

# Leveraging Public Policy for Intergenerational Impact: A Snapshot of Federal, State, and Local Action

## INTRODUCTION

Children and older adults thrive in intergenerational programs where they can learn from one another, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to shared community goals. Intergenerational programs intentionally unite the generations in ways that enrich participants' lives and help address vital social and community issues while building on the positive resources that young and old have to offer each other and to their communities.

Public policy plays a key role in expanding intergenerational opportunities. This resource offers a concise overview of how federal, state, and local policy efforts can strengthen intergenerational programming. It highlights legislation, partnerships, and advocacy strategies that expand access, improve sustainability, and elevate the value of intergenerational programming.

Intergenerational policy advocacy transforms innovative programs into lasting infrastructure. It secures funding, removes regulatory barriers, and embeds intergenerational approaches into housing, education, health, and community development systems. By understanding how these policy examples take shape, practitioners and advocates can better champion the conditions that allow intergenerational programs to grow, endure, and connect people across the lifespan.

## FEDERAL POLICY

### The Care Across Generations Act

In 2025, Representative Marilyn Strickland (D-WA) and Representative Bryan Steil (R-WI) introduced the [Care Across Generations Act](#),



Photo: Juliette Fowler Communities

which proposes a federal grant program designed to help long-term care communities operate or partner with childcare programs. The bill supports intergenerational care by funding activities that bring older adults and young children together in shared settings, allowing long-term care communities to either run on-site childcare directly or collaborate with existing providers. It also enables care communities to use grant funding for building, renovating, or expanding space to host childcare and multigenerational programming, strengthening both aging services and the care workforce.

Nationally, the bill aims to reduce loneliness and isolation among older adults by creating structured opportunities for meaningful intergenerational engagement that enhance emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. At the same time, it supports healthy child development by expanding access to enrichment, mentorship, and social-emotional learning through relationships with older adults. By encouraging co-located or partnered care models, the legislation helps address workforce shortages in both long-term care and childcare, positioning intergenerational care as a strategic

solution within the broader national care infrastructure. This federal framing provides a model for state-level advocacy, demonstrating how public policy can intentionally invest in intergenerational connection as a tool for strengthening communities and care systems. The legislation has been referred to the U.S. House Committee on Education and Workforce, where it awaits action.

## STATE POLICY

### Nebraska: Intergenerational Care Facility Incentive Grant Program

In alignment with the goals of the federal Care Across Generations Act, [Nebraska Legislative Bill 904 \(LB 904\)](#) includes provisions to tackle the state's intertwined shortages in elder care and childcare by incentivizing providers that co-locate services for older adults and young children. The bill was signed into law in 2024 and established the Intergenerational Care Facility Incentive Grant Program, housed within Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to support nursing homes that want to add licensed childcare onsite. To launch the program, LB 904 allocates \$300,000 from the Medicaid Managed Care Excess Profit Fund for FY 2024-2025, providing one-time grants to help providers cover start-up and renovation costs. Priority is given to rural communities, where care shortages are often most acute. The bill also incorporates provisions from earlier intergenerational care legislation and authorizes DHHS to administer the program immediately.

The passage of Nebraska's intergenerational care legislation was the result of a sustained, multi-year advocacy effort led primarily by [First Five Nebraska](#), with partnership from the [Nebraska Health Care Association](#). First Five Nebraska first championed the idea in 2020, when former State Senator and child health policy expert Sara Howard worked with State Senator Anna Wishart to introduce [LB 1051](#). The



Photo: Benevilla

bill received a strong hearing shortly before COVID-19 shut down the state, halting momentum. As interest in intergenerational care grew, Wishart remained committed and reintroduced the concept in 2024 as [LB 1178](#), with First Five Nebraska taking the lead on advocacy. With strong backing from childcare and long-term care stakeholders, the bill was folded into LB 904, which passed and was signed into law in April 2024, marking a significant policy win for both sectors and intergenerational care in Nebraska.

To date, the law has resulted in a \$100,000 grant to [Mid-Nebraska Lutheran Home and Newman House](#) in Newman Grove, which is in the early stages of development. Champions of the legislation recognized the grant program could have greater impact if funds were made available to a broader audience. In 2026, State Senator Dan Quick introduced [LB 721](#), legislation that allows intergenerational incentive program funds to be used to expand existing intergenerational programs in addition to developing new programs. It also clarifies that for-profit facilities may apply for the grants.

The new legislation could significantly strengthen and expand programs, like the Trucks N Tiaras Academy of Discovery & Enrichment in North Platte, Nebraska. Partnering with [Linden Court](#), a skilled nursing and rehabilitation care community, Trucks N Tiaras is a visiting-based intergenerational program that brings children and older adults together for shared activities. Several times a month, preschoolers visit Linden Court for reading circles, crafts, music, seasonal celebrations, and one-on-one social time with residents. These interactions help children build empathy, communication skills, and confidence, while older adults experience reduced loneliness, increased cognitive stimulation, and renewed purpose.

With support from this grant, Linden Court could explore creating dedicated intergenerational spaces, increasing the frequency of activities, or even moving toward a shared site model where children and older adults interact daily. For rural communities like North Platte, where both childcare and elder care shortages are acute, Nebraska's Intergenerational Care Facility and Incentive Grant Program offers a pathway to strengthen existing partnerships, improve sustainability, and scale the impact of intergenerational care. [Learn more about LB721.](#)



Photo: Grace Skilled Nursing & Therapy & Jenks Public Schools

## Oklahoma: Intergenerational Education Revolving Fund

Oklahoma [House Bill 2749](#) (HB 2749) was introduced on January 16, 2025 and aimed to create a statewide framework for intergenerational learning by establishing a formal Intergenerational Education Program within the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA). The bill, authored by State Representative Trey Caldwell and State Senator Grant Hall, created an Intergenerational Education Revolving Fund to support competitive grants for nursing providers partnering with public schools, enabling programs where older adults and school-age children engage in shared educational activities. The measure directed OHCA to develop program rules, minimum standards, and award procedures, positioning the state to expand structured intergenerational learning opportunities across diverse communities.

HB 2749 allows grant awards to be issued as Medicaid rate adjustments, giving nursing homes a financial incentive to collaborate with local schools. This approach aligns with broader policy goals such as reducing social isolation among older adults, enriching students' learning through intergenerational engagement, and improving the financial stability of long-term care facilities. The bill passed the Oklahoma House with strong bipartisan support but was placed on Senate General Order in April 2025, halting implementation despite its potential to scale intergenerational education statewide. Today, HB 2749 remains in Senate General Order, which means it is waiting in line to be considered by the full Senate.

Oklahoma's HB 2749 could significantly strengthen and expand partnerships like the one between [Norman Public Schools](#) (NPS) and [Grace Skilled Nursing & Therapy](#) in Norman, Oklahoma. In this intergenerational learning model, PreK students learn daily inside a skilled

nursing care community. The program creates a shared classroom environment where young children and older adult residents interact through reading, STEM projects, arts and crafts, music and movement, games, and regular social events. These structured interactions foster meaningful connections, reduce social isolation among older adults, and enrich children's early learning experiences.

If passed, the bill would provide competitive grants and Medicaid-based rate adjustments, directly supporting programs like this one with funding for staff, coordination, materials, and program sustainability. By formalizing intergenerational education within the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, HB 2749 could provide long-term stability, enabling Norman Public Schools and Grace Skilled Nursing & Therapy to deepen programming, serve more students, and potentially serve as a model for replication across Oklahoma.

## LOCAL POLICY

### Swampscott, Massachusetts: Shared High School and Senior Center Campus

The creation of the shared campus between [Swampscott High School and Swampscott Senior Center](#) emerged from community-driven advocacy. Advocacy goals centered on co-locating essential community services, improving accessibility for older adults, modernizing school facilities, and advancing age-friendly planning principles. Community members pushed for a senior center that was physically accessible, socially vibrant, and integrated into daily civic life, while school leaders sought a site that could accommodate a new high school and foster stronger community connections.

Public meetings and town-wide votes, including approval of a tax increase to fund construction, reflected sustained grassroots engagement. Key players included the Swampscott Council on Aging, the School Building Committee,



Photo: Swampscott High School & Swampscott Senior Center

municipal leaders, town planners, and engaged residents, with support from organizations such as AARP Massachusetts, which later highlighted the project as a model for age-friendly, intergenerational design. The Massachusetts Legislature approved the town's request to repurpose parkland for the project, but the vision and momentum came from local advocates committed to improving both senior services and school infrastructure. The outcome was a purpose-built intergenerational campus that enables shared programming, informal daily interactions, and cross-generational visibility. This project stands as a local policy win demonstrating how municipal advocacy, age-friendly planning, and cross-sector collaboration can produce lasting intergenerational infrastructure and serve as a replicable model for other communities.

## MULTI-LEVEL ADVOCACY

### Oregon: Advocacy to Support Expansion of Bridge Meadows

[Bridge Meadows](#) is a nationally recognized intergenerational housing and community-building model that brings together older adults, families, and youth formerly in foster care to live in intentionally designed neighborhoods of mutual support. They conducted advocacy at the

federal, state, and local levels to secure support for their communities. Currently, Bridge Meadows has Oregon communities in Portland, Beaverton, and Redmond, with more on the way. Each community blends affordable housing with on-site programming that fosters connection, healing, and stability. Residents commit to being part of a shared-purpose environment: older adults provide mentorship and emotional support, families receive a strong social safety net, and youth build relationships that help them thrive.

Independent evaluations of Bridge Meadows have documented meaningful outcomes, including increased housing stability for families, reduced social isolation among older adults, improved mental health and resilience for youth, and stronger community cohesion overall. The model has been highlighted as a promising strategy for addressing both the child welfare and aging-services crises simultaneously.

Bridge Meadows' growth has been closely tied to thoughtful, sustained advocacy that elevates the model's impact and makes the case for public investment. Leveraging local community and state connections, Bridge Meadows receives grant funding from the Portland Children's Levy and the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to provide therapy, case management, and community meals for youth previously in foster care.

In 2025, Bridge Meadows pursued support and funding from the Oregon Congressional delegation and State Legislature to develop additional Bridge Meadows communities and support operations for existing communities. After learning the impact of Bridge Meadows and strong outcomes for residents across the lifespan, U.S. Senators Merkley and Wyden championed securing congressionally directed spending (community project funding) to support a new Bridge Meadows community in Eugene, Oregon. \$750,000 was allocated for this

new community development in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, which was signed into law on February 3, 2026.

Bridge Meadows advocacy in the Oregon State Legislature led to the introduction of [Senate Bill 229 \(SB 229\)](#), a 2025 legislative proposal that directs the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to provide dedicated funding to expand and strengthen Bridge Meadows communities. If passed, the bill authorizes OHCS to distribute funds for statewide expansion, including the development and construction of new intergenerational housing units, as well as operational support for both existing and emerging Bridge Meadows communities. SB 229 also directs resources toward programs that strengthen intergenerational engagement, ensuring residents of all ages benefit from structured activities and community-building initiatives. In addition to funding distribution, the bill requires OHCS to oversee the use of funds and report annually to legislative housing committees for five years. Although SB 229 was not passed by the Oregon Legislature during the 2025 Session, this advocacy had a strong impact and helped connect Bridge Meadows to the Governor's Office.



Photo: Bridge Meadows

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Across federal, state, and local levels, these examples show that intergenerational programs grow because communities, advocates, and policymakers choose to invest in them. These initiatives highlighted here demonstrate how intentional advocacy can turn promising ideas into lasting infrastructure. By engaging with local leaders, sharing stories of impact, and championing policies that bring generations together, anyone can help strengthen the programs that allow intergenerational connections to thrive.

Generations United offers tools and advocacy resources, advice, and networking connections to support this work, making it easier for communities to take the next step toward building places where people of all ages can learn, connect, and flourish.

### Resources

[Intergenerational Shared Sites Fact Sheet](#)

[Sharing Our Spaces Toolkit](#)

[Join the Shared Site Learning Network](#)

[Public Policy Priorities for the 119th Congress](#)

[Policy & Action Hub](#)



Photo: ONEgeneration

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## ABOUT GENERATIONS UNITED

For more than three decades, Generations United's mission has been to improve the lives of children, youth, and older adults through intergenerational collaboration, public policies, and programs for the enduring benefit of all. As the leading advocate for intergenerational initiatives, Generations United sparks cooperation across ages, harnessing the vibrancy and productivity that emerge when people of all ages come together. Learn more at [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org).

## ABOUT THE EISNER FOUNDATION

The Eisner Foundation identifies, advocates for, and invests in high-quality and innovative programs that unite multiple generations for the enrichment of our communities. The Eisner Foundation was started in 1996 by Michael D. Eisner, then-Chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, and his wife Jane in order to focus their family's philanthropic activities. The Eisner Foundation gives an estimated \$12 million per year to nonprofit organizations based in Los Angeles County and New York City. In 2015, The Eisner Foundation became the only U.S. funder investing exclusively in intergenerational solutions. To learn more about The Eisner Foundation, please visit [www.eisnerfoundation.org](http://www.eisnerfoundation.org).

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