



**Office for
the Aging**

Older Adults & Extreme Heat: Be Prepared, Aware & Connected

Retired Public Employees Association
July 9, 2026

New York State Office for the Aging
Tina Hotaling, Aging Services Program Coordinator II
Alicia Saure, Aging Services Program Coordinator I

Today we will

- Provide a brief overview of New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and the Aging Services Network's efforts preparing and responding to extreme heat
- Discuss the impact of extreme heat on older adults & risk factors
- Learn steps to be prepared, stay informed, and stay connected
- Highlight NYSOFA's partners in promoting energy, weatherization and utility consumer assistance programs and resources

NYSOFA: Our Mission

“It is the mission of the New York State Office for the Aging to help all older New Yorkers to be as independent as possible for as long as possible, **with an emphasis on hard-to-serve and diverse populations**. NYSOFA fulfills this mission through advocacy, development, and delivery of person-centered, consumer-oriented, and cost-effective policies, programs, and services that support and empower older adults and their families, in partnership with a network of public and private state and community organizations.”

-NYSOFA MISSION STATEMENT

Avg. NYSOFA Client (case management)

83-years old

Low-income

Female

Lives alone

4-10 chronic conditions



Office for
the Aging

Combating Ageism

Social, Economic & Intellectual Capital of Older New Yorkers

- New York's total population is over 19 million individuals
 - State **ranks fourth** in the nation in the number of adults age 60 and over: 5+ million.
 - Another 3.7 million between 45-59

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PUBLIC SERVICE!

Did you know ?

- **80% of NYS Retirement System Payouts Stay in NY - \$10.6 billion annually**
- **Other Pensions - \$30.5 billion**
- **Social Security - \$70 billion** paid annually to NYS older adults
- **900,000 individuals age 60+** contribute **442 million hours** of service at economic value of **\$13.2 billion**
- **64% of individuals** age 60+ own their own homes and have **no mortgage**
- **4.1 million caregivers** at any time in a year – economic value if paid for at market rate is **\$39 billion**, average age is **64**

Source: <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/aging.html>



**Office for
the Aging**

What Characterizes Older Adults?

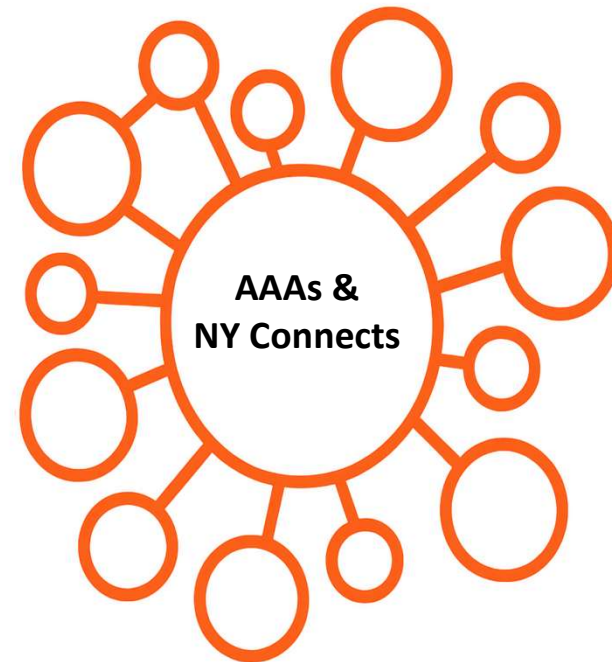
- **A growing population with increased and unprecedented longevity:** Older adults are living longer and healthier lives, and their numbers are growing
- **Highly heterogeneous:** There is enormous variation in health, functional ability and financial status. Disparities exist along the dimensions of income, gender, race/ethnicity and education
- **Social and economic impact:** Older adults hold a disproportionately large share of our country's wealth, represent an enormous source of consumer spending and economic productivity, and contribute in many ways (e.g., support to grandchildren, childcare) to family and community life



**Office for
the Aging**

Our Infrastructure

- **59 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)** and approximately **1,200 contractors** supporting the community-based care needs of older adults and their caregivers
- **777 senior centers**
- **819 congregate meal sites**
- **315 central kitchens**
- **2,057 home-delivered-meal routes**
- **41 highest-level evidence-based interventions (EBIs)** serving 35,651 older New Yorkers
- **30+ public-private partnerships** that serve **2 million additional people** using technology to keep older adults engaged, overcome **social isolation**, support **family caregivers**, and more



**Office for
the Aging**

NYSOFA: Providing 20+ Core Services

Nutrition Program - Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, etc.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP)

Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP)

Elder Abuse Prevention and E-MDT Program

Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Program

National Family Caregiver Support Program

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and Collaboration with NYSDOL on Older Adult Worker unit

Collaboration with NYS OTDA: HEAP to provide public information on home energy & weatherization assistance programs to older adults

Chronic Disease Self-Management Education Program (CDSMP)



**Office for
the Aging**

For more information, visit <https://aging.ny.gov/>

NYSOFA Partnerships & Innovation Projects



NYSOFA has **33 public-private partnerships** that serve **1 million** people using technology to keep older adults engaged and overcome **social isolation**.

Why focus on Social Isolation?

Loneliness and isolation **increase the risk for developing mental health challenges**.

Lack of social connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels **comparable to smoking**.

Social isolation significantly increases a person's risk of premature death and causes **a 50% percent increased risk of dementia**.



**Office for
the Aging**

NYS & NYSOFA: Raising Awareness and Response to the Energy Needs of Older New Yorkers

- Access to affordable energy is a social determinant of health
- NYSOFA partners with other NYS agencies to **improve access to energy affordability**, energy efficiency and access
- NYSOFA and the aging network provide **outreach, information, and assistance** to older adults on the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other benefits
- NYSOFA **participates** in:
Weatherization Policy Council;
Extreme Heat Workgroup;
Emergency Management Access & Functional Needs Workgroup;
Interagency Winter Workshops, etc.



**Office for
the Aging**

NYSOFA's Partners in Promoting Energy, Weatherization & Utility Consumer Resources

Public Utility Law Project (PULP): Education on utility consumer rights and protections

Department of Public Service (DPS): Energy Affordability Program (EAP) & utility consumer rights and resources

Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA): Clean Energy Hubs, EmPower+, in home energy assessments

Homes and Community Renewal (HCR): Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance (OTDA): Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

NYS Power Authority: Education programs on energy literacy, including energy savings workshops



Older Adults & Energy Costs

What is Energy Burden?

“Energy burden” is the percentage of gross household income that is spent on energy costs.

Older Adults households are among those with highest energy burdens- 36-40% higher than non-older adult households.

Learn more about the impact energy burdens:

<https://iejusa.org/energy-justice-101-understanding-energy-burden/>

LIHEAP Survey Source: National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA)

<https://neada.org/program-policy-reports/liheapsurvey/>

Deal with the Heat, or Eat?

Low-income and minority communities face compounding vulnerabilities, including fewer cooling resources, reduced access to healthcare, and hotter neighborhood conditions due to the urban heat island effect.

National survey respondents reported making choices when faced with energy bills, they couldn't afford:

- 25% kept their home at a temperature that was unsafe or unhealthy
- 36% went without food for at least one day
- 41% went without medical or dental care
- 31% did not fill a prescription or took less than the full dose



**Office for
the Aging**

Extreme Heat: Risk Factors for Older Adults

- As bodies age, our internal cooling system is less effective; we produce less sweat and have a reduced sense of thirst.
 - Older adults have an increased risk of dehydration, greatly exasperating risk of serious illness, or death.
 - 90% of older adults have at least one chronic health condition.
 - Chronic illnesses (cardiovascular, renal, lung, neurological, dementia, and others) increase risks associated with extreme heat.
 - Medications (diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, some heart and high blood pressure medicines) can make it harder for the body to cool itself in summer.
 - Taking several prescription drugs at the same time can increase the risk of hyperthermia (heat related stress).
- **80-92%** of heat exacerbated deaths annually are **65+ yrs. old**
 - **Major causes of death in heat waves:** Heat stroke, heart attack, COPD, pneumonia, and dementia related complications
 - **Black and lower income communities** have **3 times higher** heat related **mortality** rates

Source: <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/heat-waves-and-annual-death-rates-in-older-adults-in-the-united-states/>



**Office for
the Aging**

Be Prepared, Informed & Connected

Heat Exhaustion		Heat Stroke
ACT FAST • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing • Sip cool water • Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve		ACT FAST CALL 911 • Move person to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice
<i>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</i>		<i>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</i>

Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!




✓ **Be prepared**
have a plan

✓ **Be informed**
monitor weather alerts,
the temperature of your
home, and how you are
feeling

✓ **Be and stay connected**
to friends, family &
neighbors.



**Office for
the Aging**



Before a Heat Wave



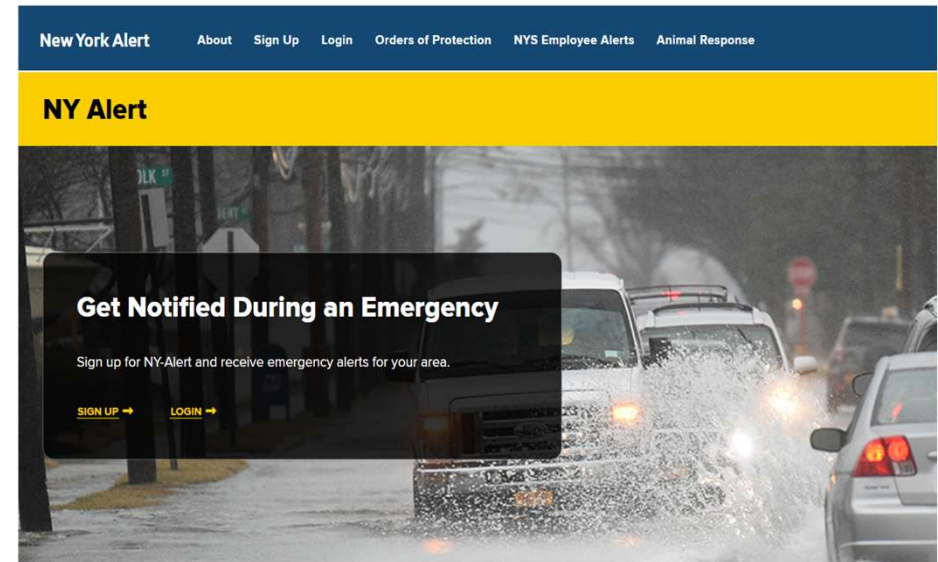
- ❑ Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
Heavy sweating; cold, pale, and clammy skin; fast, weak pulse; nausea or vomiting; muscle cramps; tiredness or weakness; dizziness; headache; fainting (passing out). For other symptoms of heat-related illness, [see the CDC website here](#).
- ❑ Make sure that you can open your windows and/or that your air conditioner is installed and working properly.
- ❑ Find out where to cool down
New York State Department of Health has [information about cooling centers here](#). If there are none, identify air-conditioned buildings where you can go (such as libraries, malls, supermarkets, or friends' homes).
- ❑ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about medications that might make you sensitive to the sun or heat.
- ❑ Have a plan, choose someone that you can call for help or who can check on you.
- ❑ If you have a pet, check out ways to keep your pet safe during heat waves
[Warm weather pet safety | American Veterinary Medical Association](#).
- ❑ Have a plan in place in case of loss of power
[Utility Service Interruptions | Department of Public Service](#)



**Office for
the Aging**

NY Alert –sign up today!

- Subscribe to receive critical information and emergency alerts, including information about weather-related events.
- Receive critical, emergency-related information including instructions and recommendations in real-time by emergency personnel.
- All areas of New York State are included in the system. You decide which areas to receive alerts about.
- Signing up is free.
- Messages can be received by phone, email, text and fax.



Learn more and sign up at <https://alert.ny.gov/>

Places to Get Cool

- Pools and beaches across the New York State Park system are available for cooling off during hot days this summer.
 - View the [full list](#) of statewide swimming lakes, ocean beaches and pools.
 - Call ahead to confirm hours.
- New York State Department of Health collects information about seasonal cooling centers.
 - For more information and to find a Cooling Center near you, go [here](#).
- For further information on how to stay safe during periods of excessive heat:
 - [New York State Department of Health](#)
 - [CDC website](#).



**Office for
the Aging**

NYSOFA: Emergency Management Preparedness & Response

- Prior to the pandemic, the focus was on responding after a natural disaster, such as a flood or evacuation.
- During the pandemic, it became clear that older adults had unique needs that could be fortified to prepare for emergencies instead of responding after.
- NYSOFA and our emergency management partners shifted our planning and practice efforts toward advanced preparedness and early warnings.

Intervention Levels

- **Green Zone-** days ahead of anticipated heat wave allows for early warning measures.
- **Yellow Zone-** first 1-2 days of extreme heat event, window for preparation narrows, focus shifts to early response and mitigation of emergencies.
- **Red Zone-** Prolonged extreme heat, overlapping power outages, and stress on medical systems.



Green Zone-Communication

- At the onset of likely extreme heat event, effective communication of prevention materials begin to go out.
- Social media accounts and mass communication platforms are used to push out advance warnings.



Yellow Zone- Mitigation

- AAAs provide calls to older adults who are case managed or voluntarily sign up for mass communication platforms.
- Messages ask about hydration, food security, air conditioning, refrigerated medications and knowing signs for heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as well as who to call.
- If cooling centers have been opened, messaging on how to access those or community areas with air conditioning.



Red Zone- Coordinated Response

- Prolonged heat, likely complicated by power outages or rolling brown outs.
- Older adults who are reliant on durable medical goods or refrigerated medications are offered batteries, charging services, or assistance in accessing shelters.
- Home delivered meal drivers are doing daily safety checks and calling emergency services when assessing an older adult may be in distress.
- When AAA staff are unable to reach older adults for a verbal check in, they will coordinate with local law enforcement to do an in-person safety check.



Older Adults and Extreme Heat: Key Takeaways for a Safe Summer!

Have a plan, be prepared

- ☐ Gather important information: list of names/numbers, medicines,
- ☐ Have water, shelf stable foods, and medicine on hand before heat wave
- ☐ Have a plan in case of power outage

Keep connected to family, friends & neighbors

- ☐ Have a buddy and be a buddy
- ☐ Know where you can go to stay cool
- ☐ Remember social isolation raises your risk for poorer health outcomes

Stay informed

- ☐ Be aware of heat advisories, storm warnings
- ☐ Monitor the temperature in your home
- ☐ Pay attention to how you are feeling
- ☐ Know symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke- and when to call 911!
- ☐ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about medications you are taking



Thank You for joining us today.



**Office for
the Aging**

Contact NYSOFA

NY Connects: localized helpline and online database for trusted information about long term services and supports

- 1-800-342-9871

<https://www.nyconnects.ny.gov/>

HIICAP helps 220,000 New Yorkers annually to understand Medicare decisions and apply for programs that save on costs

- 1-800-701-0501

<https://aging.ny.gov/programs/medicare-and-health-insurance>

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is an effective advocate and resource for individuals residing in long term care facilities

- 1-855-582-6769

<https://aging.ny.gov/long-term-care-ombudsman-program>

NYSOFA News: Read and subscribe to our monthly newsletter ***Inside NYS Aging*** for community outreach resources delivered to your inbox

<https://aging.ny.gov/pressroom>

Tools and Innovations Page: <https://aging.ny.gov/tools-and-innovations>

Social Media:

www.facebook.com/nysaging

www.x.com/nysaging

<https://www.youtube.com/newyorkstateofficefortheaging>

<https://www.youtube.com/@NewYorkStateOfficefortheAging/streams>

NY Caregiver Portal: www.newyork-caregivers.com



**Office for
the Aging**