

# Project 2015

## State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York

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Status Report  
2003



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### Status Report 2003

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Status Report is submitted to the Executive Chamber as part of the unfolding process of planning, engagement and action by New York State agencies to prepare for the future impact of our changing population. The New York State Office for the Aging would like to thank the participating state agencies that responded to the Status Report survey in 2003. *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York* is a planning initiative involving 36 New York State government agencies that began in 2002. Through this initiative, the agencies gained an understanding of several major demographic changes that our State will experience over the next 10 to 15 years, particularly the aging and increasing diversity of our population. They deliberated the impact of these demographic changes on their agencies; they identified strategies, action steps, and collaborations they could employ to assure that their agencies would be prepared to meet the impact of our State's dramatically shifting population profile. This Report provides a look at the progress made and plans for the future as New York continues to prepare for the impact of our changing population.

NYS Office for the Aging  
Report by Jennifer Rosenbaum  
2003

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In early 2002, **Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York** was launched as part of New York's ongoing effort to prepare New York for the future. Governor George E. Pataki directed 36 state government agencies to consider what the resident makeup of the State is expected to be by the year 2015. The agencies were further directed to identify strategies for assuring that the State is prepared to recognize the advantages and to meet the challenges of expected demographic changes in New York, particularly the aging and increasing diversity of our population, in creative, productive ways.

Each agency participating in the project wrote an agency-specific Brief identifying the priority issue areas that concern its agency's mission, policies, programs and practices, and action steps to be considered within the next five to seven years to become better prepared to meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by these population changes in New York. The individual agency Briefs became part of a Project 2015 White Paper that was presented to Governor Pataki in October 2002, titled *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of An Aging New York – White Paper for Discussion*.

The initial project activities culminated in a meeting (Governor's Symposium) in October, 2002, of the 36 participating state agencies to (1) present the publication, *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of An Aging New York – White Paper for Discussion* to the Executive Chamber; and (2) design strategies and action steps in order to continue individual agencies' progress in addressing the trends, issues and impacts identified in their Project 2015 Briefs, and to engage the public in considering the issues.

To follow up on the status of individual state agencies' progress since the October, 2002 Symposium meeting, the 36 participating state agencies were contacted for a Project

2015 Status Report in the summer 2003. Each state agency received a Status Report survey form and responses were received from all 36 agencies participating in the project. This Project 2015 Status Report provides valuable information about activities under way in state agencies and affords an opportunity to formulate next steps for New York State government to consider within Project 2015 into the near future. The Status Report survey asked the participating state agencies to provide information about activities, programs, and legislation that their agency has initiated or enacted within this initiative, and plans their agency has under consideration within this initiative for the future.

Through Project 2015, agencies are building and developing innovative partnerships, and New York's leadership can formulate strategies to further improve quality of life and statewide vitality in New York for the years to come. State agencies also can continue to foster discussions with the public and can include feedback for action in the project from the wider community. The New York State Office for the Aging, as the lead agency for this effort on behalf of the Executive Chamber, is committed to ongoing discussion, analysis, planning and action as state government considers the impact of our changing population and the policy implications of these changes for New York State. Future work will continue to focus on the readiness of state government for the impact of an aging, more diverse population.

# **STATUS REPORT QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

During July, 2003, the 36 participating state agencies in Project 2015 received a Status Report survey form with three core question areas. Each set of questions was designed to elicit responses about activities that state agencies have initiated as part of the project since the Project 2015 Symposium in October, 2002. The three core question areas asked about:

1. Internal activity within state agencies concerning Project 2015;
2. Public engagement by state agencies about Project 2015; and
3. Interest in collaboration in a) workforce issues, and in b) technology and service issues.

## **1. STATE AGENCY INTERNAL ACTIVITY**

Each agency's Project 2015 Brief outlined its priority issue areas for action. The first Status Report survey question instructed agencies to respond for each priority issue area about progress and action steps in each of several domains internal to their state agency (e.g., agency divisions, work units, regional offices), including information about: action steps the agency has taken to share information among staff; projects or products to address each priority issue; work plan developed for action; action steps initiated to address each priority issue; and barriers encountered to taking action steps to address the priority issues.

Agencies identified both informal and formal activities that they have employed to share information about Project 2015 and to follow up on Project 2015-related initiatives. Methods used include intra-agency e-mail, staff team meetings and management team meetings. Ten of the participating state agencies have shared information with staff in specific units or bureaus so that they may consider how to incorporate activities or develop actions. Five state agencies have shared information with their regional or

local offices. Five state agencies have incorporated the issues of an aging population and increasing diversity into agency policy. Examples of internal agency activities follow.

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) has incorporated issues of aging and diversity within the programmatic theme “Winds of Change” (a renewed focus on quality, based on evidence-based treatments and practices). Educational information regarding Winds of Change has been disseminated widely to all OMH staff through articles published in the OMH Quarterly and on the OMH Evidence-based Web page at [www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/ebp](http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/ebp).

OMH also has developed Cultural Competence Fact Sheets, which have been distributed and are available on the Web. “[W]e are applying knowledge gained from Project Liberty to design and implement effective community outreach and mental health promotion models for statewide implementation. These include an internet-based clearinghouse of mental illness and mental health information *tailored to specific populations, and culturally relevant public awareness campaigns that inform individuals and families from a wide range of diverse communities about effective mental health treatment and supports*” (emphasis added).

At the State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), two presentations were made about the project to all staff. In January, 2003, NYSOFA began work to develop “Project 2015: Tool Kit for Community Action,” based on the state agency project, for use in counties across New York.

The Department of Health (DOH) offered a training session about Project 2015 to all staff in the Capital District in 2003. In addition to presentations by two demographers, DOH provided training about use of census data for their staff.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) incorporated project information into presentations and training that they conducted throughout the state in 2003.

As a result of Project 2015, the Department of Agriculture and Markets has broadened their approach to market food safety training educational material. They are developing multilingual material with grant funding through USDA, which will reach a broad audience.

### Barriers:

There has been a high turnover in State Agency Designees – the primary liaison from each state agency to New York State’s Project 2015 – in the short span of time from October, 2002 (the culmination of the Brief development process) to July, 2003, when the Status Report was conducted. When the Status Report was conducted, approximately one-third (13) of the 36 State Agency Designees no longer were assigned to that role, due to retirement or transfer of responsibilities to another individual. The resulting staffing shortages diminished clarity about implementation steps, and budgetary pressures that state government is facing affected the ability of several agencies to proceed with the plans and goals for the project that agencies had identified for themselves in October, 2002.

Despite severe fiscal constraints that state government continues to face, several state agencies indicated that there weren't any barriers to proceeding with Project 2015. Agencies that identified barriers pointed to the general areas of limited staffing, costs, and the challenge of devoting staff time to a future-oriented issue.

## **2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

At the Governor’s Symposium in 2002, state agencies considered how each will involve New York State communities in discussions about preparing for future demographic changes. The Status Report survey followed up on this by asking state agencies to provide information about discussions, events, presentations, activities, etc. that each agency has engaged in with the public since October, 2002 (including consumers,

business, academia, state and local government entities, service providers and/or other partners the agency regularly interacts with as part of their agency's mission and work) as part of Project 2015. 23 state agencies had conducted activities with the public or planned to do so by the end of 2003. Examples from five state agencies that have initiated significant public engagement activities as part of Project 2015 follow.

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) has focused its resources and energies on informing its statewide network of 59 area agencies on aging (AAAs) about Project 2015 and encouraging them to undertake local and regional efforts to engage decision makers in planning for the aging of the baby boomers.

A component of this effort was the development of a new product, *Project 2015: Tool Kit for Community Action*, to help the county-based area agencies on aging (AAAs) to implement Project 2015. The Tool Kit was distributed in notebook form to all the AAAs in New York. In 2003

In addition, the major professional development conference for the aging network in New York used "Project 2015" as the theme for its 2003 conference. Over 300 local aging network administrators and staff participated in the conference.

NYSOFA also has set up a "Project 2015" site on its Web site. All publications that are part of Project 2015 can be obtained from the Web site, <http://www.aging.state.ny.us> and clicking on "Project 2015" on the left toolbar.

The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) provided a presentation and discussion about the OASAS "Senior Initiative" and Project 2015 at "IPRO, Inc." [Independent Peer Review Organization] in Long Island. The OASAS Web site is now updated regularly to include "senior-specific" reports, informational items, news releases, links, etc. (e.g., the issuance by the U.S. HHS and NCOA of a new packet of materials to assist in improving the health of older adults; counseling from

pharmacists to customers filling new prescriptions, changing dosages or strength of drugs currently taken (2002-2003). OASAS has successfully increased public education efforts using both private and public information sources. For example, the Albany, New York Times Union newspaper worked with OASAS to present a December 1, 2002 article entitled "Seniors in Recovery." This article covered OASAS' professional description of the risk of alcohol and/or other drug (AOD) problems among seniors; services available to seniors; comments from a senior consumer of services (client); and suggestions by a specialized geriatric outpatient clinic recently licensed by OASAS. OASAS has begun discussion with the NYS (SUNY) School of Public Health to explore possible opportunities for cooperative research initiative focused on Project 2015 priority issues.

The Department of Civil Service's Executive Deputy Commissioner was the keynote speaker at the NY Public Employer Labor Relations Association (NYPELRA) Annual Conference held in July 2003. The focus of his presentation was the aging of the state workforce; the changing demographics in New York State and the United States; and the challenges these demographics are presenting to public employers in terms of human resources issues and the demand for government services. The Director of Workforce and Occupational Planning made a presentation to the National Association of State Personnel Executives in Portland, Maine in July 2003, and scheduled to present at the International Public Management Association – Human Resources in September 2003.

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV): The agency's 2015 project team met earlier in 2003 to plan future activities. Foremost among these is an internal conference being planned that will draw wider awareness of 2015 scenarios and issues. At that time, a public engagement action plan will be developed.

The Consumer Protection Board (CPB) is developing multilingual material with grant funding through USDA. CPB also has developed a brochure, "Senior Scams" that describe the most common scams targeted toward seniors. Outreach staff members

are using the materials in presentations at senior centers and organizations with a high volume of seniors, in order to keep them informed about their consumer rights and to alert them to recent consumer scams.

At presentations and through the literature they make available, CPB is stressing the importance of signing up for the Do Not Call (DNC) Registry. In addition, the new National DNC law now will automatically protect any senior who already has signed up for the protections offered by the NYS Do Not Call law.

### **3. COLLABORATION**

While the Project 2015 Status Report specifically asked agencies to provide feedback about possible future collaborations around a) workforce issues and b) technology and service issues, state agencies also provided information about a variety of collaborative initiatives under way as part of Project 2015. Some examples follow.

Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD) and Department of State:

Together, they have developed a statewide training curriculum on accessibility provisions of the NYS Building Code. The curriculum is being finalized and will be offered to educate building code inspectors and other key stakeholders on the accessibility provisions of the NYS Building Code.

Civil Service and Governor's Office of Employee Relations: These two agencies have successfully partnered to address the succession management needs of state agencies. A conference was held in the fall 2002, which was attended by 250 state managers. In addition, Civil Service has completed the primary components of a Web site with information about Workforce Succession and Planning, and the Web site will continue to develop as new information is gained. The Web site is being used not only by state program and human resources managers but also by an international audience.

Consumer Protection Board (CPB) and Department of Insurance: The CPB is currently partnering with larger state agencies in order to reach a greater population of seniors. One of the effective partnerships CPB is currently involved in is their joint effort with the New York State Insurance Department to disseminate information to seniors about subjects such as “How to Purchase Long-Term Care Insurance”, “How to Purchase Life Insurance” and “How to Purchase Health Insurance.”

Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD), Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) and Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR): In partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) and Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), OAPwD assisted the DDPC in developing and awarding a grant to create a Web site that will list privately owned affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities. This site will have a list of DHCR’s affordable housing.

OAPwD and DHCR are partnering to expand and improve accessibility requirements within the framework of the state’s existing Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the accessibility provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This may include development of more public resources materials to better disseminate information on affordable, accessible housing options.

The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) is working with the NYS Office of the Aging (NYSOFA) and the Office of Mental Health (OMH), in order to improve those agencies’ understanding of the OASAS structure and organization, including program operations and central and regional administration. Collaboration with these and other agencies is also designed to afford OASAS with a better understanding of other systems to improve services for seniors through improved interagency linkages.

Department of Health (DOH) -- internal collaboration: DOH has established a collaboration between the two major divisions in the Department involved in the development of policies and regulations affecting institutional and non-institutional long-term care.

Empire State Development (ESD) is a member of New York's Workforce Investment Board, participating in quarterly meetings and sharing information and ideas with other state agencies, including State Education Department (SED), Department of Labor (DOL), and State University of New York (SUNY). This is a forum in which the impact of aging and diversity could be considered.

Office of Mental Health (OMH) and local providers: Project Liberty is a successful collaboration of OMH, local governments, and more than 100 local provider agencies. Project Liberty is the single largest and most rapidly implemented public mental health program in the history of the United States.

Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), in collaboration with the NYS Association for Retarded Citizens and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), is conducting "End of Life Care" training statewide, with 1,200 staff participating to date.

State University of New York (SUNY) System Administration and SUNY campuses: System Administration will incorporate into their next cycle of Mission Review (Mission Review II), exploration of campus program and service plans to accommodate the state's changing demographics, and will identify any collaborations within the University that may assist with the state's aging workforce needs.

### ***COLLABORATION: PROJECT 2015 WORKFORCE ISSUES***

In the *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York* agency Briefs, 20 agencies underscored the implications of the aging of the current

workforce, the shrinking younger labor pool, and the markedly changing demographic characteristics of the state's future labor pool.

In the Status Report, agencies were asked about their interest in working collaboratively to consider workforce issues in New York. In response to the Status Report survey, 26 of the 36 participating state agencies responded that they are interested in state agency collaboration regarding workforce issues concerning the aging and increasing diversity of our workforce. A Project 2015 workforce collaboration may include an array of issues identified in the Briefs, such as to: match workers with ongoing demand changes in the labor market; consider creative solutions to retain experienced older workers; recruit retirees; stem the out-migration of the state's educated young adults; educate and train members of an increasingly diverse labor pool; and to draw workers from groups not traditionally considered for workforce recruitment and retention.

The workforce issues that emerged from the 2015 status update include issues such as *workforce preparedness, retention, education and training, recruitment, testing and credentialing, and benefits*. The *availability of trained, competent workers* and the *retention of highly qualified employees* are issues that were raised across sectors.

*Evaluating changing demand* and *employing diverse groups* were raised as issues to consider. *Specific worker shortage areas* identified by state agencies included *teaching; nursing; health care workers; direct care workers; and in law enforcement*.

*Career development, labor market preparedness, and seeking to match job market needs with graduates* were identified as critical issues to consider.

Creative strategies to *preserve historical knowledge, transfer knowledge* and to *mentor less experienced staff* were highlighted.

*Technology and innovation, developing and maintaining a skilled technology workforce* emerged as key areas.

These issues will form the basis for how we establish an effective 2015 workforce collaboration initiative across state agencies. The issues raised through Project 2015 will be important components for next steps in the collaboration.

### ***COLLABORATION: PROJECT 2015 TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICE ISSUES***

In the *Project 2015: State Agencies Prepare for the Impact of an Aging New York* agency Briefs, 22 agencies recommended an increasing reliance on various existing and new technologies as an efficient and effective method of improving communication and interaction with consumers, streamlining service and product delivery, increasing round-the-clock access to services, assisting people with disabilities and impairments, and responding to increasing consumer demand for (1) "self-service" information and transactions; (2) alternative technological options, including Internet-based services; and (3) seamless, across-government integration of transactions with the public.

However, agencies cautioned about the need to (1) adapt all technological solutions and tools to the age, language, racial, cultural, educational, and disability characteristics of users; (2) recognize that many users will continue to need education and personal assistance in using the Internet and other technologies; and (3) be vigilant about the growing reliability, security, and privacy issues associated with the Internet and data-sharing technologies.

In the 2015 Status Report, 22 of the 36 participating state agencies responded that they are interested in state agency collaboration regarding technology and service issues concerning the aging and increasing diversity of our population.

The technology and service issues that emerged from the 2015 status update include two key issues: *ensuring that Web sites are fully accessible to people with disabilities*; and *use of technology to provide better information to the public, about services and benefits*. Both the Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities and the Public

Service Commission noted the importance of assisting people with disabilities and impairments through technology. The State University of New York identified *alternative learning technologies* as an issue to consider.

The *use of technology in long term care, home health care, and patient monitoring* were highlighted by both the New York State Office for the Aging and Department of Health. The Office of Children and Family Services added *tech-based materials and Web sites to present information about how to report adult abuse*.

The State Education Department noted that *self-service transactional processes* could be considered within a Project 2015 collaborative for teacher certification and professional licensing, for example.

*Coordination of services using technology* was a concept suggested for consideration. Agencies with very different responsibilities identified similar issues. For example, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Mental Health both identified *collaboration to develop seamless, cross-government integration of transactions with the public (while remaining compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for human service agencies)* as an important area of collaboration for state agencies. The State Police added across-government services such as a *statewide radio network* to the cross-government concepts of technology and service collaboration.

The Public Service Commission noted the importance of *improving communication and interaction with consumers of all age, language, racial, cultural and educational backgrounds*.

## **SUMMARY**

Overall, Project 2015 has been successful in raising awareness across state government about the impact of our changing population. Moreover, many agencies

have begun to take action to address issues of aging and diversity in their agency's identified priority issue areas. All 36 participating agencies in Project 2015 responded to the Project 2015 Status Report, and provided an array of thought-provoking ideas for consideration for future areas of collaboration and work in Project 2015.

A full report of all participating state agency responses is available by contacting Jennifer Rosenbaum, New York State Office for the Aging at 518-473-4936 or by email at [Jennifer.Rosenbaum@ofa.state.ny.us](mailto:Jennifer.Rosenbaum@ofa.state.ny.us).