

# Aging & Independence Services

2021 Annual Report, July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

**We are living longer...  
...and the aging population is growing.**



**In 2019**, around 822,300 people age 60 or older lived in the 10-county region—**that's 1 in 7 of us.**

**By 2050**, our 60+ population is expected to grow to 1.8 million, **or more than 1 in 4 of the residents of the 10-county region.**

Most of us want to stay in our communities as we age, but we need easy access to transportation, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and housing that is affordable and accessible for every stage of life.

**This is where our work comes in.**

## ***Our Goal***

To maximize the independence, health, and well-being for older persons, individuals with disabilities, and their care partners today, while preparing the 10-county region for the future.

## ***Helping People Find Information and Services***

ARC's **Empowerline** links people with trusted community services and healthcare providers to help them live their best lives.



people received counseling from certified professionals



replies to requests for assistance



people received home and community-based services such as meals, personal care, and homemaking

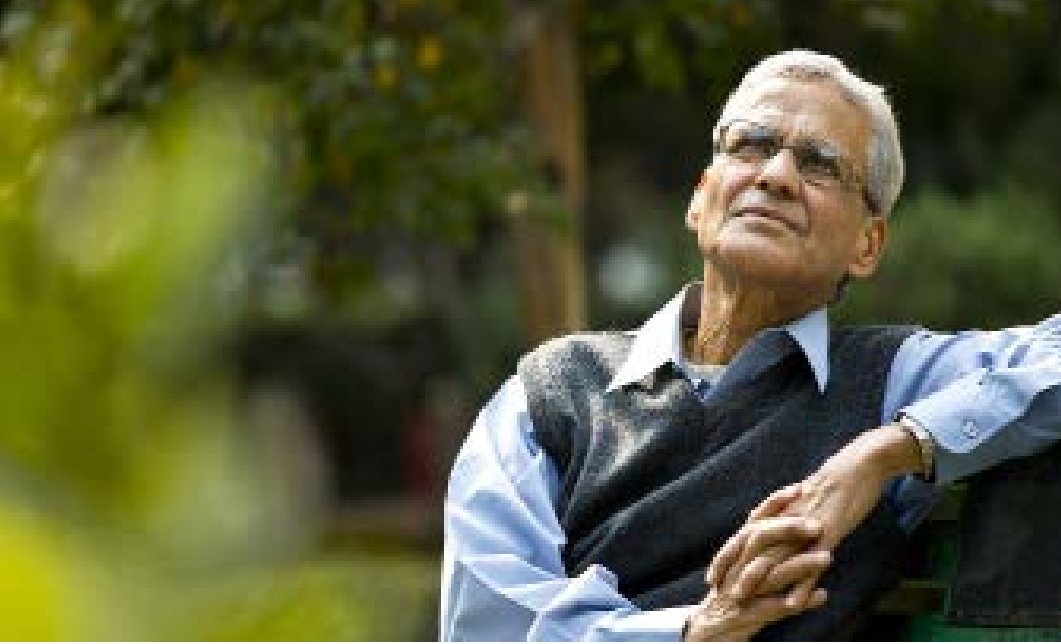


visits to [empowerline.org](https://empowerline.org) for information and referrals

\*Missing data for December 4, 2020-January 4, 2021.



**37,261** people were served through our interactive **Empowerline** programs and services



*“Since participating in the program, I am very active – I walk two miles every day. I also started eating more vegetables and cook them with no salt. I have found other seasonings to use to make them taste better.”*

- Client of the diabetes coaching program

## Providing a Range of Services to Maximize Health & Independence

ARC supports healthy living and aging by offering a range of services for older persons, people living with disabilities, and their caregivers so that they can remain in their homes and communities and thrive, even as their needs change.



**39,880**  
HOURS

4,992 People Served

### Managing Care

ARC helps people navigate the complexity of their health and daily living needs through collaborative programs that help coordinate care.

### Supporting Care Partners

More and more of us find ourselves in the role of caring for others. It can be very rewarding but also stressful at times. ARC helps fund programs that relieve some of that burden.

**148,210**  
HOURS

1,075 People Served



**1,099,324**  
MEALS

9,100 People Served

### Delivering Meals

For people who cannot leave their homes, food delivered in person at no cost is invaluable.

### Material Aid

From assistive equipment such as easy-to-use can openers to short-term financial help with bills and groceries, material aid helps older people maintain their independence.

**\$330,780**  
FINANCIAL HELP

2,025 People Served



**7,660**  
HOURS

522 People Served

### Legal Assistance

Older adults are at particular risk of financial exploitation and scams. Legal assistance helps to protect their independence and security.

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW SERVICES FOR OLDER RESIDENTS

ARC's Aging & Independence Services Group continues to evolve and adapt to meet the changing needs of older residents and the realities of our world. With the COVID-19 pandemic, all of us adapted to connecting with others virtually and over the telephone. When gathering with others, we got used to wearing masks and practicing social distancing. Over the past year, ARC launched the following new services as we responded to evolving needs:

**One2One Telephone Reassurance** This phone-based outreach program supports at-risk adults over the age of 60 and people with disabilities who typically live alone, are homebound, and have little or no caregiver support in metro Atlanta. Volunteers provide ongoing companionship and support over the phone so that the clients feel less socially isolated. During the first year, **38 volunteers** connected with **76 people**.

**Home Modifications** Through state funding, we were able to provide **more than \$1 million** to three nonprofits (Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, and HouseProud) to help low-income older adults make critical modifications and repairs to their homes so they can age safely in place.

**CARES Flex Funding** During the pandemic, we awarded a monthly budget to caregivers and family members who provide services such as bathing, dressing, day programs and more to individuals 60 years and older, relieving some financial pressure from those most impacted by the pandemic.

**Empowerline Self Service** We launched a new feature for our Empowerline website ([empowerline.org](http://empowerline.org)) that enables individuals to search easily for services accessible in their community.

We will continue to tailor our services to meet the changing needs of older adults. As more people get vaccinated and the pandemic continues to morph, ARC's Aging & Independence Services Group is committed to offering virtual alternatives in addition to in-person options in order to ensure everyone's safety.

## Staying Engaged through Volunteering

ARC's Aging & Independence Services Group is committed to providing fresh ways for older people to stay involved, learn new things, and meet new people. During the pandemic, we came up with new ways to keep volunteers engaged in a meaningful way.

Volunteers in the **AmeriCorps Seniors Metro Atlanta RSVP** program provide free peer-to-peer educational presentations, community events, and counseling for their fellow older adults—all geared to help them remain healthy, active, and independent. AmeriCorps Seniors Metro Atlanta volunteers gave virtual presentations on a variety of topics to older adults.

In 2020, we launched One2One, a program where volunteers are matched with older adults and connect with them weekly over the phone.

 **66**  
VOLUNTEERS

 **572**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS

 **1,170**  
One2One CALLS MADE



*"They hear my voice and are so excited. You can tell that this is truly helping them feel less isolated."*

- Shirley Yearwood  
One2One volunteer



## WORKING TO CLOSE THE LONGEVITY GAP ACROSS THE REGION

People, on average, are living longer than ever before. But that's not true for everyone. Individual longevity can vary by as much as two decades or more, based on a range of socio-economic factors that include race, level of education, housing security, and income. And in metro Atlanta, lifespans differ greatly based on geography.

So last year, ARC's Aging & Independence Services Group worked on a strategic regional framework that addresses these socio-economic disparities in order to close the longevity gap. In September 2020, the ARC Board adopted the "[Live Beyond Expectations Regional Strategic Plan Framework](#)." The goal is to improve the quality and length of life for residents of all ages, abilities, and incomes, regardless of ZIP code.

While some may attribute poor health outcomes to personal choices, research indicates the story is much more complicated. Life expectancy is shaped by numerous and complex factors, from health considerations such as access to care to environmental variables such as access to sidewalks. Many of these factors are outside of an individual's control, but they can be influenced by our work at ARC and that of our partners. A long-term, interdisciplinary approach rooted in data is the region's greatest hope for overcoming this lifespan gap.

ARC is currently working with partners and community residents to execute strategies that address disparities related to:

**Place:** Focus on locations, within each county, where residents experience the most inequity

**Policy:** Work with governmental, philanthropic, educational, nonprofit, business, and resident leaders to improve or amend policies that create inequities and advance policies that promote equity

**Practice:** Provide services and programs that address unmet needs

We invite all interested individuals and organizations to learn more about this issue and to join us in order to ensure that the Atlanta region is a place where all people can live long, high-quality lives, regardless of location.

[Get Involved](#)

## What's Next?

ARC has experienced an increase in the number of older adults accessing services and resources during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The agency will continue to respond to changing needs with additional COVID relief funding.

And we've also discovered throughout the pandemic that older metro Atlanta residents are resilient. While the pandemic has had a major impact on 59% of residents ages 65+, according to ARC's 2020 Metro Atlanta Speaks annual survey, older residents are more confident in their ability to pay their rent or mortgage, are less likely to feel their health and finances were impacted by COVID-19, and have not needed to access food through their local food bank as much as all other age groups. Moreover, 92% of residents ages 65+ wear their masks most or all the time, helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

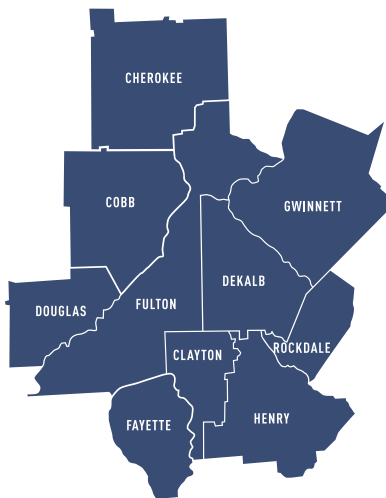
The pandemic continues to lay bare critical systemic health and social disparities. As the designated Area Agency on Aging under the federal Older Americans Act for the 10-county Atlanta region, ARC's Aging & Independence Services Group advocates for these services at the federal, state, and local levels.

## You can make a difference, too.

Learn more about the crucial issues impacting older people, people with disabilities, and their care partners at [atlantaregional.org/aging](https://atlantaregional.org/aging). There, you'll also find policy briefings to help you make sense of these issues and take action.

## We fund services provided by:

Cherokee County Senior Services  
Clayton County Senior Services  
Cobb County Senior Services  
DeKalb County Office of Aging  
Douglas County Senior Services  
Fayette Senior Services  
Fulton County Department of Senior Services  
Gwinnett County Senior Services  
Henry County Senior Services  
Rockdale County Senior Services  
Atlanta Legal Aid Society  
Center for Pan-Asian Community Services  
Center for the Visually Impaired  
Habitat for Humanity  
House Proud  
Innovative Solutions for Disadvantage and Disability  
Jewish Family and Career Services  
Latin American Association  
Meals on Wheels Atlanta



*"As someone whose family has benefited directly from our county's senior services program, I just wanted to say thank you to ARC for supporting it."*

- Metro Atlanta resident