

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-232](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

According to the Census Bureau, by 2030, about 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 and older. This aging of the population presents challenges and opportunities for policymakers and service providers in helping ensure that the older population's needs—including housing and health services—are met. Federal agencies with programs that provide housing assistance to low-income older households include HUD and USDA. Several HHS programs provide those households with health services.

This report assesses the extent to which the three agencies collaborated to address the housing and health service needs of older adults living in federally assisted housing.

GAO compared agency efforts to leading collaboration practices it has identified (including written agreements; roles and responsibilities; leveraged resources; relevant participants; and defined outcomes) and interviewed HUD, HHS, and USDA officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations (one each to HUD, HHS, and USDA). They focus on including USDA in collaborations on older adult housing and health services and defining outcomes for the efforts. The three agencies concurred with GAO's recommendations. HUD stated that it had begun examining challenges relating to services for low-income rural older adults.

View [GAO-18-232](#). For more information, contact Daniel Garcia-Diaz at (202) 512-8678 or garciadiazd@gao.gov.

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OLDER ADULT HOUSING

Future Collaborations on Housing and Health Services Should Include Relevant Agencies and Define Outcomes

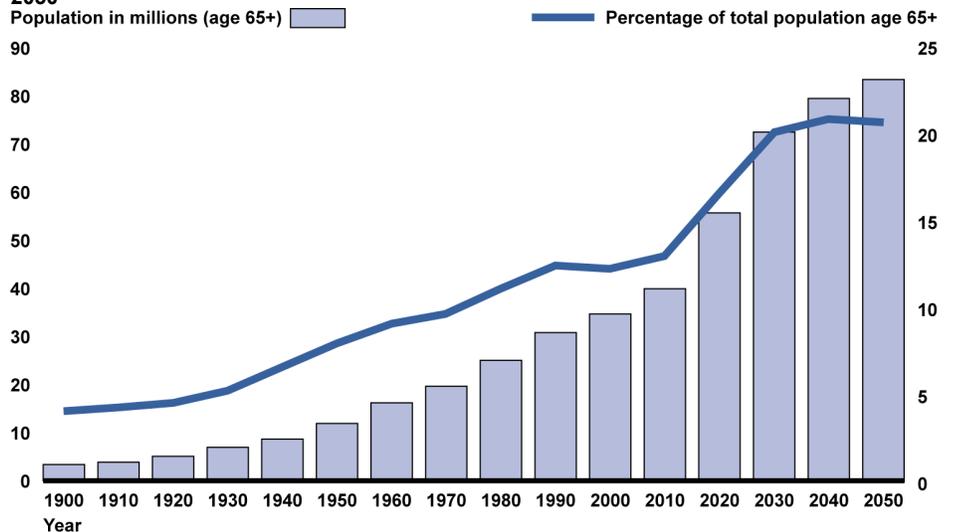
What GAO Found

The Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Health and Human Services (HHS) have collaborated on older adult housing and health issues, but these efforts did not fully demonstrate leading practices GAO identified for effective collaboration.

- The HUD-HHS efforts demonstrated some leading practices. For example, the agencies have written agreements for data-sharing projects and have leveraged resources to conduct research on older adults.
- The Department of Agriculture (USDA) was not included in the efforts although it provides housing assistance to older rural households. GAO identified the inclusion of all relevant participants as a leading practice. According to HUD, the efforts were intended to explore the health of HUD-assisted households. However, by not including USDA in future collaborations, HUD and HHS may miss opportunities to leverage expertise and USDA may not be able to benefit from any resulting insights and improvements.
- The HUD-HHS collaborative efforts also did not define common outcomes, another leading practice GAO identified, likely because their collaboration is relatively new. Without common outcomes (for instance, focused on recipient impact or cost savings), the agencies lack measures against which to monitor, evaluate, and report the results of any collaborations.

Future collaborations would benefit from consistent USDA involvement. And by defining common outcomes, the agencies would help inform Congress and stakeholders of results achieved and strategies or areas on which to focus.

Historical and Projected Population 65 and Older as a Proportion of Total Population, 1900-2050



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. | GAO-18-232