USAging | DOORS to Housing FOR OLDER ADULTS

DOORS TO HOUSING FOR OLDER ADULTS

2026 IMPACT REPORT

Older adults are increasingly at risk of becoming unhoused, many for the first time. From 2024 to 2026, USAging elevated the issue of homelessness among older adults and prepared the Aging Network and homeless services systems to work together on community-driven solutions. These cross-sector partnerships put in place innovations so that older adults have timely, coordinated access to age-appropriate housing assistance and supportive services.

PROBLEM

The scale of homelessness among older adults and its long-lasting impact necessitate a nationwide mobilization.

20%

20 percent of people experiencing homelessness are older adults—the fastest-growing age group of individuals losing their housing.[1]

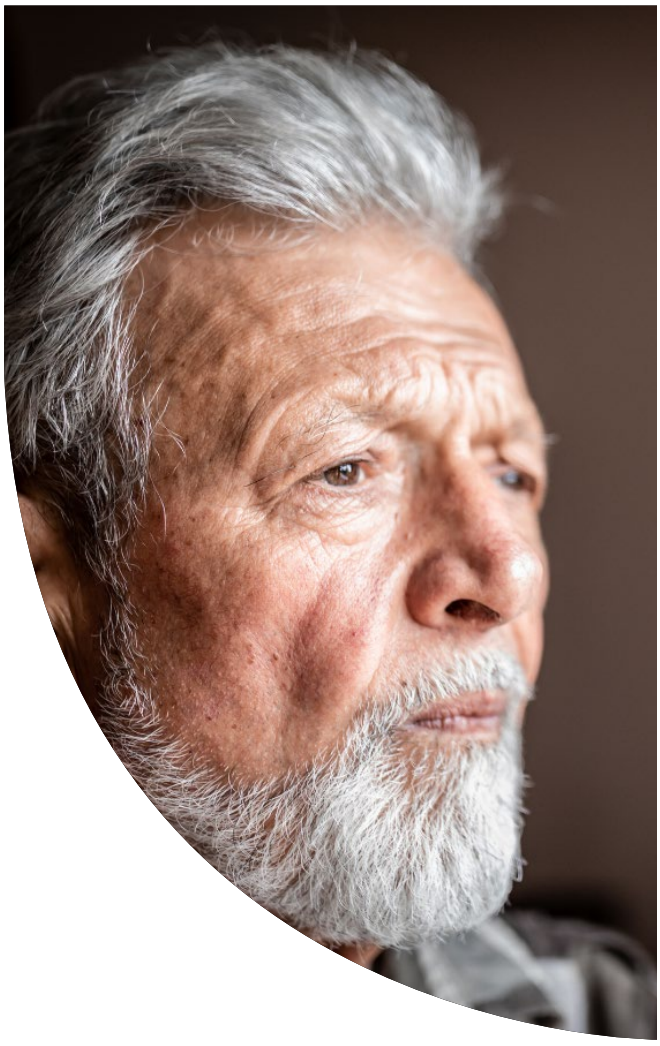
94%

94 percent of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) say lack of affordable housing is a major concern in their service areas.[2]

6.8%

Although the federal 2025 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 1 reveals a welcome three percent drop in overall national homelessness since 2024, the crisis among older adults worsened. The report indicates that 6.8 percent more adults 65 and older experienced homelessness in 2025 compared to 2024.[3]

Effectively addressing the unique needs of older adults at-risk of or experiencing homelessness takes intervention from multiple sectors. Two critical systems are Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and homelessness response networks, known as Continuums of Care (CoCs). As the keystones of the Aging Network and homeless services system, AAAs and CoCs can drive transformative change when they partner. AAAs wanted to adopt this approach and asked for a roadmap on developing effective partnerships to propel community-driven solutions tailored to older adults.



USAGING ACTIONS

With support from a Next50 grant, USAging has increased and strengthened partnerships between the nation's AAAs and CoCs to to address homelessness among older adults through the launch of the Doors to Housing for Older Adults initiative. In this initiative, USAging partnered with the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

The figure below summarizes how USAging achieved this Doors to Housing for Older Adults goal. The National Alliance to End Homelessness served as USAging's major partner in this project.

IDENTIFY & ELEVATE SOLUTIONS

- Collected strategies from trailblazing AAA-CoC partnerships
- Informed project via service-provider discussion groups
- Utilized 2025 AAA National Survey to gather critical data on housing and homelessness

BOOST VISIBILITY & READINESS TO ACT

Elevated the issue, solutions and stakeholders' motivation to act through:

- National summit with multi-sector, energized audience
- Extensive communications (direct and third-party)
- Calls to action at summit and the USAging Annual Conference

EQUIP COMMUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

Produced and marketed Doors to Housing for Older Adults resources, including:

- Partnership Action Guide
- On-demand trainings
- Key Concepts and Resource List

Built a network of more than 2,200 aging, homeless services, housing and health professionals committed to reducing older adults' homelessness

RESOURCES & OUTREACH

To launch this initiative, USAging interviewed 15 trailblazing AAA-CoC partnerships and conducted two discussion groups to deeply inform the Doors to Housing resource suite.

- **The Partnership Action Guide** (i.e., roadmap) draws from best practices and charts the steps in building, implementing and sustaining effective partnerships. Each of the five stages features inspiring examples from the trailblazers.
- **AAA-CoC Basics Online Training** is a pair of brief videos that orient users to AAAs, CoCs and their networks to help jump start their discussions.
- **Key Concepts and Resource List** provides a starting place for local leaders to develop a baseline understanding of the problem, both systems and local innovations.
- **Solutions for Older Adults' Homelessness National Summit** featured trailblazers to inspire and advance the growth of AAA-CoC partnerships.





Sandy Markwood, CEO, USAging, is joined by Davey Schaupp, Filmmaker, Humans for Housing, and Irma Jimenez, Division Director, Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veteran Services Division.

USAging opened its 2026 Annual Conference (with 1,400 attendees) with a general session urging the Aging Network to reduce homelessness among older adults by using the Next50-funded Doors to Housing resources. Keynote speaker Davey Schaupp, filmmaker of *No Place to Grow Old*, championed using stories to open minds to difficult truths and compel meaningful change on homelessness. The high-profile session also featured homelessness innovations from Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veteran Services on street outreach, advocacy and homelessness prevention.

An overwhelming 98 percent of attendees rated the session as excellent/good. One reviewer said, "Changing the Story was very compelling. The movie was very poignant." After the conference, at least 21 Aging Network organizations scheduled film screenings.

The initiative's national summit recording and all resources are available on the Doors to Housing for Older Adults microsite. National presenters included Next50, USAging, the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Michael Larson, producer of the documentary *No Place to Grow Old*.

Since receiving the Next50 grant, USAging has extensively elevated the issue of homelessness among older adults and called upon professionals in aging, homelessness, human services, housing and health sectors to develop community-driven solutions. AAAs and CoCs trailblazers presented in interactive workshops at USAging's Answers on Aging Annual Conference and Tradeshow and the National Alliance to End Homelessness's national conferences in both 2025 and 2026.

ADDITIONALLY:

- USAging presented at other organizations' in-person and virtual events and also promoted Doors to Housing resources at four conference exhibit hall booths.
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness published Why Continuums of Care and the Aging Network Must Work Together blog post.

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH PHASE

Our interviews revealed that ***trailblazing AAA-CoC partnerships are driving systems-level changes so that fewer older adults become unhoused and more can receive the support needed to stabilize aging in place.***

These community-driven solutions ultimately help older adults to optimally age well in the community—preserving key economic assets and promoting well-being through safe, healthy and stable housing along with necessary home and community-based services.



MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY TRAILBLAZING AAA-COC PARTNERSHIPS

- Developed a rapid rehousing program for older adults.
- Expedited access to Medicaid long-term services and supports for older adults experiencing homelessness.
- Created productive referral pathways to streamline older adults' access to assistance across both systems and facilitated new cross-network partnerships at the service provider level.
- Streamlined data sharing across systems.
- Updated the homeless system's coordinated entry assessment to help prioritize older adults.
- Made a successful case for municipal policies to increase affordable housing.
- Established processes for case conferencing to integrate assistance from both networks to support individuals with complex needs.
- Trained staff across both networks to specialize in serving older adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Closed a critical gap by establishing a new shelter for older adults with functional needs.

The new suite of Doors to Housing technical assistance products is helping communities scale this successful strategy.

I was struck by the concept of community-driven partnerships outlined in the Action Guide. Available solution for my community is the creation of a dedicated Older Adult Housing Taskforce that specifically includes representatives from the low-income sector and those with lived experience. By leveraging existing governance bodies like the Community Action Partnership, we can co-produce housing strategies that are not just 'one-size-fits-all' but are tailored to the specific health and mobility needs of aging residents in the [region].

—Anonymous Summit Participant

EARNED MEDIA

"How Aging and Homeless Services Can Meet in the Middle", a September 2026 *Shelterforce* article, highlighted Doors to Housing for Older Adults for its technical resources and tools for local leaders and featured a trailblazer AAA included in the Partnership Action Guide. The article greatly expands awareness and use of these resources across the nonprofit's affordable housing and community development audience because of *Shelterforce's* reach:

46,000

unique monthly visits to website

12,100

email newsletter subscribers with a 47 percent average open rate; 30 percent of readers report using the content to effect change

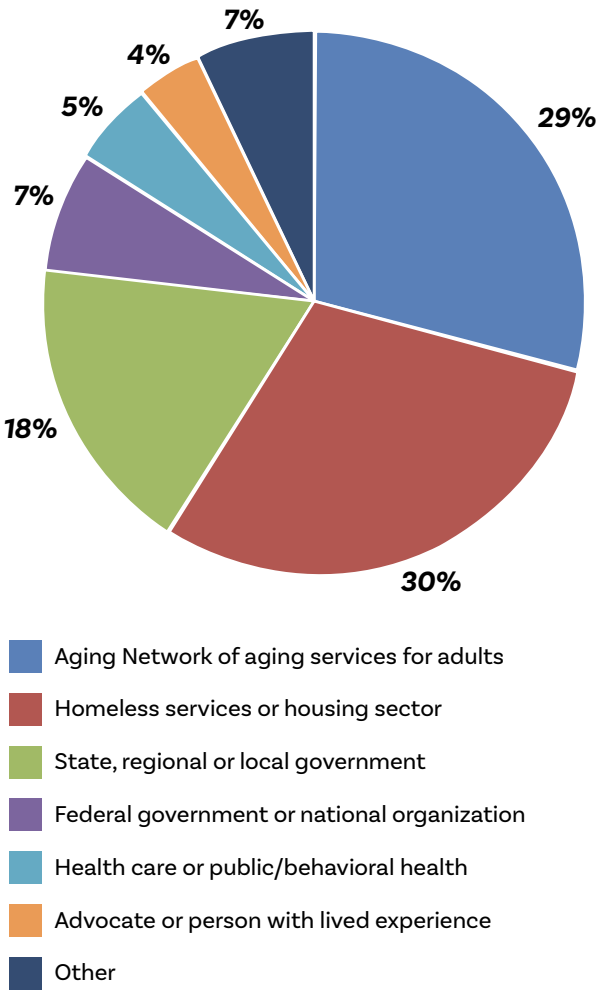
30,000

annual audio plays[4]

REACH, ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT

As a result of USAging's extensive marketing campaign with nearly 29,000 social media impressions, more than ***2,400 individuals registered for our virtual summit.*** *Figure 1 describes this multi-sector audience.*

FIGURE 1. SUMMIT MULTI-SECTOR PARTICIPANTS



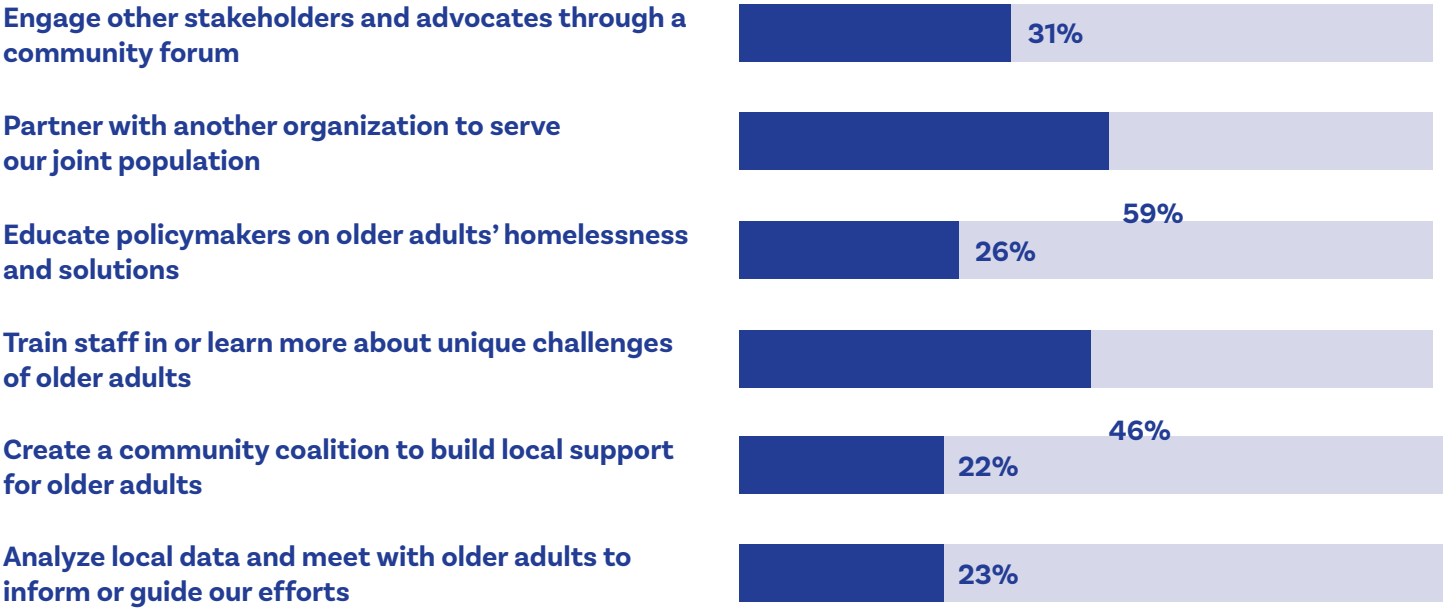
The strong level of engagement throughout the live summit underscores both the urgent need within communities and the commitment of AAAs and CoCs to be part of the solution. The summit:

- **Engaged 1,144 individuals** (unduplicated), **69 percent of whom participated 90 or more minutes.**
- Gained 265 views of the summit recording.
- Generated a listserv of more **than 2,200 people who receive periodic updates** about homelessness among and housing for older adults.

Building on the momentum of the summit and related events, USAging now has a network of more than 600 AAA staff members who are actively strengthening and expanding new responses to homelessness.

To prompt participants to plan their next steps on developing partnerships, the post-summit questionnaire gathered organizational commitments to act (respondents could select up to three actions). Figure 2 shows that the most common planned actions included partnering with another organization (69 percent), training their staff about homelessness among older adults (46 percent) and engaging other stakeholders and advocates on the issue (31 percent).

FIGURE 2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO ACT BY JUNE 30, 2026



In spring 2026, 40 participating organizations took the first step toward hosting community forums centered on the No Place to Grow Old, which the summit previewed.

Since the summit, USAging has steadily promoted Doors to Housing resources in newsletters, social media and presentations. Analytics show strong engagement across USAging web and social channels. Users are actively exploring and applying these resources to better support older adults experiencing housing instability.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

USAging projects that Doors to Housing will drive a 20 percent increase in AAA–CoC partnerships. To measure progress, USAging will benchmark 2028 survey results against the 2025 baseline, which showed 6.9 percent of AAAs held formal partnerships, 32.4 percent held informal partnerships, and 57.2 percent held none.

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

HUD's 2025 national homelessness data indicate that helping older adults maintain or quickly regain housing has become more imperative and urgent. **AAA-CoC partnerships is a strategy that resonates with communities, and Doors to Housing for Older Adults substantiated how cross-sector collaboration between AAAs and CoCs drives crucial systems-level changes.** Each trailblazing partnership developed a community-driven solution that responded to local needs and often leveraged existing resources. Some efforts were unique, such as a new rapid rehousing program, expedited access to Medicaid support and updated system assessments. Several partnerships trained their staff and/or network members, improved coordination across systems and advocated for policy responses to the crisis.

Clearly, **demand and readiness for resources to support cross-sector partnerships and community-driven innovation is high.** Through intentional marketing and secondary promotion by partners and stakeholders, USAging secured 2,400 summit registrants, built a network of more than 2,200 cross-sector leaders and generated organizational commitments and actions to help keep more older adults housed.

Given extensive tumult in the homeless services system related to changing federal priorities and funding, USAging recommends a focus on Aging Network capacity in the next phase. Feedback from the virtual summit, presentations, conference sessions and numerous discussions, AAAs are asking for USAging assistance to:

- Strengthen how the Aging Network supports older adults by:
  - » Supporting the development of homelessness prevention and crisis response services so that all AAAs can provide essential support to those in need.
  - » Building on Title VI Native American Aging Programs' success to enhance their role in community supports for housing stability.
- Elevate AAAs' and Title VI programs' advocacy and partnership development with other community systems, including homeless services as well as housing providers, health, transportation, workforce services and law enforcement. They are eager to promote policy solutions that address root causes of older adults' housing instability.

CONTACT

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APPENDIX

This appendix provides additional data from the Solutions for Older Adults' Homelessness National Summit.

The Commitment to Change questionnaire asked about broad-based changes in the community—beyond the Aging Network and homeless services system—to reduce homelessness among older adults (respondents could select up to three changes). The results are as follows.

- 79 percent selected affordable housing suited for older adults.
- 65 percent selected a source of flexible funding to help lower income older adults retain housing.
- 35 percent selected stronger political will for policy change.
- 16 percent selected community education about the issue and options to address.
- 13 percent selected state/community information exchanges for sharing data across aging, homeless services, housing and health care.

Additionally, the questionnaire asked participants about the types of non-financial support they would need to pursue those types of broad-based changes (respondents could select up to three supports). The results are as follows.

- 57 percent selected community of practice (or learning community) with peers that are pursuing similar goals.
- 54 percent selected case studies on community-driven innovations like those in the summit.
- 41 percent selected toolkits.
- 40 percent selected on-demand training.
- 35 percent selected customizable templates for advocacy or community education.
- 32 percent selected webinars or office hours that help us understand how to advance community change.

ENDNOTES

[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). Addressing Homelessness Among Older Adults: Final Report.

[2] USAging. (2025). AAAs Respond to Complex Community Needs.

[3] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2026). 2025 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 1.

[4] Shelterforce. (n.d.). Advertising Media Kit.