



Pennsylvania
Department of Aging

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT: Karen Gray, agingcomms@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Urges Older Adults to Engage with PA's 400+ Senior Community Centers, Releases Results of National Collaboration to Increase Awareness of Vital Aging Resource

Pennsylvania's more than 400 senior community centers offer connection, activity and access to life-enriching resources to keep older adults healthy and thriving.

SCCs are not nursing homes or assisted living facilities; they are neighborhood spaces for older adults to stay active and independent.

Philadelphia, PA - Delivering on another key tactic in *Aging Our Way, PA* — the Commonwealth's 10-year multisector plan to improve services and supports for older adults—the **Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA)** today released the results of a national partnership to increase awareness of and participation in Pennsylvania's more than 400 Senior Community Centers (SCCs).

Pennsylvania Department of Aging **Secretary Jason Kavulich** hosted a Community Conversation centered on how the Commonwealth is working to reshape the way Pennsylvanians think and talk about SCCs. The conversation highlighted lessons learned throughout the project and discussed next steps for implementation.

"Senior community centers have a huge role to play in the future of aging in Pennsylvania, which is why we forged a national partnership to explore how we can best support them," said Secretary Kavulich. "Senior community centers are vibrant social hubs where active older adults find what we all need at every age – friendship, activities, support and a sense of belonging."

The project is another key action item of [Aging Our Way, PA](#), Pennsylvania's strategic plan launched by the Shapiro Administration: to strengthen awareness, engagement and investment in SCCs. The project produced recommendations and practical "how-to" guidance for applying these approaches in senior centers across Pennsylvania. Strategies for helping people understand SCCs differently include:

- Moving away from assumptions and creating understanding: "Senior community centers are community spaces—similar to libraries or parks—that help people stay active, engaged, and connected as they age."
- Moving away from who goes to senior centers to why communities need them: "Real connection depends on whether communities create spaces, activities, and transportation that make participation possible."

As a result of this work, two new resources are now available to SCCs and the public: the Strategies Report: [Senior Community Center Framing Recommendations Report](#), and the Quick Start Guide: [Reframing Senior Community Centers Quick Start Guide](#).

Joining Secretary Kavulich on the panel were Patricia D'Antonio, Executive Director of the National Center to Reframe Aging; Renee Cunningham, President of the Pennsylvania Association of Senior Centers; and Jeff Miller, a member of the project's advisory council. Panelists reflected on the work completed through the initiative and shared their vision for advancing these efforts statewide.

Conducted in partnership with the National Center to Reframe Aging, the "Reframing Communications About Senior Community Centers in Pennsylvania" initiative focused on developing new communications strategies to help older adults and entire communities view senior community centers – and aging itself – in a positive, future-focused way.

"This investment from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging is kickstarting a national conversation, providing communication strategies for senior community centers, and setting an example for other states in highlighting their importance and value," D'Antonio said. "Our recommendations can help organizations and policymakers increase awareness, reduce stigma, expand participation, and strengthen public support for senior community centers."

SCCs provide regular opportunities for connection, activity, and access to resources that are key to healthy aging. Research from the project notes the importance of differentiating SCCs from institutional care settings such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities, and instead recognizing and promoting them as neighborhood resources that older adults can use to stay active and independent.

“At Centro Hispano’s Casa de la Amistad Senior Center, we see every day the richness of Pennsylvania’s aging population: seniors who bring different cultures, languages, traditions, and life experiences, into one welcoming shared space. Reframing senior centers means recognizing that they help our older Pennsylvanians stay healthy, engaged, and empowered,” said Michael Toledo, President & CEO of Centro Hispano Daniel Torres Inc. and reframing project advisory council member.

The project was completed in three phases and included participation from Area Agencies on Aging, the Pennsylvania Association of Senior Centers, SCC directors and staff, and older adults across Pennsylvania. The project began with a statewide assessment to better understand the current landscape of perceptions and usage of SCCs. [PDA previously released information about Phase One here.](#)

Building on those findings, the project team conducted stakeholder interviews and focus groups to test new messaging approaches and identify communication strategies that resonate more effectively with older adults and the broader public. Working closely with an advisory council composed of professionals and older adults, the project developed practical tools and action steps to help SCCs implement new communication strategies and strengthen community engagement.

The Department of Aging will encourage SCCs, aging network partners, and community stakeholders to use these resources as they continue advancing the goals of *Aging Our Way, PA* and building communities where older adults are valued, included, and empowered.

#