



## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & QUALITY OF LIFE

### The Issues

**Rising Costs and Limited Income Growth.** Inflation and increases in the cost of living—especially housing—are outpacing wages in Pennsylvania. Many households, even those with multiple earners, cannot keep up with rising rent, utilities, and basic needs. Older adults on fixed incomes are particularly squeezed, with rates of homelessness among people 55+ climbing sharply.

**Aging Population and Workforce Displacement.** Older workers face job loss at disproportionate rates, and many are unable to find reemployment comparable to prior positions. Limited retirement savings and reduced income security, especially those on fixed incomes, force dependence on public services and hinder economic stability for retirement aged populations..

**Resource Gaps and Uncertainty.** Social service providers report rising demand, but funding, infrastructure, and staffing are not keeping pace. Instability in state and federal levels on budget and policy directions are creating fiscal uncertainty for organizations tasked with providing baseline supportive services.

**Fragmented Policy Response.** While many collaboratives, housing initiatives, and workforce programs exist, strategies remain fragmented. Pilot projects and nonprofit-driven solutions have shown promise, but Pennsylvania lacks a united approach to connect housing, economic development, and community well-being.

### The Impacts

**Increased Vulnerability for Older Adults.** Homelessness among adults 55–64 has risen by 169% over the past three years, with a 30% increase among those 65+. Without intervention, this trend will worsen as more baby boomers age into fixed incomes and limited housing options

**Greater Strain on Service Providers.** Nonprofits and local agencies are absorbing the gap between rising need and stagnant funding. Budget delays and mandated changes—such as costly Medicaid implementation requirements—divert resources from direct services.

**Community Instability.** Families pushed out of stable housing or employment contribute to instability in schools, neighborhoods, and local economies. Service providers report steep



increases in calls for help, with York County on track for 600+ housing and quality-of-life assistance requests in 2025

**Missed Opportunities for Regional Growth.** Without coordinated strategies, Pennsylvania risks underutilizing proven tools like low-interest housing loans, wraparound support for small business start-ups, and workforce development initiatives that build stability and long-term opportunity

## **Next Steps**

YCNC is working to create recommendations that address the issues and impacts noted above for the economic opportunity & quality of life priorities, that both move the needle to remedy situations and provide sustainable paths forward for economic competitiveness.