



Becoming
Age
Friendly
Berkshires
A
Municipal
Checklist

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A SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MUNICIPALITIES

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ENGAGEMENT &
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What is Age Friendly?

Age Friendly communities are *livable* - providing appropriate housing, good transportation, work and volunteer opportunities, plus a range of leisure activities for all residents - across their lifespans.

Age Friendly communities enable people to actively participate in civic and social life and treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age or ability. They are places that make it easy for older people to stay safe and connected to the people that are important to them. Age Friendly communities help people stay healthy and active -- even at the oldest ages and provide appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

This Checklist is intended to be used to “start the conversation” in your city or town, around becoming age-friendly. Chances are, you’re doing alot already! No need to start from scratch – just put on your age-friendly lenses, review the current municipal board, committee, outreach and employment policies and practices that you use right now. Then, identify ways to expand or adapt your Actions from the suggestions on the Checklist - or design some yourselves. Don’t forget to share best practices or what you’ve discovered, with other Berkshire County communities, via www.agefriendlyberkshires.com. For additional assistance with using the Checklists call Age Friendly Berkshires at 413-442-1521 x16.

Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan – Civic Engagement & Employment



An age friendly community enables and encourages active engagement of all residents in political and civic life. An age friendly community also provides multiple ways older people can continue to work, volunteer, and be engaged in community life and the political process during retirement. Older adults offer a diverse skill set, life experiences, and achievements that are applicable to volunteerism or a “second career.”

Many older adults have the time and desire to “give back” to their community. Connecting older adults to opportunities on municipal and nonprofit boards is beneficial to any community. In the work-a-day world, age discrimination is still a relevant issue. Educating employers on the benefits of recruiting older adults has proven to increase employment opportunities for those who want or need to keep working.

Civic Engagement Regional Goals:

- Increase opportunities for all residents to actively participate in civic affairs.
- Increase the number of older adults who participate as volunteers on municipal or community boards and commissions.
- Strengthen outreach efforts to potential volunteers, including organizing information about volunteer opportunities in one location.
- Facilitate the use of volunteers by county organizations by offering training/support to both organizations/managers and volunteers.

Employment Regional Goals:

- Increase employer awareness of the benefits of employing older adults.
- Recognize/encourage employers who offer part time, shared jobs, time-banking, work from home and flex-time arrangements, desired by older workers.
- Increase training opportunities for older adults to develop skills necessary to meet the needs of a dynamic workforce.
- Facilitate greater utilization of entrepreneurship and mentoring programs for older adults.
- Increase opportunities for financial planning to enable residents to budget, save and plan for retirement.

Civic Engagement & Employment Checklist

- Create or connect with training for municipal boards that want to use volunteers effectively
- Create or connect with volunteer leadership programs for residents interested in serving on non-profit/other boards
- Increase awareness among employers in town on the benefits of hiring older workers, including the use of flexible work schedules attractive to older or second-career workers, i.e. "flex time", part-time, work at home, job sharing, etc.
- Foster an age-friendly attitude in town, through education -reinforcing the fact that "age happens" to everyone and age discrimination is illegal in hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees
- Provide opportunities for training older residents on use of new technologies and "how to start a business."
- Develop intergenerational skill building/mentoring opportunities with COA's and community groups and local schools, i.e. youths teach elders about technology or other current studies, while elders teach youths about careers, life skills, etc..
- Increase knowledge around saving, budgets, retirement planning, managing credit/debt by developing a list of financial/estate planning resources and related

services and offering programs to residents.

- Increase the number of older adults running in local elections, volunteering, and serving on municipal boards/commissions by publicizing opportunities to serve
- Publicize information on requirements for running for municipal positions
- Provide training for new board/commission members, encourage boards to convene for continuing education and trainings, and develop a mentoring system
- Increase involvement in government and civic affairs by residents by creating Civic Issues forum or newsletter
- Increase public engagement with elected/appointed officials by increasing publicity/outreach for

public meetings/calls for comment

- Develop and support a web-based portal that shows all volunteer opportunities in Berkshire County and promote same, regionally
- Adapt municipal and private workplaces, including retail establishments, to meet the needs of the disabled or persons living with dementia
- Connect with training for municipal employees on recognizing dementia in residents, so they can respond appropriately
- Your own Civic Participation & Employment Actions: