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# **Age Well Live Well**

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**Be Connected**

# Texas Health and Human Services

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HHS oversees the operation of the health and human services system. HHS has responsibility for strategic leadership, administrative oversight of Texas health and human services system programs, and provides direct administration of some programs.

## **HHS oversees:**

- Eligibility Determination
- System Planning and Evaluation
- Policy Development and Rule-making
- Ombudsman Services
- Aging Programs



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# Aging Service Coordination Office

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## Initiatives

- Age Well Live Well
- Aging Texas Well
- Database of Aging Programs
- Texercise
- Silver Lining



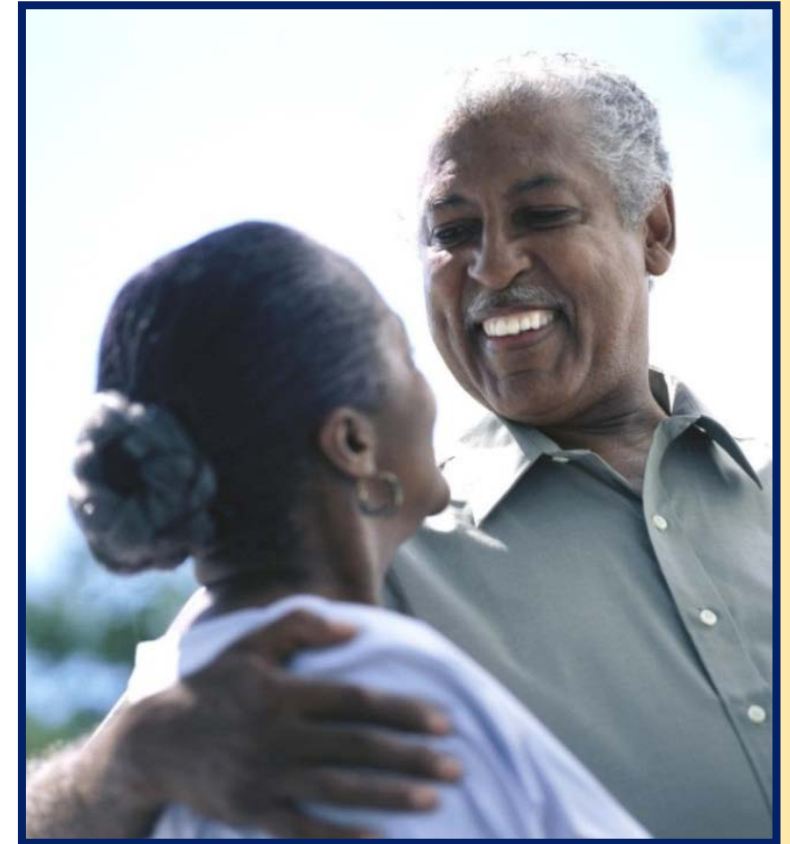
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# Age Well Live Well

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*In 2050, the population of Texans aged 65 and over is projected to be 17.4 percent.*

The **Age Well Live Well** campaign provides resources and tools to help individuals and local communities meet the needs associated with aging and create opportunities for living well.



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# Age Well Live Well

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*The Age Well Live Well campaign provides resources, tips, tools and expertise to help Texans:*

- **Be Healthy:** by improving the physical health of older adults, their families and the community at large.
- **Be Connected:** by providing opportunities for Texans to get engaged in local activities and volunteer.
- **Be Informed:** by creating awareness of aging-related issues and resources offered through Age Well Live Well partners, HHS and the aging and disability network.



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# The Changing Face of Texas

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In 2012, Texas's population was more than 25 million and nearly 4 million (15%) were 60 years or older.

It is estimated that by 2030 Texas's 60 plus population will increase to over 6 million (20%).

**An increase of almost 25% from 2012.**



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# The Changing Face of Texas

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## Baby Boomers



# Isolation and Loneliness

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## Definitions

- Social connectedness - satisfaction and contentment with one's social life.
- Loneliness - dissatisfaction with the quantity or quality of one's social relationships.
- Social isolation - an objective lack of social networks and access to information and resources.



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# Isolation and Loneliness

## Demographics and Statistics

- 19% of Americans age 62–91 are lonely.
- Loneliness increases the likelihood of mortality by 26%.
- *“The effect of loneliness and isolation on mortality is comparable to the impact of well-known risk factors such as obesity, and has a similar influence as cigarette smoking.”*



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# Being Engaged Can Help

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*The good news is that community involvement can help reduce many of the effects of loneliness.*

*Staying connected and engaged with your community is a key component of living a healthy lifestyle.*



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*Be connected by building new friendships.*

# Be Connected

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## Types of engagement

- Volunteerism
- Lifelong Learning
- Civic Involvement
- Recreation
- Spirituality



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# Volunteering

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*“Volunteer activities can strengthen the social ties that protect individuals from isolation during difficult times, while the experience of helping others leads to a sense of greater self-worth and trust.”*



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# Volunteering

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*People who volunteer live longer and volunteering leads to greater life satisfaction and lower rates of depression.*

- Volunteers extend limited capital
- Volunteers provide personal connections
- Volunteers meet new people
- Everyone is welcome
- It is good for you
- Volunteers make a difference



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# Volunteer Resources

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Search engines for posting volunteer opportunities:

- <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>
- <http://createthegood.org/volunteer-search>

Opportunity for older adults to mentor small business owners:

- <https://www.score.org/>

Partner with Senior Corps:

- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps>



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# Lifelong Learning

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*An AARP study of adults aged 50 and older revealed that more than 90% planned to continue learning as they age.*

Reasons to plan lifelong learning opportunities:

- Learning new things can keep the brain stimulated.
- It encourages social interaction and is a great way to develop new friendships.



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# Lifelong Learning

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If you are not ready to host your own lifelong learning series, you can connect older adults in your community to existing opportunities at community centers, libraries, universities, and community colleges.

Ready to start your own lifelong learning program? Community partners that already offer opportunities can help guide you in the right direction. There are also online resources that can help you get started:

[www.roadsscholar.org/about/lifelong-learning-institutes/](http://www.roadsscholar.org/about/lifelong-learning-institutes/)

[www.osherfoundation.org/](http://www.osherfoundation.org/)



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# Civic Engagement

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**Civic engagement addresses public concerns and promotes the quality of the community.**

- Civic engagement provides older adults with a purpose, a way to meet similarly minded people and the opportunity to make a difference in an area they are passionate about.
- Helping the older adults find a cause they care about and an opportunity to work to make positive change is a benefit to both the older adult and the community.
- The civic organization or cause benefits from a lifetime of skill building and experience.



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# Civic Engagement

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Involvement can help older adults to make a difference in their own backyard. Older adults can get involved in their neighborhood associations. They can also join a civic or social group such as AARP, Kiwanians, Lyons Club, etc.

If older adults are interested in being involved at the state or policy level. Consider reaching out to the Texas Silver Haired Legislature for more information:

<http://www.txshl.org/>



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# Recreation

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*“Refreshment of strength and spirits after work and a means of refreshment or diversion.”*

Recreation can include physical activities such as walking, playing sports, dancing, hiking, or riding a bike.

It can also include hobbies such as painting, bird watching, writing poetry, or playing dominoes.

Anything that provides a fun activity whether it is enjoyed individually or in a group can be considered recreation.



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# Recreation

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Creating recreation opportunities can reach older adults that might not get involved in other engagement opportunities:

- Highlight local senior centers or plan activities for older adults at community centers or libraries. 211 will have a list of centers and libraries.
- Encourage outdoor activities. Highlight volunteer/engagement opportunities at community parks such as park clean up or campsite hosts.
- Foster interest in new hobbies. Plan an art class, plant a community garden, feature a new board game, host a dance.



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# Spirituality

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*It is important to provide older adults interested in spirituality or religion with the opportunity to stay engaged in a spiritual life as they age.*

Studies show:

- Older adults who place importance on religious or spiritual beliefs have an increased psychological well-being.
- People that use religious or spiritual coping mechanisms are less likely to develop depression and anxiety.



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# Spirituality

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- Encourage older adults to connect with a faith community, or help them address barriers that might be keeping them from staying involved.
- For those that prefer something less formal, the American Society on Aging outlined 10 activities that can help older adults to connect to spirituality.

Here are just a few:

- Practice breathing
- Focus on gratitude
- Explore creative expression
- Encourage kindness



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*Be connected by strengthening your community.*



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# Steps for Creating Social Engagement Opportunities

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# Assess Available Resources

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Assessments provide what programs, tools and resources are already available and help identify gaps.

- AARP's Age Friendly Communities
- World Health Organization's Livable Communities
- Texas Healthy Communities
- Texas Connector by OneStar Foundation
- Consider: surveys, focus groups, and community forums



# Identify Potential Barriers

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- Being aware of potential participation barriers can help you plan a better activity.
- Here are a couple of barriers that might come up:
  - Transportation issues
  - Unaware of activity
  - Caregiving responsibilities
  - Nervous about stepping outside of comfort zone
  - Funding
  - Time commitments



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# Steps for Creating Opportunities

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- Use assessment results to identify what is needed (e.g., program, activity)
- Survey older adults to find out what they would enjoy doing
- Develop a program, activity or event to meet the need and fill the gap
- Write up a plan of action with tasks divisions
- Find community partners to help you
- Look for funding (e.g., grants, sponsors)
- Get started!



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*Be connected by creating new experiences.*

# Group Activity

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In your groups:

- Group member volunteers to scribe
- Review your assigned community
- Review the list of resources and barriers
- Brainstorm an activity to plan
- Highlight potential challenges or barriers
- Suggest solutions
- Pick a group representative to report back



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# Next Steps

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- **Assess your community.** What new connection opportunities are needed?
- **Reach out to partners.** What other organizations can help you create a new opportunities?
- **Don't recreate the wheel.** Generations United and AARP's Connect to Affect have great opportunity ideas.
- **Ask for help.** Need help with your engagement idea? Call Aging Services Coordination.



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# Contact Information

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Texas Health and Human Services  
Aging Services Coordination

1-800-889-8595

Claire Irwin: [Claire.Irwin@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:Claire.Irwin@hhsc.state.tx.us)

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