AGE-FRIENDLY
Franklin County & North Quabbin

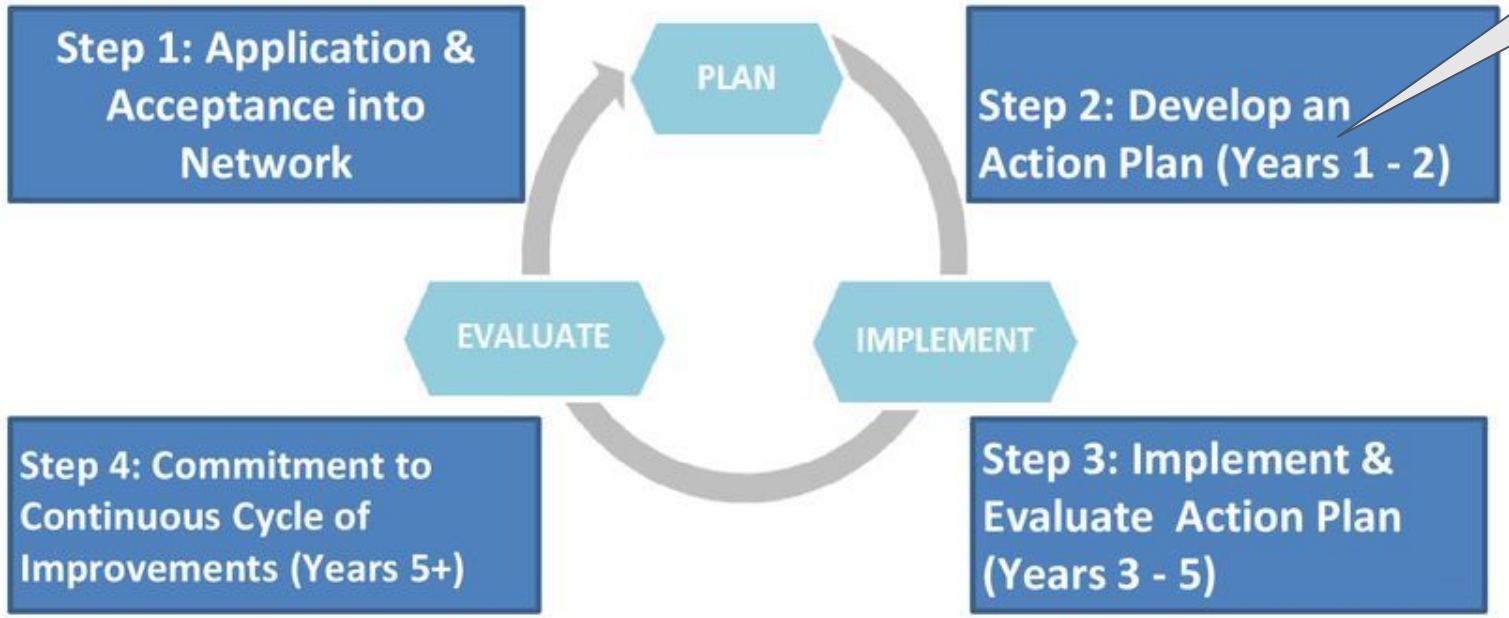
Mass in Motion©

Mass in Motion Age- and Dementia-Friendly Initiative In Montague

December, 2022

AARP Age Friendly Process

We are here!



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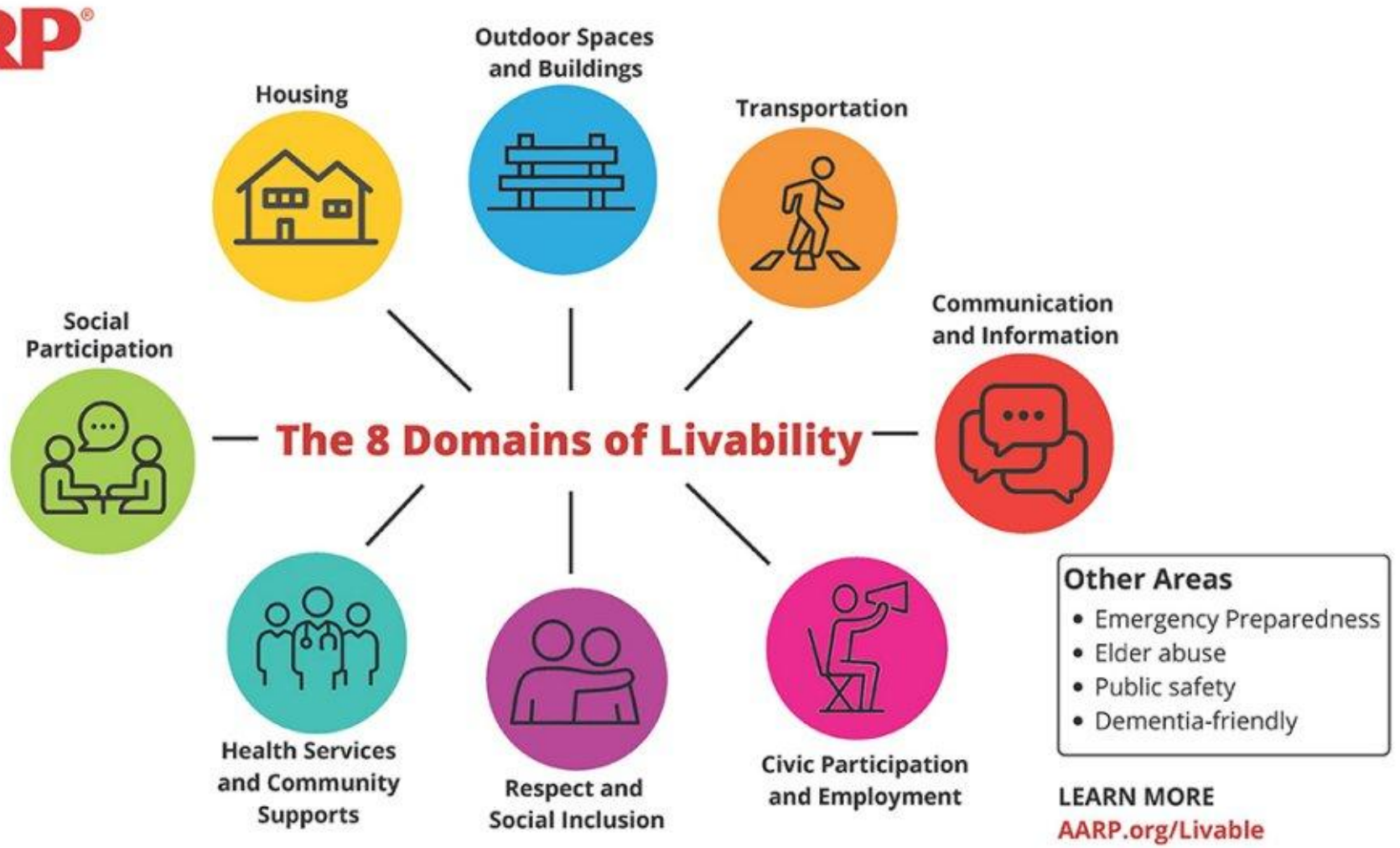
Livable Communities
Great Places for All Ages

8 Domains of Livability



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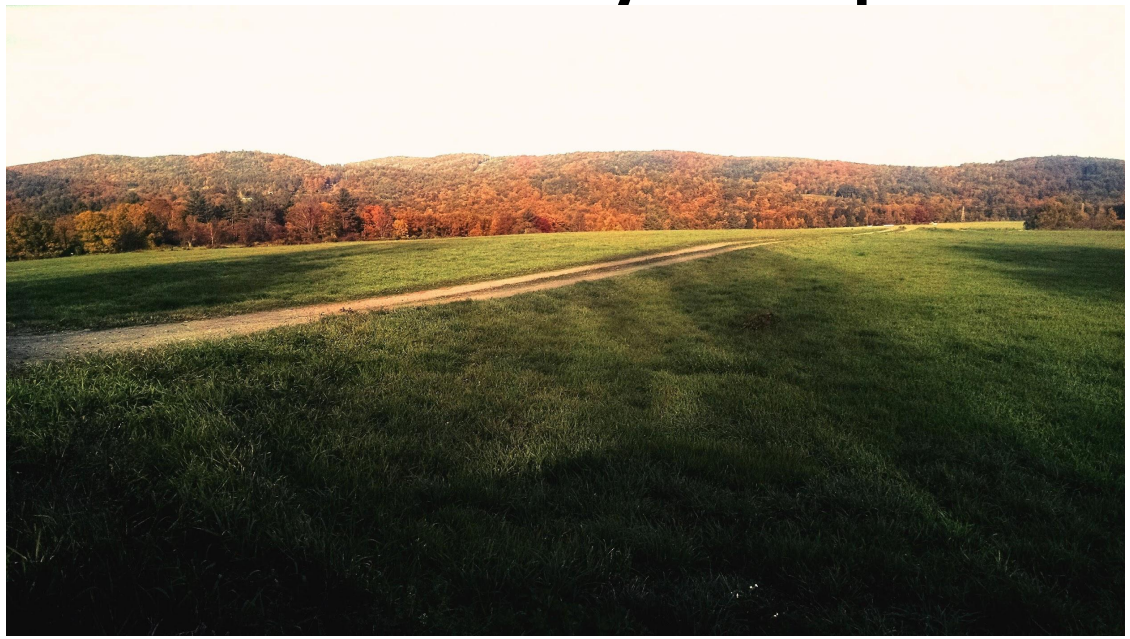
Mass In Motion

- Statewide movement that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play
- Mass In Motion Franklin County's grant is designed to complement LifePath's ongoing Age-Friendly project
- Changes community conditions by looking at long-term solutions to address root causes of problems
- Leading with race explicitly but not exclusively

Age- and Dementia- Friendly Franklin County Needs Survey Responses



Throughout slides:

Region wide info is given first,

Montague-specific info is listed second in red

Demographics of Survey Respondents

- 72% female, 25% male, 2% prefer not to say (66% female, 22% male)
- 25% live alone (45% live alone, 34% w/spouse or partner)
- 72% between ages of 60 and 79 (57% of respondents in Montague are between ages of 60 and 79, 21% 80 and up, 15% are 50-59 or caregiver)

Built Environment:

Housing, Public Buildings and Outdoor Spaces, and Transportation

Housing

- 47% (44%) of respondents own their own home
- 67% (61%) of respondents have lived in their current town for over 15 years (60% (53%) in the same home)
- 90% (83%) reported that it was important for them to stay in their town as they age, and 88% (84%) in their home.
- 33% (36%) reported good or excellent access to affordable housing options for people with their income level
- Motivations for changing housing in the future:
  - cost 52% (45%)
  - need for different type of housing 43% (41%)
  - need for better access to transportation 27% (23%)
  - cost of living in the area 26% region wide (19%)
  - need for better healthcare services 19% (17%)
  - need to be closer to family, social opportunities 29% (29%)
- Maintenance: respondents reported generally good access to home repair services (58%, 51%) and lawn care (53%, 51%), a quarter regionally report it to be unavailable

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:

- 77% (69%) respondents report good access to public buildings for their current needs
- 42% (26%) either don't have access or don't know if they have access to outdoor spaces that are accessible to them and have adequate benches
- 69% (55%) of residents reported need for better lit and accessible streets and roads
- 61% (68%) of respondents report good traffic signs and pedestrian crossings – 38% (31%) report them to be poor or they don't know
- 81% (80%) of respondents report always feeling safe in their home and community

"Both local little grocery stores have steps to enter. No handicap access."

Transportation

- Need for more access to transportation was the #1 issue mentioned in open responses
- 29% (23%) of older adults identified a potential need to change housing to get better access to transportation
- 90% (75%) drive themselves
- 23% (25%) have others drive them
- 20% (25%) walk or bike
- 2% (5%) report using special transit like Senior Center van
- 23% (30%) of respondents report there is no public transit in their area or it is too hard to get to 14% (30%)

"If someone is sick, they have to rely on a friend to take them to the doctor or to run an errand."

Social Environment:

Communication and Information, Social and Civic Participation, Health Services and Community Support, Social Activities

Health Services and Community Supports

Health Services:

- 13% (22%) of respondents receive caregiving support
- 4% (3%) are primary caregivers of children
- 10% (9%) are the primary caregiver for an older adult
- 21% (25%) of respondents report access to adequate caregiver support (respite care, support groups)
- 22% (22%) of respondents say access to home health care providers is poor or unavailable

"As I start to have more health issues I am concerned (including cognitive issues). If anything happened to my husband, I'd be lost."

Health Services and Community Supports

Health Services

- 34% (46%) of respondents say access to healthcare professionals is poor, unavailable, or they don't know
- 37% (17%) say health and social services are not conveniently located or they don't know
- 56% (50%) of respondents report access to wellness programs such as nutrition, pain management, etc.
- 79% (79%) of respondents report lack of access or don't know access to mental health supports

"Good healthcare choices are extremely hard to find, and very hard to get anyone within a reasonable distance of travel."

Health Services and Community Supports

Community Supports

Village or Neighbor to Neighbor support groups:

- 44% (48%) of respondents are interested in volunteering in a Village support group
- 31% (29%) are interested in receiving support from a Village support group

Information about Services

- 49% (51%) report good access to easy-to-find information about services

Health Services and Communication

Telehealth

- 72% (74%) of respondents have used telehealth at least once, 59% (66%) more than once
- Of those who used telehealth at all:
  - 70% (72%) had a good experience
  - 59% (54%) would prefer to see their provider in person
  - 90% (67%) found the technology was not confusing to use
  - 86% (49%) would choose to use it again, even after pandemic

"I would use telehealth again in the future, even after the pandemic."

Focus Group/Open Response Themes:

- Technical support needed to use telehealth services

Social Participation

- 34% (45%) of older adults live alone, 52% (34%) live with a partner or spouse, and 10% (15%) live with family or friends.
- 77% (74%) of respondents interact with someone outside of their household several times per week or more
- 8% (6%) interact with someone outside of their household less than twice per month
- 83% (80%) sometimes or often feel well supported
- 20% (23%) do not have or are unsure if they have someone they can call for help anytime of day or night
- Sense of community belonging is an unmet need for older adults

"My biggest worry is that I'm alone and I don't see people every day. I'm going to die in that apartment alone by myself."

Communication and Information

- Top sources of information identified were family and friends 52% (53%), social media/internet 54% (52%), COA/Senior Center 52% (44%), newspaper 51% (64%), town newsletter 27% (18%)
- Computer use and Internet access: 89% (89%) have reliable internet at home; 92% (92%) have a computer, tablet or smart phone and 86% (89%) know how to use them; 74% (66%) use Zoom or similar video chat. 31% (30%) want to learn to use new technology better
- Assistance needed for seniors wanting to use digital communication
- Lack of outreach and information leads to further isolation

"Since I don't use a computer, printed listings of services available to elderly that I could reach by phone."

Civic Participation and Employment

- 56% (47%) of respondents felt they had good or excellent volunteering opportunities
- 66% (40%) felt they had good or excellent opportunity for civic engagement (such as serving on Montague board or committee)
- 69% (61%) had good or excellent access to information about Montague updates
- 83% (84%) were unaware of or thought remote engagement opportunities for homebound older people were poor
- 86% (96%) of respondents were unaware of or thought flexible employment opportunities for older people were poor
- 25% (27%) of respondents report financial insecurity as their biggest problem or worry about getting by each month
- 43% (35%) feel ok financially now but worry about the future

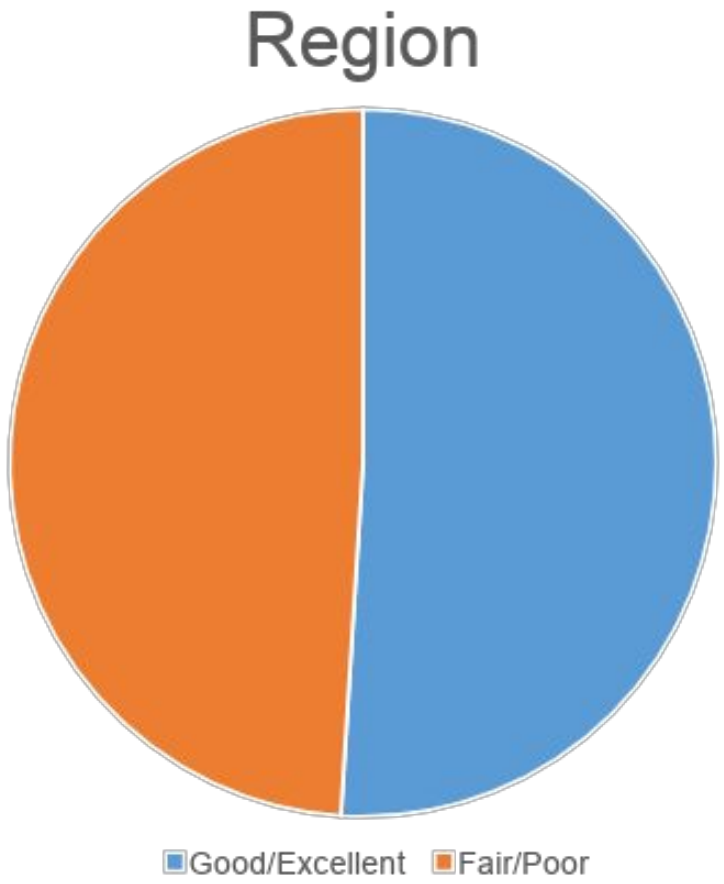
"We need flexibility in the ability to keep working as we age, along with appreciation and respect of the older employee."

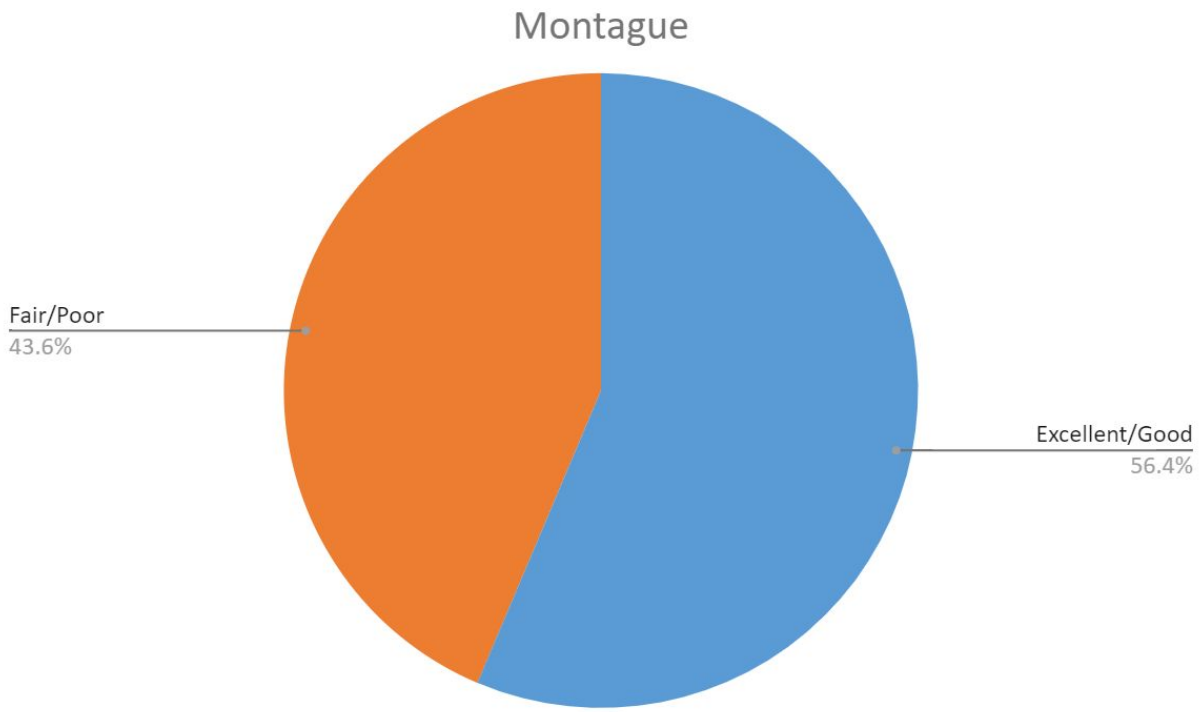
Respect and Social Inclusion

- 54% (52%) of respondents feel they have conveniently located social and cultural activities
- 59% (53%) felt they had access to events that were affordable to them
- 69% (72%) did not have access to or did not know about intergenerational events
- 66% (59%) felt they had social participation opportunities in their language
- 67% (69%) of respondents had good access to fitness and outdoor recreation opportunities

"I don't want to be separated out as I get older - I want to live with all kinds and ages of people."

How do you rate Montague as a place to age?





Timeline

Initial meeting with Montague governance & stakeholders – review process, data

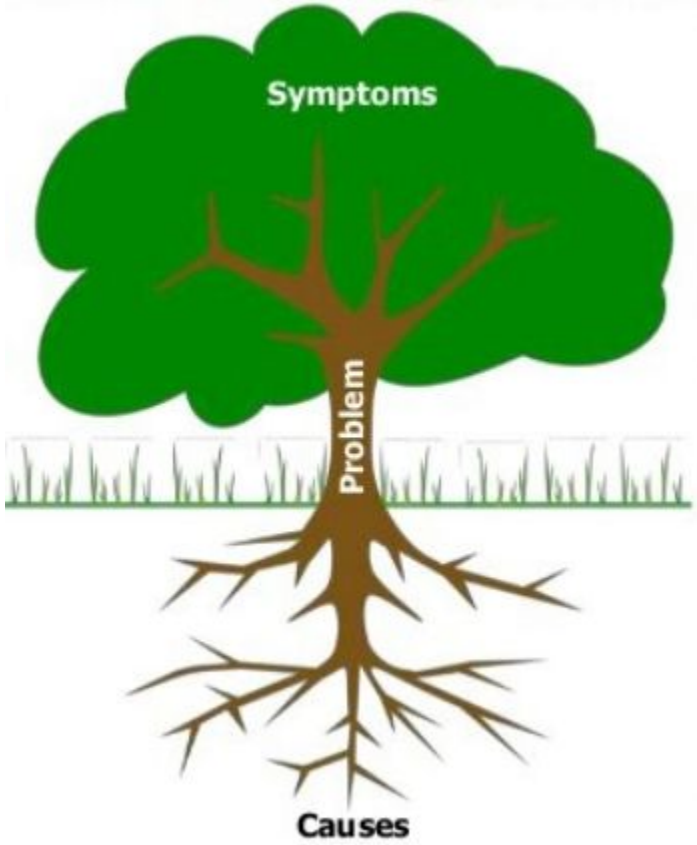
Convene work group to focus on local priorities

Health Equity Training

- Examine data,, answer additional questions about needs in Montague
- Identify priorities, examine root causes
- ID strategies to address priorities
- ID structure moving forward (funding, implementation)

Mass in Motion and Health Equity

- Structural inequities and racism play large role in determining health and opportunities for health and wellbeing
- “Leading with race” important even in a Montague without much diversity
- Use Racial Justice Reframing Questions
  - Who benefits?
  - Who is harmed?
  - Who influences?
  - Who decides?
  - What are the unintended consequences?



Practical Age- and Dementia-Friendly Examples

Neighbor support for small repairs through Village to Village networks or Senior Center

Ensure people know of the existing resources like FRTA Access

Install benches along popular town walking routes, formal or informal

Provide first responders with special training to better serve older adults living with dementia or other age-specific issues when in an emergency

Specifically include older adults in community-wide events held in accessible venues

Ensure that online town board meetings are always close captioned and that you have adequate microphones and audio boosters for in-person public meetings

Use your town newsletter to share information on age-specific resources and supports

Establish a buddy system in schools to encourage intergenerational interacting and appreciation.

Questions?

Contact Us

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