

NYC AGING 2019-2025

Strategic Vision, Relentless Leadership



December 2025

INTRODUCTION

**THIS IS A STORY ABOUT HOW STRATEGIC
VISION AND RELENTLESS LEADERSHIP
CAME TOGETHER TO REALIZE A BROAD
SET OF IMPACTS—PROGRAMMATICALLY,
OPERATIONALLY, AND CULTURALLY.**

In April 2019, Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez was appointed the ninth Commissioner of The New York City Department for the Aging (NYC Aging). Having served with the agency for the period of 1985–1992, the newly appointed Commissioner entered her role with appreciation for the past, perspective on the current state, and a vision for the future. This time around, Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez was a seasoned leader, having served as New York State’s Secretary of State and in executive roles in the nonprofit and private sectors. She knew that transforming aging services so that they no longer looked like “your mother’s senior center” would require conviction, partnership, and innovation. Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez and the NYC Aging team “went to the mat for aging.” As NYC Aging celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, the team has a legacy of effective accomplishments that pave the way for the next 50 years.

Results-oriented, this report shares the tools, values, and context that drove the following key NYC Aging accomplishments:

New York City Is an Age-Inclusive Citywide System
NYC Aging Is a Top Place to Work Today & Strong for the Future
NYC Aging Is an Influencer, Dismantling Ageism
NYC Aging Is Serving More People & Communities Than Ever

Impact data are provided in the section “By the Numbers.” Opportunities for the future can be read in the final section, “What’s Next.”

This reflection celebrates NYC Aging’s accomplishments and breakthroughs of the past six years. It also acknowledges growing pains and opportunities for continued attention. The report was developed through reviewing agency documentation, such as City Council testimonies, procurements, speeches, reports, and data. First-person perspectives were collected through interviews with nonprofit executives, city leadership, and agency staff. While the breadth of NYC Aging’s activities is extensive, interviews aligned around a key set of milestones and activities. Varied opinions and perspectives on the past six years have been included. Citations remain anonymous in order to facilitate candid feedback, quotes, and insights. We appreciate the people who shared their time and reflections. They are acknowledged at the end of the report.



PROCUREMENT



DATA



LANGUAGE



PROJECT
MANAGEMENT



PUBLICITY



RELATIONSHIPS

NYC IS A MODEL AGE-INCLUSIVE CITYWIDE SYSTEM

NYC Aging is an integrated network of programs, services, and initiatives that are intentionally “stitched together” to create the foundation for a citywide “age-inclusive” system. It was not always this way. Historically, “our success was measured by how many meals we served,” a provider explained. “There was no consideration for the holistic work—exercise, socialization, health and well-being.” **Over the past six years, NYC Aging has championed a broader perspective through a vision of “Community Care,”** where everyone plays a role in helping New Yorkers age longer in their communities. One provider reflects, “At first, there were a lot of eye rolls. ‘Community Care’ is not a new thing. The importance, however, is that it packages Aging services in a way that everyone can understand and lean into. It has made its mark over time.”

Older adult centers (OACs) play a foundational role in developing NYC Aging’s Community Care. Constituting nearly fifty percent (50%) of NYC Aging’s budget, with a sixty-six percent (66%) increase in funding over six years, the agency has used procurement as a tool for OAC innovation and growth. Today, NYC Aging contracts with 308 OACs, serving more than 25,000 older adults daily and nearly 120,000 meal participants. (Ten million meals are served annually through older adult centers and home-delivered meal programs.)

OAC services are expansive and include social engagements, congregate meals, intergenerational programming, health, wellness and nutrition screenings and education, and mental health services. They continue to offer meals—now more nutritious and culturally diverse than ever—and remain reliable spaces for cooling during the summer and case management support. The investments in Community Care, including OACs, contribute to New Yorkers’ record life expectancy of 83.2 years old that was realized five years ahead of projections.

The Community Care vision has come together in a 2025 comprehensive concept paper that explicitly connects and bridges gaps among three programs: older adult centers, naturally occurring retirement communities, and transportation. NYC Aging anticipates issuing three separate RFPs that collectively take bold steps for tomorrow’s future—a hallmark approach of an age-inclusive city. The agency hopes that this investment can give rise to a broader focus on transportation, perhaps a deepening of the relationship between NYC Aging and the MTA to support para-transit and Access-A-Ride.

A senior NYC Aging leader reflected, “The fact that there has been so much procurement in six years is remarkable. For the agency to keep current, we needed to re-procure. The agency didn’t shy away from the stress and conflict it would generate.” For some providers, the stress remains from NYC Aging’s decision to re-procure OAC services in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other providers have indicated that the cost of responding to RFPs every few years is “prohibitive.” Yet another provider exclaimed that increased competition “is a great thing!” City leadership summed up NYC Aging’s procurement strategy: “It took courage to stick with message and vision.”

Today, “more Aging services have been introduced into neighborhoods that never had them before,” according to a long-serving NYC Aging provider. Moreover, those services—many initially funded by federal COVID stimulus funds—have been baselined into Aging’s budget, meaning that they are more secure and stable for the future.

An age-inclusive city is more than just integrated NYC Aging services, as explained in the Age-Inclusive American Cities Guidebook, it requires “deliberately reimagining and repositioning the core of our cities—policies, infrastructure, systems, and services.” Putting this vision into action, NYC Aging leaned into the relationships it cultivated at City Hall. In 2023, supported by a unique trifecta of leaders “experiencing caregiving in real time,” NYC Aging sought and obtained the support of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, and City Council Chair of the Aging Committee to launch the New York City Cabinet for Older New Yorkers (“Cabinet”) and codify it into Local Law 64 of 2024.

The Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, comprised of thirty city agencies, seeks to realize and institutionalize an age-inclusive New York City through structural, legislative, and systemic solutions. The Cabinet has implemented approximately twenty citywide initiatives to combat ageism and ensure older adults are the core of program design, service delivery, and policy planning. Initiatives include establishing an anti-ageism curriculum for the Department of Education designed to help students recognize ageism and prevent age-based discrimination. Intergenerational storytelling, a partnership with the Department for Youth and Community Development, is strengthening communities across the city and challenging ageist stereotypes. Both of these initiatives have been nationally recognized as “Programs of Merit” by Generations United. On October 17, 2023, the Cabinet and NYC Aging were honored at the New York Stock Exchange for their efforts to combat ageism by ringing the opening bell. One stakeholder reflected, “The Cabinet has been phenomenal. The Cabinet is getting older New Yorkers on the radar of commissioner-level people.”

But why stop with New York City when there is a whole country that needs to become age-inclusive! The demographics are shifting and the needs of older adults and their caregivers are growing in prominence as we all “Age Out Loud.” Seizing an opportunity—and leveraging New York City’s position as the nation’s largest Area Agency on Aging—NYC Aging successfully encouraged the Mayor to introduce a resolution at the 2023 U.S. Conference of Mayors to establish the standard for an age-inclusive country. Joined by nearly twenty colleague cities, NYC Aging defined and established a road map to an age-inclusive United States of America. It continues to pave the pathway with sister cities today.

Culture Of
Change



COURAGE



CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT



OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE



ACCOUNTABILITY



PERSON CENTERED
PARTNERSHIP



DIGNITY

TOP PLACE TO WORK TODAY, STRONG FOR THE FUTURE

In October 2025, City & State released its annual top places to work in New York State. For the first time ever, a New York City agency (in fact the only City agency to make the list)—NYC Aging—was featured on the list. This accomplishment, like the other impacts of the past six years, recognized the quiet, disciplined, behind-the-scenes investments in efficient operations and a positive workplace culture that were the engine for effective programmatic design and execution.

The partnership between operations and program started at the very top with the Commissioner, a visionary programmatic expert, and Michael Ognibene, the First Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer, who brought a structured approach and solid track record of developing strategic operations, creative actionable plans for workflow solutions, and a unique brand of problem-solving skills. Their roles were clear, their respect ran deep, and their partnership model penetrated the agency. Ognibene was tasked to remake the agency to increase coordination, maximize efficiency, and propel innovation. An early decision was to centralize information and referral resources through Aging Connect. Since its launch in February 2020, Aging Connect has received approximately 241,650 calls, helping 195,181 callers with the ability to translate more than 240 languages.

With decades of experience leading government strategy and transformation, Michael walked in the door understanding that effective change requires accountability. Establishing plans and managing to those plans were essential. Ognibene noted that “if you are gonna put it out there, then you better track it!” Every division soon had a lead project manager, each coordinated by the Senior Director for Operations Efficiency. Suddenly, many job descriptions and hiring goals included project management skills. Today, “Program is now hiring people with subject matter expertise AND project management. If you don’t have project management experience, you will be required to develop it.” Eighty percent of NYC Aging staff are Lean Six Sigma white belt certified, signaling a move toward operational efficiency and project management expertise.

The impact of project management expertise can be measured. After COVID-19, the agency identified forty opportunities to strengthen programs and operations. By June 2021, thirty-five had been actioned through diligent project tracking and management. A middle managers report on agency sustainability identified 118 NYC Aging milestones. Sixty-seven percent (67%) have been reached.

Universally, staff agree that this shared focus on program and operations has “sharpened the work.” A more recent colleague shared his appreciation to be part of a team “who take the mission really seriously. It’s not just a job. There is a commitment to good government.” City leadership recognizes the “team is really outstanding. Leadership gets credit for picking a good team. They show up 100% with love and competency, joy and respect. They take it all very seriously.” The Commissioner agrees, reflecting that she “**lets the best idea in the room rule.**”

In October 2025, NYC Aging took “top workplace” one step further with the release of a caregiver survey to 350,000 City of New York employees, to gain insight into the caregiver experience among City staff and identify opportunities to better support working caregivers.

Of the 15,656 respondents, eighty percent (80%) identified themselves as caregivers; sixty percent (60%) live with their care receiver; one-third spend more than thirty hours per week on caregiving; ninety-one percent (91%) have emotional strain; yet more than sixty percent (60%) find caregiving rewarding. The findings and recommendations were shared with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and the Office of Labor Relations, with the goal to consider how to shape resources tailored to staff needs.

While the story about NYC Aging and its workplace development is one of intentionality and focus, it is written in the context of the monumental and historical backdrop of COVID-19. Like all businesses, the global pandemic demanded that NYC Aging create new communication channels and ways of working. The daily muster—a half-hour all-agency call—was an idea of Ognibene born through the pandemic that became a permanent structure and created the foundation for an agency-wide “WE CAN” ethos—the wellness, engagement, culture, action network. As an Aging team member explained, “The muster was rooted in, ‘How are you doing?’” It was a space where colleagues “revealed more about themselves than at any other time.” It became a ritual that strengthened bonds and built new intra-agency relationships. When people came back to work, the calendar invitation remained and the calls continued. Now the weekly muster is “an opportunity to learn about the rest of the agency and each other’s work.” While staff explained that “agency-wide” didn’t exist prior to COVID, team members today can’t imagine work without it.

WE CAN is embedded in the agency culture with independent governance. WE CAN sponsors regular bonding activities like viewing the solar eclipse together; enjoying an ice cream truck in front of the headquarters; evening karaoke; Halloween bake sales; Welcome Wagon Buddies; and non-work-related Lunch and Learns. In 2024, the agency reported that forty NYC Aging employees had been paired with a buddy.

WE CAN also seeks to cultivate deeper and direct meaning in NYC Aging’s work. With a deliberate approach to engagement, all staff members—administrative and program—participate in direct services throughout the year. Illustratively, in recognition of National Senior Center Month, staff created certificates for each of the 308 older adult centers, naming the provider and thanking them for their commitment to older adults. Each NYC Aging staff member was provided with a framed certificate, and staff then coordinated a visit, delivered the certificate, and met provider staff and older adults. For National Caregiver Month, each of the staff wrote eight letters of appreciation to caregivers, and the agency mailed Caregivers Need Care Too letters to 2,500 caregivers. “The agency has a lot of heart,” as one stakeholder shared. “**They are so driven to figure out how to make the city better for older people and it’s a beautiful thing.**”

Milestone Highlights

2021

COMMUNITY CARE PLAN

2021

RAMPAGE PSA

2022

CABINET FOR OLDER NEW YORKERS

2023

FIRST MAYORAL TOWN HALL

2024

NATIONAL AGE-INCLUSIVE WORKGROUP

2024

BOOM! CONFERENCE

2024

KEYNOTE, UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

2025

NYC AGING 50TH ANNIVERSARY

NYC AGING IS AN INFLUENCER, DISMANTLING AGEISM

NYC Aging’s budget has grown from \$396 million in Fiscal Year 2019 to \$608 million in Fiscal Year 2026, tracking the agency’s increasing influence. The New York City Mayor has opened—and joined—Gracie Mansion celebrations for NYC Aging and its providers. The Mayor has prioritized older adults for sharing information and hearing from constituents, not just collecting votes. Twenty-eight town halls at OACs across all five boroughs engaged more than 3,500 older adults. They became a hallmark of the Mayoral administration, keeping older adults top of mind at the highest levels of decision-making and priorities.

Stakeholders across the spectrum recognize the Commissioner as an effective communicator. A staff member reflected on the past six years with gratitude, “The Commissioner tells you like it is,” and that is a good thing! A leader in the sector shared, “She is a ‘bad ass’... at her core she is an advocate.” Another stakeholder said about the Commissioner, **“She’s tenacious, she is willing to fight for older New Yorkers to make sure they get what they need.”**

People are listening. As a long-term older adult supporter shared, the Commissioner has been able to make changes that “everyone has been talking about for so long.” In December 2024, NYC Aging hosted its first-ever aging conference, BOOM! – A Silver Dawning in American Cities. A two-day national convening, BOOM! was an overwhelming success. Attendance reached more than 260, with more than fifty panelists representing ten cities in the United States, London, and the United Nations. On social media, the posts about the conference received more than a 10% engagement rate and nearly 3,500 Instagram accounts saw the posts.

With a persistent commitment to reframing how we talk about older adults, NYC Aging has changed New York City’s lexicon. There are fewer references to “senior citizens,” “senior centers,” and acronyms that keep the agency out of common parlance. Today, we talk about “older adults” and the agency stands proud and with clarity as NYC Aging. As many have reflected, “Language is important. Words are really important.” NYC Aging is an effective linguist and communicator.

NYC Aging’s strategic communication planning has illuminated ageism and elevated older adults in our collective communities. Creative, award-winning, and eye-catching publicity campaigns like Rampage during the pandemic, Join Us, the Older Adult Center initiative, or Ageism Stops with You have created awareness, a buzz, and interest in older New Yorkers. A longtime NYC Aging team member shared that her family never understood her work until the current campaign rolled out in subways and buses. Excitedly and with pride, she thought, “Yeah! That’s my agency.” Reflecting, she added, “One of the big legacies is that NYC Aging is now on the map.”

Infusing the agency with fun and sharing that levity with the public has changed the narrative for NYC Aging and the communities it serves. One longtime provider explained, **“Grandma was always fun inside the closet. NYC Aging has let her out of the closet to let everyone know that Grandma is fun!”** Initiatives like the “brilliant” Talent Is Timeless—an annual competition that hosts more than 1,000 older adult participants and 500 acts before a Grand Finale audience of 2,000. Groove in Foley Square was launched in 2024 to celebrate National Older Adults Health and Fitness Day. More than 1,000 older adults and young adults participated in yoga and dance, with press coverage spanning major networks. These innovative initiatives establish visualizations and narratives about all that older adults can do, erasing the staid mantra, “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up.” Today, our youth see “Nana is on TV! She is living—she is dancing.”

“THE FUTURE REQUIRES
CONTINUED LEADERSHIP
THAT WON’T ACCEPT THE
STATUS QUO”

NYC Aging
Provider

Breakthrough Activities

2022

SILVER STARS

2022

OAG & NORC EXPANSION

2022

NYPD PARTNERSHIP

2023

TALENT IS TIMELESS

2024

INTERGENERATIONAL GROOVE

2024

CASE MANAGEMENT RFP

2024

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

2025

CAREGIVER RFP

NYC AGING IS SERVING MORE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES THAN EVER

“The agency priorities are very clear. It really drives and guides the work,” remarked a senior leader. That work has been marked by expansion, reach, equity, and “sheer creativity,” as noted by multiple providers. NYC Aging strives to put older adults, their communities, and providers at the center of the work. Leading with dignity and inclusion, decisions are made with the goal of improving the lives and well-being of older adults and strengthening their Community Care. Today, NYC Aging serves more than 220,000 older New Yorkers annually.

Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez is universally recognized as having a **“single-minded focus on her goals and a real sense and vision on how to execute.”** Establishing the position of Executive Deputy Commissioner and Chief Program Officer was a strategic decision to accelerate the goals of Community Care and an age-inclusive New York City. Ryan Murray, an experienced government leader and expert in program and civic innovation, was selected in 2023 to be the inaugural appointment.

In a Community Care model and age-inclusive cities, the health and well-being of caregivers must be considered alongside older adults. Using data analytics, NYC Aging recognized that the number of caregivers served by the agency was not increasing, while the actual number of people providing care continues to increase (an estimated 1.3 million caregivers in New York City). NYC Aging noted, “We have a crisis in caregiving—financial, workforce, emotional, and coverage.” A 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Caregiver Program is a critical step to connect with more caregivers through enhanced provider staffing and NYC Aging outreach teams. A broader public service campaign will amplify this work and highlight early connection as critical for success. NYC Aging was pleased to receive an increase of \$5.6 million in the November Plan 2025, in time for National Family Caregivers Month, that will result in expanding staffing and services at NYC Aging’s community partners that offer caregiver support services and will enhance service provision to an additional 3,000 caregivers.

Through NYC Aging service and service-to-work programs, experienced workers contribute over 500,000 service hours annually to city agencies and hundreds of nonprofits and community organizations that operate critical social service, education, and early childhood programs. Although over 500 older adults have been hired through NYC Aging programs since 2022, more broadly, over forty percent (40%) of older New Yorkers report financial hardship, indicating that it is especially important to create viable career pathways for individuals between 60 and 74 years old who are not retired by choice, are capable, and are seeking employment.

NYC Aging has shifted to fully engaging local and high-growth industry leaders to establish strategic and structured pipelines for experienced workers. NYC Aging and its city ecosystem partners will continue to convene large-scale and direct-hire events; lead training and policy & practice forums for industry leaders, anchor employers, entrepreneurs, small business owners, and HR professionals; and use its reach to recognize employer commitment to hiring experienced workers. Targeted and self-sustaining job seeker training programs will also be established for high-growth and in-demand sectors such as health care and technology. Additionally, as the largest employer, the city is also modeling an age-inclusive approach by investing in retention pathways through programs such as Silver Stars, which offers city retirees and those with specialized skills opportunities to work part-time on critical projects.

Case management, significant for “helping older adults stay in the homes and neighborhoods they love,” has grown over the years to now reach more than 30,000 New Yorkers. Critical services include geriatric mental health, a growing area of focus for NYC Aging. In 2024, NYC Aging offered direct mental health supports for nearly 6,000 older adults through clinicians at older adult centers. NYC Aging is the only Area Agency on Aging in the country to provide such services.

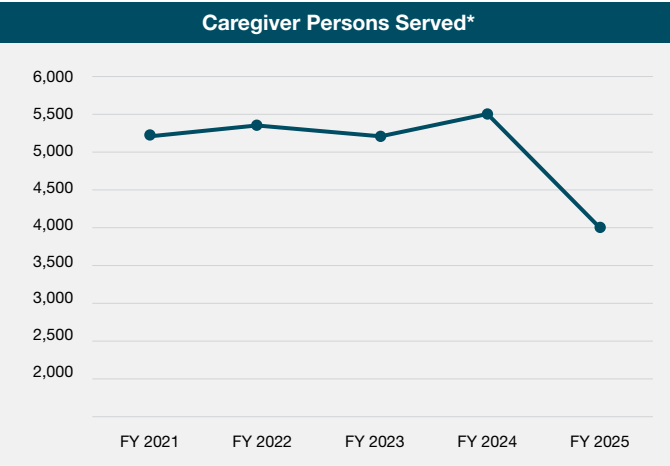
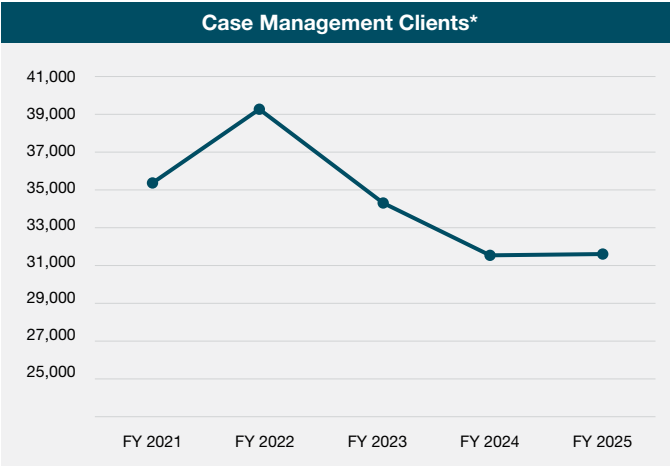
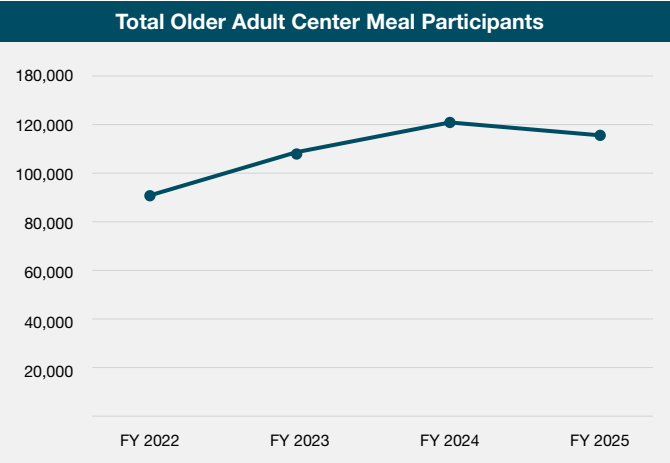
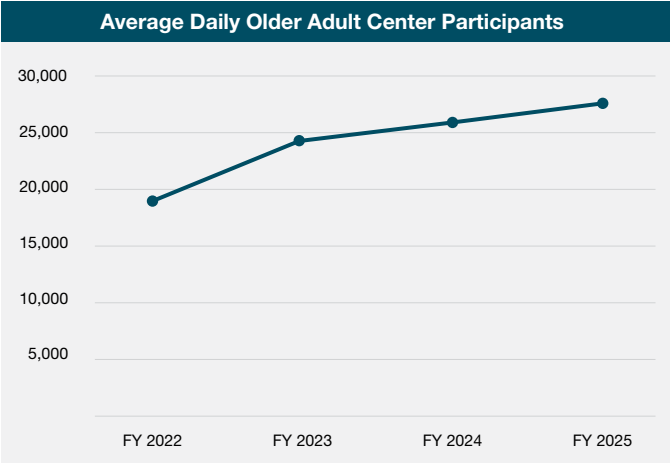
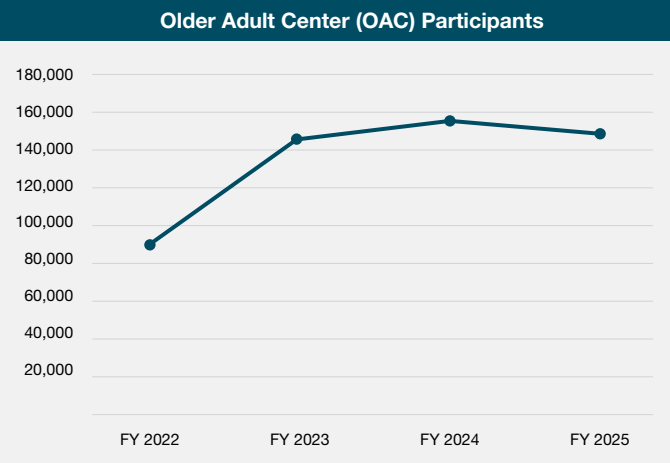
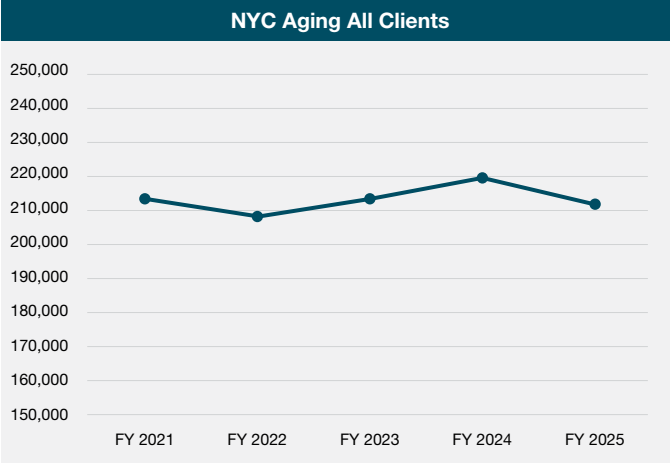
For older adults to “age in place,” safety is a paramount concern. NYC Aging and the New York City Police Department share data to support victims of elder abuse. This collaboration was expanded through the Cabinet to ensure that every police precinct has an older adult liaison who is trained to recognize and respond to cases or reports of elder abuse. Today, more than 2,000 older victims receive support through NYC Aging partnership programs.

As the second largest purveyor of meals—only behind the Department of Education—meals and meal delivery remain an important component of NYC Aging’s agenda and an opportunity for innovation. Over the past six years, NYC Aging has invested in state-of-the-art kitchens and vehicle upgrades to prepare and deliver meals at scale; established pop-up cafés serving more than 3,500 meals to more than 600 older adults; distributed vouchers for farmers markets to 43,500 individuals; offered hundreds of live cooking demonstrations and advice on how to shop for and prepare healthy meals on a budget; and recruited award-winning chefs and restaurateurs to coach and celebrate nutritious meals. NYC Aging even hosted the city’s first-ever plant-based cook-off! As one provider shared, **“Of all the activities the city offers, the people who are having the most fun are the older adults.”**

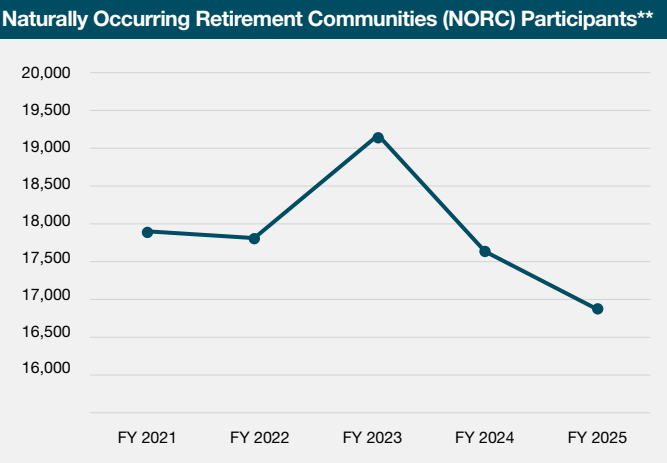
Ultimately, effective program design and continuous improvement is driven by NYC Aging’s person- and community-centered partnerships. Voices of Aging is an initiative to directly and deeply engage nearly 150 older adult community leaders in shaping priorities and helping to evolve programming. A 2024 NYC Aging Service Needs Assessment gathered feedback from more than 8,700 older New Yorkers and their caregivers.

The agency has also established feedback loops with nonprofit partners through frequent conversations, including standing calls. Every month, the Commissioner hosts a call with partner Executive Directors, while NYC Aging senior managers mirror this conversation with their provider counterparts. The agency reports that “the provider network is more engaged than ever.” Providers are feeling heard, with one organization recounting a story where RFPs were revised to include cost escalators in response to nonprofit feedback. Considering the past years, a provider remarked, “The agency has changed... communication is much, much better. Now you meet [the staff] and establish relationships.”

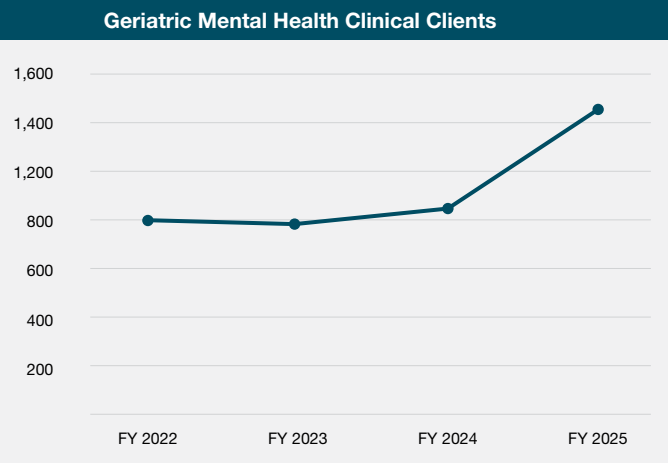
NYC AGING BY THE NUMBERS



*As demand increases and client needs become more complex, case managers must spend more hours per client, which in turn reduces the total number of clients they are able to serve.



**Decline due to increased frailty, a need for enhanced and other services beyond NORC, moves out of NORC or deaths.



Year to Date Weekly Performance (Social Engagement and Wellness)		
Program	Unduplicated Clients with Social Engagement	Total to Date 03/15 through 09/05/2020
Caregiver	3,261	29,216
Case Management	32,964	482,903
DFTA Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center	689	5,280
DFTA Foster Grandparents	359	2,631
DFTA Grandparent Resource Center	1,380	6,821
DFTA HIICAP	1,887	2,439
DFTA Nutrition Counseling	572	809
DFTA Senior Employment	163	441
Elder Abuse	1,870	21,239
Legal	1,226	2,364
NORC	15,761	151,226
Senior Centers/Other Affiliated	118,590	685,918
Social Services	6,568	35,567
DGMH	1,832	8,464
Friendly Visiting*	920	20,206
Cluster Total	173,386	1,455,524

NYC Aging COVID-19 Response

NYC Aging delivered 2.3 million meals to older adults during COVID-19.

YTD Weekly Social Engagement Contacts 03/15 through 09/05/2020

Week	Weekly Social Engagement Contacts
Week 1	100,000
Week 2	120,000
Week 3	140,000
Week 4	160,000
Week 5	180,000
Week 6	200,000
Week 7	220,000
Week 8	240,000
Week 9	260,000
Week 10	280,000
Week 11	300,000
Week 12	320,000
Week 13	340,000
Week 14	360,000
Week 15	380,000
Week 16	400,000
Week 17	420,000
Week 18	440,000
Week 19	460,000
Week 20	480,000
Week 21	500,000
Week 22	520,000
Week 23	540,000
Week 24	560,000
Week 25	580,000

NYC Aging Vaccine Initiative for Older Adults	# of Vaccinations
Homebound Vaccine Initiative	~1k clients referred for appointments
Total vaccinations (1st and 2nd) and boosters delivered from Mobile Vaccine Initiatives	~3,500
TRIE Vaccine Initiative	990 appointments made
Total COVID-19 tests conducted	~6,000

2020

AGING CONNECT

2020

MUSTER

2021

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

2022

SR. DIRECTOR
OPERATIONS EFFICIENCY

2023

EXECUTIVE DEPUTY
COMMISSIONER & CHIEF
PROGRAM OFFICER

2024

WE CAN

2024

STAFF LEARNING ACADEMIES

2025

VIVÉ CLIENT RELATIONS
SYSTEM

2025

NYC AGING DESIGNATED
TOP WORKPLACE

WHAT’S NEXT

Much has been achieved over the past six years, but as always there is so much more to do. NYC Aging is strong, positioned well, and ready for tackling future goals and unexpected situations.

Stakeholders inside and outside the agency confirm that opportunities exist in the workforce dimension. America’s workforce is getting older fast: one in four workers is now age fifty-five or older, according to a new Census report. New York is feeling the shift given the affordability issues faced by older workers. The New York workforce skews older compared with many states because more older adults need to supplement their retirement income to remain in the State. NYC Aging’s goal is to mitigate financial insecurity through workforce initiatives that educate and prepare employers on the changing age demographics and prevent the need for additional income support services for older adults. To accomplish these complementary goals, the City must expand programs such as Silver Stars, a NYC Aging collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. Silver Stars expanded the New York City workforce by bringing back more than 100 previously retired older adult employees.

Additional opportunities to cultivate an age-inclusive workforce include expanded hiring halls; employer education and outreach that focuses on the value of retaining an older workforce; and employer assistance to recruit older employees to both traditional industries such as hospitality and retail and high growth sectors including technology, health, and allied health. Given the diversity in our older populations, New York City can lead with equity-centered strategies that can be a model for the state and the country.

Expanding all services will always be a priority, especially as the older adult population continues to grow in New York City. However, expansion must be within the framework of Community Care, an approach that considers the holistic experience of thriving in a community, rather than growing individual services. With twenty percent (20%) of New York City’s population age sixty and older, but less than one percent (1%) of the total budget appropriated for services, there is a need to shine a brighter light on these residents. Keeping the attention on older adults in our communities can be strengthened by enhancing data collection, expanding quantitative reporting, and increasing publicity. In turn, NYC Aging can reach more and more New Yorkers. Surveys and information gathering by NYC Aging indicate that less than twenty-five percent (25%) of caregivers are aware of NYC Aging’s services. Forty percent (40%) of older adults are unaware of older adult centers and the breadth of programs and services.

The agency expects broader data collection and analyses with a new client relationship management system that is currently rolling out. Named “VIVÉ,” this secure, cloud-based system modernizes and streamlines client management services and offers the agency direct control of the system and data. VIVÉ is used across twenty different program types and over 400 contracted service providers, which includes more than 2,500 users. NYC Aging anticipates as many as 5,000 older adults to access VIVÉ for information like tracking home-delivered meals.

Feedback varies on the relationship between NYC Aging and providers, suggesting room for growth. NYC Aging shares that it is “focused on excellence and quality rather than proscriptive views of service delivery.” Some providers, however, mentioned that site visits and audits can still feel like “gotcha” moments, whereas others have shared, “NYC Aging is celebrating your success, not where you messed up.” A consistent refrain is the effectiveness of senior leadership, with one provider remarking, “NYC Aging brought in great people, great thinkers.” Although some providers feel that the vision and culture of support do not trickle down. A provider wondered, “Why do we always have to cycle issues up to the highest levels?” Another nonprofit partner suggested a contract “triage team.” NYC Aging must continue to invest in the growth and development of middle managers and their teams.

Providers and NYC Aging see opportunities in procurement innovation. NYC Aging would like to see increased contract funding to realize salary parity for the nonprofit workforce supporting older adults. Providers have shared, “While master contracts exist, we can’t always bundle new contracts into the master. We still need line item budgets for each location.” Additionally, exploring how new procurements can be more flexible when a goal of the work is to be responsive to shifting, unique, community-based needs. A service provider explained, “When I try to do something innovative, [I can be told that] it doesn’t fit into the box.” The provider suggests, “Just take the box away and let us do what older adults are asking for.”

As NYC Aging moves into the future, a suggestion resonates: **“Take a page from the Commissioner’s playbook—don’t be afraid to change, embrace the positive, call out the negative.”**

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