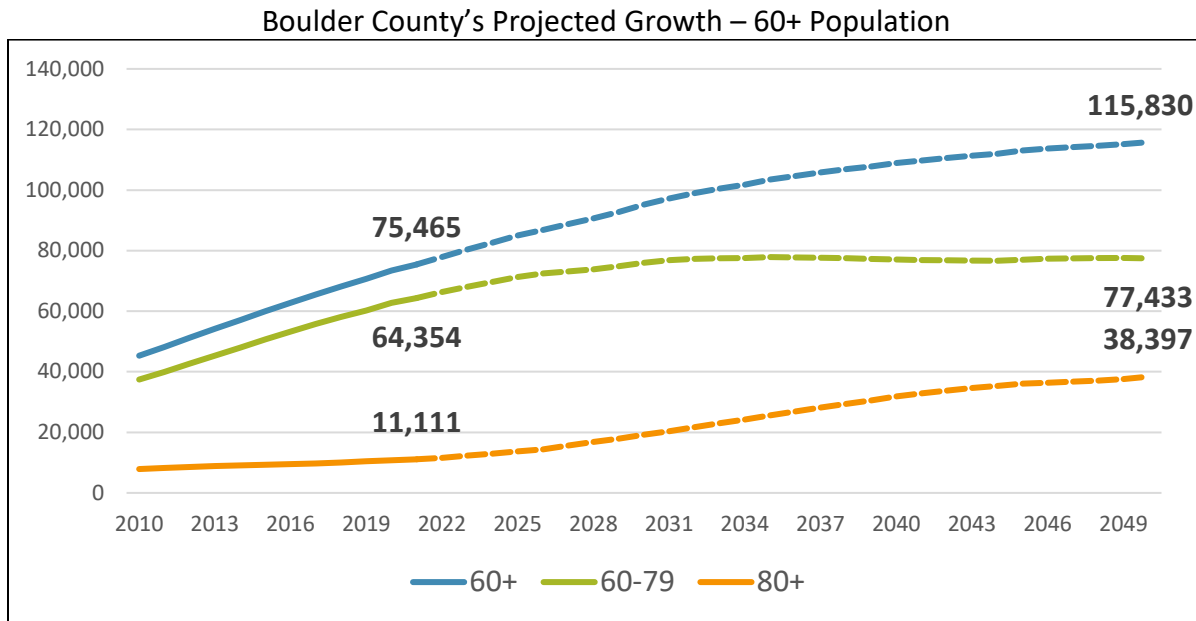


Increased Funding Needed to Support Aging Population

The Boulder County Area Agency on Aging (BCAAA) serves older adults, adults living with dementia, family caregivers, adults living with disabilities, and Veterans in our community. Boulder County’s older adults enjoy their community and want to age here. Nine in ten older adults in Boulder County reported their community as a place to live as “excellent or good” in 2022. The high and still increasing cost of living in Boulder County means the strain for those wishing to age in home and community are finding more and higher barriers to do so. Our systems must evolve to meet the needs of an aging population and paid and unpaid caregivers.

During the pandemic response, our network responded to increased basic needs for older adults. These needs have only increased in our high cost of living area alongside inflation.

Increased and flexible funding through the Older Americans Act is imperative to meet the need.



The BCAA’s flexible and innovative approach to aging services was key to working through the shifting needs of our community through the pandemic. These qualities will be key to drive our mission to support an increasing number of older adults in their homes and the broader community. Policies and funding must evolve, with a focus on sustainability and local flexibility, to adequately serve Boulder County’s dramatically increasing and changing population. The BCAA goes well beyond our core OAA services to ensure older adults in Boulder County can age well and thrive. The following is a quick snapshot into our most accessed and requested services, with further detail on the next page.

Transportation
Housing
Mental Health & Social Participation
Information and Referral

Nutrition
Financial Assistance
In-Home Services
Emergency Preparedness



The BCAA completed a quantitative and qualitative community engagement process that included the voices of older adults, caregivers, long-term care residents, Spanish speakers, service providers, LGBTQ+ older adults, low- and middle-income residents, and rural and mountain communities. Commonalities across many of the themes heard during our community engagement included accessibility, availability, and affordability. The following major themes emerged during our community engagement process.

- **Information and Referral:** Oftentimes clients come to the BCAA in a crisis. The percentage of Boulder County's older adults who shared that not knowing what services are available to older adults in their community is at least a minor problem rose from 50% in 2018 to 59% in 2022.
- **Transportation:** Door-through-door non-emergency medical transportation, improving access to transportation in mountain and rural areas, transportation to social opportunities, and transportation to access basic needs were major themes during our engagement process.
- **Housing and In-Home Services:** The need for affordable and accessible housing is universal across Colorado. Home modification is necessary for those who want to age in place. Downsizing homes is extremely difficult and often unaffordable in the current housing market.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Repeated, devastating disasters have left scars on our community. Alongside those who have felt direct impacts in these emergencies, many are left wondering how to best prepare when the next one strikes.
- **Social Participation & Mental Health Services:** Perhaps even more critical because of the pandemic, social participation stood out in our community engagement efforts. Social activities are integral to building and maintaining physical and mental health.
- **Financial Assistance:** Requests for financial assistance dramatically increased during the pandemic. We were able to meet many of the requests with the flexible funding received due to the pandemic. The financial needs continue, and the funding is much less flexible and abundant.
- **Nutrition:** Service providers reported nutrition (i.e., groceries, prepared meals) as one of the most accessed services by the older adults and caregivers over the past three years. With a rise in inflation, one of the ways residents are making ends meet is by accessing nutrition resources.

Christine Vogel
BCAAA Division Manager
cvogel@bouldercounty.org
720-308-5078

