

Vermont Action Plan for Aging Well

Summary of Findings from Other States' Planning Processes

September 29, 2021

Overview:

In Vermont's [Process Proposal for the Development of a Vermont Action Plan for Aging Well](#), a key first step outlined in the proposal was to conduct outreach to other states that had developed similar plans to learn from their efforts. Vermont first learned of other states' efforts through The SCAN Foundation, which presented to the Vermont Legislature in February 2020 and developed this article, [Building a Master Plan on Aging: Key Elements from States Planning for an Aging Population](#), in August 2020.

In July 2021, DAIL and VDH met with The SCAN Foundation and the Center for Health Care Strategies to share Vermont's progress towards the development of an Action Plan for Aging Well and to learn about how other states have done similar work. From that meeting, The SCAN Foundation introduced the Vermont team to leaders in four other states, California, Texas, Colorado, and Massachusetts who have done similar planning.

DAIL and VDH staff set up virtual conversations with each state in August and September, and below are the basic findings from those meetings.

California:

We spoke with Kim Wade, Director of the Department of Aging, and Amanda Lawrence, MPA Project Director, on August 24, 2021.

- California is six-months into implementation of a 10-year plan and just issued a 6 mo. report.
- Their Advisory Committee included 9 people and provided oversight.
- 3 Main Areas of Focus: 1) Long-Term Services and Supports; 2) Age-Friendly State; 3) Data Collection and Use. Their dashboard monitors the data.
- CA seeks for all 58 counties to have their own master plan on aging; currently 3 do
- Starting with one philanthropic supporter, the Scan Foundation, they now have 8 foundation funders contributing, supporting research, stakeholder engagement, communications and planning.
- AARP helped reach many people. They a) communicate, b) share data, c) gain \$.
- Focus on Anti-Ageism; public education is part of the mission. Having resources for communications was key to reaching and engaging the public, including using COVID funds.

- Cabinet Workgroup – helped build trust and buy-in across state government. Built comraderie & trust by asking at the first meeting, how are your parents doing? Are any of you caregivers?
- Gubernatorial campaign: SCAN Foundation leveraged this opportunity to get all candidates to pledge to make a Master Plan on Aging – held them to this campaign promise.
- Stakeholder engagement – received 850 recommendations. Cabinet signed off on 130+ strategies/tasks they would do in the next 2 years.
- Small commitment is the glue to building momentum for larger change. Their big breakthrough was tying in cabinet level priorities into aging. Climate is aging. Housing is aging. We are all aging. A healthy aging lens benefits everybody.
- Their state Older Americans Plan reflects and supports the state’s masterplan on aging
- Equity committee was at the forefront/center of the work. Ensuring focus on BIPOC, Tribes, LGBTQ+.
- Learned a lot from Minnesota. Diversify stock photos to show Aging as Black. Aging as Trans.

Relevant Links:

[Master Plan for Aging \(ca.gov\)](#)

Texas:

We spoke with Holly Riley, Office of Aging, HHS, and Oliva Burns, Aging Texas Well Coordinator, on August 30, 2021.

- Aging Texas Well began as an Executive Order a number of years ago; this has been very helpful in moving the work forward, we can point to the order.
- Work across all of HHS to make connections beyond the work of the Office of Aging.
- Having university involvement to help with data/research has been key.
- Aging Texas Well Initiative has 6 mandates:
 - Readiness of state
 - Review state policy/make recommendations
 - Advisory Committee
 - Community Preparedness
 - Biennial report to the Governor
- Aging Texas Well has changed state personnel in how they look at aging
- There are 16 core indicators being tracked including trans protection, caregiving, SDOH, intellectual development
- The initiative has the support of HHS leadership.
- Incremental progress to turn Aging Texas Well into more of a Master Plan on Aging.

- Early on did a comprehensive readiness assessment across sectors. Too \$ now but are doing targeted surveys to ask about the needs of older adults and strategies to address these needs; want to create “next ring of action” among state agencies
- Working on gaining more involvement of AAAs with the plan versus endorsement of the plan
- Staff:
 - Olivia dedicates 100% of her time to Aging Texas Well initiative.
 - We also have a research specialist who works with Olivia.
- “Texercise” is under the ATW umbrella and is evidence-based; My Healthy Texas is actionable
- “Age Well, Live Well” PR Campaign is part of the initiative. 3 core messages: Stay Connected, Stay Informed, Be Active.

Relevant Links:

Executive Order establishing ATW:

<https://lrl.texas.gov/scanned/govdocs/Rick%20Perry/2005/RP42.pdf>

ATW website: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/community-engagement/age-well-live-well/aging-texas-well>

Texercise website: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/health/wellness/texercise>

Age Well Live Well website: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/community-engagement/age-well-live-well>

Colorado:

We spoke with Jarett Hughes, Senior Policy Advisor in the Governor’s Office, and Christian Itin, Professor of Social Work at the University of Colorado and Chair of the Plan Committee, on September 1, 2021.

- Colorado Strategic Planning Group on Aging was created by legislation.
- Legislation asked for recommendations.
- Planning group is not led by government but includes government and a huge array of stakeholders.
- Funding was provided in the first two years of work (\$500,000 over two years).
- Areas of study were defined.
- Now have sought and received stable funding of \$110,000 per year, which supports Jarett’s position.
- AAA network gave funding.
- “Next 50” gave funding.
- It is important to be clear WHO is accountable and HOW to document progress and outcomes.

- 50-75 people at stakeholder meetings across the state.
- “Lifelong Colorado” initiative. Make Colorado livable across the lifespan.
- 8 Central Goals.
- Workforce has been a major topic.
- Benefit of having a planning committee outside of government, but not easy to move the needle. The planning committee was left out of the Gov budget process which make it tougher and took more time.
- Still emerging issues and it doesn’t always come up as lawmakers’ priority.
- Lots of research and education at the beginning.
- DOL key to have part of it.
- Need higher ed involved.
- Recommended to have a position dedicated to the plan.
- Good to have legislative designees on the planning committee especially those who are inspired
- Planning committee has 23 members; subcommittees are open to others.
- Over 40 people active and involved.
- Need local government and business sector at the table too.
- Looking forward – changing the structure of aging services going forward.
- Make a case for performance measurement early on; we did not have this.
- Recommendations have evolved over time – see five reports to the legislature and how they have changed (vision to specific).
- They are in process of sunset review (sunset or reauthorize). For past 3 years have been looking at structural pieces and addition of a dashboard for evaluation and measurement.

Relevant Links:

Original authorizing legislation:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/HB%201033%20Summary.pdf>

Planning Group: [Home | DOLA - Aging Strategy \(colorado.gov\)](#)

Plan: [2020 Strategic Action Plan on Aging | DOLA - Aging Strategy \(colorado.gov\)](#)

Massachusetts

We spoke with Molly Evans, Policy Director and Kathryn Downes, Policy Coordinator, at the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, on September 2, 2021.

- This work began with an Executive Order from Governor Baker in 2017 which created a Council of 24 members. Member seats include housing, tech, innovation, philanthropy, academic, business

- The Secretary of Health and Human Services was part of the council and key to its success, along with the support of philanthropic community.
- 2018 involved listening sessions across the state – lots of public engagement.
- Council formed workgroups based on what was heard in listening sessions (housing, built environment, economy, walkability, ageism). Workgroups presented to the council their recommendations.
- This led to the recommendation to seek Age-Friendly State designation via AARP.
- Then formed a separate body of people to develop the Age-Friendly Plan. Goals included removing local barriers, elevating best practice, addressing issues at the statewide level, and reframing aging. Discussion of what should live where and what role should the State plan. Pursued aging in all policies; pursued a contract with framework's institute
- 6 major goals within the plan:
 - Community
 - Information and Communication
 - Reframing Aging
 - Policy and Practice (Aging in All Policies)
 - Economic Security
 - Sustainability
- Secretary of Health and Human Services co-chaired the Council on Aging and led the development and communication of the plan. Everyone is splitting their job to work on healthy aging. 20% of Molly and Kathryn's time is now focused on this work, but more was needed during the writing of the plan. This is more work than we thought it would be. Do use an interagency and human services approach which has changed the way they work together. Seek to include programs up front.
- Build in a plan for monitoring and evaluation from the beginning; MA did not have this. Would like to use performance measures and strategies as north stars and quality improvement.
- MA also gives grants to the MA Healthy Aging Collaborative and AAAs to do some of the work.
- Gain pledges among employers to support caregivers at work
- Created a dementia friendly integration toolkit and a Community Compact Fund for small \$5,000 - \$25,000 grants to do best practice and age friendly practices (funded through Tufts Philanthropy)

Relevant Links:

Council to Address Aging: [Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts Reports and Resources | Mass.gov](#)

Key Take-aways from the 4 States:

- Having the Governor, State Agency leaders and legislators invested makes a difference.
- Having dedicated staffing to develop the plan is important to move it forward.
- Priorities are ranked and data driven - Make sure reporting timelines are clear with measurable outcomes. Having a way to transparently track data and outcomes (like a public data dashboard) is important.
- This is not just a plan about aging services. It should include services, financing, workforce, caregiver support, housing, transportation and more. It can also integrate other planning efforts (i.e. State Plan on Aging, Dementia-Friendly efforts, transportation planning, health sector planning, etc.)
- Stakeholder involvement is critical: consumers, providers and policymakers work together. There should be an effort to strike a balance between community input and professional input.
- Intentionally address equity at the start. Apply an equity lens to the plan.
- Address aging across the life span. We are all aging. This plan and its process presents an opportunity to address ageism concretely.
- Develop cross-sector collaborations (i.e., private, public, and independent). In each state universities and foundations played important roles related to research and funding.

For questions about this summary, please contact:

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