Over the last 50 years the Aging Network has evolved and grown based on the needs of vulnerable older adults across the United States. Since the initial passage of the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965, many significant steps have been taken by lawmakers, government officials, nonprofit and community leaders to help ensure older adults have the support they need to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Two of the most critical additions to the Act were the creation of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the establishment of Title VI Native American aging programs. AAAs and Title VI programs serve as the “go-to place” in virtually every U.S. community for older adults and their caregivers to learn about trusted aging programs and services.

The following timeline celebrates 50 years of Aging Network milestones following the passage of the Older Americans Act, including significant organizational highlights during the 40 years that the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) has served as the convening body for AAAs and a vocal advocate for Title VI programs. You will also find insights from Aging Network leaders from across the country whose achievements and leadership span the generations.
1965 > Older Americans Act (OAA) signed into law. Established the federal Administration on Aging (AoA).

1969 > OAA amendments provided grants for model demonstration projects, Foster Grandparents and RSVP.

1971 > White House Conference on Aging (first held in 1961)

1972 > Title VII added to the OAA, authorizing a national nutrition program for older adults.

1973 > OAA updated to establish Area Agencies on Aging and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Creation of SE4A, the Southeast Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

1974 > Transportation added to Title III model projects.

1975 > Creation of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). First executive director is hired. Inaugural n4a Conference is held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC.
OAA reauthorized to include grants for tribes under Title III; transportation, home care, legal services and home renovation/repair were mandated as priority Title III B services.

1978 ➔ Consolidation and movement of programs resulted in today’s Titles III, V and the long-term care ombudsman program.

Added new Title VI for grants to Indian Tribal Organizations.

1981 ➔ OAA reauthorization emphasized supportive services to help older adults remain independent in the community.

HCBS Medicaid waiver program established in a budget reconciliation bill as Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act, allowing states to provide a wide array of home and community-based services paid for by Medicaid.

White House Conference on Aging

1984 ➔ Additional development of the roles of State Units on Aging and AAAs in coordinating community-based services and in maintaining accountability for the funding of national priority services (legal, access and in-home).

1986 ➔ Leaders of Title VI Native American aging programs begin to organize to support training and program development among Title VI programs.
1987 OAA reauthorization added six additional, distinct funding categories for services, including in-home services for the frail elderly; long-term care ombudsman; assistance for special needs; health education and promotion; prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation; and outreach activities. Additional emphasis was given to serving those with the greatest economic and social need, including low-income and minority populations.

1988 Title VI Native American aging programs start to become dues-paying members of n4a to ensure their voice is heard in the nation’s capital.

1992 n4a receives first AoA grant to administer the Eldercare Locator service, which it still administers today.

OAA reauthorization places increased focus on caregivers, intergenerational programs and protection of elder rights.

The position of U.S. Commissioner on Aging is elevated to Assistant Secretary for Aging.

AoA develops NAPIS, a computerized reporting system to be used nationally for tracking utilization of aging services.

1993 Fernando M. Torres-Gil was sworn in as the first Assistant Secretary for Aging.

1994 The first n4a Aging Policy Briefing & Capitol Hill Day was held to provide n4a members the opportunity to learn about federal aging policy and to engage with their federal lawmakers in DC.
1995  White House Conference on Aging

1997  Jeanette Takamura is sworn in as Assistant Secretary for Aging.

2000  The National Family Caregiver Support Program is created, with separate funding streams under Title III E and Title VI C.

2001  Josefina Carbonell is sworn in as Assistant Secretary for Aging.

2002  n4a, in partnership with the MetLife Foundation, celebrated the first Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards, which annually celebrated the contributions of older volunteers for the next 10 years.

2003  AoA and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services launched the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) initiative to streamline access to long-term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities.

The Eldercare Locator receives its 1 millionth call.

2005  n4a receives a three-year $5 million grant to implement the Aging Network Community-Based Enrollment Campaign with partners to expand outreach on Medicare Part D enrollment. n4a and its national partners exceeded the enrollment goal by 200 percent.
Congress authorizes the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) to support the goal of increasing transportation options for older adults and support their ability to live independently. Since 2006, n4a and Easter Seals have administered the NCST for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

n4a and partners survey communities across the country for the first-ever “Maturing of America” report which was released in 2006.

First year of the n4a Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards, an annual competition to recognize AAA and Title VI programs that are innovative and exemplify sound management.

White House Conference on Aging. n4a developed special stickers for members to promote resolutions 17 (reauthorize the OAA) and 71 (promote livable communities). Both later finished in the top 10!

OAA Reauthorization embeds the principles of providing consumer information for long-term care planning, evidence-based prevention programs and self-directed community-based services to older individuals at risk of institutionalization.

Inaugural n4a Leadership Institute held in Washington, DC.

n4a and partners release the report “A Blueprint for Action: Developing a Livable Community for All Ages.”

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration awarded n4a and partners a grant to help seniors make the national transition to digital television. The partnership helped with the conversion to DTV for 250,000 seniors over a six-month period.

Kathy Greenlee appointed Assistant Secretary for Aging.
n4a and partners survey communities across the country for the second “Maturing of America” report that was released in 2011.

n4a receives grant from AoA to launch national volunteer initiative, currently known as the Aging Network Volunteer Resource Center.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is created, providing an umbrella over the Administration on Aging, HHS’s Office on Disability and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

n4a is awarded a grant from ACL to lead several partners to form the Aging and Disability Partnership for Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS), a technical assistance center on MLTSS for the Aging and Disability Networks.

n4a releases seminal report “Making Your Community Livable for All Ages: What’s Working!”

The Eldercare Locator receives its 3 millionth call.

n4a releases Eldercare Locator Data Report.
Voices
of the Aging Network
Where do you see the Aging Network in 40 years?

**Joseph Ruby**
President & CEO, Direction Home Area Agency on Aging | n4a President, 2014-2016
Uniontown, OH | 34 Years in Aging Network

**I see the Aging Network playing a vital role** in addressing a significant public policy issue: Medicaid diversion. According to Scripps Gerontology Center, Ohio’s population of those requiring long-term services and supports will more than double by 2040, and could consume over 50% of Ohio’s state budget without diversion efforts. To address this policy issue, the Aging Network would develop/refine evidence-based targeting methodologies to identify those who are “pre-Medicaid.” AAAs would educate the community regarding available supports and services, and operate call centers to ensure vital guidance and information is delivered. Care Managers develop care plans and would have access to adequate funding to provide LTSS that would ensure appropriate client outcome(s). The Area Agencies on Aging have been building the expertise needed to achieve this future for years, and we could easily leverage this knowledge for the betterment of older adults across the United States.

**Donna Harvey**
Director, Iowa Department on Aging | n4a President, 2004-2006
Des Moines, IA | 38 Years in Aging Network

**In 40 years, I will be 98 and YOUR consumer!** I believe the AAA role will change to be a technology-based intervention system requiring high touch and effective technology along with a strong role in planning and technical assistance for other networks that serve an aging population, with strong business lines focused on customer needs and desires. I also believe a very visible presence and recognition in the support of caregivers will be solid through the Aging Network. Ultimately, I believe that AAAs will become more identifiable as a “business line” in the Aging Network than a “quasi-governmental” role of service delivery with the exception of advocacy and planning.

**Starr Kohler**
CEO, Southwest Missouri Office on Aging
Springfield, MO | 41 Years in Aging Network

**Hit any target in the future, and people will need trusted help** with life choices, challenges, caregiving and confusion. Armed with an 80-year legacy of staying current with resources and meeting needs, AAAs will be there with help, even if the caregiver is worried about Mom’s transportation options on the moon.
If the first 50 years are an indication, the Network will be stronger and consumer-driven. By then, all baby boomers have turned 65 and will have set the standard for the generations that follow. Future technology in health will hopefully provide the opportunity to age in place with the necessary supports.

What was the most momentous thing to happen to the Aging Network in the last 40 years?

Robert Dolsen
Former AAA Director, Region IV Area Agency on Aging | n4a’s First Legislative Committee Chair
St. Joseph, MI | 27 Years in Aging Network

The most momentous event for the Aging Network occurred with little fanfare. It was when U.S. Representative Mario Biaggi (D-NY), at the urging of n4a, and skillfully guided by congressional committee staffer Bob Blancato, offered an amendment to the Older Americans Act that gave a green light to Area Agencies on Aging to play a primary role in home and community-based long-term care.

Heretofore, the Network had focused on systems centered on the delivery of “softer services” that served mostly younger, more mobile older Americans, with just a handful of states venturing into the “harder” home-based support services.

But the Biaggi proposal, offered in committee and approved by Congress, allowed AAAs to contract and purchase the hard services through enhanced information and assistance and case management, and to target individuals at risk of institutional placement.

Today, as a result, the Older Americans Act is laced with long-term care–related provisions, including assistance for family caregivers, public education on LTC issues, disease prevention and self-management, and much more.

Biaggi’s action paved the way for AAAs to play central roles in developing regional LTC systems, but it was the persistent and well-researched advocacy by n4a that moved Biaggi and his fellow Representatives to take action.

Cheryll Schramm
Former AAA Director, Atlanta Regional Commission | n4a President, 1992-1994
Atlanta, GA | 25 Years in the Aging Network

The passage of the Older Americans Act certainly set the stage by establishing the Aging Network and providing the necessary foundation for AAAs to begin the development of service delivery systems across the country. Over the past 40 years, AAAs have had the opportunity to greatly expand and enhance this delivery system by accessing a variety of additional funding sources, both public and private.
Jonathan Lavin
President & CEO, AgeOptions
Oak Park, IL | 41 Years in Aging Network

The consolidation of nutrition and social services was the essential step for assuring Area Agencies on Aging could begin to plan on a comprehensive basis and to build a platform for administering services and programs from such sources as Medicaid, Community Development Block Grant, Workforce Investment Act, and others.

Lisa James
Title VI Director, Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, OK | 14 Years in Aging Network

The inclusion of the Title VI programs under the n4a advocacy umbrella was the most momentous thing to happen in the last 40 years. This gave the Title VI tribal programs a much wider base of support nationally. This inclusion also succeeded in getting the AAAs to understand the mandate from the Older Americans Act for coordination with the local tribal Title VI programs.

What three programs/services do you view as most critical to ensure older adults can age in their homes and community?

Julie Wiggins
Director, High Country Area Agency on Aging
Boone, NC | 4 Years in Aging Network

The three most critical programs that ensure older adults’ ability to age in their home and community are, in my opinion, in-home aide, home-delivered meals and transportation. Each of these services provides resources to the most vulnerable individuals we serve, who are often at a high risk for institutionalization.

Billie Johnson
President/CEO, Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.
Toledo, OH | 41 Years in Aging Network

Home-delivered meals and congregate meals are critical services in the fight against senior hunger. As the older adult population increases and people continue to desire to stay in their homes, senior center services play a critical role in providing a comprehensive effort to address the needs of older adults.
What do you view as the greatest opportunity for the Aging Network?

**Barbara Gordon**
*Director, KIPDA Area Agency on Aging and Independent Living/Aging and Disability Resource Center*
*Louisville, KY | 35 Years in the Aging Network*

The greatest opportunity for the Aging Network is to facilitate the creation of a Network that supports a person's ability to live, play, work, and even die in the community or environment of their choice regardless of economic status. **The Aging Network actually has a unique opportunity to revolutionize the foundational infrastructure for long-term services and supports** that will provide older adults and people with disabilities attainable choices beyond what exists today. This opportunity, however, requires the Network being bold and brave enough to stop accepting and settling for what the system has to offer and design something unique and different.

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**Dawn Simonson**
*Executive Director, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging | n4a President, 2010-2012*
*North Saint Paul, MN | 13 Years in the Aging Network*

The next two decades will be tumultuous as the impact of demographic change pushes at all aspects of community living. **The aging of America requires all hands on deck and necessitates innovation.** Aging Network organizations are poised to lead dialogue and change efforts that facilitate our united mission to ensure dignity and choice for older adults.

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**Nick Beamer**
*Former Executive Director, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington*
*n4a President, 2012-2014*
*Spokane, WA | 27 Years in the Aging Network*

I think that the greatest opportunity for the Aging Network at the national, state and local levels lies in **developing contractual partnerships with health care entities (health care plans, providers and facilities), so that home and community-based services provided through AAAs can reach more seniors and others in need of long-term care services and supports.** This will also provide another way for us to help individuals to understand and to navigate through the maze of long-term care services as they deal with chronic illnesses.
How will your agency change over the next 10 years?

W. Mark Clark  
*President & CEO, Pima Council on Aging*  
*Tucson, AZ | 1½ Years in the Aging Network*

Over the next ten years our agency will greatly strengthen its administrative infrastructure, so as to be able to meet the expectations of a significantly expanded network of payers. We will also redouble our advocacy efforts to insure that the organized voices of older adults will make a positive difference in public policy at all levels of government. And we will evolve our service delivery systems to insure that those most at-risk are getting the services and supports they need and desire in the manner most in line with their cultural and linguistic preferences, so they will be able to live in the setting most comfortable for them.

Brenda House  
*Elder Services Director, Wyandotte Nation*  
*Wyandotte, OK | 28 Years in the Aging Network*

Over the next 10 years, I think we will have less funding. Less funding just like we have seen over the past 20 plus years means we have to keep finding other resources to provide meals and services for our Elders. We are very fortunate that our tribe supplements our program or we would not be able to function due to the cuts that we face each year.

What is your favorite part about providing programs and services to older adults and caregivers?

Jerry Mitchell  
*Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Arkansas*  
*Harrison, AR | 17 Years in the Aging Network*

I like knowing that the services make such a difference in the lives of those who we serve. I really like the appreciation that the older adults and their caregivers show for the services from the AAA.

Howard L. Rodgers, III  
*Executive Director, New Orleans Council on Aging*  
*New Orleans, LA | 38 Years in the Aging Network*

My favorite part about providing programs and services to older adults is that I get to interact with individuals and provide services to those who have built this country. Older Americans have contributed to the present freedoms and way of life that we take for granted. If it was not for their hard work and sacrifice, this present generation would be lost.
Describe the impact your programs have had on quality of life for older adults and caregivers in your community.

**Nick Burrows**  
*Senior Services Director, Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership*  
Idaho Falls, ID | 5 Years in the Aging Network

The AAA of Eastern Idaho empowers older adults to **make active choices for their own well-being by assisting in meeting the basic needs of food and safe housing.** We help caregivers to be more effective by enabling self-care and providing avenues to help them know that they are not alone.

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**Najja R. Orr**  
*Director, Bucks County Area Agency on Aging*  
Doylestown, PA | 13 Years in the Aging Network

The Bucks County Area Agency on Aging, one of 52 in Pennsylvania, is a public agency responsible for the planning and provision of a variety of services and supports to assist older adults in Bucks County. While typically serving consumers with the greatest needs and fewest resources, **our broad goal is to assist older adults maintain their independence in their homes and communities.**

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What advice would you give to gerontology students, social workers or others who are interested in working in the field of aging?

**Mary Lynn Kasunic**  
*President & CEO, Area Agency on Aging, Region One*  
Phoenix, AZ | 39 Years in the Aging Network

The field of aging services is so diverse, exciting and challenging. There are many opportunities to feel that one is making a huge difference in the lives of others.

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**Emily Shea**  
*Commissioner, City of Boston Commission on Affairs of the Elderly*  
Boston, MA | 18 Years in the Aging Network

There are so many great opportunities in the Aging Network. Informational interviews are a good way to make connections, better understand the broad scope of the Network, and to find the place that most suits your interests and expertise.
Lynn Kellogg  
CEO, Region IV Area Agency on Aging | n4a President, 2008-2010  
St. Joseph, MI | 38 Years in the Aging Network

**Embrace the field of aging.** It’s wonderful: multi-faceted and full of opportunity and great people. While helping communities prepare for an aging America, you’ll find personal growth and comfort with aging and the life spectrum.

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**What has been your greatest victory as a AAA/Title VI director?**

Keith E. Stormes  
Executive Director, LifeSpan Resources, Inc.  
New Albany, IN | 8 Years in the Aging Network

I've always considered it a success, but I guess it would qualify as a victory too. **Being able to serve more people each year—with the same or fewer dollars—is what I consider to be a victory.** Allowing/empowering my program directors to actually “direct” and not so much “do”—has been the catalyst to our improved efficiency. The directors have been able to implement systems that provide for the client’s needs, as opposed to supplying everything they are eligible for (which they may or may not need).

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Janet Bird  
Senior Citizen Center Director, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska  
Winnebago, NE | 2½ Years in the Aging Network

My greatest victories have been working with the state and receiving additional reimbursement for meals for those on Medicare and Medicaid; having a center atmosphere that makes the elderly welcome and want to stay to visit after the noon meals; and increasing interest in our congregate meal program.

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Scott McBeth  
Director, Mountainland Area Agency on Aging  
Orem, UT | 27 Years in the Aging Network

**Serving seniors that were the “Greatest Generation.”** There isn’t anything I enjoy in my life today that isn't a result of their sacrifices. Too few recognize and appreciate where today’s opportunities and comforts came from.
What should communities focus on as they prepare for an aging population?

Ellen Schmeding  
Director, Aging & Independence Service  
San Diego, CA | 18 Years in the Aging Network

Bringing older adults and the community together to create places where all ages can enjoy and thrive, with opportunities for social engagement, work, volunteer opportunities, play, interaction between all generations, educational/learning opportunities, accessible health care well integrated with needed social services and supports and easy access transportation and available and affordable housing!

Jaime Estremera-Fitzgerald  
CEO, Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc.  
West Palm Beach, Florida | 10 Years in the Aging Network

Rather than segregating seniors, I would like to see communities focus on providing opportunities for continued meaningful and intergenerational community engagement and involvement—neighbor caring for neighbor. Obviously community planning with a focus on easy access to necessities and services is critical as well, but too often the social, emotional, purposeful piece is not as much in the forefront and it very much determines quality of life.

Jenny Martinez  
Director, Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging  
Santa Fe, NM | 36 Years in the Aging Network

Communities really need to focus on the fact that our current infrastructures are not set up to address the needs of our aging population. As such, we need to think of “nontraditional” methods and systems to address their growing needs.

Holly Lange  
President and CEO, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging  
Philadelphia, PA | 39 Years in the Aging Network

It is important that communities celebrate the talents and contributions of their older citizens while insuring that the most vulnerable of them receive the support they need to live as independently as possible. We must seek to enrich their lives while preserving their dignity.
Our Mission

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging’s primary mission is to build the capacity of our members so they can help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

Our Vision

Build a society that values and supports people as they age.

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- TOP: President Lyndon Johnson hands a pen from the signing of the Older Americans Act to an unknown woman: Yoichi Okamoto, courtesy of the LBJ Library (1965)
- SECOND FROM TOP: Navajo Nation, Arizona: Terry Eiler for the DOCUMERICA project, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (1972)
- BELOW LOGO: A nurse helps an elderly patient leave Louisville Memorial Hospital: William Strode for the DOCUMERICA project, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (1972)

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- Navajo Nation, Arizona: Terry Eiler for the DOCUMERICA project, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (1972)

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- U.S. Capitol: The George F. Landegger Collection of District of Columbia Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith’s America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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Inside Back Cover
- TOP RIGHT: “Broken Fireplace” makes fringe for a shawl at the Indian Center in White Cloud, KS: Patricia D. Duncan for the DOCUMERICA project, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (1974)
- MIDDLE RIGHT: Mr. and Mrs. Berry Howard of Cumberland, KY: Jack Corn for the DOCUMERICA project, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (1974)