



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Tim Kaine  
Governor

Patrick O. Gottschalk  
Secretary of  
Commerce and Trade

William C. Shelton  
Director

October 1, 2006

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine, Governor of Virginia  
Members of the General Assembly

**FROM:** William C. Shelton, Director

**SUBJECT:** REPORT ON ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF THE AGING OF THE  
POPULATION PURSUANT TO HOUSE BILL 110 OF THE 2006 GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

Pursuant to House Bill 110, passed by the Virginia General Assembly in the 2006 Session, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of the population.



*Partners for Better Communities*

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## **Annual Progress Report of the Department of Housing and Community Development on the Effect of the Aging Population on State Agencies**

Chapter 54 of the 2006 Acts of the General Assembly amended § 2.2-5510 of the Code of Virginia to require that each state agency include in its strategic plan “*an analysis of the impact that the aging of the population will have on its ability to deliver services and a description of how the agency is responding to these changes.*” The bill provides further that “*(b)ased on guidance from the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, each agency shall report by October 1 of each year to the Governor and to the General Assembly its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population in at least five specific actions.*”

In accordance with this requirement and the guidance provided to agencies of state government by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Department of Housing and Community Development is submitting the following information for consideration by the Governor and General Assembly.

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## Persons over the Age of 65 Receiving Agency Services

1. *To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.*

Programs of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) have generally not distinguished between persons in the 65-74, 75-84, and 85+ age categories. Because of federal program reporting requirements, most of the programs distinguish between persons under and over the age of 65. The Department has not collected information by subcategories above the age of 65. The table below addresses the most recent years for which data by age is available, which will serve to indicate the recent trends in the respective program service areas.

### Persons Over 65 Receiving Services

Service Area	Fiscal Year			
	2003	2004	2005	2006
Home Rehabilitation/Indoor Plumbing	94	56	45	54
Production/Preservation of Affordable Housing Units*	N/A	N/A	104	461
Emergency and Accessibility Home Repairs [Households with Elderly Residents]	274	271	128	366
Prevention of Homelessness	42	109	69	58
Home Weatherization Services [Households with Elderly Residents]**	1306	1856	2217	1708

\*Presumed benefit based on units of senior housing projects receiving Community Development Block Grant or e HOME Investment Partnership programs using federal funds administered by DHCD.

\*\*Reporting for these programs is on a federal fiscal year basis. Data for 2006 covers three-quarters of the program year.

## Agency Programs and Services Used by Senior Citizens

- 2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?*

Most of the major housing and community development programs and services administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) target low and moderate income individuals and families. Some of the benefits provided to seniors may be an incidental consequence of the program design. Nonetheless, in several of the programs listed below, older Virginians have traditionally comprised a significant share of the beneficiaries:

**Indoor Plumbing/Rehabilitation Program:** DHCD combines state general funds and HOME Investment Partnership funds to provide zero interest, forgivable loans paying for the installation of indoor plumbing. The program targets lower-income owners of substandard housing where either indoor plumbing does not exist or where the existing water delivery or waste disposal system has failed. This program also provides for the general rehabilitation of such units and for accessibility improvements to overcrowded units or those occupied by persons with disabilities. Indoor plumbing loans are only available to localities that are not federal entitlement jurisdictions of the CDBG program.

**Community Development Block Grant Program:** DHCD administers U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through a competitive grant program that funds projects addressing critical community development needs. These needs include housing, infrastructure, and economic development. Eligible activities include rehabilitation, relocation, and demolition of homes and buildings. In addition, community facilities, such as senior centers, are eligible for project assistance.

**Affordable Housing Production and Preservation Program:** DHCD uses federal HOME Investment Partnership funds (including a 25 percent State match) to provide below-market rate loans for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental projects containing four or more units and congregate housing projects. These rental units target low and very-low income tenants. Funds from this program provide gap financing and are generally used with other funding such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits, bond financing, and other sources of private or public funds

**Emergency Home Repair Program:** DHCD uses state general funds to remove imminent health and safety hazards and barriers to habitability in the homes of lower income Virginians. Eligible repairs include plumbing, structural, and electrical work as well as the installation of wheelchair ramps and accessible appliances. Funding through the Virginia Tax Check-off for Housing, which specifically addresses the housing needs of seniors and persons with disabilities, is also distributed through this program

**Accessibility Repair Program:** DHCD works with other agencies and non-profit organizations and uses the receipts from income tax check offs to pay for modification work needed to make housing more accessible.

**Homeless Intervention Program:** DHCD uses state general funds and federal TANF funds to provide time-limited financial and housing counseling assistance to low income individuals and families experiencing a financial crisis and that are at risk of becoming homeless or that are currently homeless. HIP assistance sustains their ability to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

**Weatherization Assistance:** DHCD administers grants using two sources of federal funds, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to reduce the heating and cooling costs and ensure the health and safety of low-income households. The elderly, individuals with disabilities, and families with children are among the targeted populations. The **Weatherization Assistance Program** (WAP) relies on DOE funding. Fifteen percent of the HHS **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program** (LIHEAP) funds are used for weatherization assistance. Services include sealing air leaks, repairing leaky duct systems, repairing or replacing unsafe or inefficient heating systems, and installing carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

Although the agency does not directly maintain waiting lists for the services discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the referral lists maintained by the Department of Social Services for the LIHEAP program and referral lists maintained by housing authorities, homeless service providers and other agency partners, strongly suggest that the levels of need already exceed the resources available to the agency. As the agency has noted in its strategic plan, current funding levels are unlikely to meet the anticipated demand in the future for services linked to an aging population.

## **Agency Programs and Services Specifically Designed to Serve Senior Citizens**

- 3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.*

DHCD has not developed programs specifically to provide services to seniors. The majority of the housing and community development funds available to the agency are from federal programs intended to benefit low- and moderate-income persons. To the extent that seniors—especially those with fixed or limited incomes--fall within program income guidelines, they have tended to comprise a substantial component of the beneficiaries. Depending on the specific program, they may account for one-third to nearly one-half of the persons benefited.

## **Consumer Oriented Publications and Websites**

- 4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides “consumer-oriented” publications and websites online that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.*

The majority of publications produced by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) target specific audiences, such as building inspectors, fire safety officials, business owners, small-business entrepreneurs and community development planners. Others address units of local government and other entities eligible to participate in various grant, loan or technical assistance activities administered by the agency. Therefore, most publications are not produced for the public, nor could they be described as consumer-oriented.

There is one significant exception to this general rule. DHCD publishes and offers online in PDF format a handbook containing the current provisions of the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA). The VRLTA specifies the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants under a rental agreement. The handbook also provides information on possible sources of legal assistance for landlord/tenant problems. This may be of wider use to the general public. Although DHCD maintains the handbook, landlord/tenant disputes (other than fair housing complaints) generally fall within the purview of the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

All documents published by DHCD are written and designed to be comprehensive and understandable to their target audiences. These audiences may include, but are by no



means limited to, seniors. The use of PDF formatting permits users to magnify online documents to enhance their readability.

## **Services Addressing the Impact of Aging on Virginia's Population**

5. *Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.*

The Department is undertaking actions in several areas that may assist in responding to the challenges associated with the aging of the state's population.

- In the realm of building regulation, DHCD is actively reviewing building and fire code provisions affecting assisted living facilities as well as other residential facilities that are intended to provide a safe environment for generally older residents with various limiting conditions.
- In keeping with its emphasis on enhancing opportunities for community development in Virginia's localities, the Department is maintaining its commitment to working with communities in identifying the areas of greatest need and assisting through its grant and loan programs in meeting those needs. As the aging population begins to have an impact on localities, non-profit organizations, and other partners, DHCD is positioning itself to work with them in responding to specific areas of anticipated need, including :
  - Growing numbers of disabled, elderly, and homeless households are creating a higher demand for housing with access to critical supportive services.
  - Increases in the number of requests for assistance for home modifications are resulting from an expanding elderly population that is attempting to remain independent.
- The redesign of the agency web site, which is currently underway, will enhance its user-friendly features and facilitate access by persons with disabilities. This should simultaneously increase its ease of use for older Virginians seeking information about a variety of community development and housing assistance services administered by the agency or its state and local partners.