



Age-Friendly Massachusetts Action Plan Journey



Executive Office of Elder Affairs
RESPECT INDEPENDENCE INCLUSION



August 1, 2023

Robin Lipson
Deputy Secretary
Massachusetts
Executive Office of Elder
Affairs



Governor Baker's Challenge (Executive Order 576)



“We need to think differently about aging in Massachusetts. This isn’t just about acknowledging a shift in demographics; it’s about being intentional in our planning to ensure that those who grew up here, raised families and built communities, can continue to contribute their energy experience and talents where they live and make Massachusetts the most age-friendly state.”

– Governor Charles D. Baker, 2018 –

We Started by Listening



- What factors make your community a great place to grow older?
- How can we support families that include one or more older adults?
- How can we promote more human connectedness (reduce loneliness, isolation) in communities?
- What are the top two issues or concerns that create barriers to people being able to age well in their communities?
- How can we accelerate innovation to support and connect older adults?
- How can we change public perceptions about aging?



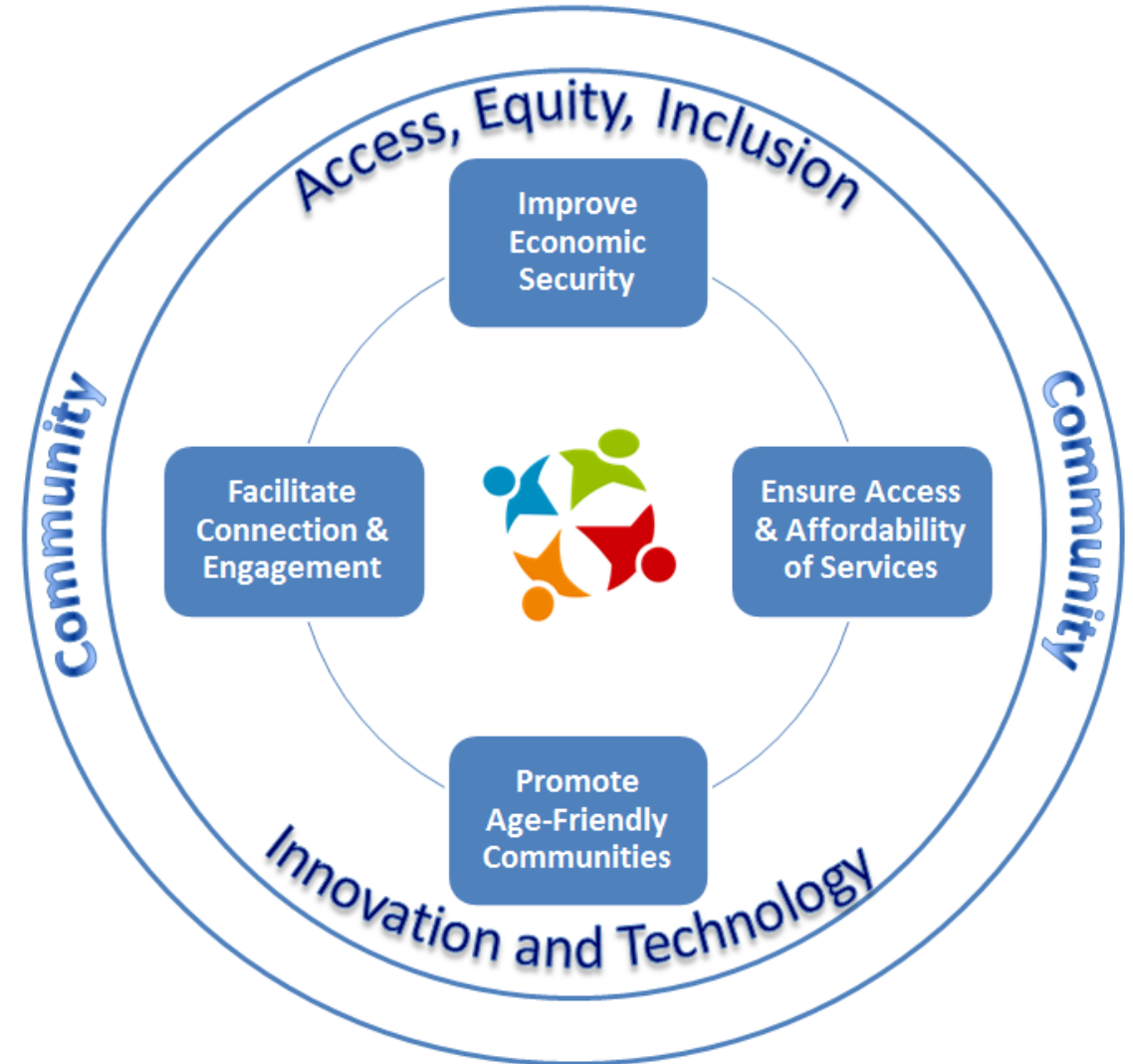
Framework

Aspirational Future State

- All Massachusetts communities are considered age-friendly
- Aging is considered an asset and is embedded in all policies
- Massachusetts is the Silicon Valley of innovation in aging and exports knowledge and services
- Continuum of long-term care services is reimagined and integrated
- People of all ages have access to health and social supports and disparities are reduced
- People proactively plan for a 100-year life
- Residents have the resources to live a meaningful life in the community they choose



Framework



ReiMAging Aging: A Movement

2008: Tufts Health Plan Foundation founded with a focus on healthy aging

2012: Tufts Health Plan Foundation partners with UMass Boston to produce Healthy Aging Data Report and MHAC is officially launched

2015: Age-Friendly MA Summit with 400 thought leaders

2017: AARP launches Community Challenge to fund local Age Friendly work

2017: Start of Age-Friendly Universities and Health Systems in MA

2017: Governor's Council to Address Aging in MA established under Executive Order 576

2018: Governor's Council to Address Aging in MA releases blueprint recommendations

10+ Years in the Making

2011: First Memory Café in Massachusetts meets in Marlborough

2014: Dementia Friendly Massachusetts launched

2014: Three Massachusetts communities join Age-Friendly Network (AARP or WHO)

2015/2016: LGBT Aging Commission and Elder Economic Security Commission submit reports

2017: Governor Baker is the first Governor in MA to discuss aging in the State of the Commonwealth

2018: MA receives AARP Age-Friendly State Designation

2019: MA submits *ReiMAging Aging*, the Commonwealth's Age-Friendly Action Plan to AARP

Age-Friendly Massachusetts

Input from 500+ Residents
Across Massachusetts



Feedback and Input from
Subject Matter Experts



Governor's Council to
Address Aging in
Massachusetts



Community-Led Age and
Dementia Friendly Efforts



State Designation Team and
Long-Standing Partners



Cross-Sector Partnerships
and Collaboration



Massachusetts Healthy Aging
Collaborative (Backbone
Organization)



Healthy Aging Data Reports



Sector-Specific
Age-Friendly Initiatives



ReiMAgine Aging:

Planning Together to
Create an
Age-Friendly Future for
Massachusetts

ReiMAging Aging

Massachusetts Statewide Age-Friendly Action Plan

Mission

To amplify, align, and coordinate local, regional, and statewide efforts to create a welcoming and livable Commonwealth as residents grow up and grow older together.

Vision

Aging in Massachusetts is reimagined.
The Commonwealth is an accountable partner in supporting communities, embedding aging in all policies, and empowering residents with opportunities to age meaningfully in the communities of their choice.

Goals

1. Deepen Community Initiatives
2. Promote Information and Communication
3. Reframe Aging
4. Embed Aging in all Policies and Practices
5. Improve Economic Security
6. Create Sustainability

New Resources for Local Efforts

HANDBOOK

Massachusetts Age- and Dementia Friendly Integration Toolkit

Resources for integrating age- and dementia friendly activities in your community.



Best Practices Program

The Community Compact is a voluntary, mutual agreement entered into between the Baker-Polito Administration and individual cities and towns of the Commonwealth.

Dementia-Friendly Movement Seeks to Move People Out of the Shadows



Dancer Audrey Albert-King (back right), a frequent guest artist at memory cafés, leads an exercise at the Jewish Family & Children's Service Memory Café in Waltham, which is co-sponsored by Brandeis University. (Courtesy photos)

By PAM MACLEOD

Early everyone knows someone—a friend, family member or neighbor—living with dementia, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Although dementia is more common in older adults, it is not a part of normal aging. Contrary to popular belief, it isn't a specific disease, but rather a group of symptoms. The symptoms can include memory loss, challenges in planning and problem solving, trouble with visual/spatial perception, and other cognitive issues that disrupt daily life. The Alzheimer's Association reports that people can live with the challenges of dementia for as long as twenty years.

A 2017 report from RTI International found that about four out of five people

living with dementia live in their homes—with family, friends or alone—rather than in residential care settings or nursing homes. An estimated one in three residents with dementia lives alone.

Dementia-Friendly Movement Comes to Massachusetts

It's not uncommon for people to isolate themselves and loved ones with dementia due to embarrassment, stigma and a basic lack of understanding within their communities. In response, a nationwide grassroots movement emerged in 2015 to make our communities "dementia-friendly." This push, part of a worldwide movement, has gained momentum across Massachusetts in recent years, similar to the age-friendly movement.

Simply stated, a dementia-friendly community is a place where people living with dementia and their care partners

Pam MacLeod is the Director of Dementia Friendly Massachusetts for the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

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AROUND THE STATE

Local Age-Friendly Efforts Provide Models for Success

By ANTRON WATSON AND AMANDA BERNARDO

Scores of cities and towns across Massachusetts have begun the journey to become age- and dementia-friendly communities. Cities and towns that have not yet become age- and dementia-friendly can benefit from best practices as they take steps toward becoming more livable for all. The following are some exemplary programs that can serve as models for others.

Boston: What's in a Name?

The Commonwealth's capital city began a five-year journey to become more age-friendly by joining AARP's Age-Friendly movement in 2014. From the beginning, a key component of the city's strategy was to ensure that the local government was listening to and learning from older residents in each of Boston's diverse and

Antron Watson is Age-Friendly Director for AARP Massachusetts, and Amanda Bernardo is the Director of Policy at the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (www.mass.gov/org/executive-office-of-elder-affairs).

unique neighborhoods. The commitment to inclusion resulted in the city's holding thirty listening sessions in four languages, generating a resident survey in multiple languages, and soliciting input from more than seventy organizations throughout the city. The voices of more than four thousand older adults informed the seventy-five action items contained in Boston's Age-Friendly Action Plan, released in 2017.

In its first-year achievement report, Age-Friendly Boston (www.boston.gov/age-friendly) documented a number of successes that can be replicated in other communities. A first-ever Civic Academy invited older residents to learn about the local, state and federal governments and how to become effective advocates for issues they care about. The city worked on making parks more inviting for older residents and sidewalks more walkable. Based on feedback from age-friendly listening sessions in each neighborhood, the city mapped every public restroom

and posted a searchable database on its website. Older residents said that knowing where such public accommodations are located can make traveling around the city more comfortable. This is a prime example of low age-friendly planning serves young and old residents alike.

In his 2019 State of the City address, Mayor Martin Walsh announced that the name of the city's Commission on the Affairs of the Elderly would be changed to the Age-Strong Commission. The objective is to revamp the perception of the agency and its constituency.

Here are strategies that worked for Boston that can be replicated in other communities:

- **Engage older residents at every step:** Boston's focus on inclusion and diversity made its age-friendly plan stronger. By listening to and incorporating the views of older residents, Boston built support for its efforts throughout the city's twenty-three neighborhoods.
- **Break down silos:** Look at everyday touch points for residents and ask how



Thinking Differently



SENILE

You think I'm out of touch? Whatever! I use a smartphone, paint every day, play Sudoku on my tablet, and spend time with my boyfriend. I am a lot of things, and senile isn't one of them.

This is how I #AgeStrong.

-Irene, 103

ACE+ City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

CRANKY

I love my family, and I'm the life of every party. I volunteer to help others as a Senior Companion with the City of Boston. I am a lot of things, and cranky isn't one of them.

This is how I #AgeStrong.

-Harry, 67

ACE+ City of Boston
Age Strong Commission
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

CITY of **BOSTON**

Reframing Aging Training

Words That Do Not Work

- × Cliff, tsunami, apocalypse, crisis-oriented words
- × Burden, vulnerable
- × “Them”

Words That Work

- ✓ Wisdom, experience, opportunity
- ✓ Assets, contributions
- ✓ “Us”

- Tufts Health Plan Foundation committed \$250,000 over five years to support changing the conversation about aging, ageism and issues important to older people.
- Using a curriculum developed by the Frameworks Institute, a master trainer conducted train-the-trainer sessions with various multi-sector audiences:



Reframing Training Audiences:

State Government

Media

Technology &
Innovation
Community

Embedding Aging in All Policies and Practices

As labor crunch tightens, employers offer more flexibility to those serving as family caregivers



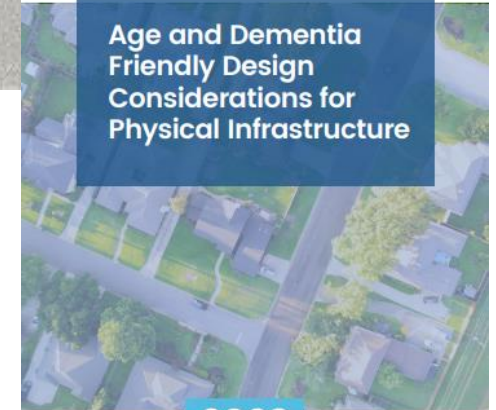
Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program



Age and Dementia Friendly Design Considerations for Physical Infrastructure



Reading Police Department Recognized As Dementia Friendly

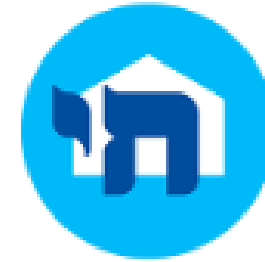


Age and Dementia Friendly Physical Infrastructure Team of the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Disease and All Other Dementias

September 2022



Improving Economic Security



2Life

OPUS COMMUNITIES

Age affordably. Live well.

AARP® Real Possibilities
Massachusetts

ENCORE BOSTON
NETWORK



TUFTS
Health Plan

Cape Is Leader In Elders In The
Workplace

March 18th, 2019



Sustaining the Movement



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging



Point32Health Foundation



ReiMAging Aging Audio Stories

Age- and Dementia-Friendly reporting and storytelling of 2022 success. This podcast will consist of 6 audio stories, approximately 10-minutes per story interviewing community leaders, subject matter experts, and impacted older adults.

Nutrition and Food Security

Theme: **Ensure equitable aging**

Transportation and Mobility

Theme: **Policy for our future**

Technology and Digital Equity

Theme: **Transformational work**



Housing

Theme: **Unique and groundbreaking work in MA**

Dementia-Friendly

Theme: **Decision-making with an Age- and Dementia-Friendly lens**

Purpose and Combatting Ageism

Theme: **Transformational work**

THANK YOU

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Helpful Age- and Dementia-Friendly Resources

 @Mass_EOEA

[Age-Friendly Massachusetts | Mass.gov](#)

[Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts | Mass.gov](#)

[Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative](#)