Why Do We Need to Map Out an Age-Friendly Future?

LET'S LOOK AT THE DATA

Between 2010 and 2022, Bergen County's under-65 population grew by just **1.3%**
In the same time span, the 65-and-over population grew by double-digits: **27.5 %**

That trend is expected to continue, with the number of people over 65 outnumbering. people under 18 in a decade's time. But it's not just the growth of the older population that communities need to consider **– it's the diversity of their lives and lifestyles.**

The nearly 175,000 Bergen County residents age 65 or older are not a monolithic group

Here's a snapshot:

About three-quarters of households in Bergen with someone over 65 living in it are owner-occupied; the remaining quarter are renters

More than 40,000 Bergen residents over 65 live alone

Close to 10,000 live with their grandchildren

About 42,000 are in the labor force

For those with wage and other earnings, the annual median is nearly $99,000, while the median for pension income is about $43,000 and Social Security $27,500

Nearly 46,000 live with a disability

38,000 report that they speak English less than "very well"

About 6,300 live in a household enrolled in SNAP (food stamps)

Roughly 30,000 homeowners over 65 and more than 15,000 renters are "housing cost-burdened," meaning housing costs exceed more than 30 percent of income

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2022 estimates. All numbers are rounded.

What do the numbers above tell us? That older adults have different lives and therefore different livability needs. **The first data to collect starts at home, with resident surveys, focus groups and compiling of community Census and other statistics.**

These resources can also help communities begin mapping their path.

New Jersey Future's *Creating Places to Age* **web page**:

https://www.njfuture.org/research-reports/places-to-age-nj/

AARP Livable Communities – Numerous Resources including Community Survey:

https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/

Livability Index: https://livabilityindex.aarp.org

UMass Boston's Elder Index: https://elderindex.org:

Age-Friendly North Jersey
AN ALLIANCE OF LEADERS STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES