

Multnomah County

AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN



Background

In October 2014, Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners unanimously adopted 10 “action areas” as the platform for designing the Multnomah County Age-Friendly Action Plan. There are already many activities, programs, and services offered in Multnomah County that will help us succeed in creating an age-friendly community and the intent of this document is not to inventory those already underway, but rather to outline the key actions that will be initiated, developed, or implemented in the next two (or three) years.

Goal

The goal of this Action Plan is to enhance Multnomah County’s age friendliness. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), an “age friendly” city:

- has structures and services that are accessible and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities,
- emphasizes enablement rather than disablement, and
- is friendly for people of all ages and abilities.

Participation in the AARP and WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities is a commitment to ongoing and iterative improvement towards building a community that is livable for people of all ages. We hope these physical, social, and service environment strategies will get us closer to that goal and inspire others in our region to seek innovations, allies, and resources for a livable community for all.

Steps to develop this plan

A review of the age-friendly literature was completed, and several focus groups were held with key Multnomah County staff to identify current age-friendly practices, programs, and services at the County and to uncover gaps and barriers. Using this information, an online survey tool was developed and distributed to all Multnomah County employees to help prioritize activities and discover new opportunities within the organization. In total, **1,640 respondents answered the survey** - approximately 35% of all budgeted employees.

Multnomah County employees completing the age-friendly survey **identified equity and social justice as a top priority**, just as stakeholders, leadership, and members of the community have consistently identified that equity, empowerment, and inclusion should be at the heart of any worthwhile plan. A survey of the literature and available reports from government entities and community-based organizations have highlighted several gaps in information necessary to complete a baseline assessment that is representative of the needs of the entire community. One of the first recommendations is to develop a more complete picture of Multnomah County’s diverse elder population by seeking a clearer understanding of the experiences of older adults who also identify in racial, ethnic, and cultural communities.

Adopted Action Areas

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

SERVICE ENVIRONMENT



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Physical Environment



As the **regional partnership** develops its plans to address housing and homeless issues, ensure these plans specifically and consistently address the needs of older adults and people with disabilities.



Develop an internal campaign to employees to recruit potential **new volunteer drivers** for community-based non-profit organizations that provide transportation to older adults and people with disabilities.



Re-establish a **Shared Housing program** in the Portland-Metro area based on national best practices, in partnership with Ecumenical Ministries, Elders in Action, and local governments.

The goal of the program will be to match homeowners or renters who have an available bedroom and who wish to remain living independently in the community in their own homes with low-income housing seekers.

The program will help matched pairs of home providers and home seekers utilizing a creative combination of rent and services in lieu of rent to make the available housing affordable and to support the home provider.



Aging, Disability, and Veterans Services Division will empower underrepresented communities to design and operate **adult care homes** that serve their communities.



Within Aging, Disability, and Veterans Services Division, conduct an internal community **transportation program analysis** to identify gaps in service, ensure equitable demand and use across the system, and to develop and better coordinate resources.

Service Environment



Bridge the gap between physical and behavioral health systems and community-based organizations through collaboration and **better coordination of services**.



Apply **equity and empowerment lens** to current policies or procedures used in the provision of translated printed materials to ensure equitable access to programs, services, and information across the ADVSD Community Services System.



Increase awareness of **library services** and programs for older adults from diverse communities by seeking input in the rebranding process, in order to reach 50+ population.



Incorporate **Age-Friendly Certification recommendations** developed by Elders in Action at all 19 Multnomah County libraries. These recommendations will include provisions for accessibility beyond minimum ADA requirements, a new signage plan, and training for library staff.



Provide equitable access to **improve health outcomes**. Look at issues of access, identify the most challenging barriers, align to current efforts, and apply an aging lens to barriers in access. Some areas to consider - healthy food, services, systems, information, prevention programs, management of dementia, physical and social environments for people of all abilities and income levels.



Support the newly-combined Multnomah County-sponsored "What Are Old People For" and "Aging Well" events into **one larger event in fall 2016**, reaching hundreds of older adults with information about community services.



Continue to implement the **regional marketing plan** to promote the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Helpline (www.adrcoforegon.org)



Amplify the aging lens: Educate and sensitize health systems, providers, and communities about age-related health issues.

Social Environment



Multnomah County Elections department will conduct education and outreach with long-term facilities and provide **increased home-based Voter Assistance (VAT)** for older adults and people with disabilities.



Determine and then **address the impact of age bias and discrimination** on Multnomah County employees by fully acknowledging that age discrimination -- for both older and younger workers -- is a form of inequity.



Complete a focused inquiry into the needs of older adults who also identify in **racial, ethnic, and cultural communities**.

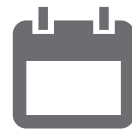


Continue the countywide and department-specific **Workforce Development and Succession Planning (WDSP)** work of knowledge management transfers, including:

- the ongoing adoption of the Knowledge-Management Tool (KMT)
- researching and implementing Job Rotation Programs
- implementing a WDSP Leadership Competency
- creating phased retirement/transition programs
- supporting the many facets of Retirement Readiness (social, spiritual, and psychological along with financial readiness)
- utilizing recent retirees as both support for current staff nearing retirement and as a resource for learning what current systems did, and didn't, work well for them.



Under the leadership of the Vital Aging Network employee resource group -- in partnership with County Human Resources and the Office of Diversity & Equity -- explore ways to **increase volunteer involvement** of older adults within Multnomah County departments.



Proclaim May as Older Americans Month and, in partnership with community-based organizations that serve older adults, develop a slate of activities designed to raise the appreciate for and inclusion of older adults in Multnomah County.

Additional Steps



Work collaboratively to revise this plan, as necessary, before submission to the AARP and WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities for final approval to ensure the plan addresses the needs of our diverse community to the greatest extent possible.



Ensure active and meaningful involvement by at least one Multnomah County staff member in each of the active Age-Friendly Action Area subcommittees and representation by Multnomah County staff on the Portland and Multnomah County Age-Friendly Advisory Council.



In collaboration with the Portland and Multnomah County Age-Friendly Advisory Council, **determine and adopt a reliable and realistic set of indicators** to measure progress towards becoming an Age-Friendly Community.

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