



Becoming Age Friendly Berkshires: A Municipal Checklist

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A SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MUNICIPALITIES

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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 makes 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.

An Age Friendly Berkshire County is a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old!

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 your current programs or partnerships to see if they are fully inclusive or all residents. Identify ways to expand or adapt your Actions from the suggestions on the Checklist - or create 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.

RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION



An inclusive society treats all residents – regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, language proficiency, income – or other status - with respect, and encourages full participation in the life of the community.

“Age friendliness” is a natural outgrowth of that shift toward greater respect and inclusiveness for all. While respect for seniors is mostly healthy in our communities, negative preconceptions of aging still exist. Help facilitate a range of intergenerational and multi-cultural activities, to foster understanding and to enhance the sense of belonging here. Education about the aging process should begin early, to raise awareness and reduce negative attitudes. *After all, we are all aging all the time!*

Social inclusion can contribute to self-esteem and prevent isolation and loneliness. Age-friendly initiatives aim to increase inclusion in community and regional activities. Older people should always be consulted on decisions and programs directly affecting them.

RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION REGIONAL GOALS

- Create an inclusive community where all people can participate fully in social, civic, and economic life.
- Develop social programs to increase respect and inclusion between persons of different backgrounds, generations or abilities.
- Encourage and facilitate an inter-generational mentoring programs in Berkshire County.
- Ensure that programs developed for older adults are intergenerational when appropriate and that segregation is not practiced inadvertently.
- Explore innovative transportation models to allow older adults to continue to engage socially on weekends and evenings, in all weather.

Respect & Inclusion Checklist

- Create Community learning projects, e.g. community gardens; multi-cultural festivals or other forums/events, to encourage dialogue and understanding
- Develop a set of intergenerational activities with schools and older adults
- Encourage active and healthy aging educational programs, such as book study groups based on This Chair Rocks, etc..
- Create opportunities for older adults to learn from teens such as lessons as how to use their smartphone or other technology
- Set up Memory Cafés and Purple Tables – places where people living with dementia can meet and socialize comfortably
- Create an “age friendly business” recognition program in your community
- Hold annual conferences/workshop for organizations working with older adults to share and celebrate intergenerational successes
- Encourage municipalities in Berkshire County to pass Resolutions to be Age Friendly as part of an inclusive community compact
- Set up training for emergency response, senior care workers, municipal employees, etc. on the unique needs of older adults, including best practices for how to interact, as well as recognize/respond appropriately to cognitive impairment, etc.
- Your Municipal Respect & Social Inclusion Actions here: