



Housing and Homelessness

Services and Partnerships to Address a Growing Issue

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING**



advocacy | action | answers on aging

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Introduction

Providing a system of supports and services to help older adults remain in their homes and communities as they age is the mission of the nation's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). However, many AAAs are finding that housing and homelessness are growing areas of concern in their communities. Older adults and their families often must make choices about where they live and how to best meet their needs if they require more assistance. Some are confronted with the challenge and cost of maintaining their longtime home, which may require a long list of necessary repairs. Others are confronted by the costs of assisted living, while some must consider their ability to remain in a home that is not designed for individuals with physical challenges or cognitive impairments. An increasing number of older adults who are living on fixed incomes struggle to find and afford rental housing—and some face homelessness. This report highlights the results of a poll conducted by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) on programs, services and partnerships that AAAs have developed to address these and other housing and homelessness issues.

Housing and Homelessness Issues Impacting Older Adults

Shortages of affordable and accessible housing are key challenges for older adults. For the 78.5 percent of older adults who own their homes,¹ the ability of their homes to meet their needs as they age is an important consideration for aging in place. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University,² seven out of 10 households headed by an individual older than age 65 live in single-family homes, most of which were not built according to universal design principles. Universal design is the theory that products and environments should be designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal design features include no-step entries, single floor living, light switches and electric outlets that are reachable at any height; extra-wide hallways and doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs; and lever-style door and faucet handles for those who have difficulty with knobs.³ Only 5.5 percent of householders between the ages of 65 and 79 and 8.2 percent of householders age 80 and older live in a home with the three basic features of universal design: extra-wide halls

and doorways, single-floor living and no-step entrances.⁴ Universal design features are uncommon in rental units as well, with only three percent providing extra-wide hallways and doors, single-floor living and a no-step entrance.⁵

While home modification programs are offered by 64 percent of AAAs,⁶ older adults residing in apartment buildings are less likely to be able to take advantage of home modification services. Additionally, changes such as achieving wider hallways or adding an entry-level bathroom to a home require substantial funding. When asked why they have not made home modifications, common challenges reported by older adults included that they: are not able to execute the modification themselves (37 percent), cannot afford to pay for the modification (36 percent) and do not trust contractors (29 percent).⁷ The age and condition of rental housing is an additional issue for older renters. Rental housing stock tends to be older than that of single-family homes, with a median age of 42 years compared with a median of 37 years, respectively. Older rental housing is more likely to pose health and safety issues risks to residents.⁸ Overall, older adults whose incomes fall below the federal poverty line are more likely to live in inadequate housing than older adults whose incomes are above the federal poverty line.⁹

Older adults also face physical and financial challenges related to home repair and maintenance. In particular, affording basic home repairs and maintenance can be a challenge for individuals who have low or fixed incomes. Both small and large repairs can be a challenge—a needed repair may not be made if it requires climbing a ladder or paying for a maintenance service. Maintenance issues that are not tackled, such as cleaning gutters and maintaining a roof, can lead to greater and more costly long-term issues. These challenges are reflected by the needs of callers to the Eldercare Locator, a national service administered by n4a with funding from the Administration for Community Living, that connects older adults and their caregivers to local services and supports that can provide assistance with issues such as home repair and modification. Nine percent of the more than 300,000 calls received in 2016 related to housing, with 61 percent of these asking about repairs or modifications.¹⁰

The cost of rental housing is a concern as well. The proportion of Americans who rent housing has increased considerably over

Homelessness among older adults is also a growing challenge facing the aging population. As described later in this report, AAAs are exploring new opportunities to address these challenges for older adults in their communities. The homeless population is aging more rapidly than the general population and, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), people age 50 and older now make up 31 percent of the homeless population.

the past 15 years, with the proportion of baby boomer renters also growing in number.¹¹ The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports that only 35 affordable rental units are available for every 100 extremely low-income renter households.¹² Additionally, the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University projects that the number of low-income households led by an individual age 65 and older will grow to 27.2 million over the next two decades, with nearly 40 percent of these households being led by an individual age 80 or older. Thirty-two percent of adults aged 65 to 79 and 37 percent of individuals older than 80 are burdened by housing costs, which is defined as spending more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing. The Joint Center for Housing Studies predicts that the number of cost-burdened households among individuals age 65 and older will increase from 9.3 million in 2014 to 17.1 million in 2035. Renters are more likely than homeowners to be cost-burdened, with 55 percent of renters age 65 and older experiencing cost burdens.¹³

High housing costs have an impact on the ability of older adults to pay for other important needs, such as health care, transportation and food. The Joint Center for Housing Studies also reported that severely cost-burdened older adults who are in the bottom income quartile reduce their spending on food by more than 30 percent more than those who are unburdened by housing costs, and reduce health care spending between 51 and 67 percent more than those who are unburdened by housing costs.¹⁴

Homelessness among older adults is also a growing challenge facing the aging population. As described later in this report, AAAs are exploring new opportunities to address these challenges for older adults in their communities. The homeless population is aging more rapidly than the general population and, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), people age 50 and older now make up 31 percent of the homeless population.¹⁵ Reasons for homelessness among older adults vary: many have been homeless for years and have continued to age while homeless, while others became homeless later in life due to a variety of issues, including a lack of affordable housing, unemployment, substance abuse or behavioral health issues. Oftentimes, a complex array of factors leads to individuals becoming homeless.¹⁶

The proportion of adults ages 51 to 61 who live in homeless shelters increased from 13.6 percent to 17.7 percent between 2007 and 2016 with the proportion of older adults age 62 and older living in shelters increasing from 2.9 percent to 4.7 percent during the same time period.¹⁷ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs, which provide housing and supportive services to formerly homeless people or individuals who have difficulty maintaining housing stability without supports, tend to serve a higher proportion of older adults. Between 2010 and 2016, the proportion of PSH residents older than the age of 62 increased from four percent to 8.5 percent with the proportion of people aged 51 to 61 who participate in PSH programs increasing from 19.9 percent to 28.6 percent.¹⁸

Additional challenges facing older adults who are homeless is the fact that conditions associated with being homeless (e.g., lack of access to health care and nutritious meals) can cause accelerated aging, and not having stable housing exacerbates health conditions. One study found that the prevalence of geriatric conditions in a sample of homeless adults with a median age of 57 was similar to the prevalence found in individuals in their 70s and 80s.¹⁹ Homeless individuals also have higher mortality rates and higher rates of chronic conditions than individuals who are not homeless.²⁰ As a result, many individuals who are homeless are high utilizers of emergency services.²¹ Older adults who are homeless may be eligible for benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security or Supplemental Security Income. However, many individuals have difficulties navigating the complexities of these systems and may not have the documentation that is required to demonstrate eligibility for these benefits.

Federally Funded Housing Programs for Older Adults

The federal government provides housing programs for older adults, including those administered by HUD, and programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that serve older adults living in rural areas. Households headed by older adults (defined by HUD as age 62 and older) comprised 35 percent of households served by HUD programs in 2017.²² Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly is the only HUD program exclusively targeted to older adults. This program provides funds to housing developers to finance the development of supportive housing for low-income older adults. Section 202 properties are

CASE STUDY



Case Management in Public Housing Aging and Disability Services | Seattle, Washington

Seattle and the King County area have had a booming housing market for several years. Increased housing prices have led to a rapidly growing homeless population and reduced housing options for low-income older and disabled adults. Simultaneously, there has been a growing demand for community-based services provided by Washington State's Long Term Support Services (LTSS) programs. As the AAA serving the city of Seattle and King County, the City of Seattle's Aging and Disability Services (ADS) has developed several programs that address aging in place and housing stability for older adults. For the past 20 years, ADS has partnered with the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) to provide services, recognizing the high concentration of individuals eligible for services in Seattle public housing. In 2017, ADS provided LTSS and Medicaid case management to more than 600 residents and service coordination, eviction prevention and outreach were offered to an additional 1,000 residents, out of a total population of 4,000 residents in 52 high-rise buildings. SHA funding covers approximately 30 percent of the cost of this program (\$350,000 in 2017) while funding from the City of Seattle General Fund provides \$300,000. The remaining program costs are provided by Washington State LTSS Case Management (approximately \$800,000), which covers 13 FTEs (11 Case Managers, 1 RN Case Manager and 1 Program Manager). In addition to creating efficiencies with case management, the ADS/SHA Care Network partnership has provided an excellent platform to coordinate a variety of other programs, including Health Homes, Fire

Department High Acuity Case Management, and a partnership with a local health clinic.

ADS also provides case management in Permanent Supportive Housing, which is designed for people who have experienced or who are at risk of homelessness. PSH residents have their own case managers, but they are typically trained to address the behavioral health issues of younger clients, and may not be as knowledgeable about the supports that older adults need. These residents are also less likely than those in the Seattle Housing Authority properties to be enrolled in the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waiver program, so ADS works with each building's case managers to connect residents to this and other services.

n4a staff conducted brief, in-depth interviews with select agencies to learn about the programs they have developed to address housing and homelessness in their communities.



required to help residents access supportive services. As such, about half of Section 202 properties have a HUD-funded service coordinator who connects residents to home and community-based supports, including those provided by AAAs. Those who do not have a HUD-funded service coordinator may work with other organizations, including AAAs, to fulfill this function.²³ However, the majority of older adults are served by HUD's other housing programs, such as public housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs.

Older adults are also eligible for other HUD and USDA-administered project-based rental assistance programs, which provide rental subsidies that are tied to the housing unit, and tenant-based assistance, which can be used in any approved unit. These subsidies are generally set at 30 percent of the household's income. Older adults can also live in public housing, which consists of multi-family housing properties that are owned and operated by public housing authorities. Another HUD program, HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), addresses homelessness among veterans by providing rental assistance, case management and clinical services for veterans.

Due to limited funding for federal housing programs, only about 40 percent of older adults who qualify for assistance receive it.²⁴ One survey of public housing agencies found that, across the country, the median wait time to receive a voucher was 18 months and the median wait time for public housing was nine months. More than 50 percent of waitlists for vouchers were closed to new applicants, along with 11 percent of public housing waiting lists.²⁵ However, the FY 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Act provided \$678 million for the Section 202 program, an increase of more than \$170 million from FY 2017 funding levels.²⁶ This increase includes \$105 million for new Section 202 construction and project-based rental assistance and \$90 million for service coordination. The Section 202 program had not received new construction funding since FY 2011, aside from a small \$10 million boost in FY 2017 for either new construction or preservation.²⁷

Methodology

Under a grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA), a part of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), n4a disseminated a poll on housing and homelessness to learn the extent to which challenges associated with housing and homelessness affect older adults across the country, and to gather information on programs or partnerships that AAAs have developed to address these issues. The poll contained 14 questions and was conducted between March and May 2018.

The poll was disseminated to all 622 Area Agencies on Aging and received 171 responses, for a 27 percent response rate. The response rate for this poll was lower than the 40 percent response rate that n4a typically uses as a threshold to ensure a representative sample. We believe that the lower response rate may be due to the fact that fewer AAAs have dedicated funding for the provision of housing services. The data included in this report is based on the poll results as well as in-depth interviews with four AAAs on their housing programs.

The poll asked AAAs about several areas related to housing and homelessness, including:

- Most significant housing challenge;
- Most significant barrier to addressing homelessness;
- Housing or homelessness programs offered by AAAs;
- Partnerships with other agencies for addressing housing and homelessness;
- Staffing dedicated to housing and homelessness issues;
- Budgets allocated to housing and homelessness issues; and
- Technical assistance and training interests.

AAAs have traditionally provided a variety of services and in-home supports that help older adults age in place. These services address homelessness and housing in the sense that they make it possible for older adults to continue living in their homes and communities by providing services such as homemaker services or transportation. This mini-poll was intended to assess specific housing and homelessness programs, services or partnerships that AAAs may be providing to address these issues.

CASE STUDY



Behavioral Health Coach Model

Atlanta Regional Commission | Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Behavioral Health Coach (BHC) works with individuals living in 14 Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) properties to help address behavioral health needs that—prior to the program—resulted in lease violations or evictions, or were disruptive to the apartment community. The BHC works at AHA properties four days a week and collaborates with and receives referrals from both the AHA housing service coordinators and residents. The BHC supports residents by addressing barriers to service, including transportation to medical appointments, coordination of behavioral health services and linkage to other community-based services. An unexpected benefit to the program is that it helps reduce stigma associated with mental health issues. As residents of the AHA properties become aware of the BHC and see other residents working as part of the program, they are more likely to self-refer and to refer others to the program. The BHC also encourages residents to look out for and support one another, resulting in a greater sense of community. The program has also increased the behavioral health capacity of the service coordinators and managers, which allows them to de-escalate crises.

AHA currently provides some funding for the program and ARC has submitted a proposal to continue the work. ARC feels that having multiple sources of funding strengthens the program, as it is not limited by any single funding source, and it allows the BHC to be person-centered and customize services to meet each resident's needs. ARC held a 60-day pilot in FY 2016 to work with 20 residents who had multiple lease

violations and were at risk of eviction. Spending only \$10,000, with average per-client spending of \$530, ARC reduced 100 percent of lease violations. ARC was also able to reduce hoarding by cleaning, decluttering, replacing furniture and having therapists and hoarding specialists work with the residents to address the behavior. During this pilot, ARC increased access to medical services for 40 percent of clients, 50 percent had access to food through SNAP or home-delivered meals that they didn't have before, 40 percent gained access to in-home services, 45 percent enrolled in other benefit programs such as the Medicare low-income subsidy, and 25 percent had furniture replaced.

n4a staff conducted brief, in-depth interviews with select agencies to learn about the programs they have developed to address housing and homelessness in their communities.



Findings

As detailed in the charts, housing and homelessness are significant issues facing older adults. The results of the poll, in addition to in-depth interviews conducted with selected AAAs, indicate that AAAs view the need to help older adults in their communities maintain, repair and secure housing as central to their missions. With regard to developing specific housing and homelessness services or programs, AAAs are challenged by budgets that have been mostly stagnant for a decade. The Older Americans Act (OAA), the traditional source of federal funding for AAAs, does not provide dedicated funding for housing, although housing supports could be funded under Title III B, as these funds are used to provide an array of supportive services to address community needs. AAAs view housing and homelessness as important issues in their communities and many work in partnership with other organizations, as opposed to using stand-alone programs, to address housing and homelessness in their communities.

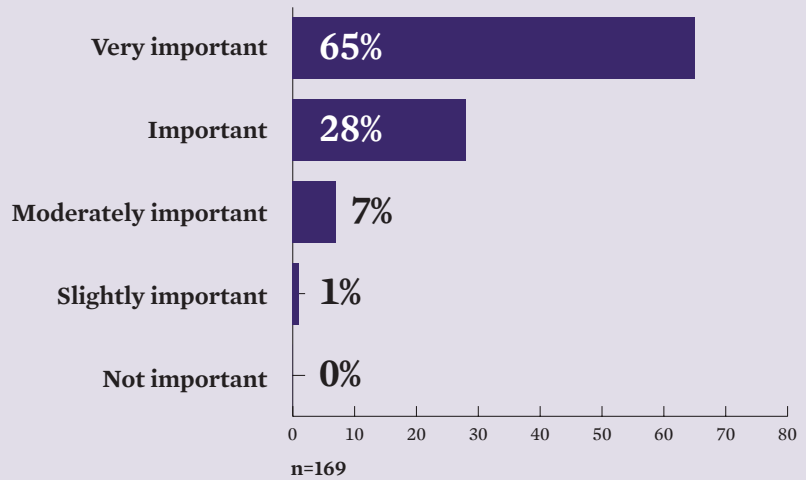
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Importance of Housing and Homelessness Issues

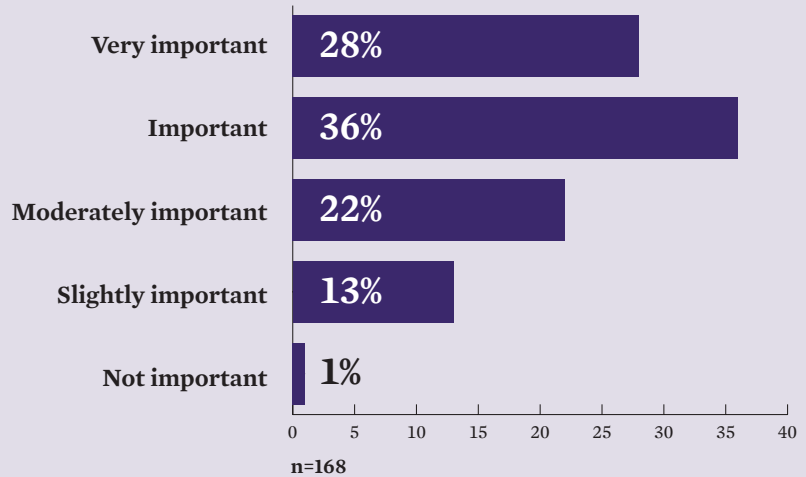
AAAs were asked to rank how important the issues of housing and homelessness are in their communities. The majority of AAAs (65 percent) reported that housing was a very important issue for older adults in their communities. An additional 28 percent of AAAs responded that this was important, with only seven percent responding that housing was moderately important. One percent responded that housing was slightly important. No AAAs responded that housing was not important.

There was wider variation in perceived importance of homelessness as an issue for each AAA's older adults, with 28 percent responding that homelessness was very important, and 36 percent responding that homelessness was important. Twenty-two percent rated the issue as moderately important, 13 percent rated homelessness as slightly important and one percent rated homelessness as not important. These responses suggest that, although AAAs view homelessness as an important issue, they may not all experience rising levels of older adult homelessness in their communities.

How important is housing as an issue for your AAA's older adults?



How important is homelessness as an issue for your AAA's older adults?

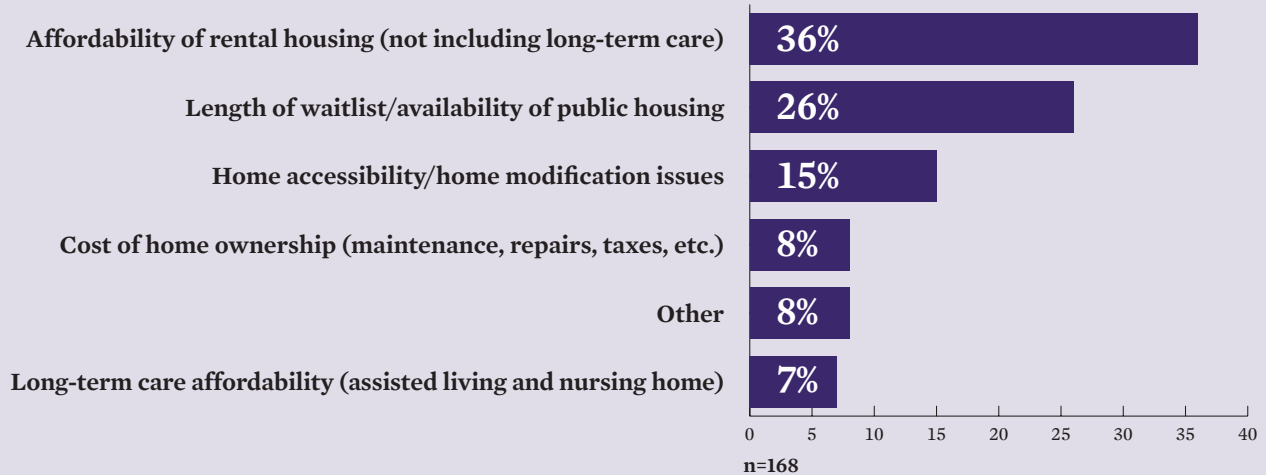


Challenges in Housing and Homelessness

When asked about the most significant housing challenge for older adults in their communities, 36 percent responded that the affordability of rental housing was the most significant challenge.

When asked about the most significant housing challenge for older adults in their communities, 36 percent responded that the affordability of rental housing was the most significant challenge. This was followed closely by length of waitlists and the availability of public housing at 26 percent and issues related to homes needing repair or modifications at 15 percent. A number of respondents added comments that the *availability* of affordable rental housing was also a significant challenge, which differs from housing affordability in that, while affordable rentals may exist in a community, there may not be enough units for those who need them. One respondent pointed out that there was a shortage of affordable apartments that allow pets, which is a barrier for older adults who have animals.

What is the most significant housing challenge for older adults in your community?



CASE STUDY



Public Housing and Assisted Living Facilities

White River Area Agency on Aging | Batesville, Arkansas

White River Area Agency on Aging in Batesville, Arkansas owns 12 public housing properties and an assisted living facility in their 10-county region in northern and central Arkansas. The program began in 1991 during the construction of a local Section 8 apartment building. HUD and AAA discussions resulted in the AAA becoming the owner and operator of its first Section 8 apartment building.

With one successful project under its belt, the AAA added 11 more housing complexes, some in very rural parts of its service area, and now has a total of 188 rental units. Each building was funded using a Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC) Section 202 loan and capital advance, designed to build and maintain housing for older adults. The apartments embrace the principles of universal design and are duplex-type properties that each have one bedroom and one bathroom. All units are single story, with one or two in each property having walk-in bathtubs and other accessibility features, including flashing alarms for those who are hearing impaired.

Owning and operating HUD complexes allows the AAA to address a housing need in its community while connecting residents to services, as AAA staff visit the buildings regularly to monitor residents' safety and to provide services. While the program has many benefits, there are also challenges with owning and operating these rental units. For example, some of the properties do not break even and ensuring that each unit is rented is a challenge in very rural areas. Accessing funding from HUD for ongoing

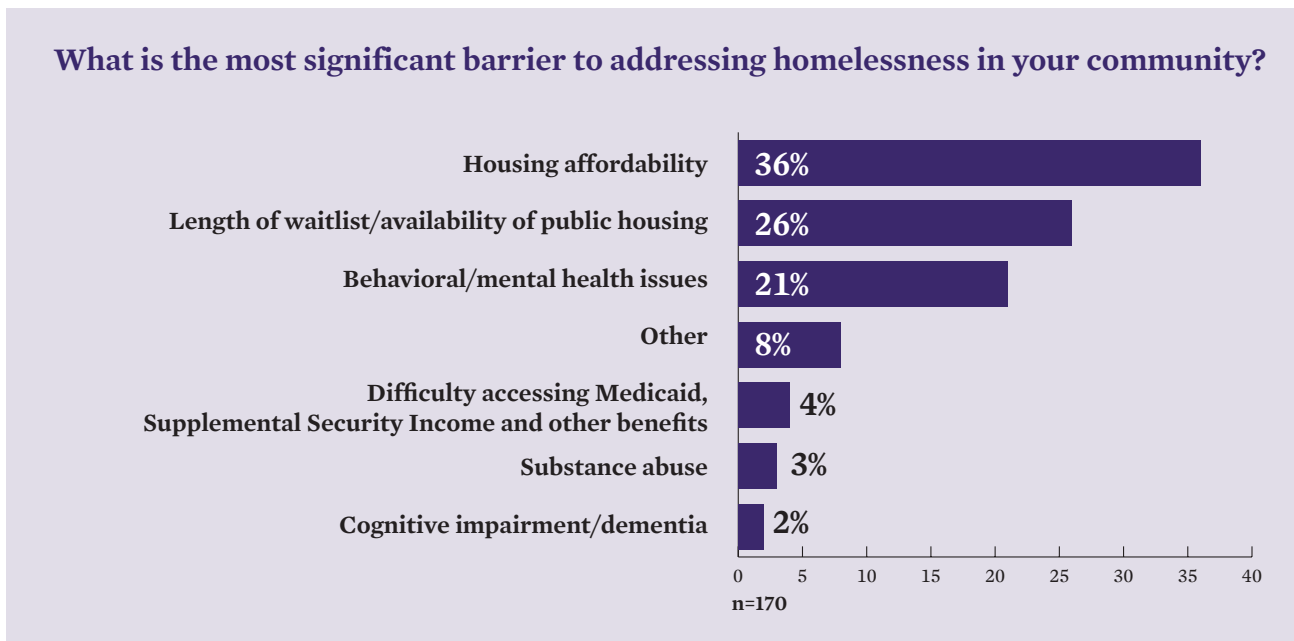
repairs and maintenance is another ongoing challenge.

The AAA has also owned and operated Eagle Mountain Assisted Living since 2006, building the facility with a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Eagle Mountain Assisted Living was the only assisted living facility in the region until very recently and has been filled to capacity for most of that time. The facility currently has a waiting list of about ten people. White River founded Eagle Mountain in part to reach a different population than the rental housing properties. The facility is primarily private pay, with a few residents participating in the Medicaid Assisted Living waiver program. The AAA strives to achieve as homelike an environment as possible, furnishing every apartment well and providing activities throughout the week. Mark Fraser, recently retired Housing Director, says, "we work in their homes; they do not live where we work."

n4a staff conducted brief, in-depth interviews with select agencies to learn about the programs they have developed to address housing and homelessness in their communities.



Housing affordability was also the most common response to the question of primary challenge in addressing homelessness (36 percent). Length of waitlist/availability of public housing was the second most common response, at 26 percent, while 21 percent of respondents cited behavioral and mental health challenges. Similar to the previous question, a number of respondents provided comments that shortages of affordable housing were significant challenges to addressing homelessness—a different problem than overall affordability. Other common responses under “other barrier” included bad credit and criminal history.

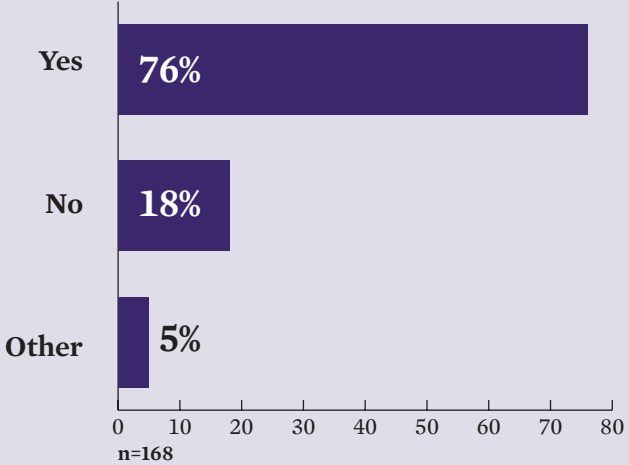


AAA Partnerships Addressing Housing and Homelessness

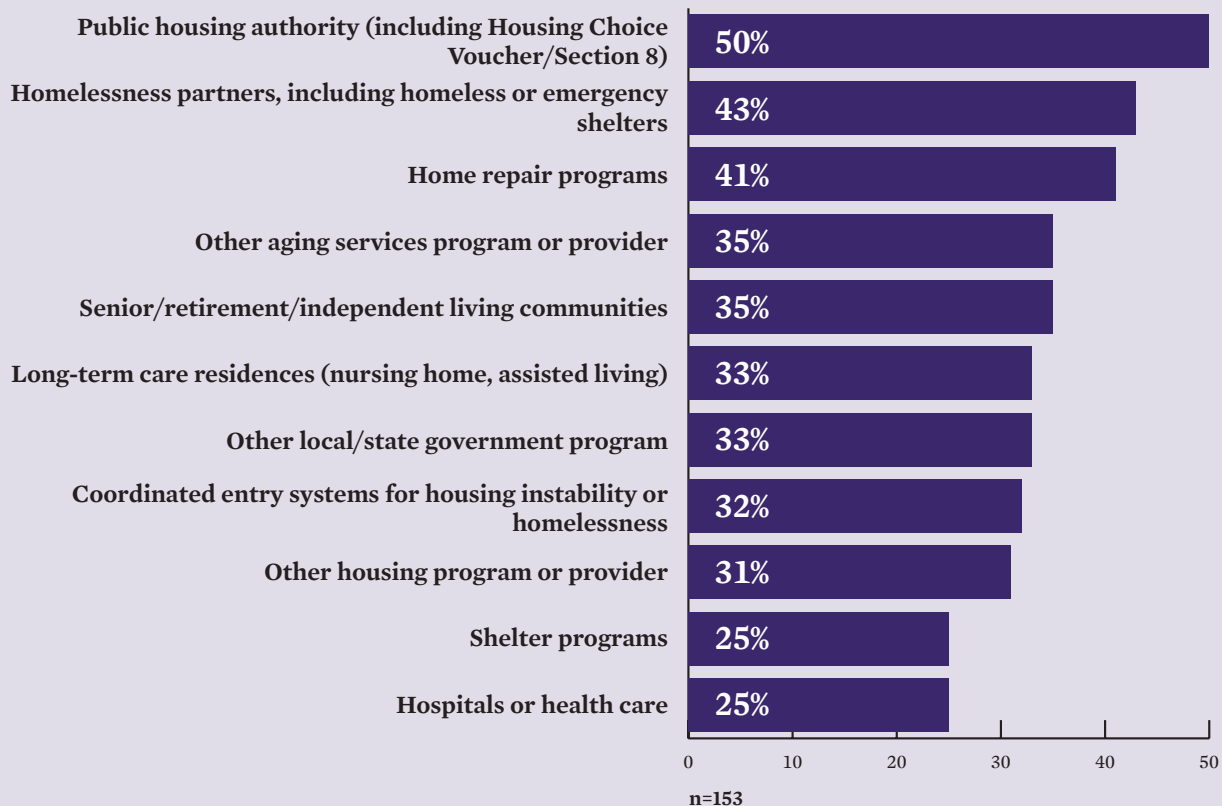
As indicated by responses to poll questions about the importance of addressing housing and homelessness and related challenges, the majority of AAAs identify housing and homelessness as issues facing older adults in their communities. Given that the Older Americans Act and other traditional AAA funding streams do not provide dedicated funding to housing, the survey included a question about whether and how AAAs are working to address these issues in their communities. A majority of AAAs—76 percent—responded that they have collaborative partnerships to address housing and homelessness.

AAAs reported working with a broad swath of partners to address housing and homelessness in their communities. Fifty percent of respondents have partnerships with a local public housing authority and 43 percent reported working with homeless and emergency shelters. Forty-one percent reported partnerships with home repair programs. While 35 percent reported partnerships with other aging service programs and providers, another 35 percent reported partnerships with senior/retirement/independent living communities.

Through partnerships, is your AAA involved in housing or homelessness programs or services for older adults?



Who are your partners on housing and homelessness program(s) or services?



AAA Services and Programs Addressing Housing and Homelessness

Twenty-one percent of AAAs responded that they currently have a stand-alone housing or homelessness program, with an additional two percent reporting that they are in the process of developing one.

The poll asked AAAs whether and what types of stand-alone programs they have to address housing or homelessness in their communities. Twenty-one percent of AAAs responded that they currently have a stand-alone housing or homelessness program, with an additional two percent reporting that they are in the process of developing one. Nine percent of AAAs responded “other,” which included having a housing program serving older adults through their Council of Government (COG) or local government structure, leading a workgroup dedicated to housing and homelessness issues, and providing referrals and information on housing. Although this poll did not address it specifically, home modification and repair is a service commonly provided by AAAs. The *National Survey of Area Agencies on Aging 2017* report found that 64 percent of AAAs offer home repair or modification.²⁸

CASE STUDY

HomeShare Program

Ventura County Area Agency on Aging |
Ventura, California

The Ventura HomeShare program was launched under the auspices of the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging in 2014 in order to match older adults who need additional income or assistance with housework and chores with low-income individuals who are in need of housing. Typically, the homeowner is an older adult living in a single-family home who can accept either rent for the room or housework services such as mowing the lawn, taking out the trash or providing a ride to the doctor. The services cannot be assistance with activities of daily living, such as helping the person bathe or dress. Prior to placement, Ventura County performs a home visit and inspection to ensure that homes are safe



and conducts nationwide criminal background checks on renters and homeowners. They also provide sample documents and counsel for HomeShare agreements, but

allow applicants to negotiate the rent and other arrangements directly. The AAA also provides mediation to resolve disputes that arise between home providers and home seekers.

The program is labor intensive due to the complex needs and numbers of individuals seeking housing,

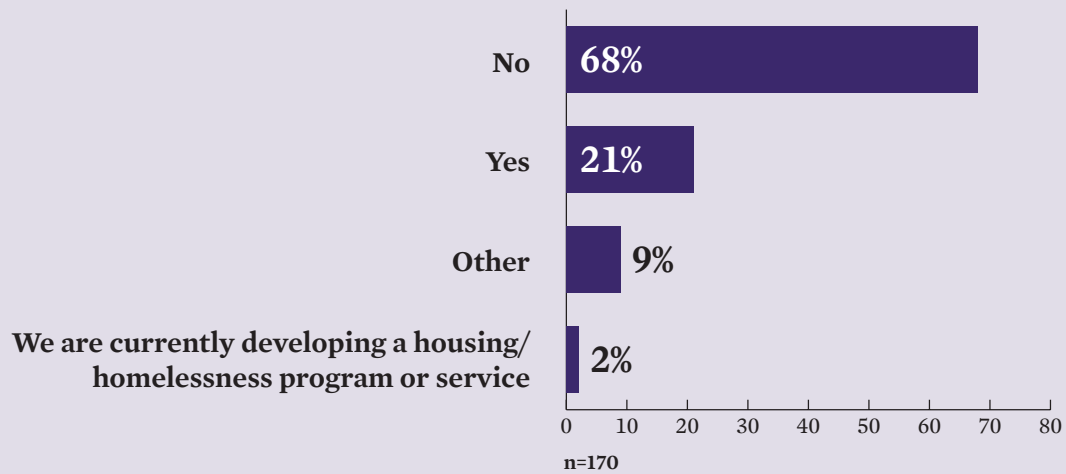
as well as the challenge of finding matches that both parties find agreeable. The program is funded by the county, which pays for 1.5 FTEs. Due to the relatively low number of matches, they focus on demonstrating the value in other ways, such as the ability to connect individuals with the services provided by the AAA. One of the most significant challenges is that there are far more individuals in need of housing than there are people providing homes—for every eight or nine people seeking housing, there is approximately one provider. Ventura County also works with other housing providers and county agencies to identify available housing units, which enables them to connect individuals on the HomeShare program's waiting list to a shelter or housing unit.

Recently, staff modified the program to house displaced families in need of housing because of the December 2017 California wildfires. Recognizing the immediate need caused by the one of the largest wildfires in state history, the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging expanded the program in this innovative manner to address this need, creating special marketing materials for this population and attending Federal Emergency Management Agency meetings to spread the word. In addition to housing displaced families, the agency also used the platform to find more HomeShare providers.

n4a staff conducted brief, in-depth interviews with select agencies to learn about the programs they have developed to address housing and homelessness in their communities.



Does your AAA have a housing or homelessness service or program?



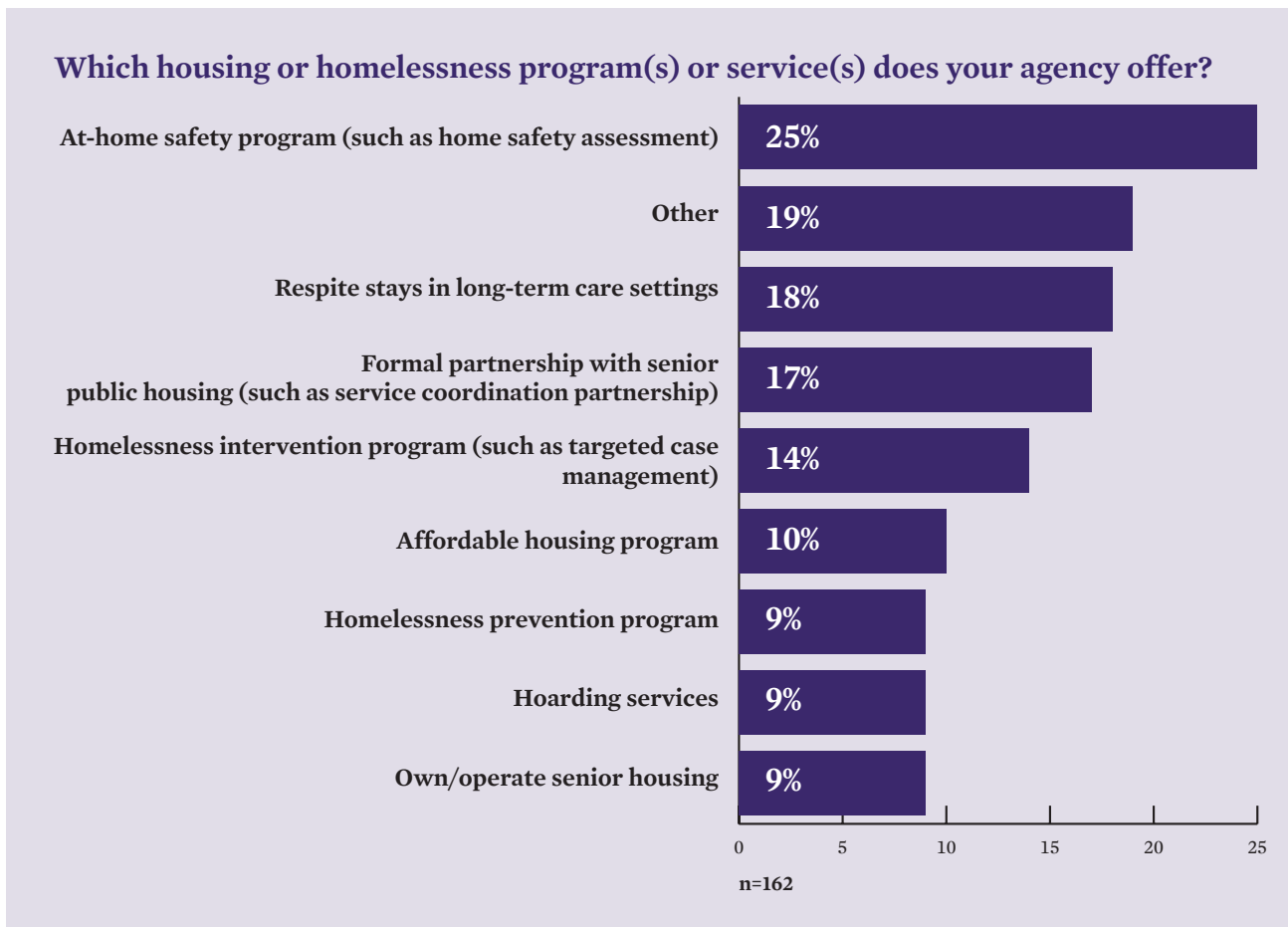
Of AAAs responding that they had a program, 25 percent reported having an at-home safety program (such as home safety assessment), 18 percent reported providing respite stays in long-term care settings and 17 percent reported having a formal partnership with senior public housing. An additional 14 percent reported having a homelessness intervention program, such as targeted case management, which can be provided through Medicaid to specific populations, including those with certain diseases or mental illnesses. The program can be used to support individuals who are currently experiencing or who are at risk of being homeless by providing assessment, developing a care plan, and connecting individuals to services that can meet their needs. Other responses included having a program aimed at assisting with affordable housing (10 percent); homelessness prevention program (nine percent); hoarding services (nine percent) and owning/operating senior housing (nine percent).

Nineteen percent of respondents reported offering an “other” housing or homelessness program or service. Of these respondents, AAAs reported, for example, participating in Money Follows the Person, a national grant program that provides funds to facilitate the transition of individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions from institutions to the community, as well as other nursing homes to community transition programs. Other responses noted programs that provide housing coordinators to

assist with securing housing, home repair, rental assistance, senior homelessness awareness campaigns and managing assisted living subsidy programs.

Staff and Budget Devoted to Housing and Homelessness Issues

The poll found that 30 percent of AAAs have full or part-time staff dedicated to working on housing or homelessness. However, most AAAs that do have staff focused on housing have only part-time staff or partial FTEs dedicated to this work. The median FTE reported for housing and homelessness issues was 0.25 FTE, indicating that half of surveyed AAAs had less than a quarter of one staff person’s hours devoted to housing and homelessness. Although the median FTE was 0.25, the number of staff ranged between zero and 25 FTE. With a median total staff of 20,²⁹ AAAs may not have staff time to devote to this issue.

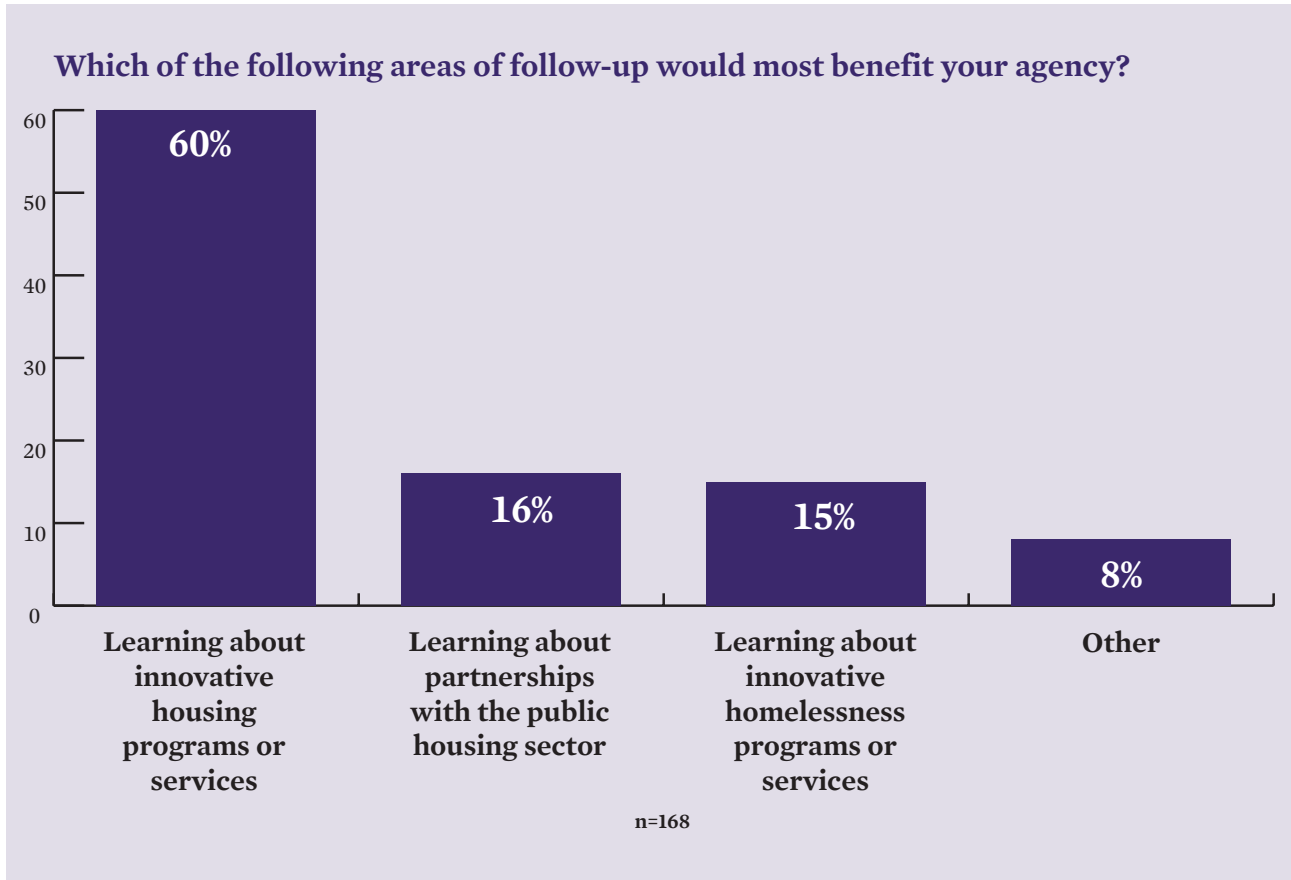


Consistent with the amount of staff time devoted to housing and homelessness issues, AAAs report that relatively small proportions of their budgets are targeted to housing and homelessness. The average budget proportion dedicated to housing and homelessness issues (e.g., services, programs, staff time) was two percent of the total budget, with a range between zero and 30 percent. As discussed earlier, the Older Americans Act does not offer a direct source of funding for housing programs, although AAAs can utilize OAA Title III B Supportive Services funding. However, AAAs often use these funds to address a variety of other community needs by providing services such as information and referral, case management, in-home care, transportation, adult day care, chore services and legal services.

Technical Assistance Interests

When asked which type of follow-up activities would most benefit their agency, AAAs overwhelmingly favored learning about innovative housing programs or services (60 percent). Sixteen percent selected “learning about partnerships with the public housing sector” and 15 percent responded “learning about innovative homelessness programs or services.” Other responses included learning ways to fund homelessness and housing programs, innovative housing programs in very rural communities and mixed-use projects that provide services, housing and retail.

When asked about notable and innovative programs that they offer, AAAs described a variety of programs, illustrating the myriad ways that housing and homelessness issues impact the lives of older adults. Responses included case management for older adults in public housing to address lease violations and other issues, ownership of housing units for older adults, the provision of emergency housing for victims of elder abuse, operation of a homeless shelter, the provision of housing and rental subsidies, and accessory dwelling units and manufactured cottages. One AAA described its Lifelong Housing Certification Program, which certifies housing at various levels based on universal design standards.



Summary

AAAs view housing as a pressing issue for older adults across the U.S., with homelessness not far behind. In the AAA poll, the affordability of housing, as well as the availability of affordable housing, were viewed as pressing issues affecting housing and homelessness for older adults. AAAs clearly view these issues as a significant need, which they must address in spite of the absence of dedicated funding. While AAAs could use their OAA Title III B dollars, which fund supportive services, to address housing issues, these funds must compete with the wide variety of additional programs that AAAs provide to address an array of needs in their communities.

Nevertheless, twenty-one percent of AAAs offer specific housing or homelessness programs, and 76 percent are working with partners to address housing and homelessness challenges in their communities. Older adults continue to need home repairs and modifications to help them as they age in place, and AAAs work to

provide this vital service. Beyond this, the most common programs offered by AAAs were providing home safety assessments (25 percent) and respite stays in long-term care facilities (18 percent). Seventeen percent had a formal partnership with public housing, which included provision of service coordination to residents. Many AAAs are already partnering for greater community impact with 50 percent partnering with the local public housing authority, 43 percent with homelessness initiatives and 40 percent with home repair programs. An increasing number of AAAs are looking at how their communities can best support older adults and families. In fact, according to the AAA 2016 National Survey Report, 70 percent of AAAs are involved with livable, age-friendly or dementia-friendly community initiatives, many of which include housing as a key factor.

Core to their mission of developing a coordinated system of services and supports to provide person-centered care and a range of options for older adults in their communities, AAAs often work through partnerships to most effectively and efficiently address community needs. With the majority of AAAs already having partnerships to address these issues, additionally, more than 20 percent of AAAs have a stand-alone housing or homelessness program or service.

Looking to the future, there are many areas ripe for further exploration. With the key housing challenges identified through the survey revolving around affordability, some AAAs are partnering with public housing and senior public housing programs to tackle the affordability of rental housing and the waitlist/availability of public housing. Other AAAs own and operate senior housing ranging from Section 202 public housing apartments to market-rate assisted living facilities. AAAs also address cross-sectional issues that intersect with housing, such as caregiver respite, in which AAAs provide short-term housing and respite opportunities in assisted living and nursing homes. A small number of AAAs operate senior domestic violence housing/shelters. As AAAs continue to focus on their core mission of supporting older adults as they age in their homes and in their communities, given the increasing numbers of older adults, housing and homelessness services, programs and partnerships will all be increasingly vital.

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About n4a

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is a 501(c)(3) membership association representing America's national network of 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and providing a voice in the nation's capital for the more than 250 Title VI Native American aging programs.

The fundamental mission of the AAAs and Title VI aging programs is to develop services that make it possible for older adults to remain in their homes, thereby preserving their independence and dignity. These agencies coordinate and support a range of home and community-based services, including information and referral, home-delivered and congregate meals, in-home assistance, transportation, caregiver supports, evidence-based health promotion/disease prevention programs, employment services, adult day care and more.

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