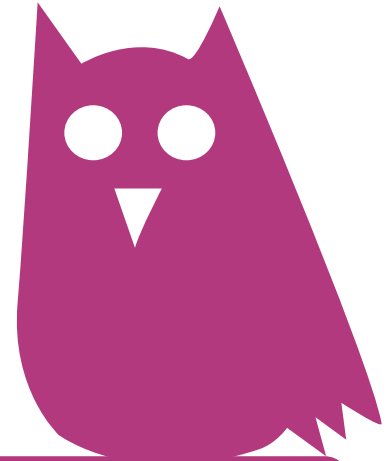


# 5 Ideas

## To Help Older Adults Age in Their Communities

New York City's older adult population is growing rapidly. From senior centers, to social services, to home-delivered meals, to intergenerational programming with older adults and young people, settlement house programs help seniors stay at home longer. This improves their quality of life and reduces incidents of expensive emergency interventions. To ensure our aging population can remain safely in their communities, policymakers can:



### 1 Invest in and expand programming in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

NORCs are buildings and neighborhoods with a high concentration of older people. NORC programs offer services, health care, and activities to help older adults age in place, improving their quality-of-life and delivering a tremendous return on investment in reduced emergency interventions. Many communities with booming older adult populations lack these programs.<sup>1</sup>

- **Establish at least one new NORC program in every Council district** with an increasing older adult population and in areas with few or inaccessible resources
- **Invest in existing NORC programs** to ensure older adults have the resources they need to remain safely in their homes and communities for as long as possible

### 2 Address food insecurity among older adults

Food insecurity remains very high among older New Yorkers. Home-delivered meals and senior centers that offer meals urgently need additional resources to meet demand.

- **Expand funding for grab-and-go meals** to interested older adult centers
- **Fund more than one meal per day** for home-delivered meals to ensure homebound seniors have enough to eat
- **Deepen investments in existing food programs** to ensure that chronically under-funded nonprofits can continue food to seniors

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1. Seven out of the 20 community districts in the City with the largest increases in their older adult share of the population over the past decade do not have a NORC program. For example, the older adult population in Queens Community District 13 rose by nearly eight percent over the past decade, but there is no NORC in this community district.

# 3

## Prioritize benefits enrollment programs so that no penny is left on the table

Utilizing state and federal benefits to the greatest extent possible gives older adults improved economic security and helps our economy by boosting support and spending. Programs like NYC Benefits, where staff use a holistic approach to help older adults access benefits like SNAP and Medicaid ensure that no penny is left on the table.

- **Scale up benefits outreach programs** like NYC Benefits in all senior-serving programs
- **Increase funding to expand case management programs** to address the needs of older adults
- **Prioritize local, in-person, and one-to-one support** for individuals navigating benefits applications for fewer application errors leading to a rise in successfully-completed applications

# 4

## Invest in flexible, community-based mental health services

The City's older adult population has many mental health needs, and our epidemic of social isolation is only making matters worse. Older adults who live alone or have mobility issues are especially vulnerable, and a community-based approach is key.

- **Expand and invest in community-based Geriatric Mental Health services**, which identify mental health needs, provide interventions, and offer references to psychiatric treatment when necessary
- **Build and strengthen partnerships with local clinics** to improve access to critical mental health services
- **Prioritize funding programs that combat social isolation** through one-on-one and group interactions

# 5

## Create Intergenerational Community Centers

Intergenerational community centers build upon the strengths, interests, and assets of older adults and position them as an important community resource for the greater good. These centers create multi-aged social networks that help participants thrive in the communities they know and love.

- **Encourage collaboration between the Department of Youth and Community Development and NYC Aging** to better support intergenerational community centers
- **Fund intergenerational coordinator staff lines** so organizations that have programs for both youth and seniors can intentionally create more opportunities for those populations to interact