

PROJECT 2020

Building on the Promise of Home
and Community-Based Services

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How did the partnership between NASUA and n4a on *Project 2020* develop?

At the NASUA and n4a winter 2007 meetings, both Boards gave their support to the development of a joint policy agenda that would help reshape the Aging Services Network to prepare to meet the needs of current and future generations of older adults.

Since those meetings, NASUA and n4a leadership and staff have worked closely to develop a well-grounded proposal that builds upon the strengths of the Aging Services Network and its existing services and support systems. The goal of this proposal is to rebalance the nation's system of long-term care from its current institutional bias to one more focused on the provision of home and community-based care. All of the components are based on the success of existing U.S. Administration on Aging programs and changes to the Older Americans Act that NASUA and n4a supported as part of the 2006 reauthorization.

2. What was the impetus for *Project 2020*? How does *Project 2020* differ from the current AoA demonstration grants?

Project 2020 has evolved from long-term care initiatives of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) and other government agencies and is based on statutory authority incorporated into the Older Americans Act in 2006.

Over the past few years, AoA, in cooperation with State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs, has tested best practices in community-based long-term care services demonstrated as effective in reducing the need for more expensive insti-



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tutional care and preventing spend down to Medicaid. In fact, AoA's strategic plan is driven by the need to modernize the Aging Services Network's role in long-term care, and *Project 2020* would address three of the five goals in AoA's strategic plan.

Recognizing these successes, Congress expanded opportunities for the Aging Services Network to build on its leadership role in advancing home and community-based long-term care in the 2006 amendments to the Older Americans Act.

Project 2020 seeks to fulfill this overarching goal by directing the funding necessary to implement and carry out a three-pronged approach through the Aging Services Network, focusing on person-centered access to information, evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion activities, and enhanced nursing home diversion services. These three elements were also the core of AoA's Choices for Independence initiative, for example, but *Project 2020* takes a bolder approach — taking the three components to national scale and realizing more assistance and greater savings over the course of five to 10 years.

3. Would *Project 2020* be funded through the Older Americans Act? How would this work?

The three main components of *Project 2020* are designed to be implemented through the existing Older Americans Act (OAA) infrastructure with funds flowing from AoA to State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs. We are still working with our legislative champions to determine the best funding mechanism within the federal budget system, but whether the dollars flow through the OAA appropriations channel or another way, the end result will be the same: more funding for all levels of the Aging Services Network.

All states would receive funding for person-centered access to information and evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion activities in the first year of *Project 2020*. Funds for enhanced nursing home diversion services would be distributed to states as a competitive grant program based on performance-based criteria and administered by AoA. In other words, states would not be competing against one another but rather against a set of performance-based criteria.

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Funding for *Project 2020* will be based on each of the three components' target populations, matching rates and eligibility guidelines. For more details, see *Project 2020's* "Funding Assumptions and Elements."

4. Will *Project 2020* affect our existing Older Americans Act funding?

Project 2020 is designed to supplement, **not supplant**, existing Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and funding. *Project 2020* funding would come from budgetary adjustments made as result of savings accrued in the Medicaid and Medicare programs, and thus would not adversely affect existing OAA funding levels your state and agency receives. NASUA and n4a will continue advocating for OAA funding increases for core programs along with the funding necessary to fully implement *Project 2020*.

5. What is the timeline for implementing *Project 2020*?

All states will be engaged in *Project 2020* implementation within three years of passage, and all three components of *Project 2020* will be fully rolled out on nationwide basis within ten years. We expect every state would have a person-centered access to information system in place within five years of enactment. The evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion programs would be rolled out over ten years, although every state/territory would begin receiving funding in the first year following enactment. Finally, all states and territories would have operational programs running in the enhanced nursing home diversion services component by year five.

6. What does "Person-Centered Access to Information" mean? Does this include Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)?

The *Project 2020* proposal is based on a person-centered and consumer-directed approach to long-term supports. The term "person-centered access to information" is intended to encompass the use of different models that address the lack of information on and fragmentation of community-based long-term services. One model that has been successfully tested in states is the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), however other successful "single point of entry" models have also been

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developed by states and community agencies and are also eligible under this component of *Project 2020* so long as they coordinate with or build on the capacities of the Aging Services Network through SUAs and AAAs/Title VIs.

Whether it is an ADRC or another model, person-centered access to information refers to a single entry point system that coordinates with or builds on the capacities of the Aging Services Network through SUAs and AAAs/Title VIs to assist consumers make difficult decisions about long-term care and determine the most appropriate services through options counseling, planning and care management.

The system should provide streamlined access to public and private long-term care services, including information on Medicaid home and community-based services as well as other benefits, programs and services administered through the Aging Services Network and other sources. The program must have the capacity to link consumers to evidence-based programs and target consumers at the highest risk of Medicaid spend down and nursing home entry to enhanced nursing home diversion services.

7. What types of programs qualify as Evidence-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion programs?

Evidence-based programs empower older adults to take responsibility for their health by making informed health choices and adopting healthier behaviors. Most importantly, such programs have been proven to help participants avoid hospitalizations and unnecessary physician visits. The Aging Services Network is well positioned to provide low-cost interventions to help older adults make behavioral changes through clinically tested and proven methods to help them better manage their chronic conditions, prevent falls and maintain their independence in the community.

Project 2020 seeks to build on and replicate these successful evidence-based programs in a variety of areas. States, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs would have the flexibility to choose among a number of evidence-based programs focusing on chronic disease self-management, falls prevention and other areas. Following enactment of *Project 2020*, it is anticipated that more detailed guidelines, as well as a list of approved evidence-based programs, would be

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made available to assist state and community agencies design or expand their programs.

8. What technical assistance will be available to State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs on *Project 2020*? Will an evaluation of the program be conducted?

The *Project 2020* proposal includes an extensive technical assistance component to ensure that implementation will generate the savings projected for the initiative. Analysis of related AoA demonstration projects has revealed that with extensive technical assistance, participating agencies can successfully implement and perform the required activities in a disciplined manner that produces consistent results.

Based on the types of technical assistance that state and community agencies have found work the best, *Project 2020* would include on-the-ground real time, state and community-specific technical assistance that takes full advantage of peer-to-peer information exchange among state and local aging professionals, such as partnering more experienced aging professionals with their counterparts at agencies new to implementing the programs envisioned under *Project 2020*.

A complete national evaluation of all components will be conducted to ensure that established performance goals are met.

9. What can State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs do to prepare for *Project 2020*?

Aging Services Network professionals at every level are encouraged to utilize the *Project 2020* advocacy toolkit to help educate state colleagues, allies and elected officials. Look for NASUA and n4a updates on how you can become involved in the *Project 2020* legislative campaign as we seek congressional champions.

Additionally, some states have moved to enact statewide legislation that complements or builds on the goals of *Project 2020*. As this campaign progresses, we will make available information on those states' efforts.

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10. All my questions haven't been answered. When will we have even greater detail on how *Project 2020* will work?

Since there is not yet a bill to implement *Project 2020*, there are some excellent questions that do not yet have a definite answer. As soon as *Project 2020* is put into legislative language, further information will emerge. n4a and NASUA are working with a Senate champion to explore how best to legislatively advance *Project 2020*, and are currently hopeful that we will have a bill in the next few months. When a bill is introduced, we will develop new Toolkit materials to help explain the legislative particulars of the proposal, and we will ask for your support to advance it in Congress.

For additional information:

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