

**House Study Commission on Aging
House Health Committee Hearing on H7279
Rep. Lauren Carson, Chair
Rhode Island Multi-Sector Plan on Aging – Project Update
January 29, 2026**

2026 Legislation proposals

Extend the Study Commission until a permanent Joint Commission is established, H7279

Pass H5719 Sub A again

Establish the Aging Study Commission as a Joint and permanent

Purpose and Vision

The Rhode Island Multi-Sector Plan on Aging is a statewide strategic initiative to align public, private, nonprofit, and community partners around a comprehensive agenda that supports healthy, equitable, and independent aging. The plan aims to anticipate demographic shifts, reduce disparities, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration to improve the quality of life for older adults and caregivers.

Key Focus Areas/Workgroups

- Access to services
- Housing
- Transportation and mobility
- Economic security
- Health
- Municipal Services

Next Steps

1. The 6 workgroups have finalized their goal and priority statements. They were reviewed yesterday at the Aging Study Commission meeting. The goal was to prepare a one-page statement outlining all the domains and the values, and to make a priority statement about them. No specific legislative issues will be identified in these statements.
2. Maria Cimini, in her role as Director of OHA, is required to create a state plan for federal money. I am working closely with her through June 2026 to merge and integrate our joint planning efforts.
3. The State Commission on Aging, led by Meg Grady, is arranging a meeting with the governor's staff to share this work and express/request support for this planning process.
4. We will hold a Commission meeting for public comments on our work on March 6 at the State House. The priority statements on each of the issues/domains will be presented for public comment.

Progress to Date

1. Stakeholder Engagement

- **Completed:**
 - Series of listening sessions with older adults, caregivers, service providers, and community groups (Fall–Winter 2025).
 - Targeted interviews with municipal leaders, healthcare systems, and labor representatives.
 - Consulting assistance from the CHCS
 - July meeting with 85 participants/stakeholders
 - 6 issues identified
- **Next Steps:**
 - Convene the House Aging Commission in March 2026 to refine strategic priorities and ensure representation from frontline communities.

2. Data & Needs (2026)

- **Status:**
 - Demographic analysis completed using Census ACS and state health data to project aging population trends through 2040.
 - Gap analysis in service access and infrastructure is underway with key indicators identified (e.g., housing cost burden, transit access).
- **Preliminary Findings:**
 - Sharp increase in residents aged 65+ projected; greatest growth in suburban and coastal regions.
 - Significant service access inequities by income, disability status, and geography.

3. Draft Strategic Framework: 2026 Plan

A preliminary framework will be developed and aligned to six strategic goals:

- 1. Enhance well-being and health outcomes**
- 2. Support housing stability and age-friendly communities**
- 3. Increase accessible transportation and mobility options**
- 4. Strengthen economic security and workforce supports**
- 5. Access to services**
- 6. Municipal services**

Each goal is paired with draft objectives, measurable outcomes, and potential lead entities.

Challenges & Risk Areas

- **Workforce Capacity:** Persistent shortages in long-term care and allied health fields.
- **Funding Alignment:** Need for sustainable funding streams spanning state, federal, and private investments.
- **Data Integration:** Fragmented data sources limit real-time policy feedback and service coordination.

Conclusion

The House Study Commission on Aging has established a solid foundation of engagement, data insights, and cross-sector collaboration. With the extension of this Study Commission and statewide feedback, the next phase will soon move into public review and refinement in 2026. The initiative positions Rhode Island for coordinated policy action and measurable progress toward an equitable, age-ready future.