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As NY's Population Rapidly Ages, AARP Unveils its 1st State Blueprint for Action to Improve Life for the 50+

Urges One-Stop Benefits Shop, Advance Public Disclosure of Rx Price Hikes, More

ALBANY, N.Y. – Create a one-stop shop for New Yorkers to access all benefit programs for which they qualify. Require big drug companies to publicly disclose proposed price hikes in advance. Increase wages for home care workers and increase state funding for in-home services for the elderly to support New Yorkers aging in their own homes.

These are among many recommendations in “[NY State Blueprint for Action](#),” AARP New York’s first such roadmap with policy priorities and actionable steps for the State to help improve life for the fastest-growing segment of New York’s population: the 50-plus.

New Yorkers 50 and older account for more than a third of the state’s population, contributing about \$600 billion a year to the state’s economy and representing the driving force in New York’s cultural life and civic engagement. They account for the state’s leading volunteer base and represent the largest voter turnout bloc.

“New York’s 50-plus have the experience, expertise and commitment to make our state’s future bright,” said **AARP New York State Director Beth Finkel**. “We must address the challenges they experience, and this blueprint provides a roadmap to help our leaders, legislators and policymakers tackle that task.”

Here are some of the blueprint’s top recommendations:

- Stand up for nursing home residents by increasing funding for New York’s federally-required independent nursing home oversight agency, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). AARP New York is urging a \$15 million increase in the upcoming state budget for LTCOP to hire more professional staff and conduct weekly visits at all facilities. A recent AARP New York report found [over 96%](#) of nursing homes in New York City and nearly 60% statewide didn’t receive a single visit in the first quarter of 2022;
- Ensure those who qualify for benefits receive them by creating a multilingual universal benefits form for older New Yorkers for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Medicare Savings Program – which helps seniors pay their Medicare premiums and prescription drug costs - and similar programs. This would establish a universal entry point “one-stop shop” that uses “data matching” to screen for all benefits and automatically submits applications the applicant opts into – as well as driving significant federal aid New York is now leaving on the table;
- One step toward that goal would be to enact a bill introduced last year ([S8362A-Parker](#))/[A9099A-Cusick](#)) to require the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to coordinate with utilities on automated file matching for Energy Affordability Program participants;
- Fight skyrocketing prescription drug costs by requiring public reporting of proposed price hikes in advance – as **Governor Kathy Hochul** proposed in her 2023 [State of the State Message](#) - allowing safe

and legal importation of FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada, and limiting New York prescription drug prices to the much lower Canadian prices;

- Incentivize more New Yorkers to earn their way out of poverty through work by removing the EITC age cap so the fast-growing number of working New Yorkers 65-plus can qualify - and increase the credit from 30% to 40% of the federal credit;
- Support fair pay for home care workers by establishing a floor based on 150% of the regional minimum wage, and increase State funding for home- and community-based services for the elderly – both of which would support New Yorkers ageing in their own homes as the vast majority want;
- Confront the affordable housing crunch by encouraging creation of more properly regulated and safeguarded “mother-in-law apartments,” known as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) – while urging municipalities to access \$85 million in current year funding to update existing ADUs and build new units;
- Encourage home accessibility by increasing funding for the Access to Home Program, which provides financial assistance to make residential units accessible for low- and moderate-income persons with disabilities, and for the Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly (RESTORE) program, which provides financial resources to help homeowners age 60 and over address health and safety-related emergencies and code violations;
- Fight age discrimination by enacting a [bill that passed](#) the State Senate last year to prohibit employers from requiring job applicants to disclose age, date of birth or date of graduation unless the employer can demonstrate how that information relates to the job;
- Encourage more New Yorkers to save for retirement by including “gig” workers in the Secure Choice Savings Program, which requires private sector employers to offer retirement savings options to employees that do not currently have a plan;
- Support New Yorkers in fighting unfair utility rate hikes by providing “intervenor” reimbursement to help give residential utility customers an equal footing with utility companies and big business groups before regulators.

“NY State Blueprint” is available [online](#). AARP New York staff and volunteers will share hard copies of the book and meet with leaders across the state to discuss policy solutions and push for increased support and attention to the issues and recommendations outlined in the blueprint.

[Click to read “NY State Blueprint”](#)

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About AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation’s largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org, www.aarp.org/espanol or follow @AARP, @AARPenEspanol and @AARPadvocates, @AliadosAdelante on social media.

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