



Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging Area Plan

FFY 2027 - 2029

**As Required by the Older Americans Act, As
Amended in 2020: Section 306, Area Plans**

**Approved by HHSC
Office of Area Agencies on Aging
Effective October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2029**

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Executive Summary

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) operates in accordance with the Older Americans Act (OAA) to develop and coordinate a comprehensive, person-centered system of services for older individuals and disabled adults within the Planning and Service Area (PSA). Guided by its mission *to advocate on behalf of disabled adults and the senior population and assist them in living independent, meaningful, and dignified lives*, the AAA serves all older adults with particular emphasis on individuals with the greatest economic and social need, including low-income individuals and those residing in rural areas.

The AAA's vision—*dedicated to providing support and resources that enhance the well-being of seniors in the Ark-Tex region, foster independence, and promote active engagement*—is reflected throughout its service delivery model. Programs and services are designed to empower individuals to remain safely in their homes and communities while maintaining autonomy, health, and social connectedness.

Consistent with OAA requirements, the AAA relies on strong community partnerships to ensure efficient, coordinated, and responsive service delivery. The AAA collaborates with organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, Tri-State Alzheimer's Alliance, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, local Health and Human Services Commission offices, local Social Security offices, and local foundations. These partnerships reduce service fragmentation and enhance access to resources that best meet individual needs.

The AAA strives to improve access to supportive services that promote independence and prevent or delay institutionalization. Nutrition services are a core OAA-funded program and include both congregate and home-delivered meals. These services that are delivered by contracted providers address food insecurity, support disease prevention, and reduce social isolation. Meals are planned to meet dietary guidelines, approved by certified dietitians, and include nutrition education to support healthy aging.

Congregate meals are provided at senior centers across the PSA. For individuals who are homebound or unable to attend congregate sites, home-delivered meals ensure continued access to nutritious food and regular wellness checks.

In alignment with the Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan and OAA priorities related to social engagement and physical health, the AAA offers Evidence-Based Intervention programs that promote physical activity, chronic disease management, and socialization. These programs have demonstrated effectiveness and continue to expand in response to community demand.

Transportation is a critical supportive service under the OAA. The AAA assists older individuals who face barriers accessing medical appointments, nutrition sites, grocery stores, and other essential services. Through partnerships with regional transportation providers, the AAA improves mobility and reduces isolation across the PSA.

AAA case managers coordinate a wide range of home- and community-based services, including homemaker services, emergency response, in-home respite, health maintenance, and residential repair. Services are delivered using a person-centered approach and are especially vital for individuals recovering from illness or hospitalization, supporting successful aging in place.

The AAA provides benefits counseling to assist individuals in navigating Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other benefit programs. Counselors screen for Medicare Savings Programs and Extra Help and provide application assistance when eligible, supporting informed decision-making and financial stability.

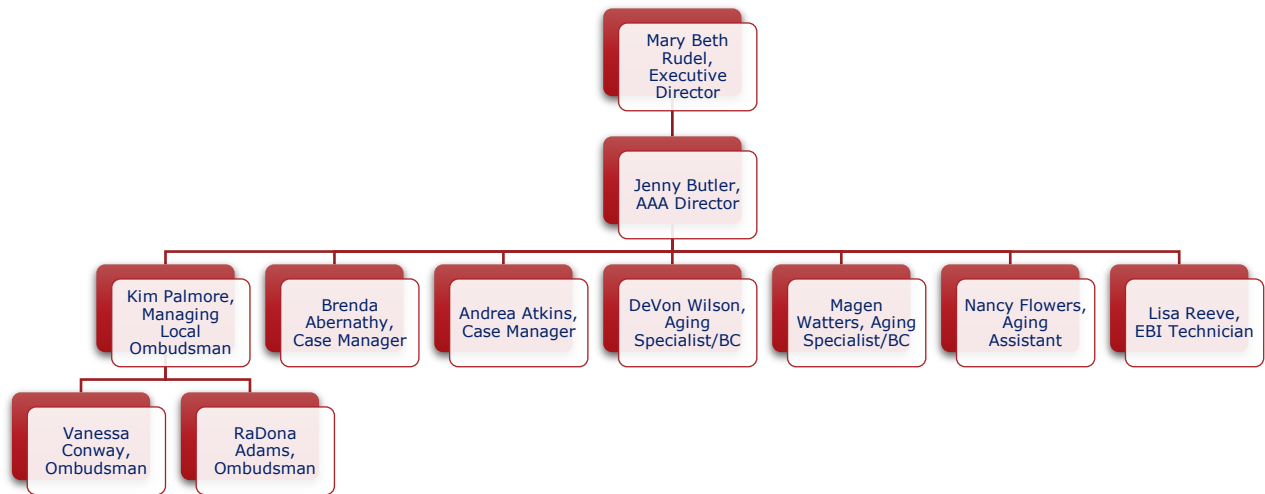
The AAA Caregiver Support Program, authorized under OAA Title III-E, provides respite and supportive services to family caregivers. Following assessment, a person-centered plan is developed to address the needs of both the caregiver and care recipient. Respite services are delivered by contracted providers with trained and vetted staff, allowing caregivers essential time away while maintaining continuity of care.

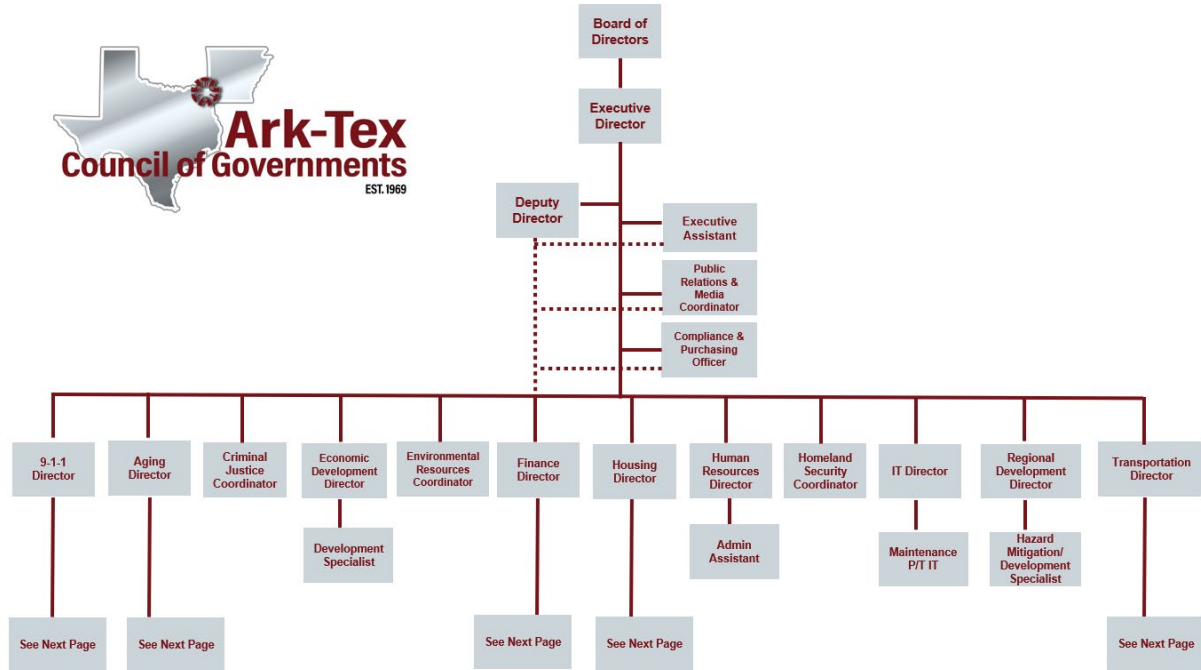
To further support independence and safety in the home, the AAA provides minor home modifications such as grab bars, handrails, and wheelchair ramps. These modifications reduce fall risk and enable individuals to remain in their homes longer.

For individuals residing in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program operates under OAA Title VII to advocate for resident rights, quality of care, and quality of life. Trained ombudsmen and volunteers investigate complaints, educate residents about their rights, and advocate on their behalf at the direction of the residents.

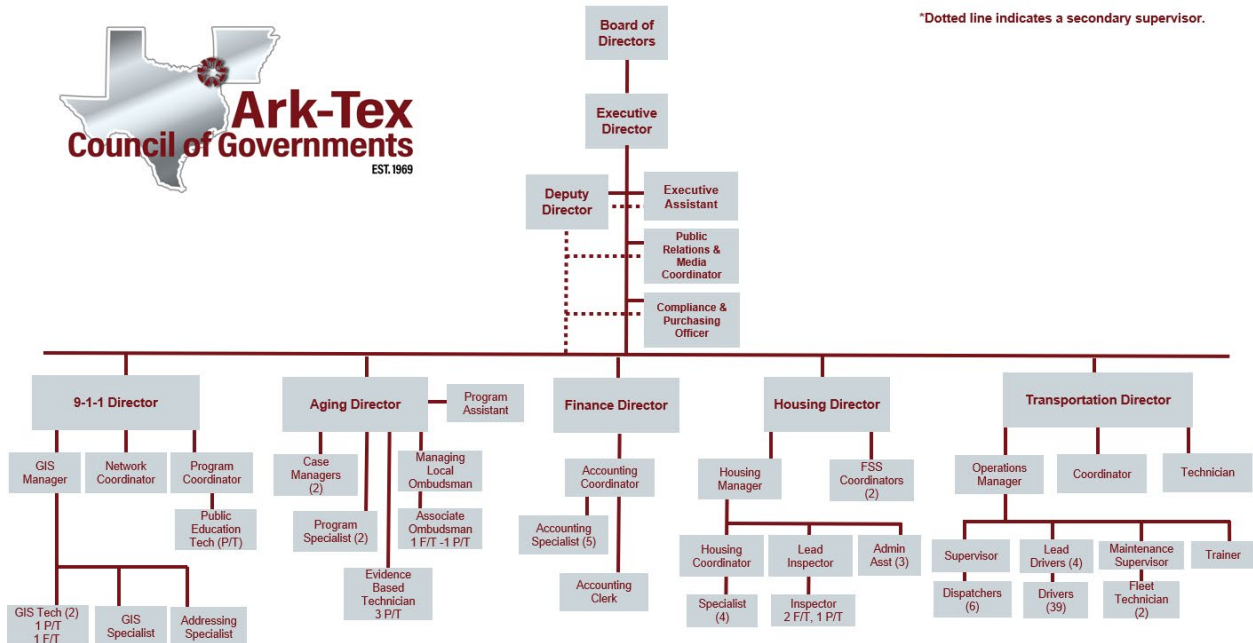
The AAA remains committed to serving the maximum number of eligible individuals with available resources. Throughout the planning period, the agency's focus is to empower older adults and disabled adults to remain independent, active, and engaged members of their communities. The AAA staff is honored to serve the 60+ population of the PSA and brings energy, compassion, and empathy to advancing the agency's mission and vision.

Organizational Profile





*Dotted line indicates a secondary supervisor.



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The Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging region consists of the following counties and County Seats: Bowie (New Boston), Cass (Linden), Delta (Cooper), Franklin (Mount Vernon), Hopkins (Sulphur Springs), Lamar (Paris), Morris (Daingerfield), Red River (Clarksville), and Titus (Mount Pleasant). There are 44 cities in Public Service Area (PSA) 5. (See [Appendix C – Map of Ark-Tex PSA 5](#))

The largest city in the region is Texarkana in Bowie County, with a population of 35,971, reported in 2024. Texarkana is a twin city located in Texas and Arkansas with a total population of 64,868.

The largest cities in the rural counties are Paris (25,037); Mount Pleasant (16,238); and Sulphur Springs (16,891). With the exception of Bowie (Texarkana) and Cass (Atlanta) counties, all County Seats are major communities within the county.

The Ark-Tex region has a diverse mix of economic and social resources that support community development and quality of life. These counties are largely rural but benefit from several regional hubs, transportation corridors, and community institutions that provide employment, healthcare, education, and social services. The regional economy is supported by industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, retail trade, education, and transportation/logistics. Agriculture continues to play a significant role, particularly cattle ranching, poultry production, hay, and timber. Manufacturing and distribution facilities located near major transportation routes also contribute to employment opportunities.

Healthcare systems serve as major employers and essential social resources. Regional hospitals, rural clinics, and community health centers provide access to medical services for residents across the nine counties. Education institutions—including public school systems, community colleges, and universities—provide workforce training and higher education opportunities that support economic growth. Currently, there are five hospitals located throughout the region. Titus Regional Hospital is in Mount Pleasant, Paris Regional Medical Center in Paris, and three Christus Health hospitals in Texarkana, Atlanta, and Sulphur Springs. The AAA fosters a relationship with

these healthcare providers to enable the sharing of resources and referrals to assist older adults in the community with available services.

There are four junior colleges and one university in PSA 5. Adult Education and Literacy courses are offered at the junior colleges. Texarkana College and Texas A&M University Texarkana are in Bowie County. North East TX Community College and Industrial Technology Training Center are in Titus County. Paris Junior College is in Lamar County and has a satellite campus in Sulphur Springs.

Social support networks are provided through nonprofit organizations, community action agencies, and faith-based groups. These organizations provide services such as food assistance, housing support, transportation, senior services, and caregiver assistance. Workforce development services and economic development corporations work collaboratively to attract business investment, expand employment opportunities, and support local entrepreneurship. The Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) plays a vital role in fostering regional development by collaborating with local governments, businesses, and communities to create a thriving sustainable region. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) provides guidance on the economic state of the North East Texas Economic Development District (NETEDD). The CEDS is updated annually to assess the economic progress and to update economic goals for the region. The current CEDS report says, “The plans for proposed Interstate 69 and completion of Interstate 49, the upgrade of U.S. 59, and the availability of U.S. 271, U.S. 259, the expansion of U.S. 82 and several state highways should increase the attractiveness of this region for distribution centers and other industries dependent upon access to major highways.” And “Continued expansion of area airports will be an important part of this growth as will development of large industrial parks near major transportation corridors.”¹

The Ark-Tex region counties benefit from strong community networks and a variety of economic assets that contribute to regional stability and quality of life. However, several factors continue to limit resource accessibility and impact long-term regional development. Many communities across the region

¹ [CEDS Booklet 2023-2028 2025 Actual 2025](#)

are rural and geographically dispersed, creating transportation challenges for residents who must travel significant distances to access employment opportunities, healthcare services, education, and social support programs. Limited public transportation options further compound these barriers, particularly for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents.

Access to healthcare services is another challenge in smaller communities throughout the region according to community health assessments conducted by CHRISTUS Health, Paris Regional Health, and Titus Regional Medical Center. While larger counties may have hospitals and expanded medical services, rural areas often face shortages of healthcare providers and limited availability of specialty care. This can result in residents traveling to neighboring counties for treatment and experiencing delays in receiving necessary services.

Workforce development is also impacted by shortages of skilled labor and gaps between available job opportunities and workforce training. Many communities face difficulties attracting and retaining qualified professionals, while younger workers may relocate to larger metropolitan areas in search of broader employment opportunities. Additionally, the regional economy in many counties relies on a limited number of industries, which can make local economies more vulnerable to economic shifts and reduce opportunities for career advancement.

Technology infrastructure also presents challenges in some areas of the region. Broadband access remains inconsistent in certain rural communities, limiting opportunities for remote work, online education, telehealth services, and business development. Reliable internet connectivity is increasingly essential for economic growth and access to modern services.

Social service providers across the region also face funding limitations that can restrict the availability of programs and the number of individuals served. Many services depend on federal, state, and local funding sources that are often limited and may not fully meet community demand. As a result, agencies may experience staffing shortages, service limitations, or waiting

lists for assistance programs.

Demographic trends further contribute to growing service needs. The region has a significant and increasing population of older adults, which increases demand for healthcare, transportation, in-home support services, caregiver assistance, and other aging-related programs. At the same time, income disparities and higher poverty rates in some communities can create additional barriers for residents seeking housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

Addressing these challenges will require continued collaboration among local governments, healthcare systems, nonprofit organizations, and regional planning entities. Through coordinated efforts, these partners can work together to strengthen economic opportunities, improve service delivery systems, and expand access to critical resources for residents throughout the region.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau. 2023, 5-Year American Community Survey (Texas-Specific Sample). [Table S1701](#), the Ark-Tex PSA has an average of 11.6% of the population age 60 and over for whom poverty status was determined below the poverty threshold. (See [Appendix D](#) – Population Age 60 and Over Below Poverty). The Texas Demographic Center (TDC) projects a 14.28% population increase in individuals over the age of 60 in the Ark-Tex region from 2020-2035 (See [Appendix E](#) – TDC Population Projections).

Texas defines the greatest economic need as one resulting from an income level at or below the Federal Poverty Level. ² Individuals with greatest social need include those who cannot always afford basic needs such as food or medicine, lack the skills or knowledge to prepare well-balanced meals or appropriately manage medicine, cannot access transportation to destinations such as medical appointments, live in a rural area, lack English language skills, have a disabling illness or physical condition, have limited mobility with impaired ability to leave home, are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorder with neurological and organic brain dysfunction, are socially

² [26 Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) §213.51\(2024\)](#)

isolated, or screened as a high nutritional risk.

The Ark-Tex region will follow updated TAC and OAAA policies and procedures, including changes related to ACL 2024 regulatory revisions³, Executive Order GA-55⁴, and federal executive orders that affect the definitions of greatest economic and social need.

The Ark-Tex AAA prioritizes in-home services for adults sixty and over who are frail and homebound due to illness or incapacitating disability, or otherwise isolated. A Consumer Needs Evaluation (CNE) form is used to assess the older adult to determine if they are homebound or frail.

³ [Final Rule: 2024 Update to ACL's Older Americans Act Regulations 2024 Update to ACL's Older Americans Act Regulations](#)

⁴ [EO-GA-55 Prohibiting Govt Race Discrim IMAGE 2024-01-31.pdf](#)

Advisory Council Composition

The creation of the ATCOG AAA Regional Advisory Council was authorized by ATCOG on November 7, 1974, under Section 903.66 of Public Law 93-29, as amended, as a necessary component to enable ATCOG to initiate and conduct area wide aging planning under the above cited act and according to the State Plan for Aging Programs for the State of Texas. The purpose of the ATCOG AAA Regional Advisory Council shall be to fulfill the mandate of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 903.66 (13), to advise the ATCOG AAA on all matters relating to the development and administration of the area plan on aging and operations conducted thereunder. The Council shall consist of the following: One (1) representative from each of the nine (9) counties in the Ark-Tex region; Two (2) elected officials; One (1) representative from the general public; One (1) representative from the private sector; One (1) representative from a health care organization; One (1) representative from the Title III Service Providers; One (1) representative from the Veterans Administration; Two (2) representatives from social service agencies; One (1) representative from a hospital.

The ATCOG AAA Regional Advisory Council shall meet quarterly and at such times as the Chairperson deems necessary. If a meeting is cancelled, the meeting will be rescheduled as soon as possible. The meetings are held the first Thursday in March, June, September and December.

Representatives shall be appointed for a term of five (5) years or until a replacement is found. Regional Advisory Council members are appointed to the Council by the ATCOG Board of Directors, the County Judge, Title III Service Providers and/or Chambers of Commerce, subject to approval by the ATCOG Board of Directors.

Stewardship & Oversight

Reference: [OAA of 1965, as amended through P.L. 116-131 \(3/25/2020\), & 45 CFR 1321.59](#)

Ark-Tex AAA will provide Area Agency Administration as a direct service throughout the nine-county region that includes Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus for FY2027-2029 and going forward.

These activities will include the development and implementation of a coordinated system to serve older adults and family caregivers within the AAA's PSA with Older American's Act (OAA) services.

The AAA services will target individuals age 60 or older and give priority to those with greatest economic and social need, living in rural areas, and low-income older adults. As a focal point for aging services, the AAA will provide advocacy, evaluate local resources, identify service gaps, and any other responsibilities listed in the OAA, service definitions for the Area Agencies on Aging, and Area Agency on Aging Policy and Procedures Manual.

Ark-Tex will conduct quality assurance and monitoring procedures to ensure accurate delivery and expenditures of services. Training and education will be provided to staff, volunteers, and contract providers regarding OAA service requirements including service recipient complaints, responsibilities on abuse, neglect, and exploitation, interest lists, targeting, voluntary contributions, and records maintenance.

AAA staff will conduct Data Management that supports activities directly related to data entry and reporting for services not directly provided by the AAA. This will include service authorization and document verification, tracking and reporting of congregate meals, home delivered meals and transportation services. Ark-Tex AAA staff will ensure the complete and accurate data in the HHS information system. They will also generate reports and confirm accurate data in support of the annual State Program Report (SPR) and Quarterly Performance Report (QPR).

Key Topic Areas

Reference: [45 CFR 1321.65\(b\)\(5\)](#), [45 CFR 1321.65\(b\)\(2\)](#), & [45 CFR 1321.65\(c\)](#)

Core Program Area 1: Supportive Services

Ark-Tex AAA case managers receive referrals via telephone, email, website, fax, health fairs and through in-office contacts. The case managers assess the needs of the older individual and coordinate services accordingly to meet those needs. Priority is given to those who meet targeting and preference requirements identified as residing in rural areas, have a disabling illness or physical condition, are socially isolated, have limited mobility that impairs their ability to leave home, lack of transportation resources, are food insecure, among other listed in the Older Americans Act.

Older individuals in the Ark-Tex AAA that receive services are primarily rural and low-income. The case managers can coordinate services such as homemaker, health maintenance, benefits counseling, emergency response services, income support, residential repair, nutrition, transportation, and connect individuals to resources in the community. Some of these services will be delivered to the client through AAA agreements with providers in the PSA and authorized by case management staff.

Core Program Area 2: Nutrition Services – Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals

The Ark-Tex AAA provides nutrition services through providers to help older adults live independently and to reduce hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, and promote socialization as required by the OAA. Nutrition services are provided to eligible people through congregate meals, home delivered meals, and nutrition education. The AAA nutrition providers develop menus that are approved by a licensed dietitian. Meals must meet nutrition program requirements from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) and dietary reference intakes (DRIs) to help address prevalent disease conditions for the aging population. Standardized recipes are used by the AAA meal providers to ensure menus meet Texas Model for Menu Planning.

Eligible people must meet the requirements set forth in the OAA and are screened by the AAA nutrition providers for poor nutritional health using the Determine Your Nutritional Health checklist (NRA), the Consumer Needs Evaluation (CNE), and Determine Type of Meal Assessment (DTM) to complete the assessment process for either congregate meals or home delivered meals. These assessments are completed annually for each nutrition client.

The AAA staff conducts quality assurance monitoring for the nutrition service providers to ensure policies and procedures are followed and nutrition requirements are met. This can include reviewing health department inspections, meal menus, food staff certifications, observation of meal preparations, and ensuring proper documentation for client intakes and assessments are completed properly. Quality assurance is also done through annual surveys to ensure meal recipients are satisfied with the nutrition services.

Eligible individuals receive congregate meals in a congregate setting. The AAA currently has provider agreements with two meal providers operating congregate sites in seven of the nine-county Ark-Tex region. Hopkins and Franklin counties are currently the only two counties that operate multi-purpose senior centers and provide a meal to older adults not funded through the Ark-Tex AAA nutrition program.

Home delivered meals are provided to eligible individuals in their homes. The AAA currently has provider agreements with two meal providers that serve home delivered meals in each of the nine counties in the PSA. Eligible persons must be 60 or over, frail, homebound, and have a CNE score of at least 20 to receive home delivered meals (HDMs). Meals are available five days per week and are delivered by the AAA nutrition provider in a combination of hot and frozen.

Core Program Area 3: Evidenced Based Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Services

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) provides several evidence-based intervention programs designed to promote social connection, positive mental health, and healthy living. These programs are offered in both

individual and group settings and focus on improving nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and reducing social isolation.

A Matter of Balance is an eight-week group program that helps participants build confidence and reduce fear of falling. The course encourages discussion of personal experiences and teaches strategies to improve balance, independence, and safety. The AAA currently supports one master trainer and five trained coaches to deliver this program.

Tai Chi for Arthritis is a group-based program for individuals with arthritis, joint pain, or increased fall risk. The program focuses on improving balance, strength, flexibility, and relaxation while reducing pain and falls. It is offered over 8 or 16 weeks, totaling 16 hours, and is led by two certified instructors.

FallsTalk is a one-on-one intervention for older adults at risk of falling, particularly those who are homebound or prefer individualized support. The program promotes behavior change by increasing awareness of fall risks and strengthening prevention skills. AAA case managers deliver this program directly to eligible participants.

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance is a group program that has demonstrated positive outcomes in improving balance, strength, and mobility. Participants report fewer falls, increased confidence, and improved quality of life. The AAA currently has two instructors trained to provide this program.

All programs are included on the Direct Service Waiver Form and are delivered directly by trained AAA staff.

The Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging (AAA) provides Health Maintenance services to eligible individuals who need assistance obtaining medications, nutritional supplements, eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, or other devices necessary to support their health and safety.

These services are coordinated and authorized through case management and are designed to enhance clients' overall quality of life by addressing unmet health-related needs.

In addition, the AAA connects individuals with resources, educational materials, and referrals to organizations that provide medical treatment, health education, counseling, and home health services, including physical, speech, and occupational therapy.

Core Program Area 4: Family Caregiver Support

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) utilizes a comprehensive, person-centered approach to assess the needs of caregivers and care recipients in order to effectively plan, coordinate, and monitor services that best address identified needs. Through a combination of direct services and provider partnerships within the Planning and Service Area (PSA), the AAA delivers a range of supports including caregiver support coordination, caregiver information services, emergency response, nutrition services, income support, information and referral/assistance, benefits counseling (including Legal Assistance for individuals age 60+, Legal Awareness, MIPPA, and SHIP-HICAP), outreach, residential repair, in-home respite, social reassurance, and transportation. Many of these services are authorized by AAA case management staff and delivered through established provider agreements.

Priority for services is given to individuals who meet targeting and preference criteria outlined in the Older Americans Act, including those residing in rural areas, individuals with disabling conditions, those who are socially isolated, have limited mobility, lack transportation, or experience food insecurity. This targeted approach ensures that resources are directed to those with the greatest economic and social need.

Case management remains a critical component of service delivery, ensuring continuity of care and appropriate utilization of resources. The assessment process includes completion of required documentation such as the Caregiver Intake, Client Rights and Responsibilities, Caregiver Assessment Questionnaire, Nutritional Risk Assessment, and Consumer Needs Evaluation, along with all necessary HIPAA and program compliance forms. Service data and client information are maintained in the Texas Health and Human Services Information Management System to support accurate reporting, including State Program Report (SPR) requirements.

In addition to core services, the AAA is actively working to enhance supports for caregivers and care recipients. Case managers provide education and resources related to dementia and Alzheimer's disease by connecting caregivers to local support groups, distributing educational materials through mail and virtual platforms, and conducting outreach at community events such as health fairs. The AAA also prioritizes strengthening and expanding

partnerships with hospitals, clinics, and community-based organizations to increase referrals and improve service coordination.

Ongoing efforts to enhance service delivery include expanding outreach into rural and underserved areas, increasing access to evidence-based programs, exploring innovative service options such as virtual education and support, and continuously evaluating service gaps. Through these strategies, the AAA aims to improve access, responsiveness, and overall quality of services for older adults and their caregivers across the region.

Core Program Area 5: Legal Assistance

AAA Benefits Counselors conduct legal assistance services to clients age 60 or over and SHIP-HICAP services to Medicare beneficiaries. The Benefits Counselors on staff are certified through Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC) and TX Health and Human Services.

Benefits counseling programs help older adults understand their rights and address priority legal issues related to Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, long-term care, nutrition (SNAP), and other public entitlements. Assistance is regularly given through one-on-one assistance in person, by phone, or by other virtual means, if necessary. Benefits counselors assist individuals with completing applications and preparing required documentation for Medicare Savings programs that help with health care costs, food stamps, Medicaid, and utility assistance programs offered in the PSA.

AAA staff and benefits counselors regularly provide education and outreach regarding services available throughout the PSA. This is achieved by attending health fairs, in person and virtual presentations, and developing partnerships with local organizations such as local HHSC and SSA offices in the region.

If a client is needing legal representation or advocacy, the AAA will refer that case to Texas Legal Services Center, Lone Star Legal Aid, and other elder law attorneys within the PSA that could assist with legal matters.

The AAA participates in the HHSC Community Partner Program and can assist older adults with accessing the online Your Texas Benefits programs to complete applications.

In addition, AAA staff are also volunteering with the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol. The prevalence of fraud and scams targeting the older population is a concern for the AAA. Education and awareness regarding fraud and scams and how to report them is provided to seniors in the community through events and social media.

Core Program Area 6: Ombudsman Services

The Ark-Tex AAA is the host agency for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program in the PSA. The Ombudsmen staff advocate for residents' rights and quality of life and care in long-term care facilities. Each Ombudsman completes certification training through the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO). The Office maintains the Ombudsman Policies and Procedures Manual that details documentation requirements of certified ombudsmen who utilize the Ombudsman database.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR § 1321.3), greatest economic need means "the need resulting from an income level at or below the Federal Poverty Level and as further defined by State and area plans based on local and individual factors, including geography and expenses" and greatest social need means "the need caused by the following noneconomic factors which include physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; cultural, social, or geographical isolation; other needs as further defined by the State and area plans based on local individual factors." ⁵

The Ark-Tex PSA is a largely rural area with a significant number of older adults considered low-income or below the poverty level. The strategies implemented during the previous area plan included increased outreach and education for AAA services through in-person and virtual presentations, speaking with staff at health care centers, food pantries, Health and Human Service center locations, and Social Security offices. The AAA has found that outreach provided through these venues can have an impact for several population groups to reach individuals with greatest economic need, greatest social need, low-income minority older adults, hard-to-reach populations, and those residing in rural areas.

In alignment with the Texas State Plan on Aging, the AAA staff and service providers will continue to complete thorough screenings and assessments of

⁵ [eCFR :: 45 CFR 1321.3 -- Definitions.](#)

each eligible person's ability to perform ADLs and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living to identify functional limitations to ensure services are targeted to those with greatest need. AAA case managers include caregivers as partners in care during care planning for care recipients, recognizing their role in decision making and service planning.

Collaborative efforts with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are essential to improving access and supporting older adults and family caregivers in maintaining independence. The AAA will participate in training provided by the OAAA as listed in the Texas State Plan on Aging that will enable staff to improve awareness of resources and long-term care services available through HCBS providers. Education can be provided by caregivers in need of community based long-term care services to increase access to care.

The Ark-Tex AAA will follow best practices to serve older adults with physical and mental health conditions. Strategies include utilizing consumer needs assessments to determine if the older adult is determined to be frail due to functional impairment if the person is unable to perform at least two activities of daily living or needs considerable supervision because the older adult's action poses a serious health or safety hazard to themselves or another person due to a cognitive or other mental impairment. AAA staff screen for chronic conditions and fall risk during assessment and intake processes. Case managers can also help connect individuals with local mental health authorities that deliver mental health services in the PSA to support access to services.

Needs Assessment Activities

Reference: [45 CFR 1321.65\(b\)\(3\)](#) & [45 CFR 1321.65\(c\)](#)

Ark-Tex AAA used a combination of sources to assess needs and collect feedback regarding priorities of older adults, family caregivers, and providers. Needs assessment activities included a Community Needs Assessment, analysis of census data illustrating characteristics of older adults and caregivers in the PSA, and review of the 2024-25 Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan.⁶

The Community Needs Assessment survey was developed to gather information on needs and concerns of older adults, caregivers, and service providers that deliver services and supports to older adults and family caregivers. The final survey form was approved by the AAA Regional Advisory Council for distribution. The survey could be completed either online via Microsoft Forms or in-person and did not include any personally identifiable information to ensure the confidentiality of all respondents.

The survey could be accessed electronically via Facebook or the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) website. A QR code was also available to individuals that chose to access the survey through that method instead of the paper form. The survey was distributed in-person at community events and area senior centers for completion. Postage paid envelopes were provided if the participant needed to mail the survey to the AAA. All paper versions of the survey submitted were entered manually into the Microsoft Form by AAA staff. All responses received were entered into the Microsoft Form platform to ensure complete data collection.

The survey was distributed and available from January 1, 2026, to February 20, 2026. With the combined paper and electronic surveys, 61 completed surveys were submitted by older adults, family caregivers, and professionals. 57% of the responses received were from individuals age 60 or over who is not an Area Agency on Aging client, 26% were from AAA clients over the age of 60, and of those respondents 21% were individuals with a disability. The results indicated top need priorities are nutrition, transportation, assistance with ADLs and IADLs at home, caregiver support for respite and education, and residential repair. The issues listed as more

⁶ [2024-25 Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan Revised 5.2.2025](#)

highly concerning for older adults were overall health issues, safety, making the home more accessible (examples: handrails, ramps), food/nutrition, scams/fraud, lack of transportation.

In conclusion, the Community Needs Assessment survey offered valuable insight into the challenges and concerns currently faced by family caregivers and older adults. The responses highlighted key priorities that align with the Ark-Tex AAA plan to address community needs, including enhancing caregiver support, expanding education and awareness on fraud and scams, providing person-centered care plans for clients seeking services, and strengthening regional partnerships.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Outcomes

Reference: [45 CFR 1321.65\(e\)](#)

Ark-Tex AAA will work to address the priorities identified in the needs assessment survey by developing goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes. The AAA will ensure the goals align with the Texas State Plan on Aging priorities to the extent possible to support the needs of older adults and family caregivers.

Goal 1: Increase Awareness and Access to Services for Older Adults

Objective 1.1 – Increase awareness of the AAA services available in the region.

Strategy:

Ark-Tex AAA will continue to partner and develop relationships with agencies and organizations to increase awareness of services available to the aging population. This will include presentations to community civic organizations and other entities to help educate the public regarding the challenges the older population is facing and how AAA services can increase opportunities to keep seniors independent.

Public awareness will include, but is not limited to, services such as respite care, homemaker, health maintenance, benefits counseling, information, referral and assistance, Ombudsman, and other AAA services.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased awareness, outreach, understanding, and service inquiries.
- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased service use, stronger partnerships, and improved access and engagement.
- Long-Term Outcomes: Greater independence, improved quality of life, and stronger, more coordinated community support.

Objective 1.2 – Increase awareness of nutrition programs and resources in the region.

Strategy:

The Ark-Tex AAA case managers and nutrition providers use the Determine Nutritional Risk and Consumer Needs Assessment to assess clients receiving nutrition services and other supportive assistance. The nutrition providers deliver nutrition education to each meal recipient at least annually. The AAA will ensure that nutrition education topics include awareness and resources regarding healthy eating and malnutrition.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Completed assessments, increased nutrition knowledge, and awareness of healthy eating and malnutrition
- Intermediate Outcomes: Improved dietary behaviors, better identification of nutritional risk, and increased use of nutrition resources
- Long-Term Outcomes: Reduced malnutrition risk, improved health outcomes, and enhanced quality of life for older adults

Objective 1.3 – Increase access to services for older adults with mobility and transportation issues.

Strategy:

The Ark-Tex AAA will continue to partner with the ATCOG Transportation programs available throughout the region. Information and resources will be provided to older individuals in need of transportation to programs available in their area.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased awareness of transportation options and available resources
- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased use of transportation services and improved access to programs
- Long-Term Outcomes: Greater mobility, increased independence, and improved access to community services

Objective 1.4 – Promote awareness for older adults to receive in-home and community based long-term care (LTC) services.

Strategy:

The AAA will participate in training on in-home and community-based long-term care (LTC) services, including No Wrong Door initiatives, to better connect eligible individuals to appropriate resources regardless of their point of entry into the system. Information and education will be provided to older adults needing LTC supports to help them remain at home longer. Staff will also identify and address barriers to coordinating LTC services and ensure streamlined access to services through a coordinated, person-centered approach.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased staff knowledge of LTC services and improved awareness among older adults of available supports
- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased access to and coordination of LTC services and reduced barriers to receiving care
- Long-Term Outcomes: Extended ability for older adults to remain at home and improved overall quality of life

Goal 2: Enhance Support for Family Caregivers

Objective 2.1 – Enhance services and supports for caregivers.

Strategy:

Ark-Tex AAA case managers will continue to identify caregiver needs during the services assessment process. Education and information that promote quality of life and care for both the caregiver and care recipient will be provided. AAA case managers will meet and promote services available for caregivers through case managers at hospitals, home health providers and any profession that works directly with caregivers.

The AAA will coordinate with the Aging and Disability Resource Center, Health and Human Services, and providers to share resources on respite services available for caregivers, including grandparents caring for grandchildren.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased identification of caregiver needs, expanded outreach to partner organizations, and greater awareness of respite and support services.
- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased referrals and use of caregiver services (including respite), improved caregiver knowledge, and stronger coordination among providers.
- Long-Term Outcomes: Reduced caregiver stress and burnout, improved caregiver and care recipient well-being, and sustained access to coordinated support services.

Goal 3: Protect the Rights, Safety, and Well-Being of Older Adults

Objective 3.1 – Increase awareness of the risk for abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals.

Strategy:

The Ark-Tex Ombudsmen will conduct in-service trainings in nursing homes and assisted living facilities regarding resident rights to bring awareness in an effort to stop abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Ark-Tex staff are instructed on requirements and procedures for reporting suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Staff participate on the Bowie and Cass Adult Protective Services (APS) Board of Directors and plan to continue representation on APS boards in the PSA.

In addition, the Ark-Tex AAA will volunteer with the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol whose mission is to “empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.” ⁷

The AAA will also collaborate with Texas Legal Service Center for technical assistance and training regarding legal matters.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased staff and facility knowledge of resident rights, abuse reporting procedures, and fraud prevention resources.

⁷ [Texas Senior Medicare Patrol - Texas Senior Medicare Patrol](#)

- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation, improved coordination with APS, and greater use of fraud prevention education.
- Long-Term Outcomes: Reduced incidents of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and fraud, improved resident safety, and stronger protection for vulnerable older adults.

Goal 4: Strengthen Aging Services Network infrastructure

Objective 4.1 - Strengthen the capacity, coordination, and effectiveness of the Aging Services Network to improve service delivery and better meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.

Strategy:

The AAA will strengthen the Aging Services Network by building capacity through staff training, public education, and expanded partnerships. These efforts will increase awareness of available services, improve access, and address service gaps to create a more integrated and responsive system. Collectively, these activities will support long-term sustainability and enhance the network's ability to meet the evolving needs of older adults and caregivers in the region.

- Short-Term Outcomes: Increased staff knowledge and capacity, improved communication among partners, and expanded awareness of available services and resources.
- Intermediate Outcomes: Improved coordination and collaboration among service providers, increased access to services and supports, and more efficient referral and service delivery processes.
- Long-Term Outcomes: A more integrated and effective Aging Services Network, improved system responsiveness and sustainability, and enhanced ability to meet the evolving needs of older adults and caregivers, resulting in improved independence, health, and quality of life.

The goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes listed above demonstrate strong alignment with the four goals identified for the 2026-2028 Texas State Plan on Aging by addressing awareness, access, coordination, and

system capacity needed to support older adults and caregivers across the region.

Long Range Planning

Reference: [OAA of 1965, as amended through P.L. 116-131 \(3/25/2020\)](#)
Page 63

Ark-Tex AAA is reasonably prepared to provide services over the next five to ten years, especially in outreach, coordination, and community partnerships. The PSA objectives reflect a proactive approach to increase awareness of services, strengthen caregiver support, expand access to nutrition and transportation programs, and promote in-home and community-based care. However, rural areas may continue to face challenges, particularly with transportation and access to in-person services.

Programs can also improve by making the most of limited funding. Seeking grants, new funding sources, and community support can increase capacity. Focusing on prevention, education, and early support can reduce long-term costs and the need for more intensive services. The AAA will actively participate in local coalitions, advisory boards, and community groups to strengthen relationships and stay connected with regional efforts.

To support capacity building and long-range planning for the State Unit on Aging some practical recommendations include collaboration across HHSC local offices, transportation, caregiver support and education, and nutrition programs for older adults.

- **Formalize Partnerships**
Develop agreements with local HHSC offices to clearly define referral processes and shared goals in the Aging Services Network.
- **Strengthen Referral Systems**
Create a streamlined, shared referral process (aligned with “no wrong door”) so partners can easily connect clients to services without duplication or delays.
- **Hold Regular Cross-Agency Meetings**
Schedule consistent meetings or workgroups with key partners to share updates, identify service gaps, and coordinate solutions across sectors.
- **Cross-Train Staff**
Provide joint training opportunities so staff understand each partner’s

services, eligibility requirements, and referral procedures—especially across HHSC programs.

- **Improve Information Sharing**
Develop shared resource guides, directories, or simple data-sharing practices (as allowed) to keep partners informed and improve coordination.
- **Use Data for Planning**
Share and review data across partners to better understand trends, target high-need populations, and improve service delivery.

These steps can help build stronger, more coordinated partnerships, improve efficiency, and expand the overall capacity to serve older adults in the region.

The Ark-Tex AAA will focus on efforts to sustain the program service over the long term by ensuring the organization is actively working to strengthen staff capacity, build and maintain partnerships, and improve programs to meet changing community needs. Activities can include recruiting, training and retaining qualified staff, securing stable and diverse funding sources, expanding collaboration with community partners, using data to guide decisions and improve services, and ensuring strong decision-making and planning. The goal is to ensure the AAA can continue delivering quality services and respond to future needs in a consistent and reliable way.

Appendix A – Emergency Preparedness

The Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is a program of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments. The staff of the AAA will conduct all agency level response operations using the preparation, communication and documentation protocols identified in the main body of this Business Continuity and Emergency Operations Plan.

In addition, the AAA has contractual responsibilities dictated by the Health and Human Services Commission related to disaster preparedness and services for the elderly per the Texas Administrative Code 26 §213.151 (x):

(x) Emergency management.

(1) When a disaster occurs, a AAA must notify HHSC of its need to provide for emergency management activities, provide information to HHSC regarding the impact of the disaster on the older population in its service area, provide emergency management services in accordance with current Administration on Aging disaster relief guidelines, and collect pertinent data necessary to submit reimbursement requests for disaster services.

(2) A AAA must consult with the appropriate agencies that have an interest or role in meeting the needs of persons 60 years of age or older to plan for the occurrence and aftermath of natural, civil defense, or man-made disasters. To accomplish this, a AAA must:

(A) develop an emergency disaster plan in accordance with HHSC requirements;

(B) require by contract or vendor agreement that a service provider develop plans for emergency management; and

(C) provide technical assistance as necessary to service provider staff persons regarding emergency management activities.

Procedures Related to Providers and Clients:

The AAA will maintain information concerning its clients in Homemaker, Respite and "lifeline" services that are most at risk in a disaster. Risk factors may include rural, isolated, frail individuals with no family nor means to

evacuate. AAA case managers will assist such clients, upon their consent, to call the 211 registry during their routine evaluations.

Service providers are required by provider agreement to have emergency plans. Plans from Nutrition providers are submitted to the AAA. Nutrition providers are also advised to review and/or update their emergency plans and to assure their 3-day supply of emergency meals is readily available. Current Senior Center Manager contact information is obtained by the AAA and on the ATCOG website: www.atcog.org.

During a known event with sufficient warning, such as a hurricane, advance communication is issued to providers. At about 36 hours prior to landfall, providers will be notified to be prepared to activate their emergency response plans, notify clients of possible closures and distribute emergency meals as appropriate. Senior Center staff notifies the AAA of any unusual client circumstances or unmet need so the issue can be directed to the appropriate emergency management authority. Providers report to the AAA regarding status prior, during and post event, to include the number of clients impacted and the scope of the disaster as it relates to their operations. The AAA Director/Manager will compile the data and communicate all required information to the Health and Human Services Commission as directed.

In the event there is no access to the Ark-Tex Council of Governments location, essential personnel will follow the Emergency Contact Chart and notify essential backups and support staff with plan instructions. The AAA 800 number will be forwarded remotely to designated staff. Staff will perform work duties at home. If the emergency prevents working from home, an alternate site will be given to the staff when initially notified.

If the disaster is community-wide, the coordinators will run reports of active III-B lifeline clients receiving services. Clients requiring welfare checks will be coordinated. The coordinators will ensure that providers rendering AAA services are able to provide services assigned.

If the disaster destroys records retained onsite, client information can be retrieved from the State software system. Documents that are not stored in the system are scanned onto the ATCOG/AAA shared drive and can be retrieved.

Disaster Coordination:

The AAA coordinates with many response and recovery organizations to advocate for people over 60 in times of disaster. They include ATCOG Homeland Security, County Emergency Management Personnel, Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, Local Emergency Planning Committee, and the local office of the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Recovery:

The AAA will request disaster relief funds, as needed, through the Health and Human Services Commission.

Reconstitution:

Staff will be updated daily by essential personnel as to the progress of restoration of operations and return to work date.

The following is a list of personnel designated as Essential Personnel, Essential Personnel Backup, and Support Staff:

Essential: Mary Beth Rudel and Jenny Butler

Essential Backup: Kim Palmore

Support Staff: Andrea Atkins, Brenda Abernathy, DeVon Wilson, Magen Watters, Nancy Flowers, Vanessa Conway

Depending on the disaster, providers will be contacted as directed from the Executive Director and/or the AAA Director/Manager.

Contact information for staff is listed on the Emergency Contact Chart. The provider information can be found on the shared drive under Area Agency on Aging, Disaster Plan folder.

Appendix B – Public Comment Activities

Reference: [45 CFR 1321.65\(b\)\(4\)](#) and [45 CFR 1321.29](#)

The Ark-Tex AAA utilized information from the Community Needs Assessment survey tool and current understanding of the service needs and gaps experienced by older adults and caregivers in the region to develop the Area Plan. In addition, the AAA provided a process to obtain public comment for the minimum period of 30 calendar days for individuals to review and comment on the AAA's draft of the Area Plan.

Legal advertisements were placed in area newspapers, flyers were distributed to each senior center in the region, and social media posts were shared. All publications and announcements included the process to make comments via email, phone, or mail and all public input was considered and integrated as possible to the final Ark-Tex AAA Area Plan. The AAA received input, review, and approval from the Regional Advisory Council on April 28, 2026, and the ATCOG Board on April 30, 2026.

Texarkana Gazette Public Notice

**PUBLIC NOTICE: AREA PLAN
COMMENT PERIOD**
The Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging is accepting public comments on the 2027–2029 Area Plan, which guides services for older adults in the region, including meals, transportation, caregiver support, and health programs. The plan is available for review on the outside bulletin board at the main office, 4808 Elizabeth St., Texarkana, Texas, or online at <https://atcog.org/pcp>. Comments may be submitted online, by email at arktex-aaa@atcog.org, or by phone at 1-800-372-4464. The deadline to submit comments is April 29, 2026.

The Paris News Public Notice

**PUBLIC NOTICE:
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Public Comment Period Flyer

Your Voice Matters

HELP SHAPE THE 2027-2029 AREA PLAN

About the Plan
Guides services for older adults across our 9-county region, including:

- Meals
- Transportation
- Caregiving Support
- Health Programs

Why It Matters

- Identifies community needs
- Supports independent living
- Strengthens caregiver resources

We Want to Hear From:

- Adults 60+
- Caregivers
- Families
- Community Members

Deadline
April 29, 2026

Public Comment Period Now Open
Help shape the future of aging services in the Ark-Tex region. Your feedback ensures programs meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.

Submit Your Comments Today

- Takes less than 5 minutes
- No personal information required

Scan to View Area Plan & Submit Comments



or visit:
atcog.org/pcp

Contact Us
Email: arktex-aaa@atcog.org
Phone: 1-800-372-4464
Address: 4808 Elizabeth St, Texarkana, TX 75503

Area Agency on Aging
Ark-Tex Region

Ark-Tex Council of Governments

Ark-Tex Council of Governments Website

The screenshot shows the Ark-Tex Council of Governments website. At the top, there is a logo on the left, a language selection dropdown set to "English", and "Donate" and "Contact Us" buttons. Below these is a search bar and a phone number: 1-877-261-6608 #652441. A navigation menu includes links for About Us, Careers, Programs, News & Events, Transparency, Donate, and Contact. The main banner features a background image of a person's hands and the text "2027-2029 Public Comment Period Now Open". Below the banner is a horizontal menu with links: 27-29 Area Plan, Benefits Counseling, Care Coordination, Caregivers, Referral Services, Nutrition, Ombudsman, Transportation, and Videos. The section titled "YOUR VOICE MATTERS!" contains text about seeking public input on the 2027-2029 Area Plan. It is divided into two columns: "About the Area Plan" and "How to Submit Your Comments". The "About the Area Plan" column lists the plan's purpose and goals, with a "View Draft Area Plan (PDF)" button. The "How to Submit Your Comments" column includes a "Submit Your Comments Online" button, a note about the time and deadline, and contact information (Email, Phone, Mail) separated by an "OR" separator.

2027-2029 Public Comment Period Now Open

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

The Ark-Tex AAA is seeking public input on the 2027-2029 Area Plan. This plan guides meals, transportation, caregiver support, health programs, and more for our 9-county region.

About the Area Plan

Every three years, the Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging updates its Area Plan as required by the Older Americans Act. This plan helps determine how services are delivered to:

- ✓ Promote independent living
- ✓ Support caregivers & families
- ✓ Address the greatest economic and social need

[View Draft Area Plan \(PDF\)](#)

How to Submit Your Comments

We want to hear from older adults, caregivers, families, and community members.

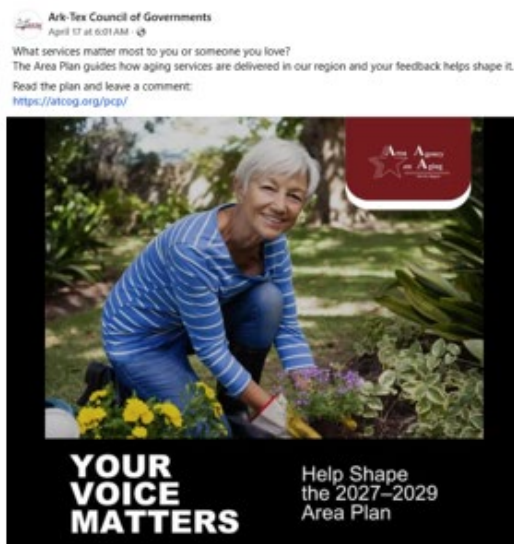
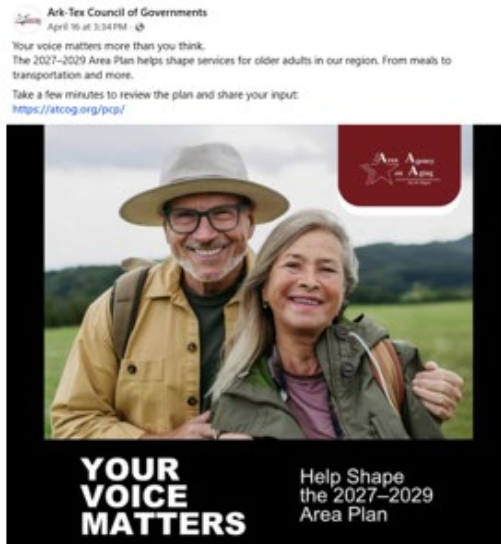
[Submit Your Comments Online](#)

Takes less than 5 minutes • Closes 04/29/26

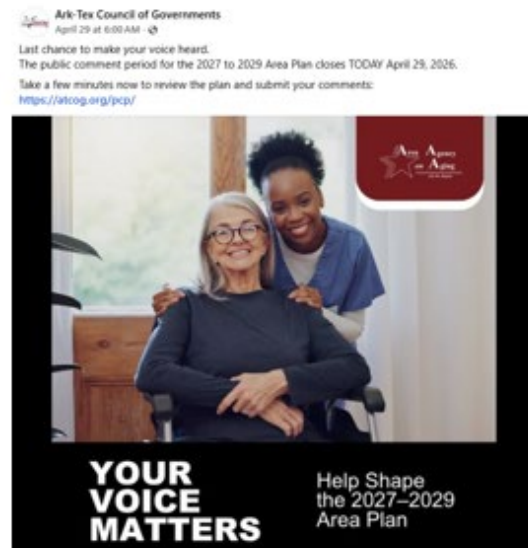
—OR—

Email: arktex-aaa@atcog.org
Phone: 1-800-372-4464
Mail: 4808 Elizabeth St, Texarkana, TX 75503

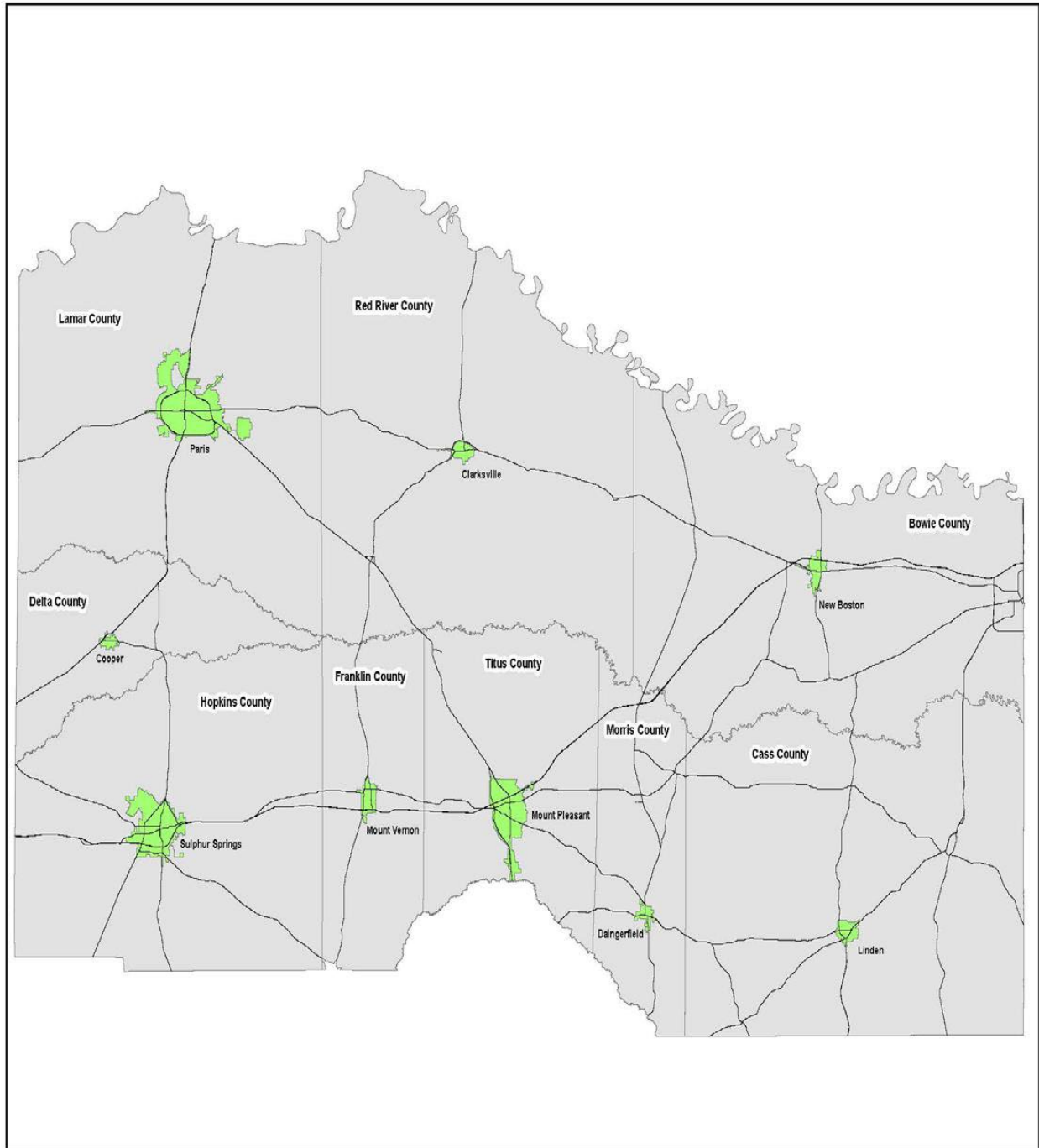
ATCOG Social Media Posts April 16, 2026 – April 22, 2026



ATCOG Social Media Posts April 24, 2026 – April 29, 2026



Appendix C – Map of Ark-Tex PSA 5



Appendix D – Census Bureau 5-year ACS Table S1701 Population Age 60 and Over Below Poverty

State-County FIPS Code	County	Area Agency on Aging	Population Age 60 And Over For Whom Poverty Status Was Determined (2019- 2023 Period	Population Age 60 And Over For Whom Poverty Status Was Determined Below Poverty (2019 2023 Period	Percent of Population Age 60 And Over For Whom Poverty Status Was Determined Below Poverty (2019-2023 Period
48037	Bowie	Ark-Tex	20,582	3,082	15.0%
48067	Cass	Ark-Tex	8,451	1,117	13.2%
48119	Delta	Ark-Tex	1,536	194	12.6%
48159	Franklin	Ark-Tex	3,017	324	10.7%
48223	Hopkins	Ark-Tex	9,027	887	9.8%
48277	Lamar	Ark-Tex	12,615	1,987	15.8%
48343	Morris	Ark-Tex	3,410	487	14.3%
48387	Red River	Ark-Tex	3,676	643	17.5%
48449	Titus	Ark-Tex	6,288	713	11.3%
	Statewide		5,422,313	629,931	11.6%

Appendix E – Texas Demographic Center Population Projection

Projections Download by Area Type for Council of Government				
Includes 2020 Census data				
Migration Scenario	Year	Month	Age	Total Population
Mid	2020	4	60+ Years	72,736
Mid	2020	7	60+ Years	72,769
Mid	2021	7	60+ Years	74,367
Mid	2022	7	60+ Years	76,000
Mid	2023	7	60+ Years	77,859
Mid	2024	7	60+ Years	79,266
Mid	2025	7	60+ Years	80,355
Mid	2026	7	60+ Years	80,990
Mid	2027	7	60+ Years	81,403
Mid	2028	7	60+ Years	81,731
Mid	2029	7	60+ Years	82,195
Mid	2030	7	60+ Years	82,766
Mid	2031	7	60+ Years	83,308
Mid	2032	7	60+ Years	83,326
Mid	2033	7	60+ Years	83,199
Mid	2034	7	60+ Years	83,075
Mid	2035	7	60+ Years	83,125