



Oklahoma's Multisector Plan on Aging

# The Current State of Aging in Oklahoma

Summary Report  
October 2023



# A Multisector Plan on Aging for Oklahoma

## Background

As Oklahomans live longer, healthier lives, a Multisector Plan on Aging will empower older adults to live life on their own terms in a society that values justice and equitable treatment for all. The Plan will tap into the ingenuity for which Oklahomans are famous to address the challenges that come with aging.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2034, across the nation the population of people aged 65 and older will outnumber people under 18 years old for the first time ever. Recognizing the opportunities and challenges that come with this changing demographic, the State of Oklahoma, under the leadership of Oklahoma Human Services, has begun development of a Multisector Plan on Aging.

The Plan builds on significant work accomplished previously. The Oklahoma Long-Term Care Services and Supports Advisory Committee Report from 2019, and the 2023-2026 Oklahoma State Plan on Aging play a crucial role in shaping this initiative as the Plan engages new and familiar stakeholders in creating a long-term strategy to achieve a vision for the future based on shared priorities.

To better define the future vision, we began by understanding the current state of aging in Oklahoma. The culmination of planning and research that began in early 2022, the Current State Report describes the aging landscape in Oklahoma, including insights shared by older adults and aging services professionals across the state.

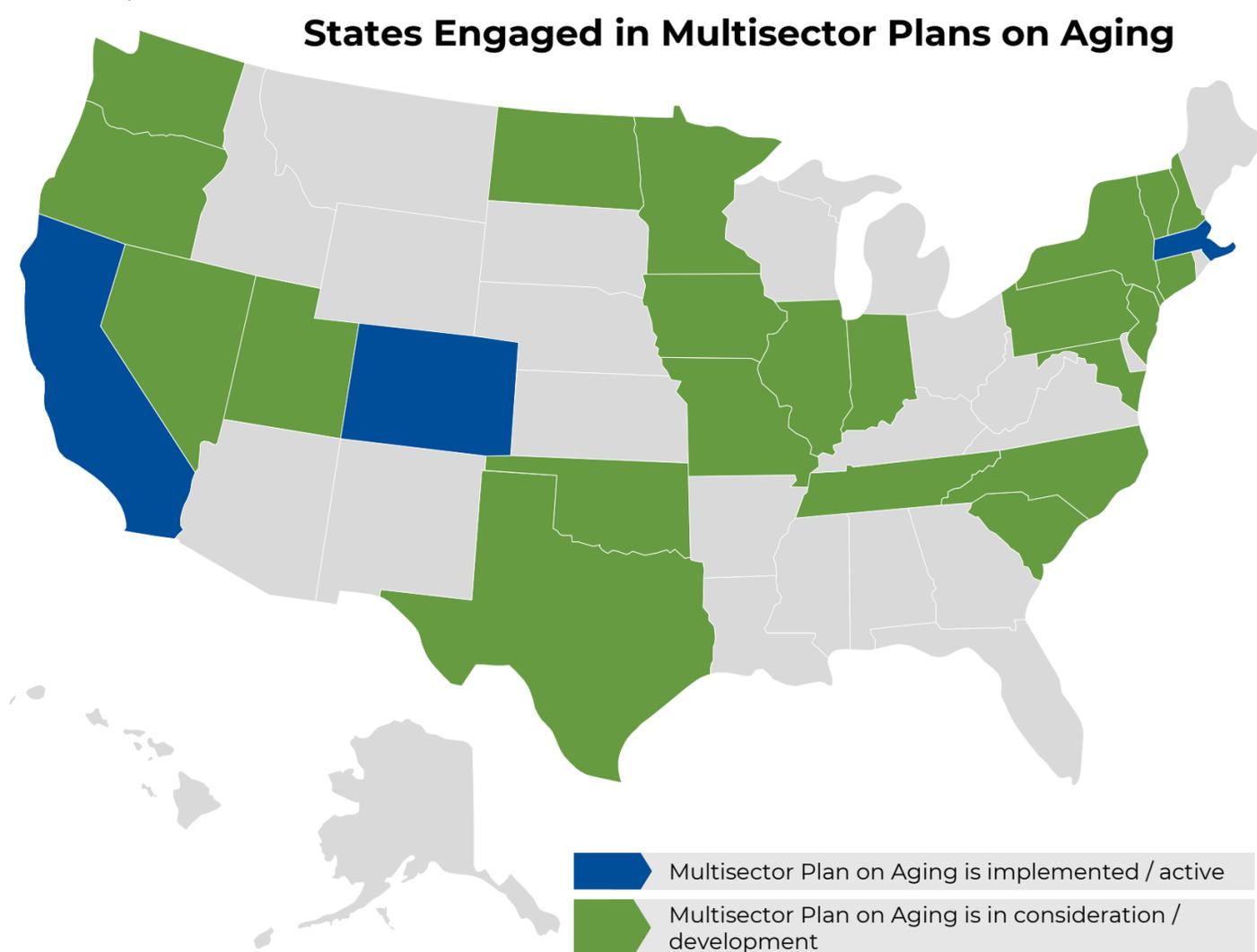


Figure 1. MPA Initiatives Across the United States of America

Other states are also developing and implementing plans like Oklahoma's. These states also want to address increased demands for aging services and supports as well as impacts to society such as to the workforce and economy. These plans create partnerships across public, private, and independent sectors to identify solutions for a wide range of challenges and opportunities in housing, healthcare, transportation, and others.

# Growing Older in Oklahoma

Oklahoma enjoys a population of older adults that is diverse in many ways, so an equitable vision of the future cannot be one-size-fits-all.

## A Profile of Older Oklahomans

Oklahomans aged 60 and over are diverse in all kinds of ways.

### Relationship Status

- 58% are married
- 42% are divorced, separated, widowed, or never married

### Households

- 56% live in family households
- 41% live alone

### Raising Grandchildren

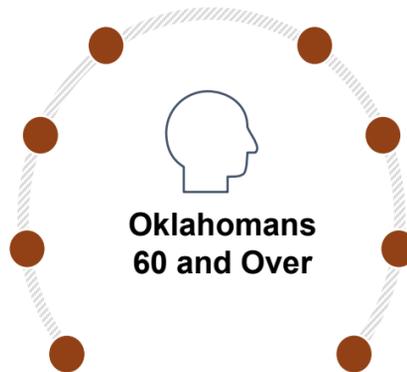
- 2% are responsible for their own grandchildren

### Education

- 32% associate degree or higher
- 23% some college, no degree
- 33% high school graduate
- 12% have not graduated from high school

### Employment

- 29% are in the labor force



### Ethnicity

- 11% are Hispanic

### Race

- 83% White
- 9% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 5% Black or African American
- 2% Some other race alone, or two or more races (of any race)
- 1% Asian Alone

### Language Proficiency

- 95% speak only English
- 2.5% speak English less than very well

### Poverty

- 11% have income below 100% poverty level
- 9.4% have income at 100% - 149% of the poverty level

Figure 2. A Profile of Older Oklahomans

Potential solutions to address the challenges older Oklahomans face cannot be designed as “one size fits all.” Figure 3. Oklahoma Percent Population over 60 by County indicates that the numbers of older Oklahomans vary across counties. For example, these variances include rural counties that have higher percentages of residents over 60 than urban counties. Each geographic area will likely need to develop specialized solutions that address the needs of their residents.

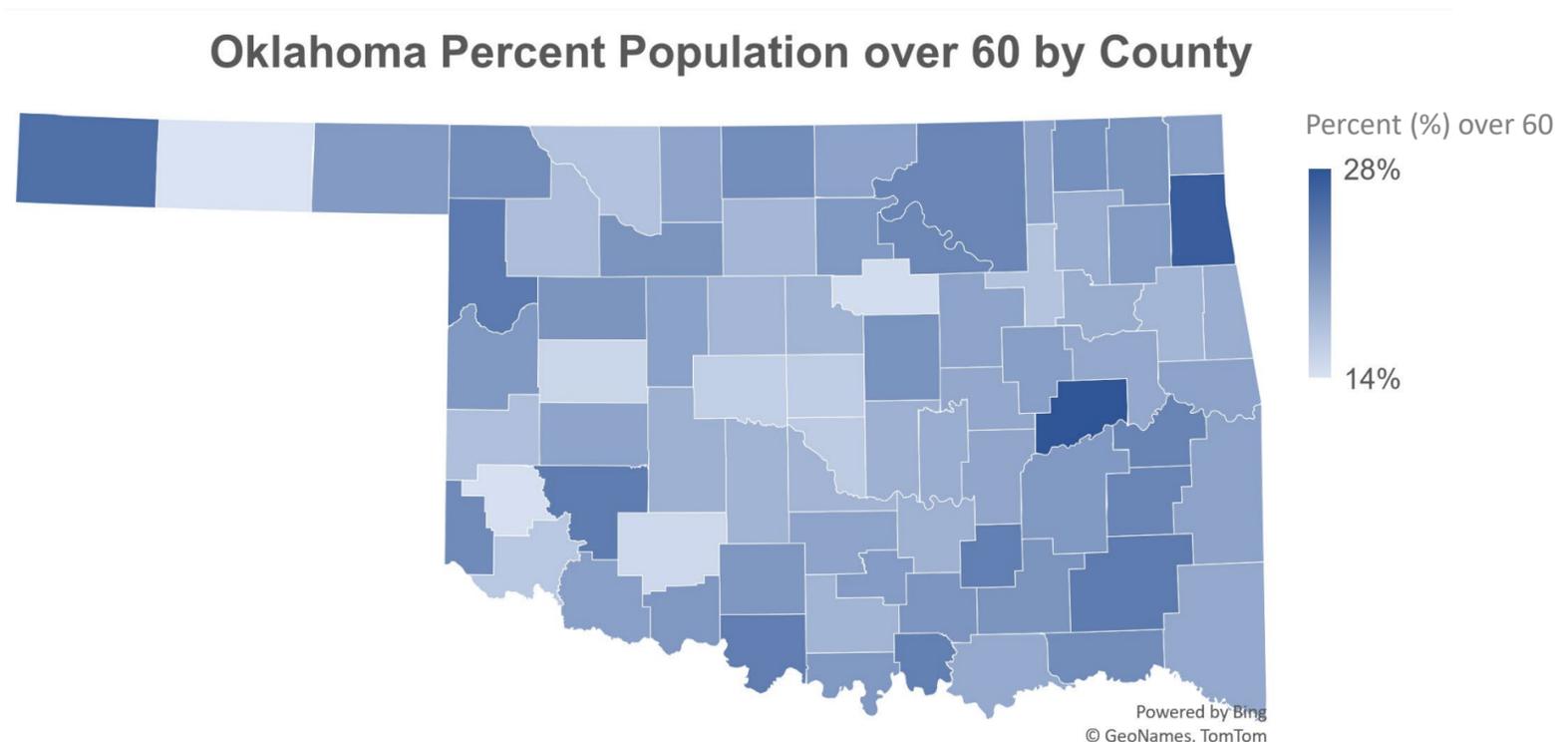


Figure 3. Oklahoma Percent Population over 60 by County

# Stakeholder Perspectives

To understand the perspectives of Oklahoma seniors and aging services professionals, Oklahoma Human Services conducted a series of in-person and virtual listening sessions. Facilitators held 10 in-person listening sessions in five locations across the state. Attendees participated in virtual sessions for employers, social workers and first responders, and the public. In-person and virtual sessions were also held with members of tribal communities, and providers of services for elder tribal members. Information gathered from these sessions informed the development of a statewide survey, which was used to confirm and refine the statements captured during the listening sessions.

## Number of Attendees by Location for In-Person Listening Sessions

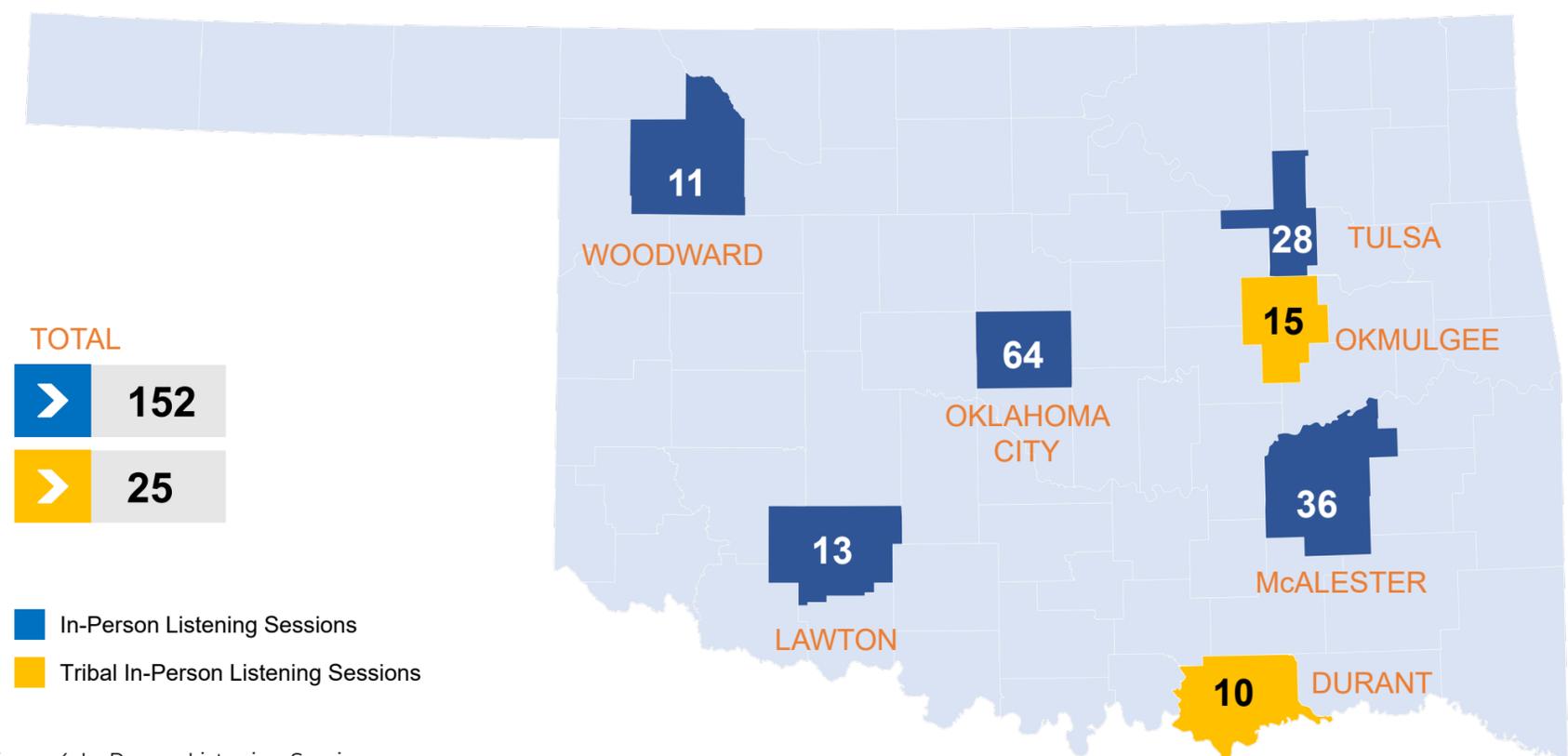


Figure 4. In-Person Listening Sessions

Powered by Bing  
© GeoNames, TomTom

Notable themes arose across all locations and stakeholder groups, particularly those related to the availability of aging services and supports.

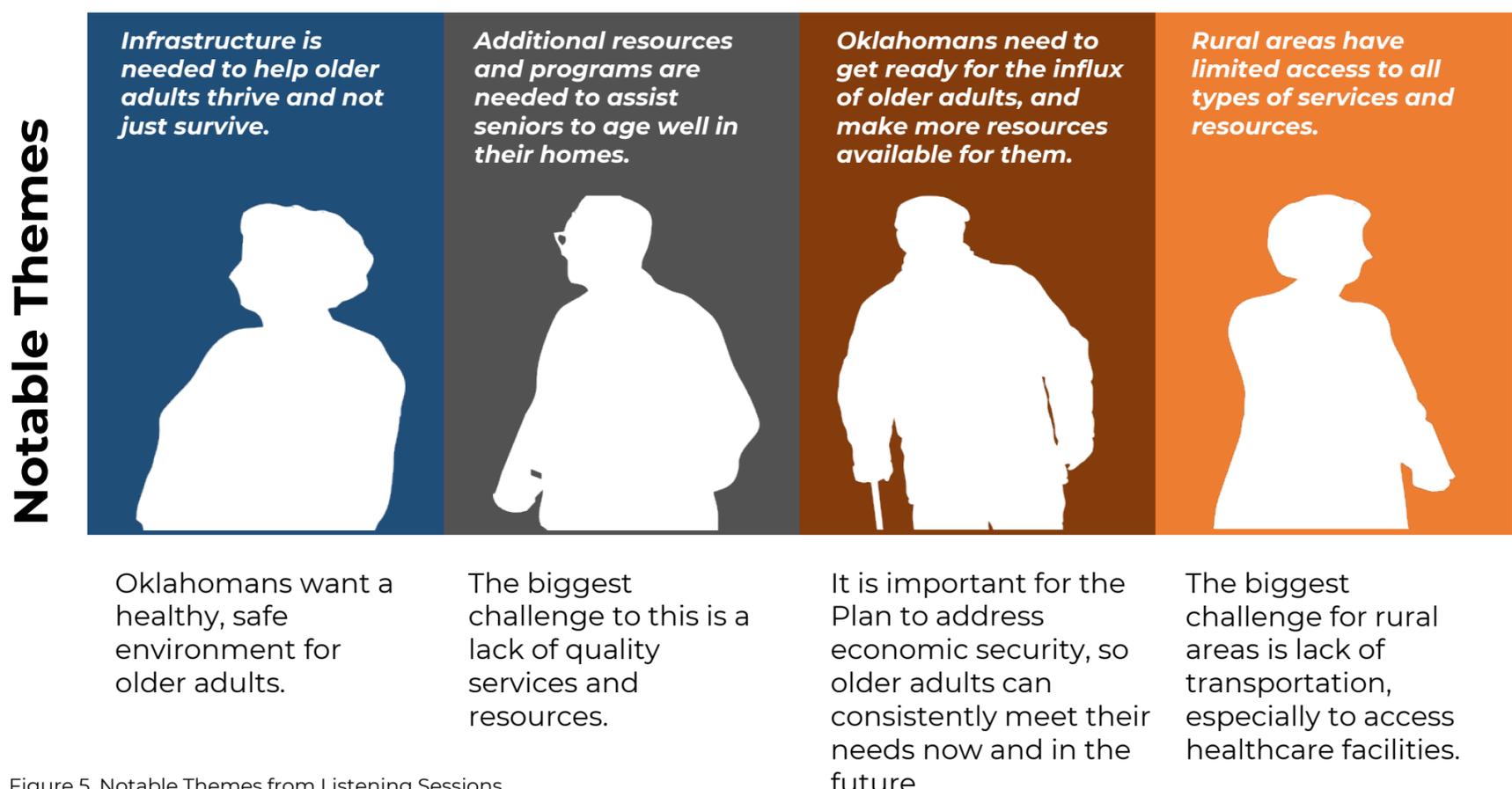


Figure 5. Notable Themes from Listening Sessions

# Oklahoma's Health and Aging Services Infrastructure

## Multisector Partnerships

Multiple organizations across the state share the goal of serving older Oklahomans and many are involved in the Multisector Plan on Aging. The organizations include state and tribal agencies, as well as private and nonprofit organizations.

The organizations provide services such as nutrition support, home weatherization, arts-based education, health insurance counseling, and more. Other agency programs work to improve community support infrastructures to better meet the needs of older adults. Examples include improving transportation options, emergency management, and facilities regulation. However, stakeholders indicate that these programs are often uncoordinated and difficult for older adults to navigate.



Figure 6. Organizations Serving on the Multisector Plan on Aging Governance Committees

## Access to Healthcare

We all rely on quality healthcare as a crucial component of the state's systems of care. Three factors significantly impact the access to healthcare for older Oklahomans: affordability, availability of nursing facilities, and sufficiency of the healthcare workforce. Of these, the biggest challenge facing the state is the sufficiency of the healthcare workforce. The number of healthcare workers in various professions, including registered nurses, emergency medicine doctors, and physical therapists, is insufficient to meet the current demand. Without changes, the unmet need will get larger as the senior population increases. These percentages are calculated based on supply and demand projections of full-time workers in these professions.

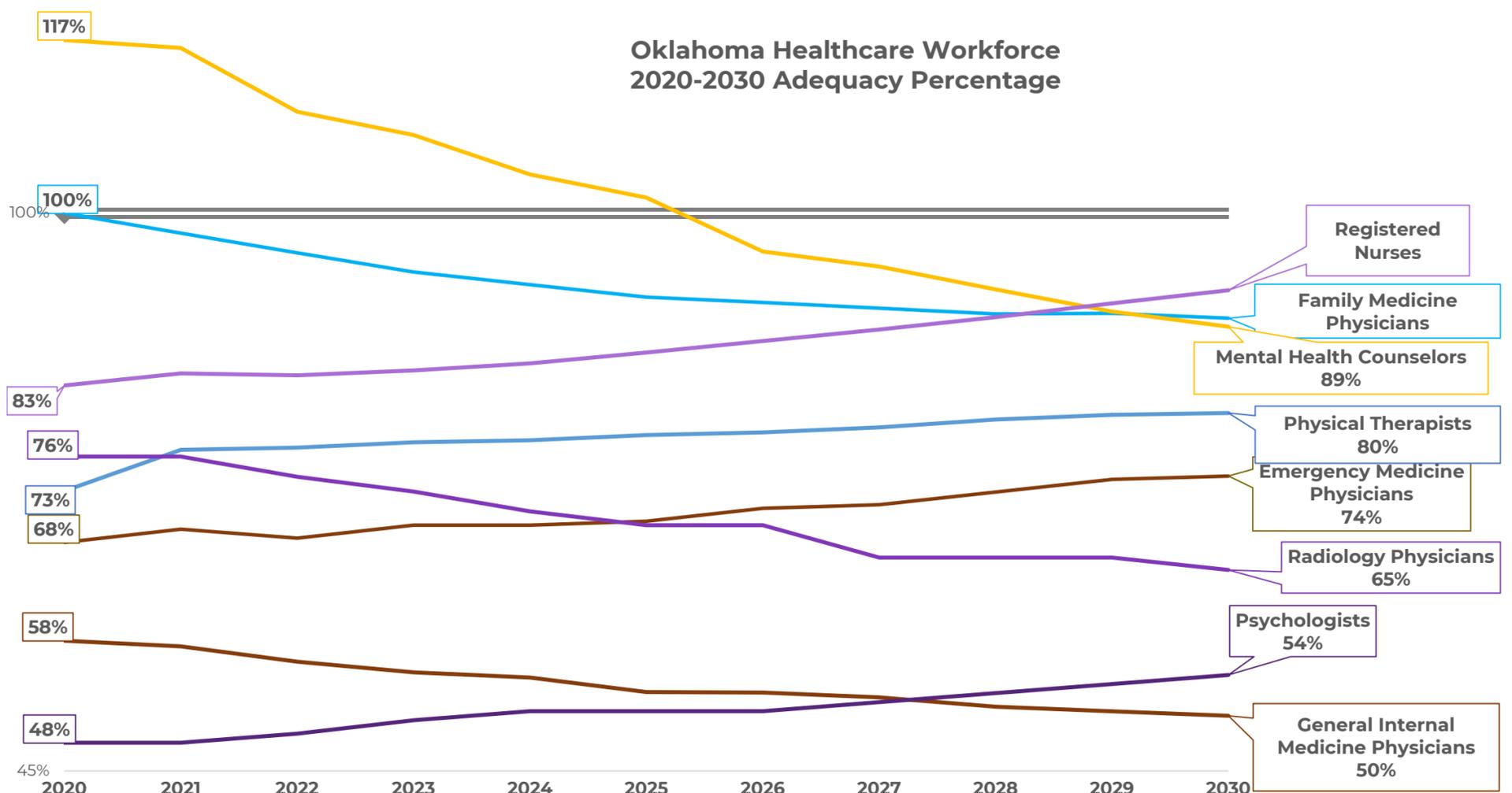


Figure 7. Oklahoma Healthcare Workforce Adequacy Percentage

# A Future Vision of Oklahoma

To enhance the potential of the Multisector Plan on Aging, we are following a four-phase process. In the first phase, which was completed in November 2022, Oklahoma Human Services conducted a readiness assessment to understand the ways in which the state was prepared to embark on the Plan's development and those areas where further work would be needed. That information formed the strategy and direction of the second phase, which sought to understand the current state of aging in Oklahoma, and this report is the culmination of that phase.



Figure 8. Multisector Plan on Aging Project Phases

Moving into the third phase, this Current State Report will lay the groundwork for identifying focus areas, setting goals, and identifying pathways to achieve them. The Advisory and Executive Steering Committee members will continue to seek stakeholder input and identify individuals to serve on subcommittees to guide this process. The Plan development is targeted to be completed by June 2024.

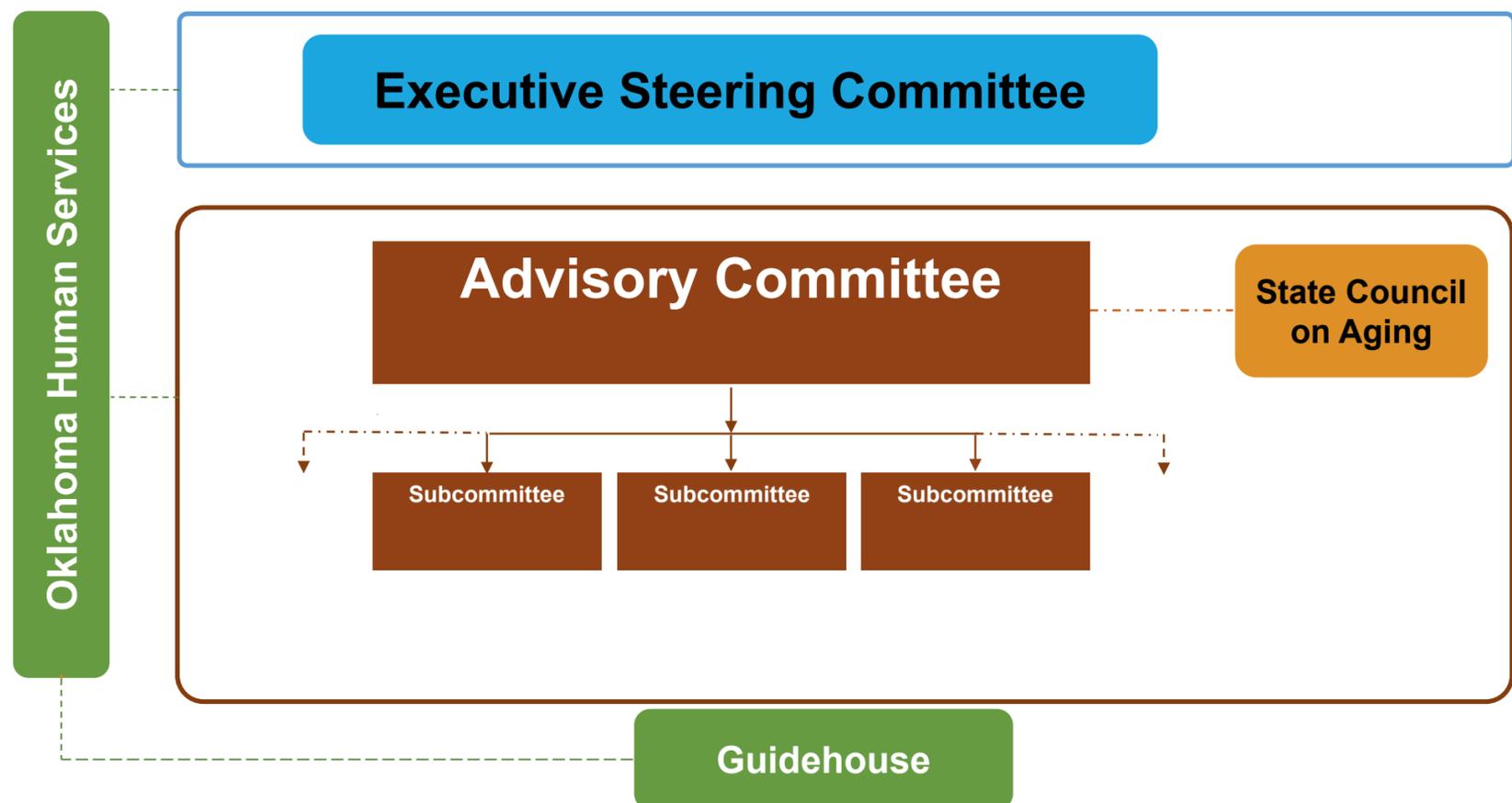


Figure 9. Multisector Plan on Aging Governance Structure

# Getting Involved

Enjoying the collective benefits and addressing the collective challenges of an aging population requires coordinated action. Together, we can find new and creative solutions for the challenges that come as we age. If you are interested in staying updated on the Plan development or supporting it by participating in one of the Advisory Committee subcommittees, please visit Oklahoma's Multisector Plan on Aging [website](#). There you can find details on upcoming events, key milestones, and relevant documents and communicate your interest in participating or receiving project updates.

To visit the Oklahoma Multisector Plan on Aging website, please use the following URL:

<https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/cap/mpa>



Search

[Apply for Services](#) [Children & Families](#) [Food & Financial](#) [Older Adults](#) [Partners & Providers](#)

[Oklahoma Human Services](#) > [Services](#) > [Community Living, Aging and Protective Services \(CAP\)](#) > [Oklahoma's Multisector Plan on Aging](#)



#### The Plan

A Multisector Plan on Aging is an approach that engages public, private, and other organizations to work together to improve the lives of older Oklahomans – specifically those 65 and older. The Multisector Plan on Aging will enable and empower us to prepare our communities for the future.

#### We Want to Hear From You!

Are you an Oklahoman over the age of 60? Do you know an Oklahoman over the age of 60? We want to hear from you! Take less than 10 minutes to share your thoughts on aging in Oklahoma by [taking our Statewide Survey](#). The survey closes on July 7, 2023.

Figure 10. Oklahoma Multisector Plan on Aging Website Landing Page

## Executive Steering Committee

Deborah Shropshire, M.D. – Oklahoma Secretary of Human Services  
Alisa West-Cahill – Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services  
Brenda Hoefar – Office of Disability Concerns  
David Ward – Oklahoma Healthcare Authority  
Deborah Smith – Oklahoma Human Services  
Jeromy Buchanan – Oklahoma Human Services  
Marshall Vogts – Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
Rep. Nicole Miller – Oklahoma State Representative  
Olivia Hook – Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
Regan McManus – Indian Nations Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging  
Stephen Weaver – Oklahoma State Department of Health  
Rep. Tammy West – Oklahoma State Representative  
Tonya Garman – Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

## Advisory Committee

Claire Dowers-Nichols – Healthy Living OKC  
Jake Brownlow – Valir Health  
Jeromy Buchanan – Oklahoma Human Services  
Karen Orsi – Oklahoma Mental Health and Aging Coalition  
Kimberly Green – Diakonos Group  
Lola Edwards – CompleteOK  
Maggie Schaffer – Alzheimer's Association  
Marilyn Olson – Villages OKC  
Sean Voskuhl – AARP  
Steven Buck – Care Providers Oklahoma