

## OLDER ADULTS

*The 2-1-1 Barometer utilizes 2-1-1 data and other information to explore issues affecting Connecticut residents. 2-1-1 tracks the type of information callers are looking for and the referrals that are made, creating a database that serves as a barometer of the needs present in the state.*



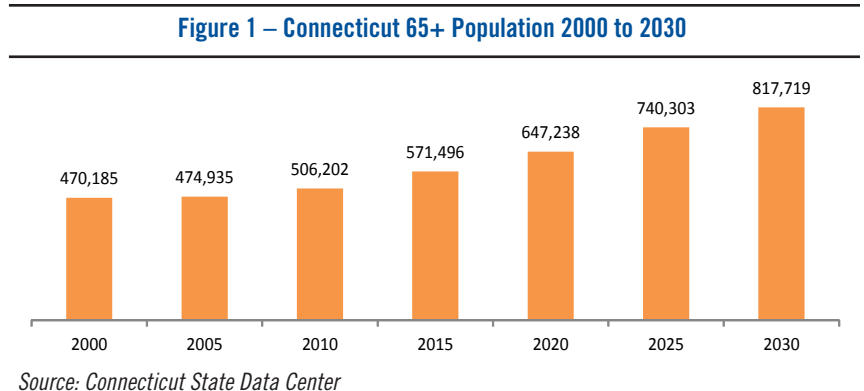
### INTRODUCTION

Over the next 25 years, Connecticut's older adult population (65 and older) is expected to double in number due to population trends and increased longevity. Increasingly, it is understood that enabling older adults to remain in their homes and communities as they age is best for most seniors and provides significant benefits to their communities and to the state. Ensuring that older adults remain connected to needed resources is essential to community-based strategies for this growing segment of our population.

This 2-1-1 Barometer reviews the Connecticut population and economic trends that impact older adults. The report also examines the thousands of calls 2-1-1 receives annually from older adults or their family members for needed resources as well as programs designed to assist the elder population, including some interesting United Way initiatives aimed at aging in place.

### THE OLDER ADULT POPULATION

The Census Bureau estimates that Connecticut is the 7th oldest state in the nation. The number of residents age 65 and older is expected to rise from the current 506,000 to over 800,000 by 2030 and comprise 22 percent of the population (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. To further demonstrate the increases in the older adult population:



- In 2010, the population of those 65 and older comprised 14.2 percent of Connecticut's population, compared to 13 percent for the U.S. as a whole.
- From 2000 to 2010 the population of those 65 and older increased 8 percent, while the general population increased 5 percent.
- From 2000 to 2010 the population of those 85 and older increased 32 percent to 85,000.
- Life expectancy in Connecticut is 80.1 years, higher than the US average of 78 years.

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Commission on Aging, *Aging Issues Fact Sheet*, May, 2011.

The economic conditions of Connecticut's older adult population vary greatly, but elders can be more vulnerable to significant and rapid changes in income security due to a decline in health status, the death of a spouse/partner or the loss of the ability to live independently:

- 6 To meet basic needs and maintain self-sufficiency in Connecticut, single elder adults in good health need an income of \$21,383 for homeowners (without a mortgage) and \$24,408 for renters. For elder couples in good health, those numbers rise to \$32,039 for homeowners (without a mortgage) and \$35,064 for renters.
- 6 The average Social Security benefit for Connecticut elders is \$14,154, far below the level needed for income security.
- 6 About 30,000 or seven percent of Connecticut's older adults live at or below the federal poverty level. (\$14,710 for a family of 2)
- 6 More than 70 percent of all older adults living below the poverty level are women.
- 6 Social Security is the only source of income for 20 percent of all older adults and for 40 percent of female older adults<sup>2</sup>.

To prepare for the population increase and to help elders maintain a high quality of life, Connecticut's State Plan on Aging for 2011 to 2013 has identified goals for the older adult population which are included on page 3 of this report.



<sup>2</sup> The Elder Economic Security Index Program: the Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Connecticut, 2009.

## UNITED WAY 2-1-1

In fiscal year 2011, United Way 2-1-1 received over 23,000 requests for services from older adults or from those calling on behalf of older adults. The top requests for services were for utility assistance, financial assistance and food (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Top Requests for Services for Callers Age 65 and Older FY2011\***

2-1-1 Categories	Number of Requests for Services
Utility and Heating Assistance	3,160
Food (includes SNAP and food pantries)	1,553
Financial Assistance	1,455
Housing & Shelter	1,289
Health Support Services	1,278
Transportation	960
<b>Total Number of Calls</b>	<b>17,838**</b>
<b>Total Number of Services</b>	<b>23,840</b>

\*Fiscal year is July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011.

\*\* Number of callers is generally higher since not all callers give their age.

United Way 2-1-1 has an extensive listing of resources for older adults at [www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org). The 2-1-1 eLibrary contains over 60 papers on elder issues. Links to a sample of those papers are listed below. The complete list can be found at <http://www.211ct.org/InformationLibrary/elder.asp>.

### 2-1-1 eLibrary Papers

- CHOICES Program
- Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders
- Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care
- Custodial Grandparents/Custodial Relatives
- Elderly Nutrition Program/Senior Community Cafe
- Frauds and Scams Targeted to Seniors
- Medical Transportation
- Medicare
- Prescription Expense Assistance
- Social Security Website

# CONNECTICUT INITIATIVES

## CONNECTICUT STATE PLAN ON AGING GOALS

The following is an excerpt from the Connecticut Plan on Aging, developed by the Department of Social Services for 2010 to 2013.

- 1** Empower Connecticut's older residents, their families, and other consumers to make informed decisions about existing health and long-term care options:
  - Educate the public to prepare for their long-term care needs.
  - Educate the aging services network about the resources available to the public regarding long-term care options.
- 2** Enable seniors to remain in their own homes and maintain a high quality of life for as long as possible:
  - Provide older adults the opportunity to remain in a setting of their choice by making available an array of services and supports.
  - Ensure Connecticut's caregivers and older adults have access to information and flexible service options.
- 3** Empower older people to stay active and healthy through services under the Older Americans Act and the new prevention benefits under Medicare:
  - Promote Health and Wellness Programs.
  - Enhance awareness of information and programs designed to promote the healthy aging.
  - Promote awareness of prevention benefits available to older adults through Medicare.
- 4** Ensure the rights of older people and prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation:
  - Improve access to quality legal advice, representation and referral for older persons and advocate on behalf of older people who are frail.
  - Develop a unified system of elder abuse prevention in Connecticut.
  - Empower seniors to know and exercise their rights, make informed decisions about planning for long-term needs and promote opportunities for self-advocacy.

## COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Below is a listing of community-based initiatives that are focused on helping older adults age in place.

- **EngAGEment Initiative** is a partnership of the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy and Grantmakers in Aging with the goal of increasing awareness and encouraging funders to take an active interest in aging issues and use funders' influence and knowledge to assist in finding creative and viable solutions. <http://www.ctphilanthropy.org>
- **Aging in Place Membership Organizations** are focused on assisting older adults remain independent in their own homes. These organizations provide services that include assistance with home repairs, household chores, transportation and shopping assistance and participation in social events. For a list of the eight Aging in Place organizations in Connecticut click [here](#).
- **Money Follows the Person** is a Connecticut initiative designed to reduce reliance on institutional care and help people move from institutions back to the community. MFP is funded by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the State of Connecticut. <http://www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?Q=414524&A=2345>
- **Hartford's Generations** is an affordable rental property with 40 units split into two sections; one for grandparents raising their grandchildren and the other for seniors. A program of CRT, Hartford's Generations offers case management, recreation and other programming. <http://www.crtct.org/Programs/Generations.htm>
- **Under One Roof, Inc.** is a not-for-profit housing and day care initiative in Norwalk that offers affordable congregate housing for older adults and an accredited school readiness child care program for young children. The two programs are integrated to provide an intergenerational component that benefits both the seniors and the children. <https://volunteer.truist.com/mfcvp/org/219457.html>

## On The Front Lines

**United Way of Greater Waterbury** partner agencies reported that over 4,000 older adults needed emergency food, dental care, and legal assistance to secure access to housing, food, and healthcare benefits in fiscal year 2011, a 12 percent increase over the previous year. Agencies are working with more individuals and families who were formerly middle class wage earners and are now experiencing financial difficulties and instability due to loss of wages or employment. Agencies report that older adults represent an increasing percentage of those seeking assistance. [www.unitedwaygw.org](http://www.unitedwaygw.org)

**United Way of Greenwich** has formed the Committee on Late Life Issues to address the needs of older adults facing health, housing and other issues. The committee offers professional training and community education to promote the improved quality of life for older adults in the community. [www.unitedway-greenwich.com](http://www.unitedway-greenwich.com)

**Middlesex United Way** partner St. Luke's Eldercare Services has implemented the Gatekeeper Program to help identify and offer support to older adults experiencing behavioral health difficulties. Through public education, the Gatekeeper Program identifies and offers support to help older adults remain safely in their homes. The program was piloted in Middlesex County and will now be replicated statewide. [www.middlesexunitedway.org](http://www.middlesexunitedway.org)

**United Way of West Central Connecticut** is collaborating with community partners to extend the time older adults can stay in their homes by reducing isolation, providing supportive services and addressing safety concerns. UWWCCT initiated "Let's Find Our Seniors," a campaign to educate the older adults in Bristol and Plymouth about available services. Volunteers hung informational door hangers on homes, apartments and condominiums throughout Bristol and Plymouth. UWWCCT is also the lead agency in forming a regional TRIAD program, a national community policing initiative where law enforcement professionals, older adults and community groups partner to reduce criminal victimization of older persons. [www.uwwestcentralct.org](http://www.uwwestcentralct.org)

*The mission of the United Way of Connecticut is to help meet the needs of Connecticut residents by providing information, education and connection to services.*

*To access other issues of the 2-1-1 Barometer online go to: [www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp](http://www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp)*

*United Way of Connecticut provides services with support from the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.*