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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OLDER ADULTS AND  
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduced By: Representative Lauren H. Carson

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND  
2 GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapters:

3 CHAPTER 66.14

4 OLDER ADULTS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES.

5 **42-66.14-1. Replacing references to elders, elderly persons, senior citizens,**  
6 **handicapped, and adults with disabilities.**

7 (a) In an effort to increase individuals' awareness of services that are available for older  
8 adults residing in Rhode Island:

9 (1) The term "older adult" shall replace the terms "elder," "elderly person(s)," and "senior  
10 citizen(s)" as they appear throughout the general laws; and

11 (2) The phrase "adult(s) with disabilities" shall replace the terms "handicapped" or  
12 "disabled" as they appear throughout the general laws when such words are used to refer to adult  
13 persons with disabilities.

14 (b) In accordance with § 22-11-3.6, the law revision director shall implement the changes  
15 mandated in this chapter to all general laws containing the terms "elder," "elderly person(s),"  
16 "senior citizen(s)," "handicapped," or "disabled" by January 1, 2027.

17 CHAPTER 66.15

18 PERMANENT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON AGING RHODE ISLANDERS.

1 **42-66.15-1. Permanent legislative oversight commission on aging Rhode Islanders.**

2 (a) There is established a permanent legislative oversight commission entitled “permanent  
3 legislative oversight commission on aging Rhode Islanders” to study current services and  
4 coordination of state programs relating to older adult Rhode Islanders and recommend potential  
5 initiatives that would help residents, agencies, providers, and the government better assist the  
6 growing population of older adults in the state achieve well-being and maximum independence.

7 (b) The commission shall consist of seventeen (17) members: one of whom shall be a state  
8 health care provider appointed by the speaker of the house; three (3) of whom shall be members of  
9 the Rhode Island house of representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to  
10 be appointed by the speaker of the house; two (2) of whom shall be Rhode Island residents over the  
11 age of sixty-five (65) years, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; one of whom shall be the  
12 director of the Rhode Island department of health, or designee; one of whom shall be the director  
13 of the Rhode Island office of healthy aging, or designee; three (3) of whom shall be directors from  
14 RI Senior Center Director's Association, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; one of whom  
15 shall be a community action program director from the Rhode Island Association of Community  
16 Action Agencies, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; one of whom shall be the director of  
17 the AARP Rhode Island, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the RI Long-Term Care  
18 Coordinating Council, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; one of whom shall be the  
19 executive director of Age-Friendly RI, or designee; one of whom shall be the director of the Senior  
20 Agenda Coalition of RI; or designee; and one of whom shall be a member of a Rhode Island  
21 organization representing adults with disabilities, to be appointed by the speaker of the house.  
22 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment. The  
23 membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

24 (c) The commission is created to serve the following purposes:

25 (1) Create a comprehensive study of key statistics and information about services for older  
26 adults in Rhode Island including, but not limited to, examining their strengths, vulnerabilities,  
27 demographics, and economic circumstances;

28 (2) Assess state, federal and local services currently available to older adult Rhode  
29 Islanders;

30 (3) Examine any duplication of elderly services within the state;

31 (4) Provide recommendations to institute, integrate, collaborate, and implement initiatives  
32 that eliminate red tape, coordinate services within agencies, and focus on better delivery of services  
33 and programs related to older adult Rhode Islanders, including older adult housing options and  
34 various living arrangements, health status and healthcare resources;

1           (5) Provide recommendations for the creation of a portal to provide and coordinate aging  
2 programs and services in the areas of employment, education, independent living, accessibility and  
3 advocacy, as well as local older adult centers and services;

4           (6) Provide recommendations on issues and services surrounding mental health,  
5 transportation, food access, and healthcare for aging Rhode Islanders;

6           (7) Review and provide recommendations for the funding of services through state, federal,  
7 and private grants and provide recommendations for more efficient distribution and use of these  
8 dollars for programs and services for aging Rhode Islanders;

9           (8) Explore and provide recommendations for increased regionalization of services;

10          (9) Create a state master plan on aging and a vision for aging in Rhode Island;

11          (10) Create a plan to restructure and return the office on aging to a department at the cabinet  
12 level with a mission to ensure implementation of the recommendations on aging by previous and  
13 existing boards and commissions with relevance to aging and the development and implementation  
14 of policies and programs in response to emerging trends in aging relating to housing, access to  
15 technology, long-term care, and long-term care funding formula for municipal senior centers;

16          (11) Evaluate and update the aging community statutes;

17          (12) Evaluate and update the purposes of the RI Long-Term Care Coordinating Council  
18 pursuant to chapter 17.3 of title 23;

19          (13) Engage state agencies that deliver programs for aging Rhode Islanders;

20          (14) Propose recommendations to provide and coordinate aging programs and services in  
21 the areas of employment, education, independent living, accessibility and advocacy, as well as local  
22 older adult centers and services; and

23          (15) Advise the house of representatives on matters pertaining to Rhode Island older adults.

24          (d) The commission shall report to the speaker of the house and senate president annually.

25          SECTION 2. Chapter 22-11 of the General Laws entitled "Joint Committee on Legislative  
26 Services" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

27                 **22-11-3.6. Revision of statutes - Older adults and adults with disabilities.**

28                 The law revision director is authorized and empowered to amend the general laws for the  
29 purpose of making statutory language conform to the requirements of § 42-66.14-1.

30          SECTION 3. Sections 23-17.3-1 and 23-17.3-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-17.3  
31 entitled "Long-Term Care Coordinating Council" are hereby amended to read as follows:

32                 **23-17.3-1. Establishment — Purposes — Reports to Council.**

33                 (a) There is established the long-term care coordinating council. The purpose of the council  
34 shall be to develop and coordinate state policy concerning all forms of long-term health care for

1 the elderly and adults with chronic disabilities and illnesses, ranging from at-home and community  
2 based care and respite care through intensive nursing care to long-term hospital care. The council  
3 shall examine and make recommendations concerning any and all issues relating to long-term  
4 health care for the elderly and adults with chronic disabilities and illnesses, including, but not  
5 limited to:

- 6 (1) Standards and quality performance;
- 7 (2) Personnel issues including training standards, recruitment, and staffing needs;
- 8 (3) Enforcement of regulations;
- 9 (4) Patient and client rights;
- 10 (5) Eligibility and access issues; and
- 11 (6) The adequacy of funding and delivery of long-term care services.

12 (b) The council is empowered to appoint subcommittees to study specialized areas of  
13 concern and to report their findings to the council.

14 (c) The council is empowered to seek the advice and assistance of the American  
15 Association of Retired Persons, Rhode Island chapter, members of state and local senior citizens'  
16 councils and advocacy/interest groups, and long term care organizations and associations.

17 (d) The council is empowered to apply for and receive grants, appropriations, or gifts from  
18 any federal, state, or local agency, from any public or private foundation, or from any individual in  
19 order to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

20 (e) All departments, boards, and agencies of the state shall cooperate with the council and  
21 furnish any advice and information, documentary and otherwise, that may be necessary or desirable  
22 to facilitate the purposes of this chapter.

23 (f) The department of health shall provide a written report to the long-term care  
24 coordinating council by March 30 of each year regarding its regulatory activities for the preceding  
25 calendar year in the area of long-term care. The annual regulatory report shall include information  
26 on long-term care survey activities, including complaints of abuse and/or neglect, as requested by  
27 the chairperson of the council. In addition, the department of health shall also notify the chairperson  
28 of the council whenever a licensed long term care facility or provider is cited for providing  
29 substandard care.

30 [\(g\) By March 31, 2026, the council shall conduct and complete a review of chapter 17.3 of](#)  
31 [title 23 and make recommendations to the house of representatives for its amendment and reform.](#)

32 **23-17.3-2. Membership.**

33 The council shall be comprised of thirty-three (33) members, as follows: the lieutenant  
34 governor or designee; the director of the department of health or designee; the secretary of the

1 executive office of health and human services or designee; the director of the department of  
2 behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals or designee; the attorney general or  
3 designee; the director of the office of healthy aging or designee; the chair of the Rhode Island  
4 advisory commission on aging or designee; the director of the Rhode Island Chapter of the  
5 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) or designee; the state long-term care  
6 ombudsman or designee; the president of the Rhode Island Senior Center Directors Association or  
7 designee; the executive director of the Rhode Island chapter of the Alzheimer's Association or  
8 designee; a representative of a not-for-profit long-term-care provider organization other than a  
9 nursing home owner and a representative of a long-term-care service provider that primarily serves  
10 persons with developmental disabilities, both to be appointed by the governor; a representative of  
11 an assisted living residence other than a nursing home, to be appointed by the lieutenant governor;  
12 a public member with no direct interest in long-term-care ownership representing a senior advocacy  
13 organization, to be appointed by the speaker; a representative of the state program of all inclusive  
14 care for the elderly, to be appointed by the lieutenant governor; a representative of senior housing,  
15 to be appointed by the lieutenant governor; a representative of a hospice provider organization, to  
16 be appointed by the senate president; a licensed home-care provider or a licensed home nursing  
17 care provider, to be appointed by the speaker; a representative of a community mental health center,  
18 to be appointed by the president of the senate; a registered nurse experienced in the care of the  
19 elderly, to be appointed by the governor; a representative of nonmanagerial nursing home  
20 employees, to be appointed by the president of the senate; two (2) members of the house, not more  
21 than one (1) from the same political party, to be appointed by the speaker; a nursing home owner,  
22 to be appointed by the speaker; two (2) members of the senate, not more than one from the same  
23 political party, to be appointed by the president of the senate; one consumer of home- and  
24 community-based care or a caregiver of a consumer of home- and community-based care, to be  
25 appointed by the lieutenant governor; one consumer of behavioral health services or a caregiver of  
26 a consumer of behavioral health services, to be appointed by the speaker; a member of the public  
27 representing the interests of parents of children with special care needs, to be appointed by the  
28 governor; a person with developmental disabilities or a representative of an organization that  
29 advocates for the rights of persons with developmental disabilities, to be appointed by the lieutenant  
30 governor; a general physician or advanced practice nurse with experience in serving persons with  
31 long-term care and behavioral health needs, to be appointed by the president of the senate; and a  
32 representative of a managed care health insurer providing long-term support and services, to be  
33 appointed by the governor. The members of the council shall serve two-year (2) terms, expiring on  
34 the second anniversary of each individual's appointment or on the date that their respective

1 successors are appointed and qualified, whichever is later. [A quorum shall consist of twelve \(12\)](#)  
2 [members of the council.](#)

3 SECTION 4. Section 42-11-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-11 entitled "Department  
4 of Administration" is hereby amended to read as follows:

5 **42-11-10. Statewide planning program.**

6 (a) Findings. The general assembly finds that the people of this state have a fundamental  
7 interest in the orderly development of the state; the state has a positive interest and demonstrated  
8 need for establishment of a comprehensive, strategic state planning process and the preparation,  
9 maintenance, and implementation of plans for the physical, economic, and social development of  
10 the state; the continued growth and development of the state presents problems that cannot be met  
11 by the cities and towns individually and that require effective planning by the state; and state and  
12 local plans and programs must be properly coordinated with the planning requirements and  
13 programs of the federal government.

14 (b) **Establishment of statewide planning program.**

15 (1) A statewide planning program is hereby established to prepare, adopt, and amend  
16 strategic plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state and to recommend  
17 these to the governor, the general assembly, and all others concerned.

18 (2) All strategic planning, as defined in subsection (c) of this section, undertaken by all  
19 departments and agencies of the executive branch unless specifically exempted, shall be conducted  
20 by or under the supervision of the statewide planning program. The statewide planning program  
21 shall consist of a state planning council, and the division of planning, which shall be a division  
22 within the department of administration.

23 (c) Strategic planning. Strategic planning includes the following activities:

24 (1) Establishing or identifying general goals;

25 (2) Refining or detailing these goals and identifying relationships between them;

26 (3) Formulating, testing, and selecting policies and standards that will achieve desired  
27 objectives;

28 (4) Preparing long-range or system plans or comprehensive programs that carry out the  
29 policies and set time schedules, performance measures, and targets;

30 (5) Preparing functional, short-range plans or programs that are consistent with established  
31 or desired goals, objectives, and policies, and with long-range or system plans or comprehensive  
32 programs where applicable, and that establish measurable, intermediate steps toward their  
33 accomplishment of the goals, objectives, policies, and/or long-range system plans;

34 (6) Monitoring the planning of specific projects and designing of specific programs of short

1 duration by the operating departments, other agencies of the executive branch, and political  
2 subdivisions of the state to ensure that these are consistent with, and carry out the intent of,  
3 applicable strategic plans; and

4 (7) Reviewing the execution of strategic plans, and the results obtained, and making  
5 revisions necessary to achieve established goals.

6 (d) State guide plan. Components of strategic plans prepared and adopted in accordance  
7 with this section may be designated as elements of the state guide plan. The state guide plan shall  
8 be comprised of functional elements or plans dealing with land use; physical development and  
9 environmental concerns; economic development; housing production; energy supply, including the  
10 development of renewable energy resources in Rhode Island, and energy access, use, and  
11 conservation; human services; climate change and resiliency; and other factors necessary to  
12 accomplish the objective of this section. The state guide plan shall be a means for centralizing,  
13 integrating, and monitoring long-range goals, policies, plans, and implementation activities related  
14 thereto. State agencies concerned with specific subject areas, local governments, and the public  
15 shall participate in the state guide planning process, which shall be closely coordinated with the  
16 budgeting process.

17 (e) Membership of state planning council. The state planning council shall consist of the  
18 following members:

19 (1) The director of the department of administration as chairperson;

20 (2) The director, policy office, in the office of the governor, as vice-chairperson;

21 (3) The governor, or his or her designee;

22 (4) [Deleted by P.L. 2019, ch. 88, art. 4, § 13.]

23 (5) The secretary of housing or designee;

24 (6) The highest-ranking administrative officer of the division of planning, as secretary;

25 (7) The president of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns or his or her designee;

26 (8) The executive director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns;

27 (9) Three (3) chief elected officials of cities and towns appointed by the governor after  
28 consultation with the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, one of whom shall be from a  
29 community with a population greater than 40,000 persons; one of whom shall be from a community  
30 with a population of between 20,000 and 40,000 persons; and one of whom shall be from a  
31 community with a population less than 20,000 persons;

32 (10) One representative of a nonprofit community development or housing organization  
33 appointed by the governor;

34 (11) Four (4) public members, appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be an

1 employer with fewer than fifty (50) employees; one of whom shall be an employer with greater  
2 than fifty (50) employees; one of whom shall represent a professional planning or engineering  
3 organization in Rhode Island; and one of whom shall represent a chamber of commerce or  
4 economic development organization;

5 (12) Two (2) representatives of private, nonprofit, environmental or environmental justice  
6 advocacy organizations, both to be appointed by the governor;

7 (13) The director of planning and development for the city of Providence;

8 (14) The director of the department of transportation;

9 (15) The director of the department of environmental management;

10 (16) The director of the department of health;

11 (17) The chief executive officer of the commerce corporation;

12 (18) The commissioner of the Rhode Island office of energy resources;

13 (19) The chief executive officer of the Rhode Island public transit authority;

14 (20) The executive director of Rhode Island housing;

15 (21) The executive director of the coastal resources management council; ~~and~~

16 (22) The director of the Rhode Island emergency management agency; ~~and~~

17 (23) One representative of a statewide aging advocacy organization who is sixty (60) years  
18 of age or older.

19 (f) Powers and duties of state planning council. The state planning council shall have the  
20 following powers and duties:

21 (1) To adopt strategic plans as defined in this section and the long-range state guide plan,  
22 and to modify and amend any of these, following the procedures for notification and public hearing  
23 set forth in § 42-35-3, and to recommend and encourage implementation of these goals to the  
24 general assembly, state and federal agencies, and other public and private bodies; approval of  
25 strategic plans by the governor; and to ensure that strategic plans and the long-range state guide  
26 plan are consistent with the findings, intent, and goals set forth in § 45-22.2-3, the “Rhode Island  
27 comprehensive planning and land use regulation act”;

28 (2) To coordinate the planning and development activities of all state agencies, in  
29 accordance with strategic plans prepared and adopted as provided for by this section;

30 (3) To review and comment on the proposed annual work program of the statewide  
31 planning program;

32 (4) To adopt rules and standards and issue orders concerning any matters within its  
33 jurisdiction as established by this section and amendments to it;

34 (5) To establish advisory committees and appoint members thereto representing diverse



1 interests and viewpoints as required in the state planning process and in the preparation or  
2 implementation of strategic plans. At minimum, the state planning council shall appoint permanent  
3 committees:

4 (i) A technical committee, comprised of public members from different geographic areas  
5 of the state representing diverse communities. This committee shall advise the state planning  
6 council on issues related to local comprehensive planning and land use. This committee shall also  
7 advise the state planning council on any other matter referred to it by the council; and

8 (ii) An executive committee consisting of major participants of a Rhode Island geographic  
9 information system with oversight responsibility for its activities; and

10 (iii) A transportation advisory committee, made up of diverse representation, including,  
11 but not limited to, municipal elected and appointed officials; representatives of various  
12 transportation sectors, departments, and agencies; and other groups and agencies with an interest  
13 in transportation operations, maintenance, construction, and policy, who shall review  
14 transportation-related plans and amendments and recommend action to the state planning council;  
15 and

16 (iv) An aging adult advisory committee, comprised of the representative identified in  
17 subsection (e)(23) of this section and representatives from the state departments that serve the  
18 interests of older Rhode Islanders including, but not limited to, the office of healthy aging and the  
19 department of health, to study and make recommendations to the house of representatives, by  
20 March 31, 2026, regarding:

21 (A) Inter-agency coordination for program delivery and budget consolidation;

22 (B) Effective delivery of supports for care for aging Rhode Islanders; and

23 (C) Areas for further program delivery for aging Rhode Islanders.

24 (6) To adopt, amend, and maintain, as an element of the state guide plan or as an  
25 amendment to an existing element of the state guide plan, standards and guidelines for the location  
26 of eligible, renewable energy resources and renewable energy facilities in Rhode Island with due  
27 consideration for the location of such resources and facilities in commercial and industrial areas,  
28 agricultural areas, areas occupied by public and private institutions, and property of the state and  
29 its agencies and corporations, provided these areas are of sufficient size, and in other areas of the  
30 state as appropriate;

31 (7) To act as the single, statewide metropolitan planning organization for transportation  
32 planning, and to promulgate all rules and regulations that are necessary thereto; and

33 (8) To assist the Rhode Island infrastructure bank in establishing review criteria, evaluating  
34 applications, approving and issuing grants, and to assist municipalities pursuant to the provisions

1 of chapter 11.4 of this title, and any rules or regulations promulgated thereunder.

2 (g) **Division of statewide planning.**

3 (1) The division of statewide planning shall be the principal staff agency of the state  
4 planning council for preparing and/or coordinating strategic plans for the comprehensive  
5 management of the state’s human, economic, and physical resources. The division of statewide  
6 planning shall recommend to the state planning council specific guidelines, standards, and  
7 programs to be adopted to implement strategic planning and the state guide plan and shall undertake  
8 any other duties established by this section and amendments thereto.

9 (2) The division of statewide planning shall maintain records (which shall consist of files  
10 of complete copies) of all plans, recommendations, rules, and modifications or amendments thereto  
11 adopted or issued by the state planning council under this section. The records shall be open to the  
12 public.

13 (3) The division of statewide planning shall manage and administer the Rhode Island  
14 geographic information system of land-related resources, and shall coordinate these efforts with  
15 other state departments and agencies, including the university of Rhode Island, which shall provide  
16 technical support and assistance in the development and maintenance of the system and its  
17 associated database.

18 (4) The division of statewide planning shall coordinate and oversee the provision of  
19 technical assistance to political subdivisions of the state in preparing and implementing plans to  
20 accomplish the purposes, goals, objectives, policies, and/or standards of applicable elements of the  
21 state guide plan and shall make available to cities and towns data and guidelines that may be used  
22 in preparing comprehensive plans and elements thereof and in evaluating comprehensive plans and  
23 elements thereby.

24 (h) [Deleted by P.L. 2011, ch. 215, § 4, and by P.L. 2011, ch. 313, § 4.]

25 (i) The division of planning shall be the principal staff agency of the water resources board  
26 established pursuant to chapter 15 of title 46 (“Water Resources Board”) and the water resources  
27 board corporate established pursuant to chapter 15.1 of title 46 (“Water Supply Facilities”).

28 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OLDER ADULTS AND  
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

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1           This act would advance the interests of older Rhode Islanders by adding a representative  
2 of an aging adult organization to the state planning council and a permanent committee on aging to  
3 the state planning council. This act would also create a permanent legislative commission on aging  
4 adults. Additionally, this act would require the long-term care coordinating council to review and  
5 make recommendations for reforming its governing statute, and would change the council's  
6 quorum to twelve (12) members. Lastly, the act would dispense with less-favored terms related to  
7 older persons and persons with disabilities, and would empower the law revision director to revise  
8 affected general laws.

9           This act would take effect upon passage.

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