sharing information about the availability of aging services and supports. Due to the impacts of the COVID pandemic, as well as the changing ways that individuals and communities consume media and communicate, it has become increasingly difficult to reach the targeted populations that would benefit from OAA-funded programs. A dedicated statewide initiative to increase the visibility of the available programs and services throughout Illinois will increase both the awareness, as well as the utilization of much-needed and sought after services.

AgeGuide’s strategy to increase visibility of the Aging Network includes multiple activities which we began in FY25 and look forward to continuing in FY26.

- 1. Begin funding IIIB and IIIE Public Education Services to support grantee efforts to increase visibility of aging services in the community.**

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide began funding both IIIB and IIIE Public Education services beginning October 1, 2025. This change was well received by our grantee network, allowing for funding dedicated to staff conducting these efforts and providing an opportunity to undertake innovative strategies to increase awareness. AgeGuide and our grantees identify that increasing awareness of services requires a mixed approach given the various avenues such as digital, print and in-person mechanisms where people receive information. As of the close of the first quarter, our network is exceeding expectations in these services. Grantees are in their communities meeting with older adults and caregivers at fairs, presentations, and other in-person

opportunities where they can bring awareness to services. Grantees are also utilizing digital methods to reach older adults and caregivers through website enhancement, digital marketing, and radio advertising. AgeGuide looks forward to monitoring the progress of this service in FY25 and continuing into FY26.

2. Expand the reach of AgeGuide’s media presence and outreach to more older adults, caregivers, kinship families, and professionals with information about services through digital ad campaigns, newspaper ads, opinion pieces, press releases, social media, newsletters, blog posts, YouTube videos, and monthly podcasts (The Age Guide).

FY25/26 Update: In the beginning of FY25, AgeGuide began its expansion of media presence and outreach by conducting its annual caregiver seminar in November highlighting Teepa Snow’s Positive Approach to Dementia Care, as well as caregiver services available in our region. AgeGuide kicked off its partnership with Trualta during this seminar. While Trualta is an online learning platform, it does contain regional resources and is connected to our local Caregiver Counseling Centers to ensure a personalized connection to our network. AgeGuide also began a presence on Instagram, utilizing a robotic cat as a “cat on the shelf,” visiting multiple grantee sites and events across the region to bring awareness to available services.

AgeGuide also continued our grassroots outreach for kinship families by contacting schools, park districts, and other child-serving organizations, providing them with materials on available services and referral bags for their kinship families.

3. Improve access to information at both the AgeGuide and grantee levels through translated program materials and delivery of culturally appropriate, accessible services.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide updated all of our county-based fact sheets in English and multiple other prevalent languages in our region to ensure access to service information. AgeGuide also began utilizing an accessibility tool for its website to increase access for people with disabilities and is in the process of implementing a Language Line for translation services. AgeGuide continues our partnership with the Coalition of Limited English-Speaking Elders (CLESE) to conduct targeted outreach to culturally diverse older adults in our region. AgeGuide has also expanded its nutrition offerings to include additional culturally appropriate meals.

4. Pilot new and innovative ways to interact and connect with people looking for services through digital marketing and technology solutions.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide continues to utilize new and innovative ways to engage with older adults and caregivers. AgeGuide has an established partnership with Alpha Media to conduct digital marketing campaigns to raise awareness of our services. AgeGuide regularly utilizes digital marketing for promotion of Medicare and Benefits Access Assistance and is expanding usage for caregiver services. Alpha Media works with AgeGuide to tailor digital campaigns based on our goals and funding availability. Digital marketing is also available in multiple languages. Currently, AgeGuide is working to produce audio campaigns for both streaming radio and YouTube, to highlight Medicare support and the new Trualta platform, as well as digital ad campaigns for these topics. AgeGuide's campaigns consistently exceed the national average for digital campaign performance. AgeGuide continues using VideoAsk software which utilizes AI and prerecorded messaging to support older adults and caregivers seeking benefits access information.

5. Participate in local community-based activities such as fairs, meetings and presentations.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide regularly participates in community-based fairs, meetings and conducts presentations across the region. As of this writing, AgeGuide has already attended or presented at over 60 fairs, meetings and presentations across the region. Due to the transition of services in Lake County, AgeGuide has concentrated its outreach efforts in Lake County to ensure information is available on new service delivery partners due to Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago, discontinuing delivery of many OAA services. AgeGuide presented to the Senior Services Coalition of Lake County, hosted AgeStrong Lake County, coordinated a Township Luncheon with Wauconda Township, and is working on grassroots outreach to local hospitals and healthcare facilities. In other areas of the region, AgeGuide presented 2 Aging Well programs in Kane County and conducted multiple healthy aging presentations in Will County to expand our grantee connections in those communities. AgeGuide anticipates these efforts to increase through FY25 and into FY26.

6. Continue funding Targeted Outreach to increase access of Limited English Proficient older adults, caregivers, and kinship families to our aging network services.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide continues to fund Targeted Outreach through the Coalition of Limited English-Speaking Elders (CLESE) in FY25 and through this area plan cycle. Our partnership with CLESE is invaluable in connecting older adults and caregivers to our network when Limited English-speaking populations are hesitant to reach out or have a language barrier.

7. Host advocacy events, site visits, and legislative aide trainings to help older adults collaborate in aging-related advocacy efforts with federal and state legislators.

FY25/26 Update: In January 2025, AgeGuide conducted a training for its legislative aides and staffers to inform them of its services, resources, and legislative advocacy priorities.

AgeGuide plans to host three Advocacy Breakfast Collaboratives across its region this year. One will be held in Aurora, one in McHenry and one will be held virtually to allow full participation in its region. AgeGuide plans to convene site visits at its funded partners so legislators can meet with older adult constituents in the community.

AgeGuide will meet with its Federal legislators on Capitol Hill in Washington DC in March 2025.

8. Host AgeGuide's annual Aging Summit to highlight aging issues, share potential solutions and advocacy strategies.

FY25/26 Update: This year will mark our fourth annual Aging Summit. In past years, we've explored themes of longevity, equity, and economic resilience. This year's theme, *Mind Matters: A Lifespan Approach to Brain Health* takes these conversations further, recognizing brain health as an essential component of aging well and living fully across the lifespan.

AgeGuide recognizes that millions of individuals face the challenges of cognitive decline, memory loss, and the stigma surrounding brain health. These challenges impact not only individuals but also families, caregivers, and communities. Promoting brain health requires a holistic approach that includes prevention, education, equitable access to care, and innovation. AgeGuide plans to use the Aging

Summit as the platform to engage in vital discussions about science, strategies and solutions that support lifelong cognitive vitality. The goal for this Summit is to show the connection between cognitive resilience and overall well-being and to provide actionable strategies for individuals, caregivers and communities to reduce decline and stigma by encouraging attendees to become Dementia Friendly Champions by taking additional training offered at the end of the day.

9. Collect and analyze Information and Assistance data to ensure that we are increasing our reach to target populations.

FY25/26 Update: In FY24, AgeGuide implemented iCarol, an information and assistance software, to track its Information and Assistance Direct Services Waiver activities. With this software, we can regularly review who contacts AgeGuide and the services and supports they are seeking. We also review the populations served and the counties they reside in, to the extent that clients are willing to share their information. AgeGuide began collecting demographic data from grantees in the previous area plan cycle, however, this data was mainly reported via hard copy reports and then analyzed. Beginning in FY25, AgeGuide now requires all OAA services, including Information and Assistance, to be entered into AgingIS software. AgeGuide looks forward to having more accurate, up-to-date information on clients being served to ensure we are meeting our goals in reaching its target populations.

10. Expand the Public Health Workforce and increase community outreach.

In FY25, AgeGuide received a subaward from the American Rescue Plan Act via the Illinois Department on Aging to expand the public health workforce. In February, AgeGuide hired a Community Health worker to increase access to public benefits and caregiver support services throughout its 8-county region. The Community Health Worker will also focus on building and fostering partnerships with the region's funded partners, local health departments, hospitals, and other health care partners to share resources, provide service referrals, and assist with service coordination where appropriate.

Initiative #2: Drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities that emphasize person-centered and trauma informed services while maximizing effectiveness of services delivered through the Aging Network.

As the lead agencies in the state and local areas, it is the duty of the State Agency on Aging (IDoA) and the AAAs to ensure the programs and services provided directly and through the community partner network are delivered utilizing person-centered and trauma-informed methods. Over time, Illinois has experienced significant changes in population, including an unprecedented increase in the percentage of older adults in our population. There has also been a significant increase in the number of older adults within racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, and minority religious populations.

Access to accurate, comprehensive, and timely data is vital to making informed decisions about community needs and service prioritization at the local, regional, and state levels. A focus on effectiveness and accuracy of services and programs will ensure maximization of the return on investment for funding and will ensure we are meeting the directives provided through the Older Americans Act and the Administration for Community Living's priorities.

AgeGuide's strategy to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities includes:

AgeGuide completes continuous monitoring of service performance. Staff review the performance and spending of grantees quarterly to ensure they are meeting targets and on track to fully expend their grant funding. AgeGuide reviews service performance, including program performance, variances and plans to remedy underperformance, as well as fiscal reporting. AgeGuide program, grants and fiscal staff meet to discuss trends in services, underperformance of 20% or more below the performance standard for the quarter, and disparities in spending. AgeGuide identifies follow-up actions, as needed, based on this assessment including meeting with grantees who are 20% or more below the performance standard to collaborate in addressing their performance issues. AgeGuide staff have created comprehensive training materials and resources for grantees to support their work to ensure accurate reporting and appropriate service delivery. AgeGuide staff work with grantees to ensure client demographics and program performance are entered into the AgingIS database. AgeGuide collects demographics each year on all services to ensure we are serving at least the incidence rate of the target populations as required by our grant agreements. Grantees who consistently do not meet their performance measures are placed on conditional status and receive more intensive support from AgeGuide to rectify conditions assigned to their grant renewal. AgeGuide conducts an on-site program and fiscal monitoring every three years as required by the IDOA's 1,000 Standards. Review of audit reports are completed on an annual basis by AgeGuide staff to ensure sound fiscal practices.

FY25/26 Update:

AgeGuide continues its established quality assurance plan in FY25. In anticipation of the new fiscal year, AgeGuide conducted an in-person onboarding training for new grantees and new grantee staff, ensuring they have the information and resources to successfully deliver services and meet reporting requirements. AgeGuide meets with grantees regularly to ensure they are prepared for the new FY25 AgingIS reporting requirements. AgeGuide established its FY25-27 monitoring schedule and began FY25 monitoring in October 2024. AgeGuide continues to identify training needed to ensure grantee success. It holds monthly funded partner and quarterly program meetings, and reviews performance and expenses as detailed above. AgeGuide also offers “office hours” for some services, such as benefits access and caregiver services, to provide technical assistance and discuss grantee challenges and best practices. AgeGuide meets with our conditional grantees more frequently to provide individualized support based on their needs. The focus of this time together is to offer additional technical assistance, connect the grantee with community partners, and provide program improvement ideas. The majority of our training materials, including service standards videos, AgingIS training, FAQs and Quick Reference Guides and onboarding trainings are all available, on demand, on AgeGuide’s website.

Initiative #3: Increase public awareness and knowledge of caregiver needs, as well as resources and services available throughout the state of Illinois to promote increased caregiver engagement in person-centered, trauma informed, and evidence-based programs and services.

In FY23, IDoA partnered with the AAA network to facilitate twenty in-person and three virtual Caregiver Roundtables across the state of Illinois, to hear from informal family caregivers about the needs and challenges they face, both met and unmet, and to explore additional support that can enhance the caregiving journey.

Conversations so far have articulated the need for these services and the need to increase visibility for these resources. Across sessions, attendees discussed caregiving from a holistic lens cutting across systems including healthcare, transportation, community supportive services, and individual (both caregiver and care receiver) needs, values, and preferences.

Caregiver training and education were also identified as needed for family caregivers and paid caregivers, including better understanding of chronic and terminal diseases, navigating healthcare systems including palliative care and hospice, physical caregiving (how to lift, transfer, bathe, groom, etc.), available caregiver resources, available resources for older adults, and caring for the caregiver.

In FY25-FY27, AgeGuide will utilize this Statewide Initiative as its Local Initiative, as allowed by the IDoA. This initiative supports AgeGuide’s caregiver outreach in follow-up to our local initiative for FY22-FY24.

Under this Statewide initiative, AgeGuide continues our provision of caregiver outreach, providing information and referral services along with services and supports through the following activities:

1. AgeGuide will begin funding IIIE Public Education services to increase public awareness of services and engage new caregivers and older relative caregivers.

FY25/26 Update: In alignment with the Statewide initiative, in FY25 AgeGuide began funding Title IIIE Public Education. Funding this service provides a strategic focus for our grantees to conduct outreach and public awareness activities. Grantees are embracing this service and documenting their public awareness activities both in AgingIS and through the quarterly caregiver services report.

2. AgeGuide and our grantees will increase awareness of services to kinship families through service on the Kinship Navigator Steering Committee, attendance of the Kinship Navigator Task Force, and increased connection with local child/family serving organizations.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide continues our commitment to increasing the awareness of services available for kinship families through participation in the Kinship Navigator Steering Committee and the Task Force. In FY25, we continued our outreach efforts, connecting with local schools and child-serving organizations to inform them of services and supports available for kinship families in the aging network. Outreach staff are providing resource bags to schools and organizations for their kinship families. These bags contain program flyers, provider listings, additional community-based resource lists, recommended reading lists, and a grandparents-raising grandchildren book. AgeGuide is also partnering with Trualta, an online caregiver training portal to provide free access to caregivers of all kinds, including kinship families. This flyer is also included in the resource bags. We will continue our outreach efforts through community presentations and hosting outreach events in FY25 and FY26. In FY25, our providers also began utilizing the TCare module designed for kinship families. We are excited to see this expansion and look forward to further promoting the availability of the TCare assessment to kinship families across the region.

3. AgeGuide will continue participating in the IL Family Caregiver Coalition to develop comprehensive advocacy and awareness of caregiver services across the state.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide staff continues to participate in the IL Family Caregiver Coalition. AgeGuide staff worked closely with key Coalition members to analyze quantitative data from the TCARE datalab and qualitative responses from our region's caregivers to develop impact infographics and show the return on investment that Family Caregiver Support Services provide to sustain State funding for these services in Illinois.

4. AgeGuide will continue to host its annual Caregiver Seminar in November to educate the public on topics surrounding caregivers and kinship families.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide hosted its FY25 Caregiver Seminar in November 2024, focusing on caring for persons with dementia. Our speaker, Dr. Beth Nolan, presented an introduction to Teepa Snow's A Positive Approach to Care. This was followed by aging network presenters highlighting the services and supports available in our state and region for caregivers and people with dementia. The seminar marked the start of two great training initiatives that AgeGuide is undertaking in FY25 including the launch of Trualta, an online caregiver training platform, and A Positive Approach to Care training and certification for our network.

5. Promote the regionwide availability of Tailored Care (TCare) which is an evidenced-based assessment tool that pinpoints a caregiver's unique areas of stress and develops targeted interventions for the caregiver.

FY25/26 Update: AgeGuide continues to promote the availability of TCare across our region. In FY25, AgeGuide grantees began utilizing the TCare module available for kinship families and were retrained on how to access the module for caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. AgeGuide regularly shares our TCare outcomes (see graphic below) with stakeholders and legislators to promote not only the availability of the service but also its effectiveness in supporting caregivers. We are excited to offer this valuable service to kinship families to ensure they are connected to the services and supports, needed to confidently parent again.

Additional Activities

In support of the Local Initiative, AgeGuide is focusing program and advocacy efforts on brain health and increasing support for caregivers through educational opportunities. In our ongoing commitment to supporting caregivers and improving the quality of care for individuals with dementia, AgeGuide is partnering with leading organizations to expand training opportunities for both caregivers and our aging network grantees.

In November 2024, AgeGuide began our 2-year partnership with Trualta, an online learning platform for caregivers. Trualta provides on demand, user friendly training for caregivers of all kinds, on a variety of topics from managing stress, supporting care recipients with chronic disease-including people with dementia, falls prevention, and caring for children and people with disabilities. In the short time that our Trualta portal has been available, AgeGuide already has over 75 users. These users are searching for information on general caregiving, dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, and fall prevention as primary topics of interest. Caregivers can also take advantage of online caregiver support and peer group communities to further enhance their caregiving journey at <https://ageguide.trualta.com>.

In addition to our collaboration with Trualta, we are excited to announce a new partnership with Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care (PAC), launched in November 2024. This initiative focuses on building capacity within our network to provide better support for people with dementia and their caregivers. Our caregiver resource and counseling center specialists will become certified in A Positive Approach to Care, improving their ability to support caregivers through training and education and one one-on-one coaching through the difficulties of caring for people with dementia. In addition to certification, all grantees will have access to PAC's Learning Management System to receive basic training on PAC to improve their understanding of dementia. Selected staff in our network will be offered additional training through PAC's Champion Courses that provide more in-depth training on the PAC techniques when working one on one with a person with dementia.

To compliment these efforts, AgeGuide will engage in vital discussions about the science, strategies, and solutions that support life-long cognitive vitality at the 4th Annual Aging Summit, *Mind Matters: A Lifespan Approach to Brain Health*. This event will bring together older adults, caregivers, community leaders, and professionals across the aging network uniting us all in a shared mission to create a world that values and supports brain health at every stage of life.

AgeGuide also continues our work to create Dementia Friendly Communities. AgeGuide continues to offer on-demand dementia-friendly trainings for various business and community sectors through [AgeGuide's YouTube Channel](#). Businesses who want to become

Dementia Friendly can request training through the [AgeGuide Learning Center](#). Staff follow up with communities interested in becoming dementia friendly to provide support, attend monthly Illinois Cognitive Resource Network meetings, and connect across the state to share experiences and knowledge.

2024 TAILORED CARE SUPPORT

BY THE NUMBERS

CAREGIVER ACTIVITY IN ALL 8 COUNTIES

2,320 TOTAL ASSESSMENTS

1,566
CASES
CREATED

181
FOLLOW
UPS

868
CARE
PLANS

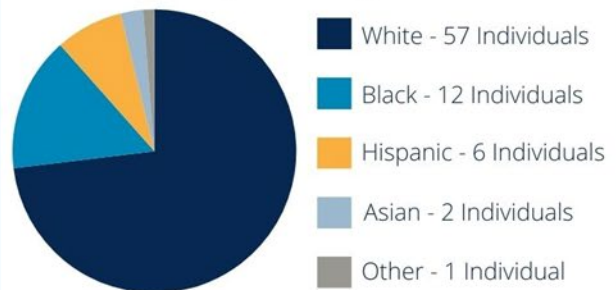
DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ALL 8 COUNTIES

Caregiver by Race



Caregiver Employment by Race

78 Caregivers Working Full Time



Caregiver by Gender

F E M A L E

73% - 837 Individuals



M A L E

27% - 310 Individuals



OUTCOMES FROM THE TCARE PROGRAM

Stress Burden

Negative state of mind from the caregiving situation



LOWERED
11%
215 Individuals

MAINTAINED
84% 1,707 Individuals

Depression

Conditions associated with the elevation or lowering of a person's mood



LOWERED
11%
219 Individuals

MAINTAINED
83% 1,689 Individuals

Uplifts

Positive outcomes that the caregiver gets after care plan



ELEVATED
7%
137 Individuals

MAINTAINED
84% 1,706 Individuals



(800) 528-2000 · info@ageguide.org · www.AgeGuide.org

Serving DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry & Will Counties

AgeGuide's Service Priorities

These are the services that AgeGuide provides or funds for older adults and their caregivers in its PSA, from the many services that are allowed under the funding provisions of the Older Americans Act. The following list does not indicate the relative importance of one service over another, but rather service priorities designed to address the issues of aging holistically.

Title III-B Supportive Services

Aging and Disability Resource Network Access Package

- **Information & Assistance (I&A):** Provides individuals with current information on long-term services and support and connects people with resources that can help them such as accessing transportation, benefits, utility assistance, homemaker services etc.
- **Public Education:** A service for older adults that provides the public and individuals with information on resources and services available to the individuals within their communities.
- **Options Counseling:** Person-centered, interactive, decision support process to make informed choices about long-term services and supports.
- **Flexible Community Services:** Financial assistance for the purchase of various services such as medical care and supplies, environmental and material aids-such as rent/mortgage, food, minor home modifications, and community access services such as transportation, not otherwise covered by insurance or other programming. FCS services are available for people aged 60+ or people 18-59 with a disability.

Other Supportive Services

- **Targeted Outreach:** Outreach focusing on minority and Limited English Proficient older adults and caregivers to facilitate the use of existing services and benefits.
- **Transportation:** Assistance with scheduling and providing door-to-door curb-to-curb, fixed and/or unfixed route transportation service including volunteer transportation.
- **Friendly Visiting:** Regular in person, virtual visits and/or phone calls by volunteers to socially isolated older adults to provide companionship and social contact with the community.

Community Connection Collaboratives: An intentional bundling of three services designed to support older adults in gaining or maintaining their health while fostering social connections.

- **Education:** Group-oriented lectures, classes, or workshops provide individuals with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills suited to their interests and capabilities.

- **Health Screening:** Assist individuals in identifying, detecting, and evaluating their health needs or potential needs.
- **Recreation:** Group activities which foster the health and social well-being of individuals.

Title III-C Nutrition Programs

Congregate Meals (C-1): Meal served to an older person, in a center or at a restaurant, strategically located to maximize access by older people within a community and to promote socialization.

- **Grab and Go options** are also available for older adults who attend scheduled social activities, however, are not able to stay for the meal.

Home Delivered Meals (C-2): Meal served to older people who are homebound due to physical or mental impairment and unable to adequately provide their own meals.

- **Emergency Shelf-Stable Meals:** Meals provided to congregate, and home delivered meal participants to ensure that each participant has a minimum of five days of shelf-stable meals in the event of emergencies, weather-related conditions, etc.
- **Food Box Option:** Bi-monthly grocery delivery program offered to homebound older adults who can cook meals for themselves. The program has limited availability in AgeGuide's planning and service area.

Title III-D Health Promotions Programs

- **Health Promotions Programs:** Evidence-based programs are multi-week, education-based workshops that promote better health and wellness among older people. Strategies employed within these programs build life skills emphasizing self-care and management. These programs also promote socialization, reduce isolation through group classes and exercise activities. Only programs that are accepted as highest-tiered evidence-based programs by any operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can be considered under Title III-D. This includes programs listed on ACL's Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

Title III-E Family Caregiver Support Program Services

The National Family Caregiver Support Program serves family and friends who care for people aged 60 and over or people with Alzheimer's disease at any age. The program also supports grandparents and other non-parent relatives over 55 who are caring for children under 19 or adults 19-59 years old with a disability.

Caregiver Resource Center Services (CRC)

- **Public Education:** A service for caregivers that provides the public and individuals with information on resources and services available to the individuals within their communities.
- **Case Management/Assistance:** Provides Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral (TCARE) assessments for caregivers to develop a care plan and determine if Respite and/or Gap-Filling services might be needed. Also, assists caregivers obtain access to other services and resources available in their communities.
- **Respite:** Provides temporary, substitute supports or living arrangements for care receivers to provide a brief period of relief or rest for primary caregivers.
- **Gap-Filling:** Provides flexible funding and includes emergency response services and items not covered by insurance nor paid by any other means.

Caregiver Counseling Center Services (CCC)

- **Counseling:** Provides advice, guidance, and life coaching to an individual caregiver or relative raising children. Counseling assists with role identity, permission to seek help, decision-making and solving problems relating to their caregiving roles.
- **Caregiver Training:** Provides education to caregivers either individually or in a group. Caregiver training is designed to inform caregivers about self-care skills and/or to instruct them in skills to care for the care receiver.
- **Support Groups:** Provides for the organization of one or more group settings to provide advice, guidance, and support to caregivers on an ongoing basis.

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Services

- **ADRD Supportive Gap:** Financial assistance for people of any age with dementia (diagnosed or undiagnosed), and/or their caregivers, for services and supports such as respite, assistive technology, home modifications, and other eligible services.

Title III-B and Title VII Elder Rights Services

- **Long Term Care Ombudsman:** Resident-directed advocacy program which protects and improves the quality of life for Long-term Care facility residents by working to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals.

- **Adult Protective Services (APS):** Provides investigation, intervention, and follow-up services to victims of alleged abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of people 60 years of age and older and people 18–59 years of age with a disability. Title VII funding supports APS programs through funding for Fatality Review Teams, Multidisciplinary Teams and staff training needs.
- **Legal Services:** Includes arranging for and providing assistance in resolving civil legal matters, protecting legal rights, providing legal advice, community legal education and research concerning legal rights and responsibilities by an attorney at law or a person under the supervision of an attorney.

Service Definition	FY26 Projected Persons	FY26 Projected Units
Title III-B Access Services		
Options Counseling	955	2290
Information and Assistance	45980	81276
Outreach	370	370
Transportation	2150	19345
Public Education	6200	62
Title III-B In Home Services		
Friendly Visiting	457	14400
Title III-B Community Services		
Education	1771	17320
Health Screening	1345	3690
Recreation	1800	9045
Legal Assistance	1354	8965
Flexible Community Services	320	320
Title III-B/Title VII Ombudsman		
Ombudsman	33309	33309
Title VII Elder Abuse Community Services		
Elder Abuse	N/A	N/A
Title C-1 Community Services		
Congregate Meals	11,300	156,800
Title C-2 In Home Services		
Home Delivered Meals	9400	1,313,000
Title III-D Health Promotions		
Health Promotions Programs	305	3940
Title III-E Assistance Services		
Case Management	12896	20370
Information and Assistance	875	875
Public Education	2400	24
Title III-E Counseling/Training/Education		
Counseling	824	2340
Support Groups	320	1003
Training and Education	588	1397
Title III-E Respite		
Respite	788	20010
Title III-E Supplemental Services		
Gap Filling	787	787
ARD Supportive Gap Filling	105	105

AgeGuide Direct Services and Waiver Justification

AgeGuide proposes to continue its provision of Title III-B/E Information & Assistance, Title III-B Education and Title III-D Health Promotion & Disease Prevention and requests Direct Service Waivers to directly provide these services in FY25-27.

Title III-B/ Title III-E Information & Assistance

AgeGuide provides a variety of region-wide Information & Assistance activities to help older adults, family caregivers, people with disabilities, and kinship families connect with local services and resources. AgeGuide and its network serves as a visible, accessible, consumer-focused, integrated access point where individuals of all ages, incomes, and disabilities can receive information and assistance, assessment of needs, options counseling, referral assistance in completing benefits applications, and follow-up to ensure that referrals and services are accessed.

AgeGuide intends to continue to perform the following activities:

- Maintain a staff person who is a certified Aging and Disabilities Community Resource Specialist (CRS A/D).
- Assist individuals requesting information and resources through phone calls, email, chat and in-person assistance.
- Connect individuals through warm transfers to AgeGuide's network of funded partners when more in-depth assistance is needed and offer additional resources as necessary.
- Assist with applications for IDoA's Benefit Access program and provide objective insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers through the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP).
- Respond to inquiries from family caregivers and kinship relatives requesting training, education, and supportive services.
- Utilize a client software system, iCarol, to collect and maintain information on client demographics and needs to support reporting, quality assurance, and needs assessment activities.
- Maintain an information and assistance resource directory in iCarol which supports the public Illinois Aging Services resource website (<https://www.agingis.com/csdpublic/>).
- Provide updated information on services and resources through AgeGuide's website (www.ageguide.org), its monthly e-newsletter, The Aging Report, its AgeGuide Listserv, podcast (The Age Guide), and social media platforms.
- Conduct presentations and attend vendor fairs to promote information about home and community-based services available through our regional Aging Network.

- Produce region-wide resource materials in multiple languages and accessible formats promoting Aging Network services for distribution across the eight-county region at senior centers, hospitals, faith-based organizations, libraries, etc.

AgeGuide Direct Service Waiver Justification:

As of this writing, AgeGuide funds ten Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) Information & Assistance (I&A) partners and eight Caregiver Resource Center Access Assistance partners at the local level. However, AgeGuide determined that it should also directly provide Information & Assistance as organizations, businesses, and government entities consider Agencies on Aging the most efficient and manageable place to start. AgeGuide has also demonstrated that it is effective in meeting the needs of caregivers through its delivery of caregiver information and its representation of the regional caregiver partner network. AgeGuide's 800 number and website continue to be an effective means of access in our area for statewide and federal initiatives. The Elder Care Locator (USAging) and the IDoA Helpline direct callers seeking information to AgeGuide. Many of these callers are then connected to the ADRN partners and Caregiver partners as they continue to be the primary entities for coordination of services and resources to support older adults, caregivers, and kinship families in their communities. This creates "no wrong door" access to long-term support service information and assistance for older adults, their families, and people with disabilities with a special emphasis on caregivers and kinship families. AgeGuide continues to be in an essential position to provide I&A services as it is a well-known and respected organization whose only interest is to represent the aging network across all eight counties. AgeGuide can offer regional information, as well as information about services provided in the other PSAs.

Projected number of persons: 4,235; Projected units: 4,375

AgeGuide is seeking continued approval for FY2025-2027 and is requesting \$225,000, shared among Title III-B and III-E funds to support region-wide Information & Assistance activities.

Title III-B Education Service – Tech and Education

According to Karina Alibhai, a Social Connectedness Fellow, and the Samuel Centre for Connectedness in British Columbia, the use of technology by older adults has immense potential to support older adults in living and aging well by addressing their physical, mental, and social challenges. Moreover, a 2016 study identified eight different technologies that have been applied to ease social isolation. Social management systems, peer support chat rooms, and social network sites were included in the list of technologies being successful in reducing social isolation among older adults.

In FY20, AgeGuide piloted programming in Grundy County, funded by AgeGuide with Social Isolation General Revenue Funds, that produced positive effects on reducing social isolation through technology use. T-Mobile and the Morris Public Library collaborated to provide free tablets to socially isolated older adults who agreed to attend 3 tutorial classes provided by the library staff so they can use the technology to interact and connect with their family, friends, and other community resources to reduce their social isolation and loneliness. In FY21, AgeGuide expanded this program regionwide. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the three tutorial sessions were presented virtually. In FY25, this program will continue to be delivered virtually combined with in-person tablet delivery. A warm handoff provides an opportunity for orientation and instruction from a trusted community organization which acclimates the participant to the technology. The tutoring organization will provide one-on-one sessions and are available in multiple languages.

The Impact of the Services:

Through FY22-FY24, AgeGuide has demonstrated the ability to reach marginalized communities, locate those with limited accessibility, availability and/or affordability of internet services, and those with limited digital experience or skills. Specifically, through the Tablets to Seniors program, written testimonials revealed that participants have gained connections to their friends, family, community, and health care providers. They have nurtured continued learning, developed hobbies and interests, and pursued idle curiosities. Working alongside trusted community partners has been the cornerstone of the program whether these organizations conducted the tutoring or connected the participants to the virtual tutoring organization. These participants would not have been identified by AgeGuide’s current network as very few have been sought out or have been connected to aging services prior to the tablet program. Through this program, they have gained healthy aging resources, developed digital skills, confidence, and knowledge, and decreased the risk of social isolation.

Participants have multiple ways to engage in training on how to use their tablets including intergenerational or “teen tutors”, assistance from their local library’s “Device Advice” technology education programming, and through the virtual technology coaching provider for a specified timeframe. The AgeGuide Welcome packet contains the AgeGuide designed handout that includes screenshots of their device as a reference on tablet basics and getting started on Google, email (Gmail), social media, internet safety and more. Also included are the county resource guides and the State of Illinois Social Isolation Questionnaire.

Projected Number of Persons: 60; Projected Number of Units: 210

AgeGuide is seeking continued approval for FY2025-2027 and is requesting \$25,000 for III-B Tech and Education activities.

Title III-D Health Promotion Service:

AgeGuide proposes to continue to provide Title III-D direct service as it is a unique position to provide Title III-D Health Promotion activities more efficiently through its regional coordination and its active participation in statewide health aging collaborations. Providing and delivering evidence-based programs region-wide requires support for the training, program costs, and licensing fees. AgeGuide intends to continue to perform the following activities:

- Facilitate program coordination, supplying program materials in bulk, and distributing program resources for overall partner operations.
- Hold program licensing for Bingocize, Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP), Tomando Control de su Salud (Spanish CDSMP), A Matter of Balance, Fit & Strong, Stress-Busting for Family Caregivers of People with Dementia (English and Spanish versions), National Diabetes Prevention Program and Stress-Busting for Family Caregivers of People with Chronic Illnesses.
- Retain Master trained staff in A Matter of Balance and Stress-Busting for Family Caregivers.
- Recruit and train additional leaders through grantees and professional partnerships.
- Monitor program fidelity to maintain program adherence ensuring quality assurance for all participants.
- Participate in statewide healthy aging initiatives and collaborations, the Illinois Falls Prevention Coalition, and Illinois Pathways to Health ACL grant.

AgeGuide Direct Service Waiver Justification:

Provision of these activities by AgeGuide is necessary to assure an adequate, equitable supply of health promotion programs across the region and to target these limited resources to better serve high risk populations.

To leverage the impact of available funding and reach the most participants, providers may operate these programs and receive training support under AgeGuide's licensing agreements. AgeGuide will focus heavily on recruiting and training additional leaders through our relationships with grantees and professional partnerships. AgeGuide will continue to assist our Title III-D funded providers in facilitating programs, providing support to all leaders in the areas of program fidelity, recruiting and retaining leaders, tracking, and preparing workshops, and completion of all required reports to retain licensure. AgeGuide will continue to assist its funded providers in outreach and marketing of their Title III-D programs to overcome barriers in recruiting participants to their programs.

Projected number of persons: 45; Projected units: 300

AgeGuide is seeking continued approval for FY2025-2027 and is requesting \$60,000 for III-D Health Promotion Program Activities.

Step 5: *Modification and Refinement*

AgeGuide recognizes the need to both preserve and enhance effective programs and services funded today, and to look ahead to how its service design can evolve to be of the greatest benefit to its communities in the future. If there is a need for modification and/or refinement to a service, AgeGuide will take the following steps:

- Identify any modification or refinement by the applicable fiscal year and date submitted.
- Describe what intervention caused the AAA to change its Area Plan.
- Identify the modifications to the Area Plan because of the intervention.

With information from results of AgeGuide's Needs Assessment, IDOA's Caregiver Needs Assessment, and the Statewide Initiatives established by IDOA, AgeGuide made the following service delivery changes in FY25 which will continue through the FY25-27 Area Plan Cycle:

1. Discontinuation of Title III-B Outreach to fund Title III-B Public Education.
2. Integrate Title III-B Telephone Reassurance activities into Title III-B Friendly Visiting.
3. Discontinuation Title III-B Counseling.
4. Modifications to Title III-B Service Shares, including increases for Title III-B Friendly Visiting, III-B Legal, and III-B Community Connection Collaboratives.
5. Baseline allocation for all Title III-D providers and utilization of the county funding formula to allocate the remaining funds.
6. Discontinuation of AgeGuide direct service Title III-E Music and Memory and Sing Along programs.
7. Discontinuation of Title III-E Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia funding for Stressbusters for Family Caregivers Programs.
8. Decrease Title III-E Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia funding for Supportive Gap services.
9. Adjust the Title III-E Caregiver Resource Center Service Share to increase III-E Assistance and decrease III-E Respite.
10. Adjust the Title III-E Caregiver Counseling Center Service Share to increase funding for III-E Training and Education and decrease III-E Support Groups.

AgeGuide will continue with these implemented changes in FY26. No other significant changes will be made to service delivery at this time.

Additional Services for Older Adults

AgeGuide receives funds outside of traditional Older Americans Act programs and these responsibilities fall into two categories: 1) Additional Services for Older Adults and 2) Special Projects – Public/Private Collaborations.

Adult Protective Services

AgeGuide is the Regional Administering Agency (RAA) for the IL Adult Protective Services (APS) program in PSA 02 under an Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) grant. AgeGuide supports five Adult Protective Service Provider Agencies (APSPAs) who investigate reports of alleged abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect for adults 60+ and people with disabilities ages 18-59. AgeGuide assists IDOA with quality assurance and compliance activities and support programs by providing technical assistance to program staff. Staff participate in the Illinois Adult Protective Services Advisory Council. APSPAs are paid directly by IDoA to conduct investigations and/or case management. AgeGuide funds APSPAs for Multi-Disciplinary Teams (M-Teams) activities, Fatality Review Teams, and training through Title VII funds. In FY26, AgeGuide anticipates \$61,503 in funding under this grant to perform the RAA activities.

Employment Programs

AgeGuide receives State Senior Employment Specialist Program (SESP) funding to assist seniors 55 and older with job referrals and coordination with National Able Network, State Employment Offices, and Workforce Boards. The Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for adults 55 and older. The program provides training for low-income, unemployed older adults. Eligible participants also have access to employment assistance through American Job Centers. This program can be used as a supplement to Social Security income or as an opportunity for socialization. In FY26, AgeGuide anticipates \$21,069 in funding.

Illinois Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) awards grants to provide low-income seniors with \$50 worth of vouchers that can be exchanged for eligible foods at participating farmers' markets and roadside stands. Eligible older adults are 60+ years old with household incomes of no more than 185% of the Federal poverty income guidelines. AgeGuide has administered the SFMNP in Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties with the help of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Joliet (Kankakee County), Oswego Senior Center, Kendall County Health Department, Senior Services Associates (Kendall County),

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Chicago, Avon Township, Fremont Township, Moraine Township, Waukegan Township (Lake County), Senior Services Associates and Harvard Senior Center (McHenry County). The purpose of SFMNP is to:

1. Promote the routine consumption of fruits and vegetables as a part of the daily diet.
2. Provide low-income older adults with access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, honey, and herbs.
3. Increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities through farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agricultural programs.
4. Aid in the development of new and additional farmers markets, roadside stands, and community support agricultural programs.

The SFMNP and AgeGuide will work with senior network providers to distribute coupons to eligible older adults in Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry Counties. Organizations collaborating with AgeGuide to distribute SFMNP coupons will receive a portion of \$2,000 to offset the cost of distributing coupons and manage reporting.

Medicare Assistance Activities

Medicare increasingly relies on the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) and in Illinois, the Senior Health Assistance Program (SHAP), which funds local Medicare assistance efforts statewide.

SHIP uses a small professional staff and a large corps of highly trained volunteers to provide objective local assistance to Medicare enrollees and people approaching Medicare eligibility. SHIP staff help navigate Medicare enrollment, cost and benefit explanation, and the availability of financial assistance programs for low-income participants; along with many other questions related to Medicare and Medicaid. Funds provided by the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) supplement SHAP funds and concentrate primarily on benefits for low-income Medicare enrollees.

Medicare enrollees and people approaching Medicare eligibility often need assistance on when and how to enroll; the choices they have for Part D drug plans, Medicare Advantage plans, and supplemental policies; the costs and benefits of various parts of Medicare; the availability of financial assistance for low-income participants; Medicare's relationship to other forms of health insurance; and sources of information and assistance about Medicare. The Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) providers in AgeGuide's region are both SHIP and SHAP/MIPPA sites. Funding for these activities varies each year.

Benefits Access Applications

AgeGuide and its Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) grantees receive funding to assist older adults and people with disabilities in completing Benefit Access Applications (BAA) through the Illinois Department on Aging. Benefit Access Applications are submitted to the Illinois Department on Aging for license plate discounts and Ride Free transit cards. AgeGuide and the ADRN grantees completed a total of 3551 applications in State fiscal year 2024. The Illinois Department on Aging awards AgeGuide approximately \$88,775 for this grant based on a \$25 per submitted application rate. AgeGuide and the ADRN grantees received payment based on applications submitted until the grant was exhausted. AgeGuide and ADRN Grantees are required to be SHAP sites to receive this funding.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

With the leadership of a Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) coordinator and the support of the State Grantee, volunteers with the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) are working to ensure fewer people become victims of healthcare fraud. SMP is an ACL federal initiative that recruits and trains volunteers to help people recognize and report healthcare billing errors and potential fraud. The primary goal of this program is to *“Protect, Detect, and Report”* Medicare and Healthcare fraud.

The Illinois SMP Program is administered by AgeOptions. AgeGuide has a direct service grant to partner in the delivery of the program in the counties we serve. These activities include training and hosting volunteers to provide outreach and education in our community, including presenting to groups, hosting exhibits at community events and senior fairs. In FY26, AgeGuide anticipates receiving \$20,000 in funding to perform the above activities. In FY25, AgeGuide received an SMP Special Project grant in the amount of \$7,095 to run a digital marketing campaign in Spanish to increase awareness of SMP. AgeGuide plans to apply for the SMP Special Project funding in FY26.

Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children Program (State Grant)

According to the Illinois Department on Aging, there are 211,919 children in Illinois under 18 living in a grandparent-headed household. One main reason for the increase in kinship families is substance abuse and alcoholism that has created a need for grandparents to step in and parent their grandchildren. Grandparents raising grandchildren over the age of 55 are eligible to receive OAA funded services. Unfortunately, those relatives under the age of 55 are not funded through the OAA services. Therefore, there are very few resources to assist them. In FY26, AgeGuide will continue to assist younger grandparents with financial assistance. If awarded funding in FY26, AgeGuide plans to continue our supportive efforts to this specific population to provide safe, stable, and loving homes for children being raised by grandparents. Services such as counseling, legal assistance, respite, and gap-filling will be provided to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren under the age of 55 through this program.

With this grant, AgeGuide will also continue our outreach efforts and expand opportunities to support grandparents and older relatives of all ages. It is unknown at the writing of this document how much funding will be available. In FY25, AgeGuide was awarded \$22,500.

Dementia Friendly Illinois

In FY25, AgeGuide received a Dementia Friendly Illinois grant from the Illinois Department on Aging. This funding replaces the previous Systems Development Grant funding and focuses solely on establishing Dementia Friendly Communities in our Planning and Service Area. AgeGuide supports this initiative by helping local municipalities in becoming Dementia Friendly and offering online training for individuals and businesses to understand dementia and how to support people when encountering them in various community sectors such as in public transportation, healthcare settings, restaurants, retail locations, etc. In FY26 AgeGuide anticipates reapplying for this funding in the amount of \$30,000.

Special Projects – Public/Private Collaboration

Illinois Veteran Directed Care

The Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program in Illinois was created following the 2009 initiative to enable Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMCs) to provide home and community-based support services through the Veterans Directed Home & Community Based Service Program (VDHCBS), now nationally known as Veteran Directed Care Program.

The VDC program provides eligible Veterans at risk of nursing home placement with the least costly and most beneficial services to meet their healthcare needs. VDC is a consumer-directed program that allows Veterans to develop a person-centered service plan that best fits their unique care needs and allows them to remain living in their homes and communities. AgeGuide's role is to provide administrative management including Options Counseling/Case Management services and person-centered guidance to the Veteran participants for the VAMC (VA Medical Centers). AgeGuide works with the VDC Program Directors at the VAMC to provide tailored services and programs to meet Veterans' healthcare and social care needs.

Currently, Capt. James T. Lovell FQHC and Jesse Brown VAMCs actively refer Veterans to the VDC program. Jesse Brown's service area also includes Veterans living in Northwest Indiana. AgeGuide partners with the Northwest Indiana Community Action Agency (NWI-CAA) under a Hub and Spoke model to provide Options Counseling/Case Management services and person-centered guidance for Northwest Indiana Veterans. AgeGuide provides training, oversight, and administrative management, while the NWI-CAA delivers Options Counseling/Case Management to the Veteran participants.

Quality of Life: In FY23, the program satisfaction survey responses showed that 95% of Veterans expressed satisfaction with the program overall. 100% reported that the program improved the quality of life of their primary caregivers. 100% of Veterans enrolled in the program said that VDC helps them remain safely in their home, and the services offered by VDC help the Veteran become more independent. Of the Veterans surveyed, 90% agree that VDC services prevented them from being admitted to a long-term care facility.

AgeGuide's Aging Summit

This year will mark AgeGuide's 4th annual Aging Summit. In past years, we've explored themes of longevity, equity, and economic resilience. This year's theme takes these conversations further, recognizing brain health as an essential component of aging well and living fully across the lifespan. Today, millions of individuals face the challenges of cognitive decline, memory loss, and the stigma surrounding brain health. These challenges impact not only individuals but also families, caregivers, and communities. Promoting brain health requires a holistic approach that includes prevention, education, equitable access to care, and innovation. To engage in vital discussions about the science, strategies, and solutions that support lifelong cognitive vitality, this event brings together older adults, caregivers, community leaders, and professionals across the aging network. There are two goals of this year's Aging Summit. The first goal is to have at least 50% of attendees stay to the end and participate in Dementia Friendly Champion training. The second goal is that at least 15% of the attendees are demographically part of the older Americans Act target population including, individuals that have low-incomes, are 75 years of age or older, limited English speakers, minorities, live alone, or at risk of social or cultural isolation.

FY26 RESOURCES & FUNDING PRACTICES

AgeGuide Resources

Anticipated Older Americans Act, State General Revenue and Other Federal Funds

By authorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA), the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) provides funds to AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois from the Administration on Community Living (ACL), in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. These funds are to be used in the eight-county planning and service area that includes DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties for the purposes described below:

Federal Older Americans Act Resources

Title III-B: Administration and Social Services, including IDoA determined set-aside for Ombudsman

Title III-C1: Administration and Congregate (Community Dining) Meals

Title III-C2: Administration and Home Delivered Meals

Title III-D: Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Title III-E: Administration and National Family Caregiver Support Program

Title VII: Administration and Adult Protective Services and Ombudsman Training and Support

Illinois State General Revenue Funds

- **Title III Match:** Administration and Home Delivered Meals, Information & Assistance, Friendly Visiting, or other Area Plan Services.
- **Home Delivered Meals:** Mandated IDoA-determined set-aside for Home Delivered Meals
- **Community-Based Services:** Information & Assistance, Transportation, or other community-based services, including special set-asides for state initiatives.
- **Caregiver Support Services:** Caregiver services including Assistance including Tailored Care (TCARE), Gap, Respite, Training & Education including Trualta, Counseling, and Support Groups.
- **Ombudsman Services:** Mandated IDoA-determined set-aside for Ombudsman services.
- **Long Term Care Ombudsman:** Resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals who live in Long-Term Care facilities.
- **Senior Health Assistance Program (SHAP):** Support and counseling for Medicare beneficiaries to enroll in Part D and other benefits.

- **Adult Protective Services (APS) Program Regional Administration Agency (RAA):** AgeGuide performs regional administrative agency responsibilities to support the Adult Protective Services program.
- **Senior Employment Specialist Program:** Advocacy and referrals to Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) grantees in our region.
- **Illinois Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children (GRG):** Provides counseling, legal assistance, respite, and gap-filling services to grandparents and other relatives to support grandchildren and to provide safe, stable, and loving homes.

Other Federal Resources

- **Nutrition Services Incentive Program Funds:** Support for Congregate and Home Delivered Meals based on prior year count of meals served.
- **Medicare Improvements for Patients & Providers (MIPPA):** Outreach and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries to apply for benefit programs.
- **Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP):** Health insurance counseling service for Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers.
- **Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP):** Prevent, detect, and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse.

Federal & State Resources and Policy Implications

Federal and State resources affect public policies, which in turn affect the services that are available to address the needs of the community. The rapidly growing and diverse aging population created an increased demand for services provided under the Older Americans Act and the federal entitlement programs of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Planning for and serving our aging population is an investment in the well-being of all Americans because our services benefit people of all ages and abilities.

FY25 Federal Budget

Source: USAging [USAging's appropriations chart](#).

At the time of publication of this report, Congress has not yet passed an FY25 budget and is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR). FY25 funding levels are based on the FY24 budget as follows:

Key Older Americans Act (OAA) FY24 funding levels:

- \$410 million for **Home & Community-Based Supportive Services**
- \$1.1 billion for **Nutrition Services**

- \$205 million for the **National Family Caregiver Support Program**
- \$26.3 million for **Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**
- \$26.7 million for **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

Proposed Federal Budget for FY25

The FY25 Federal budget has not yet been passed. There is currently a Continuing Resolution that maintains funding from FY2024.

Impact of Loss of Federal Relief Funds

From 2022-2024 AgeGuide received an additional \$10M from Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief funds. These funds allowed the aging network to invest in special projects, innovations, outcome data enhancements, and other much-needed service expansions to meet the needs of the growing aging population in our region. However, this funding will end in FY25. Without new investments from the Federal and state levels, the aging network will no longer be able to maintain this enhanced service delivery.

When ARPA funds were initially allocated, Area Agencies on Aging and our funded partners were understandably concerned about the temporary nature of these funds and the risk of increasing their level of service for a limited time. However, we were assured that by investing these resources and showing impact and value, we could expect increased investments to support aging services reversing the tide of the decade-long history of disinvestment. AgeGuide and its network utilized these relief funds to hire needed staff, expand services, and extend its outreach to serve more older adults. Services were expanded to target populations including those older adults who live alone, are at or below the poverty level, are 75 years of age or older, limited-English speaking, and are minorities. If funding isn't maintained at current ARPA levels, older adults across our region and the state who have come to rely on vital Older Americans Act services will go unserved.

Currently, Congress is in the middle of the 2025 fiscal year appropriation decisions, and it is essential we continue to invest in essential aging services.

FY26 Proposed State Budget

Source: <https://budget.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/budget/documents/budget-book/fy2026-budget/Fiscal-Year-2026-Operating-Budget.pdf>.

On February 19, 2025, Governor JB Pritzker shared his FY2026 operating budget. The \$2 million budget for the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) includes a \$144.4 million increase in funding for the Community Care Program (CCP) to accommodate caseload and utilization growth. The proposed budget includes an \$8 million increase to meet the demand for the

Home-Delivered Meals Program. The recommended budget also includes a \$2.2 million increase in funding for Adult Protective Services to accommodate improvements in service quality and response. This budget serves as a starting point and final numbers for an approved FY26 budget are not yet available.

FY26 State Budget Overview

Funding Source (\$ thousands)	FY25 Enacted	FY26 Budget	Change From FY25	Change From FY25 %
General Revenue Fund (GRF)	\$688,520,105	\$587,653,729	\$100,866,376	-14.7%
Commitment to Human Services Fund	\$971,162,100	\$1,208,631,800	\$237,469,700	24.5%
Federal*	\$192,995,400	\$212,788,800	\$19,793,400	10.3%
Other State	\$7,745,000	\$13,373,800	\$5,628,800	72.7%
Total *	\$1,860,422,605	\$2,022,448.129	\$162,025,524	8.7%

*Totals may not be exact due to rounding

Please note that some Community Care Program spending from the General Revenue Fund has shifted to the Commitment to Human Services Fund. The shift between lines does **not** equate to programmatic cuts.

Illinois Department on Aging Notification – Federal and State Resources

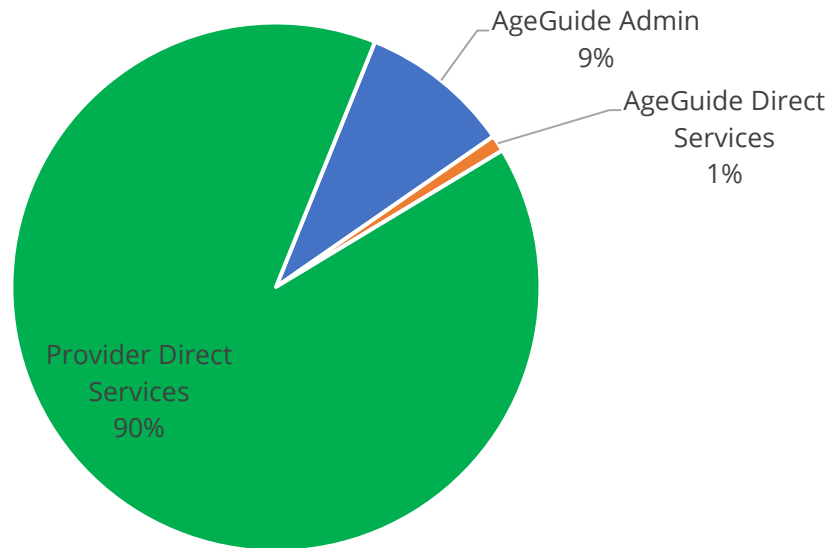
At the time of publication, the Illinois State budget for FY26 has not yet been released.

Dissemination of Federal and State Resources

AgeGuide Administrative Activities

The Older Americans Act restricts agency administration costs to 10% of the Title III allocation, per Letter 26AP1, and permits Area Agencies on Aging to provide “administratively related direct services” of advocacy, coordination, and program development.

FY2026 Projected Expenditures



AgeGuide receives Federal and State funding (\$1,444,847) from the Department of Aging strictly for the administrative function of the agency. The operational budget includes personnel, benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, occupancy, telecommunications, training and education, and miscellaneous costs in conformance with the Grants Accountability Transparency Act (GATA).

For FY26, the Illinois Department on Aging caps AgeGuide's use of "administratively related direct services" at \$3,973,707. The AgeGuide allocation for Title III administratively related direct service is \$1,150,000 and is 28.94% of the maximum cap for FY26 set by the Illinois Department of Aging.

AgeGuide's allocation for Title III-B Administrative Related Direct Service includes Advocacy (\$363,474), Coordination (\$380,298), and Program Development (\$406,228) activities and will be performed as a cost of supportive services proportionate with the requirements for administrative-related direct services.

See FY26 Resources & Funding Practices for more information.

Funding Allocation Process and Associated Policies & Practices

AgeGuide’s funding allocation process applies to services funded under Titles III and VII of the Federal Older Americans Act and State General Revenue Funds provided by the Illinois General Assembly. These funds are subject to regulations stipulated by Federal and State mandates.

Allocating Funds Across the Region: County Funding Formulas

Regional Funding Formula

AgeGuide’s regional funding formula determines the distribution of most of AgeGuide’s resources among the PSA’s eight counties. The funding formula has three purposes:

- To reflect the language and fulfill the intent of the Older Americans Act;
- To respond to changing populations and demographic factors in the region;
- To minimize disruption in existing services.

The formula uses five demographic measurements: each county’s population aged 60+ and 75+, its minority population aged 60+, its population aged 60+ with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level, and its population aged 60+ who live alone. The formula’s sixth factor, known as Fixed Cost, gives additional weight to the counties with the smallest senior populations.

Each county’s formula share is the sum of these six factors, described in the table below.

Weight	Factor	Calculation
20%	60+ Population	20% of the county's percentage of the region's population aged 60+
20%	75+ population	20% of the county's percentage of the region's population aged 75+.
15%	Minority population	15% of the county's percentage of the region's minority population aged 60+. "Minority" includes all non-whites plus white Hispanics; in other words, everyone except non-Hispanic whites.
30%	Seniors below poverty	30% of the county's percentage of the region's population aged 60+ with incomes under 100% of the federal poverty level
10%	Living Alone	10% of the county's percentage of the region's population aged 60+ who live alone.
5%	Fixed Cost	5% of the county's percentage of the weighted population aged 60+ of counties whose population aged 60+ is no more than 4.0% of the

region's total population aged 60+. Currently Grundy, Kankakee, and Kendall Counties qualify for this factor.

A county's formula share determines its percentage of most federal and state funds that AgeGuide distributes. Some other funds are available on a regionwide drawdown basis, and some on the basis of applications for funding under specific terms based on additional funding received.

AgeGuide's longstanding policy is that its funding formula uses the most current data and estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. However, the formula is not updated once a fiscal year has begun, even if more recent demographic data becomes available. If more recent census data becomes available after this document is prepared, before the start of the new fiscal year, AgeGuide will make adjustments insofar as possible.

The method of determining the Regional Funding share remains consistent with that used in previous Area Plans. AgeGuide will continually assess the appropriateness of the changes in the factors during FY25-27 Area Plan Cycle.

FY26 Regional Funding Formula

County	60+ Population		75+ Population		Minority Population 60+		60+ Pop Below 100% Poverty		60+ Living Alone		Fixed Cost	Formula
	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	Share	Share
DuPage	217,846	28.99%	62,432	29.88%	50,750	29.46%	13,401	27.89%	44,710	29.71%	0.00%	27.53%
Grundy	10,985	1.46%	2,999	1.44%	789	0.46%	534	1.11%	2,655	1.76%	33.33%	2.82%
Kane	108,858	14.49%	30,544	14.62%	28,126	16.33%	7,814	16.26%	22,100	14.69%	0.00%	14.62%
Kankakee	26,004	3.46%	7,685	3.68%	4,436	2.58%	2,424	5.04%	6,380	4.24%	33.33%	5.42%
Kendall	20,710	2.76%	5,581	2.67%	4,654	2.70%	759	1.58%	3,480	2.31%	33.33%	3.86%
Lake	155,021	20.63%	42,916	20.54%	38,198	22.18%	10,697	22.26%	31,970	21.25%	0.00%	20.36%
McHenry	70,632	9.40%	18,803	9.00%	7,656	4.44%	3,961	8.24%	13,700	9.11%	0.00%	7.73%
Will	141,336	18.81%	37,999	18.18%	37,635	21.85%	8,464	17.61%	25,470	16.93%	0.00%	17.65%
Region	751,392	100%	208,959	100%	172,244	100%	48,054	100%	150,465	100%	0.00%	100%
WEIGHT	20%		20%		15%		30%		10%		5%	100%

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 ACS 5-year estimates for 60+, 75+, and Poverty
 ACL Special Tabulation from the American Community Survey 2017-2021 for 60+ Living Alone
 U.S. Census Population Estimates: 2021 County Characteristics for 60+ Minority

Health Factor Funding Formula

The Health Factor Funding Formula began as a special pilot formula for FY22-24 III-C Nutrition Services and III-D Health Promotion Services. The Health Factor Funding Formula uses all the factors described above in the Regional Funding Formula; and in addition, uses a

“Health Factor” based on county-level health rankings. The Health Factor Funding Formula will continue to be used for FY25-27 for III-C Nutrition and III-D Health Promotion services.

County	60+ Population		75+ Population		Minority Population 60+		60+ Pop Below 100% Poverty		60+ Living Alone		Fixed Cost	Health Factor		Formula Share
	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	#	Share	Share	Rating	Share	
DuPage	217,846	28.99%	62,432	29.88%	50,750	29.46%	13,401	27.89%	44,710	29.71%	0.00%	1	9.09%	27.03%
Grund	10,985	1.46%	2,999	1.44%	789	0.46%	534	1.11%	2,655	1.76%	33.33%	1	9.09%	3.02%
Kane	108,858	14.49%	30,544	14.62%	28,126	16.33%	7,814	16.26%	22,100	14.69%	0.00%	1	9.09%	14.48%
Kankakee	26,004	3.46%	7,685	3.68%	4,436	2.58%	2,424	5.04%	6,380	4.24%	33.33%	4	36.36%	6.24%
Kendall	20,710	2.76%	5,581	2.67%	4,654	2.70%	759	1.58%	3,480	2.31%	33.33%	1	9.09%	4.02%
Lake	155,021	20.63%	42,916	20.54%	38,198	22.18%	10,697	22.26%	31,970	21.25%	0.00%	1	9.09%	20.07%
McHenry	70,632	9.40%	18,803	9.00%	7,656	4.44%	3,961	8.24%	13,700	9.11%	0.00%	1	9.09%	7.72%
Will	141,336	18.81%	37,999	18.18%	37,635	21.85%	8,464	17.61%	25,470	16.93%	0.00%	1	9.09%	17.41%
Region	751,392	100%	208,959	100%	172,244	100%	48,054	100%	150,465	100%	0.00%	11	100%	100.00%
WEIGHT	17.5%		20%		15%		30%		10%		5%	2.5%		100%

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 ACS 5-year estimates for 60+, 75+, and Poverty
 ACL Special Tabulation from the American Community Survey 2017-2021 for 60+ Living Alone
 U.S. Census Population Estimates: 2021 County Characteristics for 60+ Minority
 2024 Illinois County Health Rankings report used for Health Factor

Ombudsman Funding Formula

AgeGuide uses a special formula to distribute Ombudsman funds among its eight counties. The formula is not adjusted during the fiscal year.

- 50% of funds are distributed according to the Regional Funding Formula, as described in the Regional Funding Formula section of this document;
- 50% of funds are distributed based on the county’s total number of licensed Assisted Living facilities and Supportive Living units in each county in proportion to the totals of these beds and units in the eight-county region.

Since October 2017, the Regional Ombudsman Programs were also required to visit residents aged 18+ in Medically Complex Facilities for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (MC/DD).

County	Nursing Facility or Skilled Care	Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Developmental/Intellectual Disabilities	Sheltered care facilities	Assisted Living Facilities	Supportive Living Facilities	Medically Complex Facilities for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities	50% Based on Bed Count	50% of County Funding Formula	Standard County Funding Formula	Ombud County Funding Formula
DuPage	5,508	64	479	3,262	371	156	0.149846	0.137657	27.53%	28.75%
Grundy	265	0	0	60	160	0	0.007003	0.014123	2.82%	2.11%
Kane	3,221	112	253	1,148	985	0	0.086890	0.073087	14.62%	16.00%
Kankakee	989	112	79	326	167	0	0.026641	0.027090	5.42%	5.37%
Kendall	184	0	0	173	87	0	0.005864	0.019313	3.86%	2.52%
Lake	4,354	290	119	2,226	689	0	0.116173	0.101816	20.36%	21.80%
McHenry	1,034	96	60	1,428	223	0	0.037641	0.038649	7.73%	7.63%
Will	2,741	64	56	1,469	299	0	0.069941	0.088266	17.65%	15.82%
Region	18,296	738	1,046	10,092	2,981	156	26772.50		100.00%	100.00%

Data Source: IDPH Facilities Report

Allocating Funds by Service: Service Shares

Service Formula Shares

Once resources have been allocated to counties using the County Share Funding Formula, resources are then distributed to services using a Service Share Formula. The Service Share Formulas are developed to distribute resources within specific service categories.

Service Categories

In an attempt to direct limited resources to the most needed services, AgeGuide's Advisory Council and Board of Directors established two service categories:

- 1. Mandatory Services:** These services are mandated by IDOA and must be funded in the region:
 - Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) Access Services: Information & Assistance & Options Counseling
 - In-Home Services: (AgeGuide funds Friendly Visiting to fulfill this requirement)
 - Legal Assistance
 - Congregate Meals
 - Home Delivered Meals
 - Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Caregiver Services: Access Assistance, Supplemental Gap-Filling, Respite, Counseling, and Training & Education
- Ombudsman Services: Titles III-B, VII, and Illinois GRF, Ombudsman
- Adult Protective Services: Title VII Training, M Team, and Fatality Review Team
- Illinois GRF, Senior Health Assistance Program (SHAP)
- Medicare Improvements for Patients & Providers (MIPPA)

2. Optional Services: These services are not mandated by IDOA. AgeGuide opts to fund these services based on needs assessment outcomes:

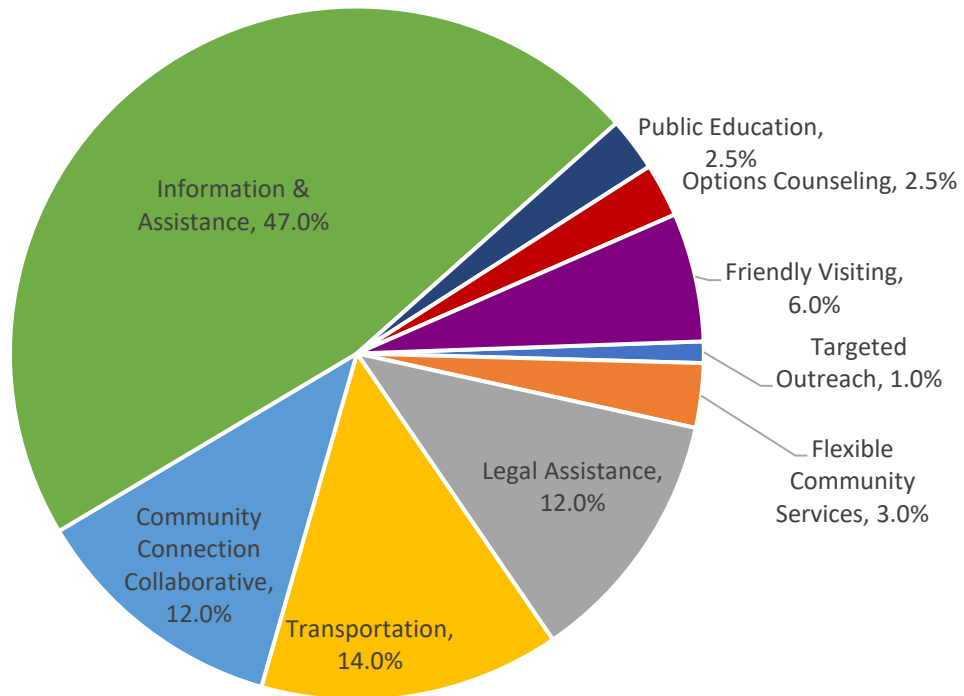
- Public Education
- Community Connection Collaborative: Health Screening, Education, and Recreation
- Targeted Outreach
- Flexible Community Services
- Transportation
- Specific Caregiver Services including Support Groups and Public Education

FY25-27 Service Share Formulas

AgeGuide has developed service share formulas for those specific Titles where funding may be used for multiple services. For III-C, III-D, and Ombudsman, no specific service share formula is used. For these funding sources, all available funding is devoted to those specific programs. Service Share Formulas have been developed for Titles III-B and Titles III-E.

1. III-B Service Share Formula

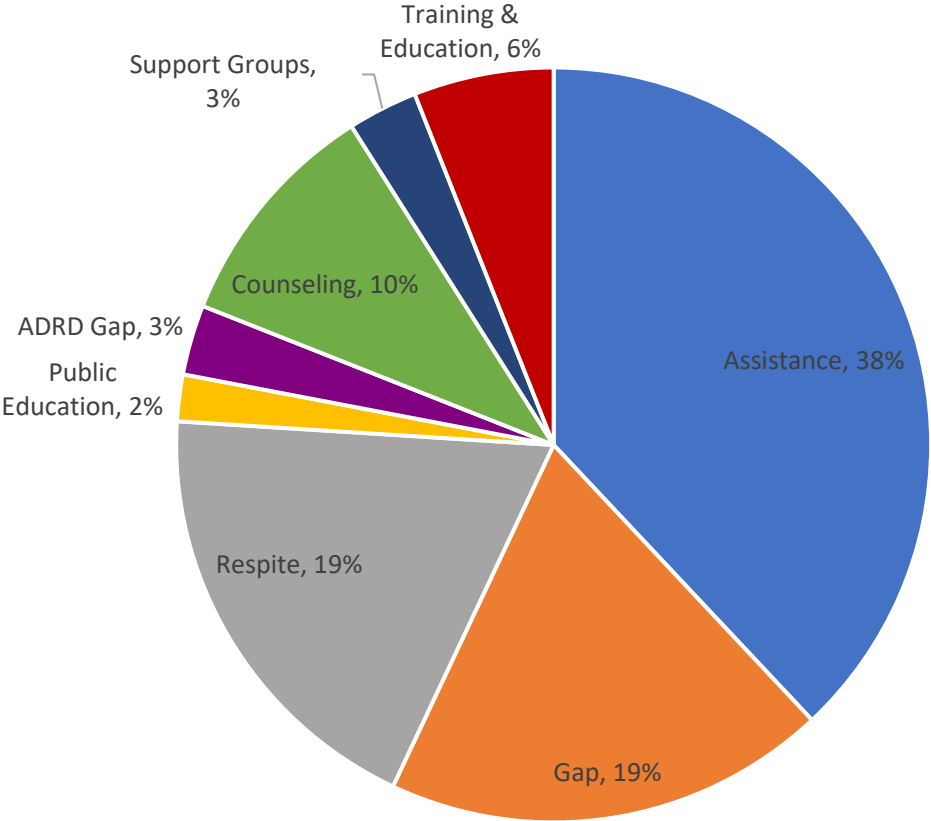
Funds from Title III-B are used for the following services: Legal Assistance, Transportation, Community Connection Collaborative (Education, Recreation, and Health Screening), Information & Assistance, Public Education, Friendly Visiting, Options Counseling, Targeted Outreach, and Flexible Community Services. Title III-B funding is allocated to these services using the following percentages for FY2025-2027:



2. Titles III-E Service Share Formula

Title III-E funds Family Caregiver Support Services, including 8 separate services: Assistance, Respite, Gap-Filling, Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Gap-Filling, Public Education, Individual Counseling, Training & Education, and Support Groups.

These 8 services are divided into 2 service bundles: Caregiver Resource Center and Caregiver Counseling Center. Title III-E funding is allocated to these programs according to the following percentages:



Service Allocation Principles

Adjustments to the funding allocations will be made at least annually, and within a fiscal year when necessary to reflect changes in the funds available to AgeGuide for service grants and contract awards. ***In addition to the general rule of distributing funds according to County Formula Shares and Service Shares, the following principles apply:***

Funding Levels

Each county has an established service delivery system in place. The distribution of available resources is designed to provide as little disruption to the existing system as possible and to accurately reflect the increases or decreases that may have occurred in the funding or service environment.

All Services are assigned a Service Share Funding Level.

- **Service Share:** the *percentage* of funding that is allocated to a specific service. A county's service share for a specific service is determined using the Service Share Formulas described above.
- **Service Share Funding Level:** the *dollar* amount allocated for a specific county and service. This is determined by multiplying a county's Service Share by the total funding amount available in the county.

In establishing Titles III, VII, and GRF service funding plans, AgeGuide considers the following criteria:

- The appropriateness of a service in helping older adults in greatest economic and social need (i.e., older adults with one or more of the characteristics in the regional funding formula), most at risk of loss of independence, or most in need of protection of their basic rights;
- The adequacy of funds to support a level of service that addressed the need effectively at an acceptable cost; and
- The ability of other service providers or systems to address those needs.

Fund Allocations Greater Than Fund Requests

In the event that allocations exceed the level of funds requested in a county, these excesses will be reallocated to the county's funded services within that title.

When Resources Increase

When AgeGuide resources increase, AgeGuide will evaluate the need in the region and may use one or all of the methods below to distribute the funding. These principles apply to Federal and State funds for III-B, III-C, III-D, III-E, and VII.

1. If services in a county are funded below the previous year's funding level, AgeGuide will prioritize new resources to fund each service fully.
2. When new funds are not sufficient to bring all services to at least the funding level from the previous year, AgeGuide will distribute any new funds to services in proportion to their share of the deficit.
3. When services are already funded at or above their previous year's funding levels, additional funds will be distributed among the services according to the County Funding Formulas and the Service Share Formulas.
4. Identify and pilot new Special Projects or other services to meet the needs of the Region. For Congregate and Home Delivered Meal services, AgeGuide may award the funds to expand the delivery of shelf-stable, weekend, special diet, or other meals.
5. Allow service providers to submit applications for additional funding, including justification for why additional funding is needed.

When increasing allocations for a provider, AgeGuide will additionally consider the provider's current spending and program performance to ensure increases are allocated appropriately.

When Resources Decline

When resources decline, AgeGuide may use one or all of the methods below to distribute the funding. These principles apply to Federal and State funds for IIIB, IIIC, IIID, IIIE, and VII.

1. Reduce or remove one-time or special project funds before existing grants are reduced.
2. Identify areas of underspending, underperformance, or reduced need, and implement proportional reductions in funding.
3. Distribute the reduction in funding among all services according to the County Funding Formula and the Service Share Formulas.

Information on a Variety of Funding Opportunities

To cover the tremendous increase in service demand throughout the service area, AgeGuide will actively pursue other sources of funding. In August 2022, AgeGuide was awarded a U.S. Administration for Community Living Nutrition Innovations grant. This was a three-year grant ending July 31, 2025. The purpose of this grant was to expand and enhance community dining opportunities by modernizing congregate dining to increase participation among older adults by utilizing a restaurant based congregate dining model that would increase participation by offering greater flexibility in meal choice and accessibility. If new sources of funds are received for the rest of this Area Plan cycle, AgeGuide's Board of Directors will determine the services, sub areas, and funding levels at that time.

Minimum Percentage Waiver Requests

IDoA requires that a minimum percentage of Federal Title III-B funds be set aside for the following services:

- Access Services: 33.1%
- In-Home Services: .04%
- Legal Services: 3.2%

Area Agencies on Aging that are unable to meet these minimum requirements are required to submit a waiver request.

This Public Hearing Document does not include a waiver request for the IDoA minimum percentage requirements. AgeGuide's FY26 funding plan exceeds the requirements for these services and therefore does not need to request a waiver from this requirement.

Home Delivered Meals (HDMs) Funding & Unmet Needs

AgeGuide and its Title III-C grantee agencies recognize and appreciate the increased support of the home-delivered meals program by the Illinois General Assembly. Since FY98, there has been a specific set-aside fund for the provision and expansion of home-delivered meals. This service has grown over the years and this additional funding has enabled our grantees to provide more meals to more people for a longer period of time in a broader service area. AgeGuide will advocate for continued, consistent funding to provide home-delivered meals for homebound older adults residing in the PSA who need meals. Consistent funding provides for stable programs that can focus on providing reliable, quality meal services, and offers peace of mind to home delivered meal participants that their meals will continue without interruption. Delays in receiving funds for home delivered meals strain the financial resources of providers and make operating consistently at full capacity challenging.

AgeGuide's priority is to use its services, especially home-delivered meals, to maintain the dignity and independence of all older people in need. As such, AgeGuide and its funded partners will provide hot, cold, frozen, or emergency shelf-stable meals to homebound older people residing in the eight-county region. In addition, AgeGuide funds six programs offering ethnic home delivered meals to service specific cultural communities. AgeGuide, in conjunction with its nutrition providers and Care Coordination Units, will continue to closely monitor those areas of its Planning and Service Area (PSA) at risk of developing waiting lists.

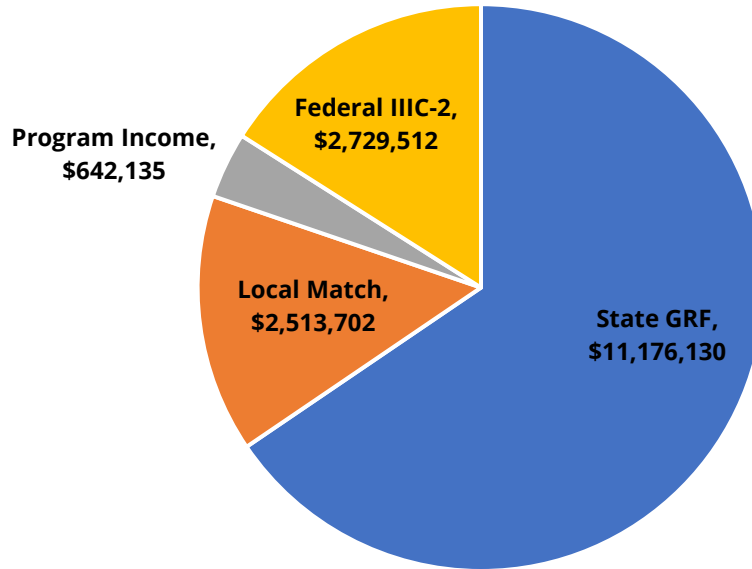
- In FY24, 1,312,862 meals were delivered to 9,371 homebound older adults in the PSA.

- AgeGuide’s eight-county region currently has one nutrition partner utilizing a waitlist due to staff shortages which have resulted in delays in processing HDM clients.
- AgeGuide continues to work with its nutrition providers and Care Coordination Units to address the waiting list in its Planning and Service Area.
- Nutrition providers provide weekend meals to those clients most in need as determined by the Illinois Department on Aging’s Nutrition Referral Assessment for home delivered meals throughout the region.
- In FY26: 1,313,000 home delivered meals are projected to be provided to 9,400 homebound older adults in the PSA.
- In many cases, home delivered meals are the first contact older adults have with available services and supports that enable them to live in their own homes, achieve better health, and feel less isolated. Nationally, the benefits of increased nutritional intake from home delivered meals translate into improved health.
- According to the 2024 Meals on Wheels America Fact Sheet:
 - For many home delivered meal recipients, the person delivering the meal is often the only person they will see that day.
 - 7 out of 10 local programs are facing higher demand for home-delivered meals than before the pandemic.
 - 77% of home delivered meal recipients say the meals help improve their health.
 - 85% of home delivered-meal recipients say the service help them feel more secure.
 - 92% of home-delivered meal recipients say meals help them live independently.
 - 64% of local programs are confident that they could serve more older adults, if the new participants came with more funding.

The home delivered meal program is a community effort bringing meal providers, volunteers, and other community organizations together to improve the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers. Research has shown that **daily** delivery of meals increases the overall improvement of health and helps older adults live independently. The home delivered meal program also represents an essential service for many caregivers, by helping them to maintain their own health and well-being.

Throughout the eight-county PSA, nutrition providers strive to develop a network of volunteers and staff to provide consistent delivery Monday through Friday. Continued adequate funding and consistent cash flow are critical to keep this extensive network operating to deliver meals and the many associated benefits of better health and improved quality of life.

Anticipated FY26 Home Delivered Meals Funding: \$17,061,480



FY25 Home Delivered Meals Status

County	Units Served YTD	Persons Receiving Meals	Waiting List
DuPage	85,233	1,701	0
Grundy	10,847	146	0
Kane	44,338	795	0
Kankakee	42,825	638	71
Kendall	11,926	214	0
Lake	43,090	895	0
McHenry	25,307	495	0
Will	65,869	1,216	0
Total	329,435	*6,097	71

*Unduplicated persons

FY26 Funding Projections

The following page includes projected FY26 Area Plan revenues and expenditures.

Older Americans Act allocations are based on Area Agency on Aging Letter #26AP1, which is the Illinois Department on Aging's projected allocation letter for FY26. State General Revenue planning allocations are based on the Governor's FY25 budget for Aging. Federal projected allocations are based on the FY24 final budget.

AREA PLAN FY2026 PROJECTED ALLOCATIONS: Letter 26AP1

REVENUES	FEDERAL FUNDS	
	Title IIIB	\$2,774,567
	Title IIIC-1	\$3,445,502
	Title IIIC-2	\$2,729,512
	Title IIID	\$170,107
	Title IIIE	\$1,403,135
	Title VII Elder Abuse	\$34,277
	Title VII Ombudsman	\$177,241
	Title IIIB Ombudsman	\$159,216
	Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)	\$660,078
	Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)	\$123,406
	Carryover	\$511,121
	FEDERAL TOTAL	\$12,188,162
	STATE GENERAL REVENUE FUNDS (Governor's Budget)	
	Title III Match	\$484,419
	Community Based Services	\$2,801,130
	Home Delivered Meals	\$11,176,130
	Caregiver Support Services	\$1,065,835
	Ombudsman	\$671,700
	Long Term Care Provider Fund Ombudsman	\$591,392
	Senior Health Assistance Program (SHAP)	\$388,038
	STATE TOTAL	\$17,178,644
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$29,366,806

EXPENDITURES	AGEGUIDE OPERATIONS	
	Federal & State Admin	\$1,487,642
	Program Development, Coordination & Advocacy	\$1,150,000
	AGEGUIDE DIRECT SERVICES	
	IIIB: Information & Assistance Direct Service	\$155,000
	IIIB: Education Direct Service	\$25,000
	IIID: Health Promotion Direct Services	\$60,000
	IIIE: Caregiver Information & Assistance Direct Service	\$70,000
	PROVIDER DIRECT SERVICES	
	Title IIIB Community Services	\$6,107,823
	Title IIIC-1 Congregate Meals	\$1,888,390
	Title IIIC-2 Home Delivered Meals	\$13,794,340
	Title IIID Health Promotion Programs	\$110,107
	Title IIIE Caregiver Services	\$2,452,366
	Title VII APS Services	\$36,880
	Ombudsman Services	\$1,560,609
	SHAP & MIPPA	\$468,649
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$29,366,806

Outstanding Leadership

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Monica Guilhot-Chartrand
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AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois does not discriminate in admission to programs or in treatment of employment in programs or activities, in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the U.S. Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Age Discrimination Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the U.S. and Illinois constitutions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have a right to file a complaint with the IL Department of Aging. For information, call 800-252-8966 (Voice/TDD), or contact the Agency on Aging at 815-939-0727 or 800-528-2000 www.ageguide.org.



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