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2007

Dear *Tool Kit* User:

When *Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State – Tool Kit for Community Action* was unveiled in 2003, New York State's communities were just beginning to consider how they might prepare for the impact of the aging and increasing diversity of our population. Area agencies on aging and others were invited to use the information and ideas in the *Tool Kit* to help strengthen and guide a dynamic, locally-based process of engaging various stakeholders in preparing for population changes taking place in communities across our state. The *Tool Kit* is a compendium of materials developed through a partnership of the New York State Office for the Aging, New York State Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the New York State Coalition for the Aging that formed in order to create the *Tool Kit* – building upon the successful implementation of the *Project 2015* strategic planning initiative at the state level during 2002 in New York. The *Tool Kit* includes materials that have been adapted for local implementation from *Project 2015*'s state government strategic planning process.

The wider *Project 2015* initiative has been extremely valuable in helping New York State to adjust to the coming demographic changes taking place across the state, and has engaged a broad spectrum of sectors in determining their priorities and action steps to better prepare to meet the needs of our aging and more diverse population. In the years since the *Tool Kit* was released, many of New York's communities have successfully used the information contained in the *Tool Kit* for a variety of local level educational, planning, and program implementation purposes as we work to prepare for an aging, more diverse population across the state. With this *Tool Kit*, local conveners have the materials and the ability to:

- Identify and consider the significant demographic changes that will occur in individual counties and regions in New York State over the coming years, particularly the aging and increasing diversity of the population.
- Consider how best to use the materials to make the *Project 2015* strategic planning approach a living process in each county and region of the state.
- Determine action steps for individual agencies, organizations and groups within your county or region.
- Better match the delivery of programs and services with the people living in the community who need those programs and services, and capitalize on the assets that community members bring to the localities in which they live.

As part of our continuing commitment to prepare for the impact of our changing demographic profile, I invite you to use the information and ideas in this *Tool Kit* to assist you in preparing for the dynamic processes that are taking place locally, and to help the various organizations in our communities to adjust to the coming demographic changes. Together, we can move forward to make sure that New York State continues to be the best, most vital place to live for all our residents.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Burgess  
Director