



JB Pritzker, Governor
Mary Killough, Director

One Natural Resources Way, Suite 100, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
Phone: 800-252-8966 • 711 (TRS) • Fax 217-785-4477

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 15, 2026

CONTACT:

Iris.Huber@Illinois.gov

Illinois Unveils Groundbreaking Multisector Plan to Transform State into National Leader for Older Adults

EngAging Illinois sets a comprehensive roadmap to address the needs of older adults through the next decade

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department on Aging today released [EngAging Illinois: A Comprehensive Plan for Living Well](#), a landmark multisector plan addressing the needs of older adults and caregivers. The plan establishes a decade-long blueprint to ensure the growing population of older Illinoisans can live dignified, engaged, productive, and meaningful lives at every stage of life.

"EngAging Illinois embodies the engagement and thoughtful people from across Illinois, representing the best of our state," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "This bold plan reflects the priorities of the people we serve and the role that state government should play in creating an age-friendly Illinois. We all want to be part of a thriving, multigenerational society, and EngAging Illinois is a smart, strong step in that direction."

The Plan was developed through an extensive collaborative process established by Governor Pritzker's [Executive Order 2024-02](#), involving 15 state agencies, a 25-member Community Advisory Council, experts in aging and caregiving, and nine public engagement sessions across Illinois that gathered input from hundreds of residents.

"EngAging Illinois represents a bold first step and a blueprint for action," **said Mary Killough, Director of the Illinois Department on Aging**. "This plan is about all of us, working together to create a state full of age-friendly cities, towns, and communities."

Priorities of the Plan

With Illinois' population over 65 projected to grow 40% by 2035 – reaching nearly 2.9 million people or 22% of all Illinoisans – the plan arrives at a critical moment. It outlines strategies across four focus areas:

- [Creating Livable and Connected Communities](#)
- [Ensuring Health for All Ages](#)
- [Investing in Caregivers](#)
- [Affording Aging](#)

Importantly, EngAging Illinois addresses critical disparities in Illinois' aging population, noting that life expectancy can vary by more than 20 years in communities just a few miles apart. Poverty rates among older adults have increased 82% over the past 15 years, and one in five Black older adults live at or below poverty level compared to one in 13 white older adults.

Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.
ilaging.illinois.gov

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 711 (TRS).

Key initiatives in the Plan include:

- Creating EngAge Central, a comprehensive online resource hub for aging services and support, including information for caregivers
- Pursuing statewide age-friendly designation with implementation support for local communities
- Expanding affordable and accessible housing for older adults
- Integrating geriatrics training into healthcare education programs
- Launching a statewide caregiver awareness campaign
- Modernizing home and community-based services

"The future of aging in Illinois starts with acting on the Plan's priorities now – and it starts with each of us," **said Michelle Hoersch, Chief Planning Officer at the Illinois Department on Aging.** "Every sector, every community, every individual has a stake in this transformation. Together, we will make Illinois the gold standard for aging well."

Implementation will be overseen by a new EngAging Illinois Commission with representation from State agencies and external partners. Action Groups for each focus area will drive progress on the Plan, with annual reports tracking outcomes. The Plan will be updated every three years.

"EngAging Illinois will create the inclusive communities we will all benefit from, communities free from ageism and with access to a broad range of public and private programs, resources and support," **said Mary O'Donnell, President & CEO of RRF Foundation for Aging.** "As a supporter of the effort to create this multisector plan, we are excited to join people throughout the state in this work to improve the quality of life of every older person in Illinois."

The full EngAging Illinois plan is available [here](#).

About the Illinois Department on Aging

IDoA serves and advocates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. For information about the Department's programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

--###--