



POLICY OPTIONS IN BRIEF

Option: Develop a 1915(i) Medicaid state plan program to provide limited HCBS services to individuals with higher incomes and moderate functional needs.

Option: Provide additional funding for home care and home modification programs and direct DARS to track unmet need.

Option: Provide financial assistance to unpaid caregivers through tax credits, respite care, and grants to community organizations.

Option: Direct DHCD to include older Virginians as a target population in the work of the Housing and Supportive Services Interagency Leadership Team

Strategies to Support Aging Virginians in their Communities

FINDINGS IN BRIEF

An increasing number of older Virginians need aging services, but non-Medicaid funding for services has decreased in real terms

An estimated 200,000 individuals in Virginia need aging services, with the number of older Virginians is projected to grow by 22% over the next 10 years. Medicaid provides a spectrum of home and community based services for those with the highest functional and financial need, but only 12% of older Virginians in need of aging services are currently Medicaid-eligible for long-term services and supports. Inflation-adjusted, non-Medicaid funding decreased over the last 10 years, limiting Virginia's ability to meet the needs of the vast majority of older Virginians who are not Medicaid-eligible.

Affordable housing and home care are the greatest needs across the state

The most significant unmet need for older Virginians is home care, which includes assistance with chores, food preparation, and activities of daily living to remain in their communities. Many seniors also need affordable housing. Many rely on fixed retirement and social security incomes that have not increased at the rate of housing costs. Local staff indicate that nearly half of those seeking home care services, and most individuals seeking housing services wait more than 30 days to receive available services due to insufficient resources, or are unable to receive them at all.

Enhancing current programs can help address unmet needs

Virginia could consider expanding its Medicaid program to provide limited HCBS benefits to individuals with higher incomes and more moderate functional needs. Some existing programs could be supplemented with state funds to serve more individuals, and Virginia could increase support to unpaid caregivers, who already provide the majority of home care services. Increasing the supply of affordable housing will require coordination among state and local stakeholders, but is necessary to address this priority need for older Virginians.