



# **COVID-19 Response Plan**

# **for Older Adults**



A Fairfax County, VA Publication  
November 2020



Dear Fairfax County residents,

No demographic has been harder hit by the pandemic than our older adult community. Case rates and fatality rates among older adults are the highest. Through June roughly 75 percent of COVID deaths in Fairfax County were from long term care facilities that serve our older adults. To date, over 80 percent of COVID deaths in Fairfax County have been adults 65 and older and over 95 percent of all deaths have been adults 50 and older. For those older adults who have not contracted the virus, the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges they were already facing, including physical and mental health issues including isolation. This is a tragedy that cannot go unaddressed.

As a result of the pandemic, many of the County's older adults have been living in virtual isolation and fear. Visits from friends, families and caregivers have been reduced or eliminated. The volunteer and other activities older adults regularly participate in have been closed or severely cut back. Many of our older adults are living in isolation due to COVID restrictions and fear of the disease. It is likely that the impact will continue for some time.

In July, we asked the Board of Supervisors to pause the development of the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan that was approved for this year and focus on a plan to address the critical issues facing our older adults during the pandemic. After multiple workgroups and focus groups with our Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, 50+ Community Ambassadors, village coordinators, the Health Department as well as medical and mental health professionals from Inova, County staff, nonprofit partners, and community members, we have synthesized their needs and feedback in this plan. The three primary needs they identified for older adults are wellness, technology, and social isolation. With their input, we have developed short term initiatives to better serve our older adult community through the remainder of the pandemic. It also includes a focus on what older adults can and should be doing in order to maintain their mental and physical health.

In addition to these initiatives, this plan includes a comprehensive list of the continued services that county staff and partners are offering. Specifically the lead agency: the Department of Family Services' Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, as well as the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, the Fairfax County Health Department, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Fairfax County Department of Fire and Rescue, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and ServiceSource have executed providing services, supports and advocacy since the beginning of the pandemic.

To our staff, Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, and partners, thank you for your dedication and passion for serving our most vulnerable. Your service to our community during this difficult time has been and continues to be invaluable.

To our caregivers, the care you provide everyday for our older adults, even as you struggle to care for your own family does not go unnoticed. Without you, we could not care for our older population, thank you.

And to our residents, especially our older adults, thank you for not giving up on each other during these difficult times. We all need one another.

Our hope is that through these strategic initiatives, as well as the many continued efforts of our staff, we can care for our most vulnerable population in this pandemic and continue our mission to help them age with dignity.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Pat Herrity  
Springfield District Supervisor  
Chairman of the Older Adults Committee



Supervisor James Walkinshaw  
Braddock District Supervisor  
Vice Chairman of the Older Adults  
Committee

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**Appendix B** – COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults: Immediate Initiatives to Move Forward



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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COVID-19 has impacted communities around the world. The oldest members of these communities have been hit especially hard. Fairfax County staff and partners have been working collaboratively across agencies to continuously gather information on the needs of marginalized communities and to address both existing and new needs of older adults.

On July 28, 2020, at a Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Pat Herrity and Supervisor James Walkinshaw introduced a Board Matter that recognized some of the specific challenges facing older adults. The Supervisors jointly called for a COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults that would offer insights and provide resources to older adults in addressing some of those challenges.

*This plan references older adults but intentionally includes programs and services for caregivers and adults 18 and older with disabilities. The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is part of the Adult and Aging Division in the Department of Family Services (DFS).*

It identified three primary concerns:

- Social Isolation
- Technology
- Wellness

This COVID-19 Response Plan reflects:

- extensive efforts of Fairfax County staff and community partners over the past seven months to address immediate key needs of older adults cut off from customary support systems by the pandemic, and
- observations and suggestions for immediate initiatives to address service and program gaps related to the pandemic. Initiatives will either be acted upon or investigated further in a larger scale SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan.

# 2. FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

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In September, the COVID-19 Response Plan workgroup conducted two focus groups: one for 50+ Ambassadors and representatives of the Neighbor to Neighbor village network, and one for medical and mental health providers. The purpose was to gather feedback from professionals and experienced volunteers familiar with older adults who do and do not have access to technology.

The focus groups were intended to capture feedback from diverse, marginalized, and other

communities regarding gaps in services and on what potential solutions they might suggest for the challenges related to social isolation, technology, and physical, emotional and mental wellness.

Facilitated by county staff, and members of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA), the focus groups used surveys and dialogue to document insight on where the county should focus next efforts in increasing support to older adults during the pandemic and beyond.

### 3. SOCIAL ISOLATION

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The complexities of COVID-19 have created a need for both physical and social distancing. This distancing has impacted the daily routines and activities of all people, but especially of older adults. In Fairfax County, restricted visitation at long-term care (LTC) facilities, closure of congregate sites for activities, modified volunteer services, and contactless Meals on Wheels services have profoundly impacted interactions within the older adult community and contributes to social isolation.

In August, ADvancing States, an organization that represents the nation's 56 state and territorial Agencies on Aging and long-term services and supports, released [\*Addressing Social Isolation for Older Adults During the COVID-19 Crisis\*](#). This resource states that "loneliness and social isolation for older adults have a deep emotional impact, sometimes leading to social disorders such as depression and anxiety. Maybe less well-known is the profound impact loneliness has on physical health." We note with pride that Fairfax County's Virtual Center for Active Adults was recognized in this report for its partnership between county agencies and a nonprofit to produce the Lunch Bunch series to help provide virtual social opportunities for seniors.

Fairfax County has collaborated across agencies to ensure that there are services in place for residents of the county, as well as the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, that address the risk of increased social isolation for older adults. Some of those services include:

- **Home Delivered Meals Expansion:** The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) expanded **Meals on Wheels** criteria to serve older adults who are quarantining as a result of the pandemic. Congregate Meal participants who would normally eat at senior centers that were closed also became eligible for home-delivered meals. The program has ensured that participants have shelf-stable meals to sustain food security in the event of an emergency. Over 300,000 meals have been made available during the pandemic to older adults. A partnership with Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) ensured 299,138 of those meals were delivered by Fastran using NCS staff on each bus as runners. This provided staff the opportunity to do welfare checks on each person during the delivery. Additionally, 3,300 shelf stable meals were delivered through this partnership.
- **Wellness Assessments:** NCS implemented a program to intentionally assess and gather information regarding overall well-being from individuals who previously attended Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Centers that had closed. This assessment aims to connect those individuals and their families to essential resources, to demonstrate support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to use the aggregated information to fine-tune programming and increase agency capacity to meet the ongoing needs of members and their families. 91% of seniors were satisfied with the county's current response to COVID 19.

- Welfare Check-ins:** The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has conducted welfare checks of all current residents in Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) owned senior residences. The purpose of the wellness calls and follow up activities are to demonstrate support and concern for residents during the pandemic, and assess other critical impacts on social determinants of health such as essential needs, connection to families, services and resources, opportunities to decrease social isolation and assessment of technology use and interest. HCD has distributed donated face coverings to residents, suspended charging late fees, kept residents housed, and connected individuals who have been affected by the economic downturn to sources for financial assistance.
- Virtual/Telephonic Social Visiting:** The AAA converted its Volunteer Solutions social-visiting program to a virtual platform to connect older adults with friendly volunteers who would establish and maintain connections.
- Virtual Center for Active Adults:** NCS, in partnership with Service Source and DFS, made a significant contribution toward combatting social isolation by creating a [virtual center](#) where older adults and adults with disabilities can gather, learn, talk, exercise, and remain engaged with one another. Multiple partners, including HCD, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB), Park Authority, Libraries, Health Department, other county agencies and over 10 different community partners, support this effort. The Friends of Senior Centers sponsored an additional virtual platform for program expansion. With an annual attendance of over 16,000, older adults participated in 772 virtual activities
- COVID Neighbors Helping Neighbors (N2N):** The Health Department created a toolkit to help county residents quickly start a COVID-19 Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors Program involving neighbors making phone calls to older adults and others at risk of social isolation during the pandemic.
- Care Packages:** Both the AAA and HCD facilitated the disbursement of care packages to older adults and their caregivers. Fairfax County [Fire and Rescue](#) contributed by donating items and delivering the some of care packages. 1,190 care packages were delivered to older adults.
- Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:** Residents of LTC facilities have felt the impact of changes in visitation policies. The [LTC Ombudsman Program](#), which is continuing its investigations remotely, mailed postcards to all residents of LTC facilities to remind them that they are not alone, and the Ombudsman Program is still here to support.
- Golden Gazette:** The [Golden Gazette](#), a free monthly community newsletter (AAA) with more than 26,000 subscribers and a dynamic webpage, has remained a steady source of information to keep older adults connected. In the nine months since the pandemic started, the Golden Gazette has published more than 85 COVID-19 related articles, videos, and podcasts that help keep older adults connected, safe, and informed.

## The Focus Groups identified these themes and short-term solutions related to Social Isolation, which will be further explored:

- **Access to Technology:** County staff is working with partners to identify accessibility to technology.
- **Access to Broadband:** County staff is exploring barriers to access and analyzing data on access.
- **Animatronic Pets:** Florida and New York have had remarkable success in improving wellness among residents of assisted living facilities and people living at home with dementia through providing inexpensive robotic dogs and cats as companions. Further information will be gathered.
- **Marketing Efforts:** Efforts will be implemented to distribute service offerings to those without technology, with language barriers, and other potentially marginalized communities.
- **Neighborhood Programs Such as Neighbor to Neighbor/Villages:** Expansion efforts will be considered.
- **Emergency Planning:** There will be consideration of older adult response teams in partnership with the Community Emergency Response Team to assist in the event of an emergency.
- **Holiday Outreach:** Community group card distribution, yard signs, and holiday cooking classes on Channel 16 will be considered.
- **Consultation with the Health Department:** Safe, in-person opportunities will be considered.

## 4. TECHNOLOGY

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In January 2019, an article published by AARP, *Older Americans' Technology Usage Keeps Climbing*, stated that "91% of those age 50+ report using a computer, and 94% say technology helps them keep in touch with family and friends." Yet despite these promising statistics on use of technology, older adults who do not have the means or capability to purchase and use technology

or access the internet must not be forgotten.

COVID-19 brought about rapid and dramatic changes in the way older adults, as well as others, interact. Technology is at the center of those changes, bringing challenges but also some significant benefits. Many older adults have turned to technology to avoid

social isolation and to address wellness in the COVID-19 environment. Technology allows families and friends to engage even while maintaining a safe physical distance.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health launched a Mental Health Innovation Challenge to combat social isolation. It will provide awards up to \$750,000 for development of an easy-to-use online system that offers suggestions for programs, activities, technologies and resources that can help people connect to others and engage in the community, based on their individual needs, interests and abilities. No Wrong Door Virginia is one of two finalists in the competition. The technology helps people create their own social connection plan based on assessment and aggregated information from personalized answers, options, and resources, and if awarded will benefit older adults and caregivers across the nation.

Locally, here are some of the ways that Fairfax County teams have banded together to ensure that older adults have technology-based options to enhance their wellbeing:

- **Telehealth:** The Fairfax–Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) implemented virtual telehealth options to meet the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities, and other eligible residents.
- **Text Alerts for Caregivers:** The AAA offers support to caregivers with text messages sent through [Fairfax Alerts](#), highlighting available resources. Caregivers receive an average of 4-5 texts per month. Over 500 caregivers signed up to receive text alerts.
- **Volunteer Solutions:** The AAA halted its in-person volunteering as a safety measure but manages a volunteer IT On Call program that helps with technology needs virtually.
- **Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD):** HCD is piloting a “Tablets for Seniors” loan program at one of the FCRHA senior communities. Older adults in one of the FCRHA assisted living communities also benefited from a donation of smart televisions through partnerships with community organizations.
- **Virtual Center for Active Adults:** On this [webpage](#), technology programming and assistance are part of the monthly calendar of events managed by NCS and a nonprofit partner; Service Source. Tech support is available 1:1 or via “Learn Zoom Sessions.” For those unable or unwilling to participate online – a tech free alternative is offered by mailing monthly activity packets which include brain health games.
- **VICAP:** Staff from AAA’s [Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program](#) (VICAP) have established a virtual format to continue to assist older adults who are enrolling in Medicare or needing help to identify appropriate insurance plans.

**The Focus Groups identified these themes and short-term solutions related to Technology which will be further explored:**

- **COVID-19 “ThinkTank Challenge”:** Inspired by the existing high school “Shark Tank” competitions, this would invite participants to come up with new ways to serve the older adult population. This competition will occur in April.
- **Technology training:** Training opportunities will be increased. Given the restraints on in-person assistance, alternatives will be considered to educate older adults.
- **Options for low/no-tech users:** Consideration will be given where technology is providing a barrier.

## 5. WELLNESS

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COVID-19 has brought change to daily routines for most people. For older adults, the impact has been profound. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) acknowledges in a July 1, 2020 release, [\*Coping with Stress\*](#), “Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.” But since these actions are necessary to combat the virus, the CDC advises that, “coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.”

Resilience is key, and part of resilience is paying attention to physical, emotional,

and mental wellness. Across Fairfax County agencies that care for the community, teams recognize the importance of wellness. Here are some services offered to help residents care for themselves:

- **Shopping Services: The Neighbor2Neighbor (N2N)** program of the Fairfax County Health Department (HD), in partnership with Fire & Rescue Department volunteers, created a free grocery shopping and pharmacy pick-up program. Similar programming is offered by the AAA to those enrolled in aging services, along with transportation for older adults who

may need to get to the grocery store or pharmacy in person. The Community Services Board (CSB) also offers prescription deliveries to make sure that people have the medications they need to stay well. Over 300 grocery and pharmacy pickups were provided.

- **Education:** The HD continues to provide vital information to the public through its **COVID-19 toolkit**. In addition to tips on how to “Protect Yourself and Slow the Spread of COVID-19,” this web resource offers information on case data, phased reopening, contact tracing, testing, and more. The HD offers information specific to older adults, such as “**When and How to Safely Visit Grandparents**” and “**Steps to Stay Safe If You are Over 60**.” In addition, the HD Director of Epidemiology held several phone conferences to share how to safely serve older adults during the

pandemic with leaders of NV Rides Partners, Villages, Shepherd Centers and over 50 additional community-based providers.

- **Flu Shots:** NCS and the HD partnered to provide flu vaccines at senior centers in the community.
- **Chronic Disease Self-Management:** **ElderLink** is now offering its evidence-based Chronic-Disease Self-Management workshop via telephone. The program aims to build participants’ confidence in managing their health and remaining engaged and active.
- **Fire & Rescue:** Fire & Rescue continues to provide a response to our community to maintain safety. The department has emergency trained volunteers that participate in the N2N shopping service that serves older adults and adults with disabilities.



## The Focus Group identified these themes and short-term solutions related to Wellness which will be further explored:

- **Education efforts related to mental health:** Consider increased offerings of Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults.
- **Education:** Consider increased education about not skipping medical appointments , self-care, provide health guidance, and develop a ranking list for risk level of common activities.
- **Self-guided questionnaire for reflection:** Develop reflection questionnaire for individual wellness through COVID-19 using the following questions, which align with both the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development Resident Welfare Check Questionnaire and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services Universal Wellness Assessment for Center Participants and Families:
  1. How have you been feeling during the pandemic?
  2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your access to basic needs such as food, housing, and medicine?
  3. How are you taking care of your overall health and physical safety?
  4. Have you had your annual physical?
  5. Have you considered getting a flu shot?
  6. How has social distancing impacted you and your family?
  7. How have you stayed in touch with family and friends?
  8. If you previously were involved in a faith community, have you remained involved?
  9. What are you doing to stay active?
  10. How are you occupying your time?
  11. How have you been tending to your emotional and mental health?
  12. Have you reflected upon and addressed your stressors and/or anxiety?
  13. Do you use technology such as a computer, smart phone, or tablet?
  14. Do you have the tools or knowledge you need to utilize technology?
  15. Are you aware of the services offered in your community?

## 6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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In addition to the short-term solutions that will be explored, additional feedback was received in response to COVID-19 that will be considered in the development of next steps for the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan.

### **SOCIAL ISOLATION**

- Consider public service announcements related to resources that address social isolation
- Support for Villages and neighborhood outreach
- Explore outdoor social activities
- Continued community partnerships and outreach to connect the community with services\*

### **TECHNOLOGY**

- Continued Development of virtual volunteer opportunities\*
- Explore radio and TV options available for those who may not have or want technology access
- Consider exploring expansion of technology use for GrandInvolve\*
- Consider opening Shark Tank competition to all ages
- Continued exploration of simple technology options, access, and affordability\*

### **WELLNESS**

- Partner with the Health Department for communication to Older Adults around any potential vaccine information\*
- Consider expanding caregiver support

\*Work has already begun on these solutions.

This report, compiled by the COVID-19 workgroup and the Commission on Aging, highlights the collaboration and partnership among departments and community. The report emphasizes the many services Fairfax County has implemented during these unprecedented times with the help of strong collaborators and a lens on equity to

address marginalized communities. It also points to ways where increased data informed decisions could lead to doing more to keep all our older residents healthy, connected, and informed—both now, and in the future.

In researching and addressing three pandemic highlighted topics: social isolation, technology, and wellness; the COVID-19 workgroup and Commission on Aging will enact this plan by further investigating initiatives that were outlined as common themes in the Focus Group Input section. As resources and collaborative efforts move initiatives

forward, understandably, this work and current work will inform and lay the groundwork for the longer-term SHAPE the Future of Aging plan, which will comprise an even more comprehensive approach to future planning that will support older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers.

## 7. HOW TO FIND HELP

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For more information about any of the programs listed contact:

The Department of Family Services' [Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line](#) (ADCR) at 703-324-7948, TTY 711. Staffed by social service specialist, the ADCR is a trusted source of information that older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers can use to obtain assistance in planning for their needs. Information and referrals to resources are provided according to each caller's unique circumstances. ADCR hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. They can

also be reached by filling out a [web request form](#).

To report abuse, neglect or exploitation call [Adult Protective Services](#) at 703-324-7450, TTY 711.

COVID-19 specific information can be found on the [Fairfax County Health Department](#) website.

To stay informed about interesting topics and resources for older adults and caregivers – subscribe to the [Golden Gazette](#).



## 8. PLAN CONTRIBUTORS

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### **Plan Sponsors**

- Supervisor Pat Herrity
- Supervisor James Walkinshaw

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- Linda Bufano, Office of Supervisor Walkinshaw

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- Cathy Muha, Secretary
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Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-7500, TTY 711.

## Fairfax County's Collaborative Response to Address Social Isolation, Technology, and Wellness Needs for Older Adults and Their Caregivers Through COVID-19

- **Home Delivered Meals:** The Department of Family Services' (DFS) Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Meals on Wheels Program provides meals to older adults who live in the Fairfax area. Congregate Meal (CM) sites are currently closed due to the pandemic, and CM participants are currently eligible to receive Home Delivered Meals as an alternative. Meals have been delivered in partnership with the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS).
- **Wellness Assessments:** The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) implemented a program to intentionally assess and gather information regarding overall well-being from individuals who previously attended Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Centers that had closed.
- **Welfare Check-ins:** The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has conducted welfare checks of all current residents in Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) owned senior residences to assess critical impacts on social determinants of health.
- **Volunteers:** DFS' AAA converted its Volunteer Solutions (VS) social visiting program to a virtual platform to connect older adults with friendly volunteers who would establish and maintain connections. VS also manages an IT on Call program that helps with technology needs virtually.
- **Virtual Center for Active Adults:** NCS, in partnership with Service Source and DFS, made a significant contribution toward combatting social isolation by creating a virtual center where older adults and adults with disabilities can gather, learn, talk, exercise, and remain engaged with one another. Tech support is available 1:1 or via "Learn Zoom" sessions.
- **COVID Neighbors Helping Neighbors (N2N):** The Health Department created a toolkit to help county residents quickly start a COVID-19 Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors Program involving neighbors making phone calls to older adults and others at risk of social isolation during the pandemic.
- **Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP):** The NVLTCOP continues to investigate issues that impact resident rights, and has mailed postcards to residents in 129 LTC facilities supported by the program to remind residents that they are not alone, and that the NVLTCOP is still here to support.
- **Golden Gazette:** The Golden Gazette, a free monthly community newsletter (DFS'AAA) with more than 26,000 subscribers and a dynamic webpage, has remained a steady source of information to keep older adults connected. In the nine months since the pandemic started, the Golden Gazette has published more than 85 COVID-19 related articles, videos, and podcasts that help keep older adults connected, safe, and informed.
- **Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD):** HCD is piloting a "Tablets for Seniors" loan program at one of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority senior communities.
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## Fairfax County's Collaborative Response to Address Social Isolation, Technology, and Wellness Needs for Older Adults and Their Caregivers Through COVID-19

- **Telehealth:** The Fairfax–Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) implemented virtual telehealth options to meet the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities, and other eligible residents.
- **Text Alerts for Caregivers:** DFS'AAA offers support to caregivers with text messages sent through Fairfax Alerts, highlighting available resources. Caregivers receive an average of 4-5 texts per month. Over 500 caregivers signed up to received text alerts.
- **Education:** HD continues to provide vital information to the public through its COVID-19 toolkit.
- **Flu Shots:** NCS and HD partnered to provide flu vaccines at senior centers in the community.
- **Chronic Disease Self-Management:** DFS' AAA ElderLink is now offering its evidence-based Chronic-Disease Self-Management workshop via telephone. The program aims to build participants' confidence in managing their health and remaining engaged and active.
- **Fire & Rescue Department:** Fire & Rescue continues to provide response to our community to maintain safety. The department has emergency trained volunteers that participate in the N2N shopping service that serves older adults and adults with disabilities.

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- COVID-19 specific information can be found on the [Fairfax County Health Department](#) website.
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# COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults: Immediate Initiatives to Move Forward

## SOCIAL ISOLATION

- With special emphasis on the impact of social isolation and loneliness on mind and body, the Alzheimer's Association will present their Healthy Living for Brain and Body program. At any age, there are lifestyle habits that can be adopted to help maintain or even potentially improve health and brain activity, and possibly even delay the onset of cognitive decline. This workshop covers four areas of lifestyle habits that are associated with healthy aging.  
**Project Owner:** Alzheimer's Association  
**County Liaison:** Department of Family Services' Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA)  
**Target Completion:** December 2020
- The Health Department will post Holiday Health Guidance on their website regarding safety while engaging with others through the holidays in this pandemic environment.  
**Project Owner:** Fairfax County Health Department  
**Target Completion:** December 2020
- AAA Nutrition Program will develop a holiday cooking segment to engage older adults that will be aired on Channel 16.  
**Project Owner:** Department of Family Services' Fairfax Area Agency on Aging in partnership with Channel 16  
**Target Completion:** December 2020

## TECHNOLOGY

- ServiceSource is implementing a service that will get technology into the hands of older adults with a low income to increase access to online opportunities. This program will utilize the ServiceSource Foundation to solicit donations from businesses and the community-at-large to purchase technology. This service is an expansion of ServiceSource's current initiative, "Engaging Through Technology", that provides technology to adults with disabilities to participate in virtual services. The initiative has a process in place to identify candidates, determine eligibility, and to ship technology to the candidates. ServiceSource pre-installs Zoom and Microsoft Teams and provides a quick reference guide for how to use commonly needed features (Ex. Accessibility features).  
**Project Owner:** ServiceSource  
**County Liaison:** Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services  
**Target Completion:** December 2020
- In the tradition of the annual "Shark Tank" Technology Challenge, a virtual "Think Tank" Challenge will be offered to high school students in Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. The initiative will be called "In This Together Think Tank Challenge: Older Adults and High School Students Engaging Together." Project proposals will include blueprint and development plans. Finalists will pitch project to panel of judges, and winners will receive cash prizes from INTEGRITYOne.  
**Project Owner:** Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA), The Department of Family Services' Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)  
**Target Completion:** Think Tank Call for Proposals in February 2021. Think Tank Committee reviews student proposals in March 2021, and Think Tank Competition will go before a panel of judges in April 2021.

# COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults: Immediate Initiatives to Move Forward

## WELLNESS

- The Fairfax- Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) will offer a Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults workshop. Mental Health First Aid is a public education program offered by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board that helps communities understand mental illnesses, seek timely intervention, and save lives. About 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. in any given year has a diagnosable mental illness. Symptoms of mental illness can be difficult to detect – and even when friends and family can tell that something is wrong, they may not know how to help.

**Project Owner:** Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)  
**Target Completion:** At least one offering by the end of the first quarter of 2021.
- The Health Department will develop a High, Medium, and Low Risk Activity List that will help determine the risk level of activities common to older adults to encourage safe activities.

**Project Owner:** Fairfax County Health Department  
**Target Completion:** December 2020
- Self-guided questionnaire for reflection of individual wellness through COVID-19 will be posted on the older adults' webpage.

**Project Owner:** Department of Family Services' Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Communications Team  
**Target Completion:** December 2020

