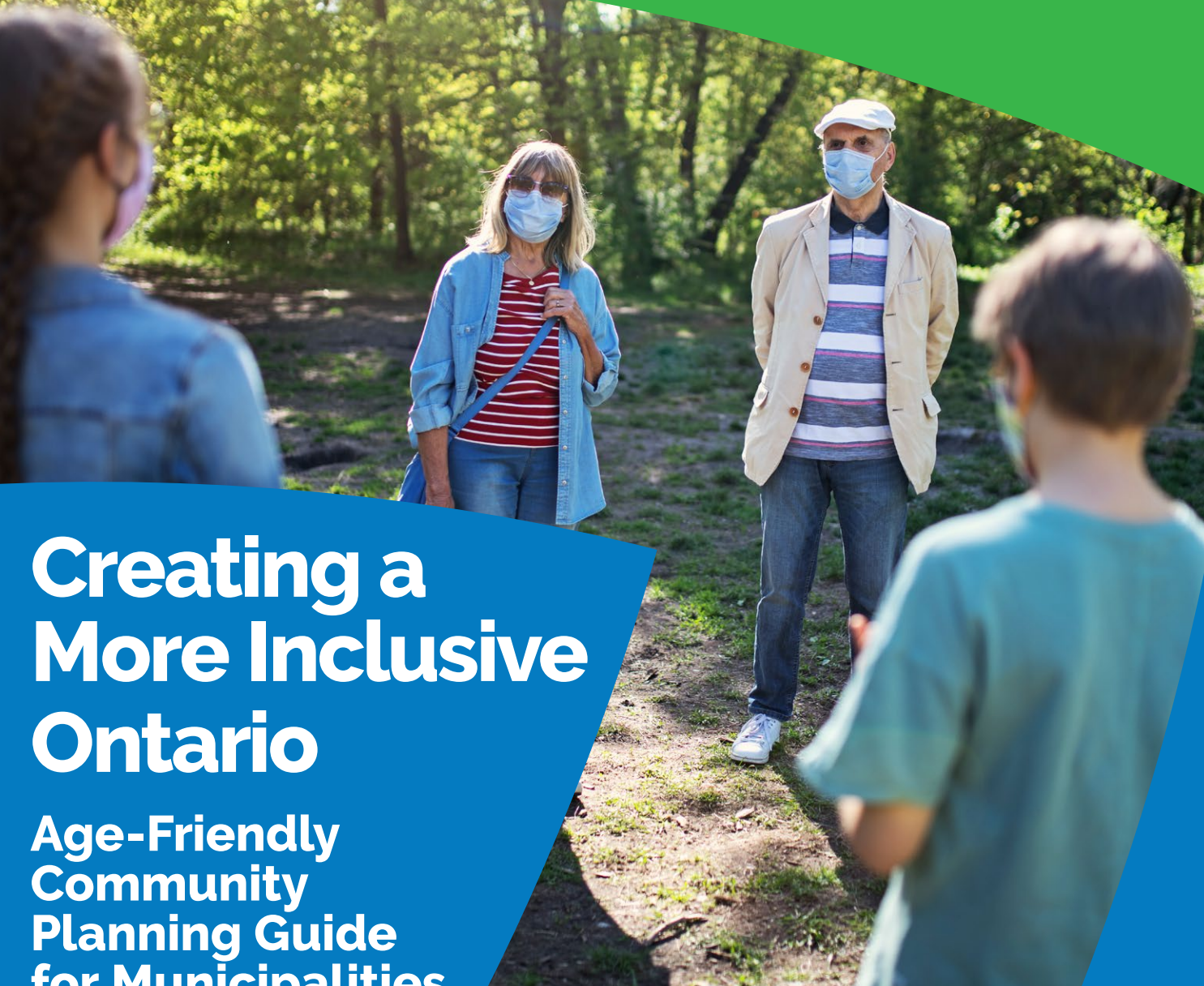


A photograph showing a group of people in a wooded area. In the center, a woman with blonde hair wearing a blue face mask, a red and white striped shirt, and a light blue denim jacket stands next to a man wearing a white cap, a blue face mask, a striped polo shirt, and a tan jacket. They are both looking towards the camera. In the foreground, the backs of two other people's heads are visible, one on the left wearing a pink mask and one on the right wearing a light blue shirt. The background is filled with green trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

Creating a More Inclusive Ontario

**Age-Friendly
Community
Planning Guide
for Municipalities
and Community
Organizations**



The [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-guide-municipalities-community-organizations-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-guide-municipalities-community-organizations-en-2021-01-01.pdf) is supported by two companion documents:

- [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf).
- [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf).

These are Government of Ontario documents produced by the Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program with funding from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

The [Age-Friendly Community Remote Events Planning Resource](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) is a guide to planning and delivering virtual events as a safe, effective and low-cost way to bring your project team and stakeholders together while COVID-19 remains active in Ontario.

All URLs provided in this document were accurate and live prior to publication.

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Important Considerations During the COVID-19 Outbreak

This guide is intended to provide municipalities and organizations with a detailed approach to Age-Friendly Community planning. Many of the strategies contained in the guide recommend community consultation, such as town meetings and planning discussions with local leaders, stakeholders and members of the public.

However, it is important to note that this kind of in-person activity may not be appropriate while COVID-19 remains active in Ontario.

All planning, implementation and evaluation activities and actions must follow local public health advice to prevent and stop the spread of COVID-19.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- holding virtual meetings and events
- maintaining physical distance of 2 metres or 6 feet
- wearing masks
- handwashing
- staying at home when feeling unwell
- following public health guidelines to limit participants at indoor and outdoor events and meetings.

Read the [Remote Events Planning Resource](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) for information and tips on hosting safe and accessible virtual meetings.

[Find resources to prevent the spread of COVID-19](https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace) (https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace).

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Executive Summary

About Age-Friendly Communities

This guide is intended for municipalities, community organizations and others working to develop and support Age-Friendly Communities (AFCs) in Ontario.

Age-Friendly Communities can help create more accessible environments for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

AFCs respond to both the opportunities and challenges of an aging population by creating physical and social environments that support independent and active living and enable older adults and people with disabilities to continue contributing to all aspects of community life. In AFCs, community leaders and residents work together to ensure that local policies, programs and services are inclusive and support the social and physical environments that enable Ontarians to live safe, active and meaningful lives.

AFCs align with the government's [Advancing Accessibility in Ontario framework](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario>) which aims to make the province more inclusive and accessible for everyone by focusing on four key areas:

- breaking down barriers in the built environment
- government leading by example
- increasing participation in the economy for people with disabilities and
- improving understanding and awareness about accessibility

AFCs help create more accessible environments for people of all ages and abilities across diverse communities in our province.

Age-Friendly Community Domains

The World Health Organization identified eight **domains of community life** that overlap and intersect to affect an individual's personal well-being and their independent and active living in physical and social environments. These eight domains are the basis for the steps outlined in this guide and are summarized below.

Physical Environment

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible, it encourages participation in outdoor activities and engagement with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities, including older adults with age-related limitations and/or disabilities.

Transportation

The condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks, affect personal mobility. Access to reliable, affordable public transit becomes increasingly important when driving becomes stressful or challenging, or when driving is no longer available as an option.

Housing

The availability of a range of appropriate, affordable, accessible and supportive housing options that incorporate flexibility through adaptive features, style and location choices, are essential for AFCs.

Social Environment

Social Participation

Social participation involves the level of interaction that older adults and people with disabilities have with other members of their community and the extent that the community itself makes this interaction and inclusion possible.

Respect and Social Inclusion

Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect and recognizing the role that older adults and people with disabilities play in our society, are critical factors for establishing an inclusive and age-friendly community.

Civic Participation and Employment

Civic engagement includes the desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting or working on committees. The ability to continue working or find new employment provides economic security for older adults, as well as people of all ages and abilities. This includes having access to accessible environments, including accessible workplaces.

Personal well-being

Communication and Information

AFCs provide information about community events or important services that is both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults and people with disabilities. An AFC recognizes the diversity of its population and promotes initiatives to reach as many people as possible.

Community Support and Health Services

Access to and awareness of community support services and mental and physical health programs contribute to quality of life and age-friendliness.

In This Guide

This planning guide combines emerging research with what Ontario communities have learned from their Age-Friendly Community (AFC) initiatives. It offers a widely used and comprehensive approach to planning, implementing and evaluating community programs that are intended to foster self-determination, inclusiveness and accountability.

This guide provides information about, and resources for, each of the interconnected steps in the process which form the main sections of the guide:

Step 1: Define Local Principles

Step 2: Assess Need

Step 3: Develop Action Plan

Step 4: Implement and Evaluate

The guide also has a section on how to **Maintain Momentum and Sustain Success**, with a table summarizing the factors that successful AFC initiatives in Ontario have identified as contributing to sustainability.

Becoming an Age-Friendly Community is an iterative and ongoing process that complements and fits into existing planning and development work in municipalities.

The revised guide emphasizes the importance of promoting sustainability for AFCs and includes new items such as:

- **Getting to Outcomes® (GTO)** implementation framework.
- **sustainability planning framework.**

- **community tips** from members of local AFCs who have had experience with the steps in the process (offered throughout the guide).
- **case studies** showing what communities have done to improve age-friendliness across the eight domains. Each case describes the initiative, program partners, funding, challenges, impact and plans for sustainability.

A list of resources, navigation guide and glossary of key terms are also included.

Supporting documents

The following documents are referenced throughout the guide and are offered to support your AFC development processes.

[Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf>): Ontario is a province rich in diverse history and culture and has many unique rural and small urban communities, ethno-cultural immigrant and Indigenous communities that all have aging populations embedded within them. This resource offers detailed information about these populations and factors to consider when engaging them in your work to create inclusive and accessible age-friendly communities.

[Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf>): This toolkit includes tools and templates to support your work throughout the process to create

an inclusive and accessible Age-Friendly Community. When the guide references a tool or template from this document, the word 'Toolkit' will appear in parentheses.

Step 1: Define Local Principles

In this step, you will learn how to create a planning structure around a local initiative and determine which AFC domains are most relevant to your community.

Defining local AFC principles is fundamental to grassroots community development and is a task any dedicated group of individuals can complete. This section highlights approaches that communities have used to begin their age-friendly planning.

You will learn about the process to:

- **form a steering committee** to provide leadership to the local AFC initiative by deliberating, making decisions, providing strategic direction, advocating for the cause and ensuring accountability.
- **build your team** to gather people from various backgrounds, professional disciplines and experiences who are willing to help create and promote a vision for your AFC initiatives.
- **define roles and responsibilities**, consider a Terms of Reference and governance structure so that members of your team have clear roles and responsibilities.
- **create infrastructure and consider funding** since each community is different, some AFCs seek grants or municipal funds early for planning and

community consultation, while others seek funding later to support implementation. Regardless, it is important to consider funding early.

- **create guiding principles** to act as a moral compass and foundation to help steer your decisions and ensure commitment to the initiative over time.
- **create an Age-Friendly Community profile**, which is a snapshot of your community's current age-friendly status.
- **discuss goals** using the information from your AFC vision, steering committee and community profile.

Step 2: Assess Needs

In this step, you will learn how to collect more detailed information about the age-friendly priorities in your community and identify your community's person-environment fit for older adults. This includes a consultation phase to gather evidence from a complete range of community stakeholders, particularly older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, community organizations and service providers. This section provides detailed information to help you engage stakeholders through a combination of consultation methods such as: community-wide needs assessment (survey), key informant interviews, focus groups and community meetings.

You will learn about the process to:

- **leverage your assets** that already exist within the community to accelerate and strengthen your work. If your local municipality is leading or supporting your

AFC movement, your efforts will benefit greatly from the experience of municipal staff or councilors. Successful strategies that communities have used include:

- collaborating with a university or college
 - getting advice and technical assistance from professionals in a relevant field
 - accessing the experience and expertise of other AFC committees
 - submitting a grant application for funding to support a needs assessment
- **carry out a Community-wide Needs Assessment (survey)** designed for your unique geographic, social and demographic circumstances, with questions addressing local realities. This includes creating a list of questions and administering a survey, using a variety of methods.
 - **collect information** using multiple methods (for example, **interview local stakeholders, conduct focus groups and host community meetings**) to ensure you are reaching a representative sample of the older adults and key stakeholders in your community.
 - **update your Age-Friendly Community Profile** developed during Step 1 after you have conducted consultations within your community.

Step 3: Develop an Action Plan

In this step, you will learn how to select specific actions that address the key gaps in your community's person-environment

fit and develop an age-friendly Action Plan that includes short- and long-term strategies to enhance older adults' quality of life and typically has:

- a community profile
- a description of the consultation process
- an overview of the current state
- a definition of the future state (the Action Plan)

You will learn about the process to:

- **select priorities** that will be the focus of your Action Plan, and for which you will further refine your initial goals and objectives. The Developing Priorities Worksheet found in the [Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf>) can help you organize your findings and clarify priorities.
- **refine goals and select objectives** that determine what will change, for whom, by how much and by when. Aim to make your objectives Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T).
- **identify strategies (actions) to address gaps** in order to develop a coherent set of changes, interventions and/or programs that address some or all of the eight AFC domains in response to local needs and assets.
- **identify leads**, including those your steering committee has developed, as well as key stakeholders, and other partners who can be at your disposal to share their experience and connections.
- **assess the fit between proposed actions and community needs and capacities** before moving ahead to assess community preparedness and anticipated barriers.
- **identify timelines and resource allocation** to assess whether your steering committee and partners have the capacity, time and resources to implement the proposed actions in your community. Key considerations include human resources, partnerships, finances and readiness.
- **create a Program Logic Model (PLM)** that is a road map for how your community's vision to become more age-friendly and accessible will be achieved. This will also support communicating your AFC vision and Action Plan. A PLM is a living document of the best possible guess, or hypothesis, of how your Action Plan is intended to work.
- **draft Action Plan** using the eight domains to structure it. This will help ensure that a comprehensive set of strategies is developed with continuity to the AFC process.
- **present AFC Action Plan to municipal council**, since having your municipal council officially adopt your Action Plan will increase the likelihood that key strategies will receive continued attention from the community.

Step 4: Implement and Evaluate

In this step, you will learn how to begin implementation, identify primary users, determine the purpose of your evaluation, plan for both process and outcome evaluation activities and improve your existing AFC Action Plan.

You will learn about the process to:

- **capitalize on quick wins** to give you early successes, build the case and garner support for larger scale projects.
- **leverage funding opportunities.** This may come from local sources (e.g., municipality, community partners, local businesses), or provincially/federally (e.g., government grants, other grants such as Ontario Trillium Foundation).
- **adjust governance structure**, if you find that the original governance structure of your group no longer makes sense.
- **seek out academic partnerships** through opportunities to engage academic partners (researchers, students) at this point in your process to support implementation of a specific action, or garner support for further evaluation activities.
- **identify primary users and target audiences.** Identify the specific people, group(s) and/or organization(s) who will use the results of evaluation activities, and who have the capacity to make changes to the initiative and its programs, services or projects.
- **define the purposes of evaluation**, through ongoing dialogue with primary users and stakeholders.
- **monitor implementation activities.** Once implementation is underway, monitoring and evaluation are needed to understand how well the activities in the Action Plan are implemented.
- **conduct process evaluation** to help your community see if your age-friendly activities are achieving the goals and objectives they were originally designed to accomplish.
- **choose outcome evaluation questions** to measure the effects of the program in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is intended to achieve.
- **choose indicators** based on the key outcome questions to be addressed during the evaluation. A good indicator is specific and measurable. Choose at least one indicator for each outcome; having more than one indicator for an outcome will provide more information on which to draw conclusions about the effects of your AFC initiative.
- **choose an evaluation design** that will help you measure how well your AFC initiative achieved its goals.
- **perform quality improvement** to improve your AFC Action Plan implementation in an ongoing way, by using the data from its process and outcome evaluations.
- **report back to stakeholders** on progress and success to help with future age-friendly decision-making, generate new collaborative opportunities and add to the credibility and accountability of your initiative.

Conclusion

This planning guide combines emerging research with what Ontario communities have learned from their Age-Friendly Community initiatives.

It offers a widely used and comprehensive approach to planning, implementing and evaluating community health programs that is intended to foster inclusiveness, self-determination and accountability.

We hope that you find the processes, tools and resources in this guide helpful in fulfilling the goals you have for your community.

By working together, sharing best practices and learning from success, we can support the development of Age-Friendly Communities in Ontario that are sustainable, inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Background

Origins of the Age-Friendly Community Concept

Improvements in health status and longer life expectancy have contributed to rapid growth in the number and proportion of older adults in our generation. As a result, this trend has led to unprecedented global shifts in population structure.¹ Although population growth in Canada is predicted to decline over this century, the number and proportion of older people are expected to continue to rise, with consequent declines in old-age dependency ratios.² Aging populations are expected to present ongoing significant challenges to, and require innovative solutions from communities and health care, social, political, and fiscal systems.

Starting from a definition of healthy aging as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age”, the World Health Organization (WHO) set out a broad public health agenda to:

- a) align health systems with the needs of older persons;
- b) develop systems of long-term-care, and;
- c) create physical and social environments that are age-friendly.³

Recognizing the profound impact of large populations of older people on communities and community infrastructures, the WHO initiated the Global Age-Friendly Cities Project in 2005 to promote policies, services, settings and structures that enable older adults to actively age-in-place.⁴

The WHO identified eight domains of community life that overlap and interact to directly affect older adults that are the following: aspects of the physical environment (outdoor spaces and public buildings, housing, and transportation); social environment (social participation, respect and social inclusion, and civic participation and employment); as well as dimensions of personal well-being (communication and information, and community support and health services) (Table 1). These eight dimensions align closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC's) Determinants of Health Framework, supporting a good fit between age-friendly communities (AFCs) and a public health approach to aging.

Table 1:

WHO Age-Friendly Domains	
Physical Environment	
Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings	When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible, it encourages outdoor activities or engagement with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities, including older adults with age-related limitations and/or disabilities.
Transportation	The condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks affect personal mobility. Access to reliable, affordable public transit becomes increasingly important when driving becomes stressful or challenging, or when the privilege of driving is no longer available as an option.
Housing	The availability of a range of appropriate, affordable and supportive housing options that incorporate flexibility through adaptive features and offer a choice of styles are essential for an AFC.
Social Environment	
Social Participation	Social participation involves the level of interaction that older adults have with other members of their community and the extent that the community itself makes this interaction and inclusion possible.
Respect and Social Inclusion	Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect and recognizing the role that older adults play in our society, are critical factors for establishing an inclusive and age-friendly community.
Civic Participation and Employment	Civic engagement includes older adults' desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond their day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting or working on committees. The ability of an older adult to remain employed or find new employment provides economic security. This includes having access to accessible environments including accessible workplaces.

Table 1: Continued

WHO Age-Friendly Domains	
Personal Well-Being	
Communication and Information	Age-friendly communities provide information about community events or important services that are both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults and persons with disabilities who are aging.
Community Support and Health Services	Access to and awareness of services and mental and physical health programs contribute to quality of life and age-friendliness.

History of AFCs in Ontario

Prior to 2013, Ontario made several incremental AFC efforts, including the use of policy tools, funding, technical support, and engagement of researchers to prepare an Ontario-specific planning guide and creation of a passive website repository of AFC materials. By 2013, 36 AFC initiatives had been started in Ontario.⁵ Between 2013 and 2018, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) facilitated the launch of four new linked strategic investments:

1. **Finding the Right Fit: Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide** (2013). This provincial planning guide provided a common framework and resources to communities and planners for the development, implementation and evaluation of AFCs. The provincial planning guide outlined an adaptable, community-level process in four steps:
 - (1) defining local principles;
 - (2) conducting a custom needs assessment;
 - (3) developing an action plan, and;
 - (4) implementing and evaluating.

2. **Ontario Age-Friendly Community Planning Grants** (2015 – 2017). In 2015, the ministry awarded 56 communities with AFC Planning Grants. Grants provided up to \$25,000 for municipalities with populations fewer than 20,000 and up to \$50,000 for those with over 100,000 residents. The 56 funded AFCs included 46 new initiatives and 10 pre-existing ones, spanning a wide range of geographies, population densities, and municipal governance structures, with commensurate variations in local needs, gaps, and priorities.
3. **Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program** (2015 – present). The Government of Ontario also funded, through the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, the AFC Outreach Program. The AFC Outreach Program is managed by the Centre for Studies in Aging and Health in partnership with Queen's University and the University of Waterloo. [The AFC Outreach Program](https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities) (<https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities>) uses a

knowledge translation and exchange approach to strengthen and accelerate AFCs by raising awareness about age-friendly communities, increasing connectivity within and between communities, and helping to strengthen capacity at a local level. It works with more than 80 AFC initiatives (in 2018, 18.9% of Ontario's 444 municipalities), four regional networks of age-friendly communities, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, non-governmental organizations and academic researchers.

4. **Ontario AFC Recognition Program (2018)** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/honours-and-awards-community#section-0>). Forty communities received an award from the province recognizing their commitment and leadership in becoming age-friendly.

Communities that provide the services, social environments and physical environments to be age-friendly reap similar benefits for all residents, irrespective of age. Accessible spaces in the built environment that accommodate those who are older or have disabilities, also help others who encounter functional obstacles in their daily lives, such as parents with infants and strollers and people with chronic health ailments. Table 2 outlines the various community benefits of AFCs and can be used to help 'build the case' when communicating with diverse AFC stakeholders.

The Benefits of Age-Friendly Communities

Age-friendly communities (AFCs) leverage the strengths of older adults by creating physical and social environments in which they are active, valued, and supported members of society. By increasing opportunities for older adults to experience competence, autonomy and relatedness, AFCs enhance their quality of life. Some of the reported benefits for older adults include: reduced isolation and improved participation, increased voluntarism, improved mental health and feelings of self-worth, increased physical activity and reduced risk of injury (falls), improved accessibility and awareness of community and health services.⁶⁻¹⁰

Table 2:

Benefits for the Community of Age-Friendly Communities
Economic Benefits
Strong Consumers – Older adults generally have more assets and fewer debts than other age groups. They have potentially enormous economic clout as consumers.
Tourism Revenue – Older adults bring tourism dollars into the economy.
Strengthened Work Force – Many older adults work, from which they generate income for themselves and their community. They are also a potential source of mentorship to younger new employees.
Economic Growth – Older adults often are more likely to start new businesses than younger adults, helping to grow the local economy. ¹¹
Retention for Economic Development – Attracting or retaining older adults who might otherwise leave a community can be an important economic development strategy.
Social Capital Benefits
Volunteer Base – AFCs reduce barriers to volunteering and enable older adults to continue serving the community through volunteering and civic engagement.
More Donations – Canadians between the ages of 65 and 74 made donations averaging \$715 in 2013, and those aged 75 and over made donations averaging \$726, compared to \$513 for all Canadians. ¹²
Caregiving – Many older residents support their extended family as caregivers to younger generations. This support strengthens social cohesion and allows younger family members to gain independence and join the local economy.
Vibrant, Intergenerational Communities – AFCs are inherently diverse. When people at different life stages live side by side, collaboration between generations leads to a stronger, more vibrant community.
Strengthened Community Connections – Strong ties to neighbours and community activities are linked to better physical and mental health in later stages of life. Opportunities for meaningful relationships and social roles support the independence and self-reliance of older people. ¹³
Opportunities Related to Housing
Greater Housing Options – Creation of affordable and accessible housing can have positive economic and fiscal impacts for both public and private sectors, by increasing demand and creative options for alternative housing arrangements.

Table 2: *Continued*

Benefits for the Community of Age-Friendly Communities

Delay of Health Expenditures – AFCs offer a continuum and greater flexibility of housing options and supportive services, allowing for aging in one's present home or community, thereby reducing the need for moves, and preventing or postponing costly public and private expenditures for long-term institutional care.

Opportunities Related to Physical Infrastructure

Accessible Communities for All – AFCs create physical and more inclusive environments that work for everyone.

Connected Neighbourhoods – AFCs have a range of accessible transportation options, facilitating mobility and connected neighbourhoods that save residents time and money and improve quality of life.

Cost Savings – Investing in age-friendly housing and environments can lead to public as well as private cost savings by enabling aging in place and avoidance of long-term care.

Health Benefits

Increased Healthy Behaviours – AFCs facilitate healthy behaviours of older adults through their design and infrastructure. Neighbourhoods that are "walkable" are associated with higher physical activity across the age spectrum.¹³

Increased Inclusion – Age-friendly environments reduce social isolation and improve health and community engagement and inclusion.

Targeted Health Benefits – AFC principles support the reduction in falls, dementia and depression within communities.

Using This Guide

This revised planning guide combines emerging research with what Ontario communities have learned from their AFC initiatives. It offers a widely used comprehensive approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating community health programs that is intended to foster self-determination and accountability.

Some communities are already well along the AFC path, while others are just beginning. You can use this guide as a step-by-step reference for the AFC process, or as a directory for quick reference to tools and resources that are relevant to your community's immediate AFC planning purposes.

Table 4 at the end of this section can help you determine where to start in the Guide, depending on the stage/progress level of your AFC initiative.

The AFC Process

This guide provides information about and resources for each of the interconnected steps in the AFC process:

Step 1: Define Local Principles

Step 2: Assess Need

Step 3: Develop Action Plan

Step 4: Implement and Evaluate

Becoming an AFC is a cyclical and ongoing process that complements and fits with ongoing or existing planning and development work underway in communities. After implementing and evaluating community projects in the fourth step, communities often recognize the need to revisit their

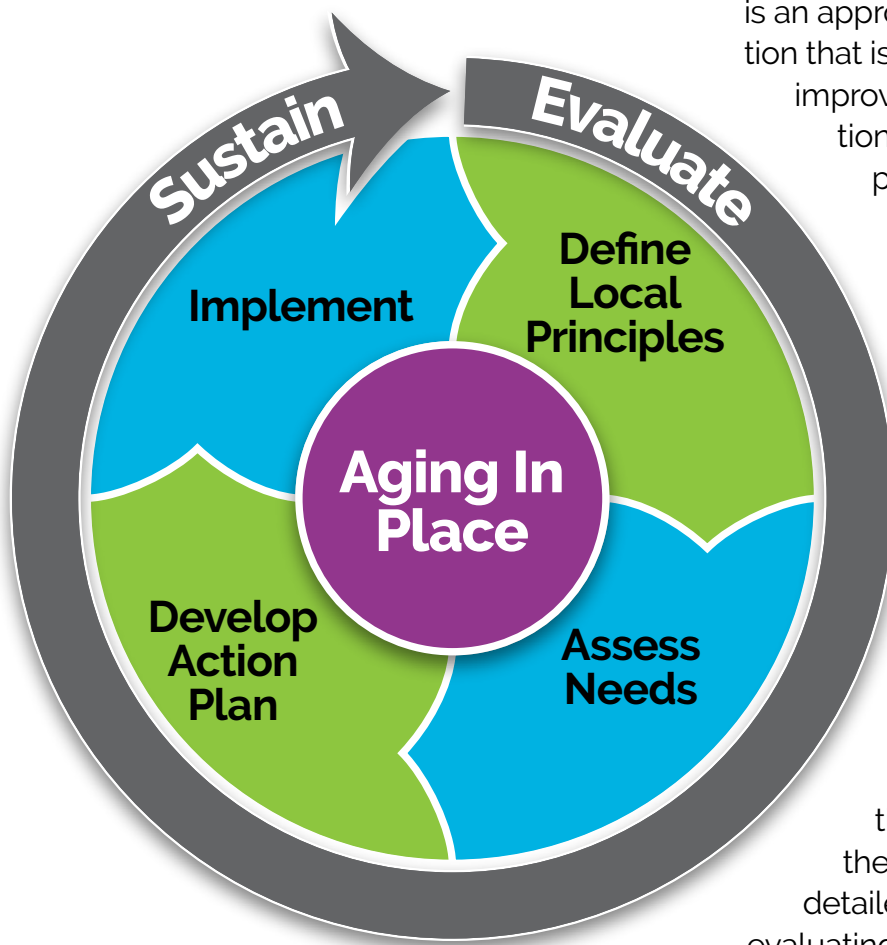
original needs assessment and determine if their community's goals and values have changed or if there are other areas or projects that could further strengthen their community.

It is important to consider and **flag the issue of sustainability early**, in order to maintain momentum, sustain important achievements and activities, and to continue responding to the evolving needs of your community (see section below for more information on Sustainability).

It is also important to acknowledge that evaluation activities do not start only after implementation is underway. **Evaluation should be an integral and ongoing activity** throughout all four steps of the AFC planning process in order to continually inform your community's needs assessment, as well as support the planning and implementation of your AFC strategy.

The need for ongoing attention to evaluation and sustainability is reflected within the AFC planning cycle.

Figure 1: The AFC Process



for implementation. The GTO® framework is an approach to community collaboration that is grounded in accountability and improvement through self-determination. GTO® has been widely used to promote self-direction and quality improvement in community-led health improvement programs of all kinds for more than thirty years.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

The GTO® approach integrates evaluative thinking and activities into all steps of the AFC Process to ensure that the Action Plan is responsive to local population needs, builds on local assets and capacities, and to help make the case for sustainability of the initiative's efforts and activities. Using the GTO tools will help produce a detailed plan for implementing and evaluating your AFC Action Plan.

The word 'accountability' can be intimidating because it often carries the implication of a punitive response if something goes wrong. For collaborative community initiatives like AFCs, accountability is demonstrating responsibility to its stakeholders: residents – especially older people, partners, municipality, and funders, among others. GTO® defines accountability in a way that can be applied to any initiative or program:

Accountability is the systematic and comprehensive inclusion of critical elements of program planning, implementation, and evaluation to achieve results.^{18(p.1)}

What's New in the Revised Guide

Getting to Outcomes: Governance, Vision and Accountability

This Guide aims to help your local AFC group develop and implement your AFC Action Plan so that it achieves its intended results and addresses the need for ongoing attention to evaluation and sustainability throughout the AFC planning cycle.

The AFC Process in this Guide uses the Getting to Outcomes® (GTO) framework

The revised guide builds on the 10 GTO[®] program accountability questions, to which two questions on governance and vision have been added as a starting point to ensure that the planning group is representative of the community and guided by a larger community vision for collaboration. Thus, governance, vision and accountability for your community's AFC initiative can be enacted by addressing the following **12 AFC Planning Questions** within this guide and related tools for collaborative thinking:

1. Are the right voices at the table? **(Governance)**
2. What is the vision for our work together? **(Vision)**

GTO[®] questions

3. What are the underlying needs and assets in the community? **(Needs/Resources)**
4. What are the short-term and long-term goals, target populations and objectives? **(Goals)**
5. What changes, interventions or programs should be used to reach your AFC goals and objectives? **(Best Practices)**
6. What actions need to be taken so that the selected strategies "fit" the community context? **(Fit)**
7. What organizational capacities, partnerships and resources are needed to implement the Action Plan? **(Capacities)**
8. How will the Action Plan be implemented? **(Plan)**
9. How will implementation of the Action Plan be monitored? **(Process Evaluation)**

10. How well did the Action Plan perform? **(Outcome Evaluation)**
11. How can the quality of the Action Plan be improved over time? **(Quality Improvement)**
12. If the Action Plan is successful, how will it be sustained and refreshed? **(Sustain).**

You can use the AFC planning questions, processes and tools at any step of your AFC's work. Although the questions are arranged in a specific order, they do not have to be taken up in that order. If planning and implementation of your AFC Action Plan are already well underway, you do not have to go back to the beginning and the first question. Rather, start with the question(s) that is (are) the most relevant to what you are doing now and/or will do next. By using the 12 questions to tie together the key elements of your AFC work, your planning group is demonstrating results-based accountability for the valuable work that it is doing to improve the lives of older adults in your community.

Community Cases and Tips

Acknowledging, sharing and learning from the successes of AFC initiatives in Ontario are key to continued success. As examples, this guide also includes:

- **Cases** – Nine case studies explore initiatives that communities have implemented to improve their age-friendliness across the eight WHO domains. Each case describes the initiative that was implemented, as well as program partners, funding, challenges, impact and plans for sustainability.

- **Community Tips** – Throughout each step, you will see process tips and lessons learned from AFC initiatives to shed light on common questions that arise during the planning and implementation processes.

sustaining AFC initiatives. Consider these factors throughout your AFC planning process – a checklist is provided at the end of the guide under the section Maintain Momentum and Sustain Success.

Sustainability

Generally, progressing through the four steps of the AFC Process takes at least 3-4 years. This can be a challenge for groups without supportive infrastructure, processes and resources to sustain and maintain their efforts. To promote sustainability, it is necessary to:

- Establish ongoing and productive partnerships between a network of individuals, groups, organizations and planners committed to planning and incorporating age-friendly principles within a community;
- Encourage existing organizations to incorporate age-friendly activities into their core missions;
- Produce evaluation and document findings on the benefits of age-friendly communities; and
- Secure long-term sources of both non-financial and financial support.

Unfortunately, many grants are relatively small, time-limited, and do not cover the necessary time span for AFC development. Also, planning groups may lack needed resources, dedicated staff and supports. Despite these limitations, many communities in Ontario have been able to keep AFC initiatives moving forward. These communities have identified eight factors listed in Table 3 as key to

Table 3:

Factors that Support Sustainability
1. Funding
• Seek flexible funding from multi-sources • Leverage existing funding from aligned initiatives • Use a business case that speaks to aspects that are value-added for groups such as businesses, municipality, health care etc.
2. Leadership, governance and infrastructure
• Connect age-friendly planning and activities to the priorities of key partners (e.g. municipalities, public health, etc.) • Include champions who represent various stakeholder groups and geographic areas within the community • Dedicate a staff person/portfolio • Coordinate and communicate efforts between upper and lower tier municipalities (if applicable) and between municipal departments • Establish a key sponsor/lead that can commit resources • Establish/strengthen municipal-community partnership
3. Strategic alignment
• Align with municipal, regional, provincial and federal priorities • Leverage opportunities such as elections, budget setting timelines etc.
4. Communication strategies
• Share locally relevant messages and stories • Use a broad media strategy to connect with a wide audience • Consider whether you will need to provide materials and communications in other languages, including identifying if your community is in a designated francophone area • Establish bi-directional communication channels • Avoid applying large urban city communication solutions to rural communities

Table 3: *Continued*

Factors that Support Sustainability

5. Long-term strategies

- Embed AFC lens/language in important local and provincial priorities (e.g. accessibility and transportation plans) and established organizations and programs
- Consider alignment with local accessibility priorities and removing barriers to access
- Consider succession planning throughout the 4 AFC steps

6. Inclusivity of diverse populations

- Be aware of diverse needs of the community
- Engage all groups meaningfully and appropriately
- Provide cultural sensitivity training

7. Involving academics

- Use students and interested academic partners as a resource
- Access academic skills and experience in grant writing, evaluation, survey techniques, indicator development, data analysis, etc.

8. Establish a critical mass

- Engage older adults
- Network with stakeholders
- Participate in regional and provincial networks to share knowledge and experiences
- Ensure broad cross-sector partnerships from public, voluntary and private sectors
- Ensure planning and implementation is informed by a bottom-up versus top-down approach
- Apply an intergenerational focus.

Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit and other resources

Throughout the Guide, you will see references to the following to support your AFC development processes:

- **Toolkit** –The [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf) includes tools and templates to support your work throughout the AFC Process.
- **Online Resource List** (https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) – is a dynamic list of resources to provide additional context, promising practices and background information to inform your work.
- **Ontario AFC Outreach Program** (https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities) – The Outreach Program was established to provide assistance to Ontario communities throughout the AFC planning process. The program aims to increase awareness about AFCs connectivity within and between AFCs, and capacity for local planning, implementation and evaluation.

Diverse Populations in Ontario Addendum

As one of Canada's founding provinces, Ontario enjoys a rich and diverse history and culture. This includes a considerable number of unique rural and small urban communities, immigrant and Indigenous communities with aging populations. In the [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf), (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf) you will find more detailed information about these populations and factors to consider when engaging them in your AFC work.

Small urban and rural communities may require unique strategies to counteract limitations in funding, demographic composition, transportation and distances involved, gaps in infrastructure, differing cultures, reduced access to planning and policy expertise and fewer potential partnerships.¹⁹ There may be limited access to skill sets in project management, capital planning, community development and change management, which can force a reliance on costly external consultants, many of whom may have little or no direct experience with AFC planning and cannot work with communities to sustain initiatives in the long term.

In 2016, immigrants represented 29.1% of Ontario's population, the highest share the province has seen in almost a century.²⁰ Most recent immigrants are non-European, with over half of the recent older adult immigrants (age 55 or older) coming from China or South Asia.²⁰ Less than 50% of older immigrants identify themselves as having fluency in either English or French, despite

often having a higher education level than their Canadian peers.^{21,22} Poverty may also be an issue: chronic low-income rates were highest among immigrant older adults at 30% compared to 2% for the Canadian-born older adults.²³ In addition, there is evidence that traditional filial piety relationships are declining as younger immigrants adopt Western cultural attitudes.²⁴ The data suggests that recent older immigrants are more vulnerable in terms of their financial, living, and health supports. Older immigrants, especially women, when compared with Canadian-born women, are more vulnerable to poor health, more financially disadvantaged, and face a greater number of barriers when accessing the services needed to maintain and/or promote their health.²⁵ With the increasing diversity in the province, these population trends and issues contribute to a heightened awareness about the needs of the older immigrant populations in planning Ontario's communities. When embarking on AFC development, visit the Statistics Canada demographic profile for your community to understand the specific ethno-cultural composition of your area.

The demographic and policy significance of AFC planning is no less significant for Indigenous communities than it is for the larger Canadian population, and may be more urgent. The number of people over the age of 65 that identified as Indigenous more than doubled between 2006 and 2016.²⁶ Older Indigenous people living in Ontario merit specific recognition given the intergenerational impacts of residential schools and related policies, which have contributed to a substantive and unique set of socio-economic, geographic,

mental health and chronic disease challenges and needs. AFC principles, resources and interventions should be adapted in ways that promote thoughtful and culturally appropriate engagement, collaboration and inclusion.

The [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf>) describes the unique context for each of the above-mentioned groups, as well as provides recommendations and considerations for customization and adaptation of the AFC planning process when working with them.

Navigating the Guide

Table 4:

Navigating the Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations		
Is this your community?	Are you considering these questions?	Start here
• Little discussion about the needs of older adults' has happened in the general community. • The idea of becoming an AFC has never arisen at municipal councils. • Focus groups have not been held to discuss the implications of being an 'older' community. • No community-wide survey of older adults' needs has been conducted. • More people in your community are being diagnosed with disabilities, or more seniors/older adults being diagnosed with disabilities as result of the aging process? • No steering committee exists to carry the AFC movement.	1. Are the right voices at the table? (Governance) 2. What is the vision for our work together? (Vision)	Step 1: Define Local Principles

Table 4: *Continued*

Navigating the Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations		
Is this your community?	Are you considering these questions?	Start here
- The idea of becoming an AFC is part of discussions in the community and at municipal councils. - Several focus groups have been held to discuss the implications of being an 'older' community. - A community-wide assessment of older adults' needs is the logical next step, but questions about what data to collect and how to collect it still exist. - Knowing the range of existing information gathering tools and what AFC-related areas they focus on would make the path forward clearer.	3. What are the underlying needs and assets in the community? (Needs/resources)	Step 2: Assess Need
- Several focus groups have been held to discuss the implications of being an 'older' community. - A community-wide assessment of older adults' needs has been conducted and the results have been compiled into a council report. - An advisory group exists to lead the AFC process. - The municipal councils report will serve as the basis for an age-friendly Action Plan, but questions about creating, implementing and monitoring such a plan still exist.	4. What are the short-term and long-term goals, target populations, and objectives? (Goals) 5. What changes, interventions or programs should be used to reach your AFC goals and objectives? (Best Practice) 6. What actions need to be taken so that the selected strategies "fit" the community context? (Fit) 7. What organizational capacities, partnerships and resources are needed to implement the Action Plan? (Capacities)	Step 3: Develop Action Plan

Table 4: *Continued*

Navigating the Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations		
Is this your community?	Are you considering these questions?	Start here
- A community age-friendly Action Plan exists, but questions remain about how to begin implementation. - Your community is unsure about how to evaluate your age-friendly work.	8. How will the Action Plan be implemented? (Plan) 9. How will the implementation of the Action Plan be monitored? (Process Evaluation) 10. How well did the Action Plan perform? (Outcome evaluation) 11. How can the quality of the Action Plan be improved over time? (Quality Improvement)	Step 4: Implement and Evaluate
Your community wants to maintain and sustain the momentum and success of your AFC initiative but it is unclear about how to do so.	12. If the Action Plan is successful, how will it be sustained and refreshed? (Sustain)	Maintain Momentum and Sustain Success

Key Terms

Accessibility – A general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by everyone. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

Action Plan – A sequence of steps that must be taken, or activities that must be performed well, for a strategy to succeed. Action plans usually answer the following questions: **What** will be done, **when**, by **who** and what **resources** are needed?

Assets – Local programs, services, positive experiences, and qualities that support active and independent aging at home, even as function may decline. It is important to build on and leverage the array of available assets (organization, community or individual skills) to improve the quality of life for older adults in the community.

Community – A group of people who live in the same place or who have a particular characteristic in common (e.g. interests, goals or identity). A community can be identified at different levels – by municipal borders, more broadly by region, or more finely (e.g. by village or neighbourhood).

Goals – Broad statements that describe the long-term impacts of what your AFC initiative aims to accomplish in the future.

Goals provide the overall direction for planning and implementing your strategies in your AFC Action Plan.

Need – A need is a problem that “should be attended to or resolved” – it is a difference or gap between how things are now and how they should be for a target group in context, i.e. for older adults in your community.²⁷

Needs Assessment – A systematic process to identify discrepancies/gaps between how older people are in your community now and how they should be, to prioritize these discrepancies/gaps, and to set criteria for decision making about feasible solutions and resource allocation.

Objectives – The specific and measurable changes anticipated for older adults in your municipality as a result of your AFC Action Plan. In other words, objectives are the desired AFC outcomes.

Outcome/Effectiveness Evaluation – Measures the effects of the program in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is intended to achieve.²⁸

Outcome Indicators – Specific, observable and measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively) characteristic or change that represents progress towards a goal.²⁹

Person-Environment Fit – The fit between what people need to age well and the resources available in the community to support them in doing so.

Process Evaluation – Assesses whether program activities have been implemented as intended.

Program Logic Model (PLM) – A picture that shows how the resources and activities in your AFC Action Plan will lead to the expected outcomes.

Quality Improvement – Is a planned, formal, systematic and ongoing process intended to improve outcomes.³⁰ Quality improvement aims to use process measure of the quality of services delivered (where applicable) and outcome indicators of the results of the process of service delivery (where applicable) on an ongoing basis to find ways to improve.

Stakeholder – Any individual, group, organization, department, structure or network with a vested interest. Stakeholders stand to gain or lose if conditions stay the same or if conditions change.

Steering Committee – A committee that decides on the priorities or order of business of an organization/cause and manages the general course of its operations. Within the field of age-friendly communities, this term is used broadly to include whoever the local 'group' is that is leading the age-friendly work.

Target population(s) – Who your AFC Action Plan will be directed to, based on the needs and assets in your community and how they are prioritized. The target population might be broad (e.g. "all older adults in our municipality"), or it might be very specific (e.g. "all older adults who live in the 'X' neighbourhood"). There are likely to be different target populations for different parts of your AFC Action Plan.



STEP 1:

**Define Local
Principles**



AFC Planning Questions	Key Tasks
1. Are the right voices at the table? (Governance)	• Form a steering committee • Build your team to be inclusive of different population groups • Define roles and responsibilities • Create infrastructure and consider funding
2. What is the vision for your work together? (Vision)	• Create guiding principles • Create an Age-Friendly Community profile • Discuss goals

In this step, you will learn how to create a planning structure around a local initiative and determine which AFC dimensions are most relevant to your community.

Defining local AFC principles is basic to grassroots community development and is a task any dedicated group of individuals can complete. This section highlights approaches that communities have used to begin their age-friendly planning.

Question 1: Are the right voices at the table?

Form a Steering Committee

The purpose of your Age-Friendly steering committee is to provide leadership to the local AFC initiative by deliberating, making decisions, providing strategic direction, advocating for the cause and ensuring accountability.

Community Tip:

"[You] need a named group (e.g. seniors council, public health unit, council, steering committee) to lead the work" – Northeastern Regional Network Participant

Having a named group will add credibility and legitimacy to your work. Having diverse stakeholders commit to working together expands the skill sets on your team, as well as your sphere of influence.

The AFC process views the community and its leaders as change agents. Communities – including both public and private stakeholders – are made up of active citizens with the potential to create change in their own domains and spheres of influence.

In the early stages of planning for an AFC, you require local champions from multiple sources who can build momentum, progressing towards more structured discussions (e.g., focus groups). Ultimately, the goal is to build collaboration among a group of local and diverse stake-

holders (municipal council and staff; business leaders; local committee members; social planning councils; university/college faculty organizations) to develop guiding principles, a vision and goals for your AFC movement.

Community Tip:

“Find municipal staff and politicians who can help champion the work” – Western Regional Network Participant

As you move through AFC development, it will be important to have municipal champions who can provide leadership necessary for change, particularly across the physical environment AFC domains. You will also likely be looking for Council endorsement of your Action Plan later in the process. Establish these relationships early and engage those municipal and political stakeholders who will be spokespeople and champions for your work.

Build Your Team

Gather people from various backgrounds, professional disciplines and experiences who are willing to help create and promote a vision for your AFC movement. Your team does not need to include an exhaustive list of everyone who might interact with or advocate for older adults in your community. Rather, the steering committee is an early gathering of people who are passionate about and interested in the inclusive and age-friendly concept. Members should have the time to contribute and make the committee a priority. Your steering committee should include representation from:

- Diverse older adults (e.g. persons with disabilities who are aging, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), francophone, older immigrant and 2SLGBTQI+ seniors)
- Community service providers
- Municipal staff
- Other key stakeholders .

Community Tip:

“Engage a range of external partners with a range of expertise” – Central Regional Network Participant

Consider not only organizational representation, but also the soft skills of those you are working with. Are there stakeholders who are strong facilitators, leaders, evaluators? Are there people who are well-connected in the community? Or people who have experience designing documents? It is not necessary to have all these skills – but it's good to think broadly about who to reach out to and what other skills they could bring to the table.

“Establish early support from the municipality and between tiers” – Eastern Regional Network Participant

These communication channels will be incredibly important to ensure key decision makers are involved and there is not a duplication of efforts.

Stakeholder analysis can be used to identify key stakeholders (primary and secondary) who have a vested interest in the issues pertaining to AFCs. Tools like the **Power Versus Interest Grid** (Toolkit) can support this process. Consider where your

stakeholders fall along each axis to better understand how to strategically engage and communicate with your partners.

Define Roles and Responsibilities

As the team grows, members should have clear roles and responsibilities. As a team, create a Terms of Reference (Toolkit) to make roles and responsibilities explicit. Consider including:

- Purpose
- Scope
- Decision-making process/authority
- Membership
- Meeting frequency/procedures
- A review date.

Your governance structure may change as your age-friendly work progresses – committee structures often shift once an AFC moves into implementation. The review date will help your committee check back in later to determine if the governance structure is still appropriate. Age-friendly steering committees in Ontario have a wide range of stewardship governance models. These include:

- Committee of Council
- Advisory committee
- Community-based steering committee
- Constellation collaborative (i.e. a central group stewards the movement and satellite groups work on particular issues or priorities).

Create Infrastructure and Consider Funding

Whatever shape your steering committee takes, it will require someone to act as a champion/chair/overall project leader to move the initiative forward and build capacity. This could be a volunteer, a dedicated staff person, or someone who has age-friendly activities included as part of their portfolio.

Community Tip:

**“You need a go-to person – someone who is dedicated to moving the work along, and not off the side of their desk”
– Western Regional Network Participant**

At some point, your group may require funding to move ahead. Each community is different – some AFCs seek grants or municipal funds early for planning and community consultation, while others seek funding later to support implementation. Regardless, it is important to consider funding early. Join related mailing lists to stay ‘in the know’ about funding opportunities so that you can respond quickly when a call for proposals is issued.

Question 2: What is the vision for your work together?

Create Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are like a moral compass that helps to steer your decisions. They act as a foundation for a unique age-friendly vision and ensure commitment to the initiative over time. Host a planning session with your steering committee members to establish your community's unique age-friendly vision and values to help develop overarching guiding principles for action. Guiding principles can include broad aspirational values and criteria, like:

- Respect and support for all citizens
- Access and inclusion for all
- Community engagement in decision making
- Livability
- Accountability.

Community Tip:

"Use common and consistent language in messaging"

"Need bottom-up, not just top-down planning for long-term sustainability"
– Western Regional Network Participants

Your guiding principles, the language you use and the approach you take needs to be driven by your unique context and what resonates in your community. This will help partners and citizens 'see themselves' in the work.

Create an Age-Friendly Community Profile

An age-friendly profile is a snapshot of your community's current age-friendly status. When seeking funds and partnerships, an accurate profile can prove invaluable to communicate the local strengths of your community, the need for AFC planning and the potential benefits of becoming more age-friendly. To create your profile, you will have to access a range of information sources. See Table 5 for types of information to include in your profile.

Unfortunately, accurate projections for some indicators may not be readily available for all communities (for example, living arrangements), may be impractical to create in others (for example, health) and could be expensive to obtain in many cases. Still, understanding the future demographics in your community is vital to creating a proactive plan. Projections should include age, gender, income and ethnicity distributions at 5-year, 10-year and 20-year horizons.

Table 5:

Types of Information to Include in a Community Profile	
Data	Sources
An overview of the current socio-demographic makeup and projections for future demographic conditions (for example, age, race, sex, gender, income, ethnicity, health status, and disability status)	Most municipal economic development departments will have a general community profile with demographic summaries and projections. Many will have more specialized data about specific topics like household travel patterns, recreation preferences and satisfaction with municipal services. To determine what specialized data may exist in your community, consider contacting individuals within key municipal divisions. A public health unit or social planning council in your community is also a great resource for accessing data. Many provincial, federal and non-government organizations also collect and house relevant data. Review your community's Census Profile from Statistics Canada for further information.
A review of existing local policies that support the goals of your AFC movement	Review local policy, strategic documents, existing planning and development plans and strategies to determine how you can draw on existing community projects to support your movement. Some examples to consider are: • Official Plan/Community Improvement/Secondary Plans • Strategic Plan • Growth Management Strategy • Sustainability Plan • Recreation and Culture Master Plan • Accessibility Plan • Transportation Master Plan • Pedestrian and Cycling Plan • Economic Development Strategy • Asset Management Plan

Table 5: *Continued*

Types of Information to Include in a Community Profile

Data	Sources
A list and description of key local services that promote older adults' quality of life	Review your local 211 website (https://211ontario.ca/) as well as the provincial Guide to Program and Services for Seniors (https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-programs-and-services-seniors) to build a list of local services for older adults. Talk to community partners to make sure you are not missing anything. Some communities take this information and create a print and/or online local information guide for older adults. The Designing an Information Guide for Older Adults (https://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Seniors-Guide-tips-FINAL.pdf) can help you with this.
A description of your AFC committee members' (and potential partners') key skills and strengths	Discuss this with your steering committee. Consider the skills that each member brings to the group (for example, connections to local decision-makers; experience facilitating focus groups; proposal-writing skills), as well as what skill sets the group might be missing.
Related local and provincial initiatives	Consider how age-friendly communities link to other initiatives and priorities within your community, as well as at a provincial level. Consider the alignment and intersection between age-friendly and accessibility principles (e.g. universal design), which aim to reduce barriers and facilitate inclusion. For example: • Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, municipalities with 10,000 or more residents must establish local Accessibility Advisory Committees. Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees (AACs) work with Municipal Councils to identify and eliminate barriers for people with disabilities within their communities. Given the shared goals between AACs and AFC, consider reaching out to your AAC. • Municipal Council priorities • Local public health unit priorities • Dementia-Friendly communities.

Discuss Goals

Using the information from your AFC vision, steering committee and community profile, your community can start to identify local AFC goals. At this point, it may be useful to see [AFC goals that other Ontario communities have identified](https://agefriendlyontario.ca/). (<https://agefriendlyontario.ca/>).



STEP 2:

Assess Needs



AFC Planning Questions	Key Tasks
3. What are the underlying needs and assets in the community? (Needs/resources)	• Leverage your assets • Carry out a community-wide needs assessment (survey) • Create a draft list of questions • Distribute the survey and collect data • Interview local stakeholders • Conduct focus groups • Host a community meeting • Update your Age-Friendly Community profile • Describe the consultation process • Describe the current state

COVID-19 Advisory:

In-person activity may not be appropriate in your community while COVID-19 remains active in Ontario. All planning, implementation and evaluation activities and actions must follow local public health advice to prevent and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Read the [Remote Events Planning Resource](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) for information and tips on hosting safe and accessible virtual meetings.

In this step, you will learn how to collect more detailed information about the age-friendly priorities in your community and identify your community's person-environment (p-e) fit for older adults.

At this point, you have probably collected some helpful information from existing sources. However, a key strategy to achieving meaningful, long-term change is to base your

Action Plan on detailed evidence collected systematically from a complete range of community stakeholders, particularly older adults, caregivers and service providers.

The consultation phase is an opportunity to collect information from the community that does not already exist. This section will help you consider how to engage stakeholders through a combination of consultation methods such as: community-wide needs assessment (survey), key informant interviews, focus groups, and community meetings. Each community must decide based on their specific needs and resources which methods are best for them. Table 6 describes the differences between the various methods which can help you decide which will best meet your needs and resources. There are numerous resources available on the [Online Resource List](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) (https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) to help you collect data using these methods and think about the level that you are engaging seniors.

Table 6:

Comparing Data Collection Methods				
	Interviews with Key Informants	Focus Groups	Community Meetings	Community Survey
What	In-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community.	Small group discussions led by a facilitator that explore the opinions and views of the participants.	Organized public gathering to engage community members and share input.	Online/Hard copy survey to be completed by individuals.
Why	Gather a deep understanding of the local experience. Further partnerships with people who can influence local policy, rally staff, and offer other valuable resources.	Inform your priority setting. Create rich discussion on age-friendly topics relevant to the community.	Inform your priority setting and generate excitement around AFC and connect stakeholders with similar interests and motivations. Reach a wider audience than focus groups.	Gather a broad understanding of the assets and gaps within the community.

Table 6: *Continued*

Comparing Data Collection Methods				
	Interviews with Key Informants	Focus Groups	Community Meetings	Community Survey
Who	The interviewer should have training in conducting interviews. Participants should be well-informed leaders within relevant stakeholder groups.	The focus group leaders should be trained facilitators. Range of participants: older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers, service providers, various ethnic and racial backgrounds and income levels, and local businesses.	The community meeting leaders should be trained facilitators. Range of participants: older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers, service providers, various ethnic and racial backgrounds and income levels, and local businesses.	Older adults and caregivers in the community; opportunity to connect to sub-populations such as socially isolated and marginalized groups.
How	Key question: What AFC dimension(s) are most significant in our community?	Key question: What AFC dimension(s) are most significant in our community?	Key question: What AFC dimension(s) are most significant in our community?	Key question: How age-friendly is our community and What AFC dimensions are most significant?
	Use a list of topics as a guide and ask open ended questions.	Present basic social, demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics of your community to guide the discussion.	Use technology such as Open Space to host large groups and allow people to participate from home.	Use online programs such as Survey Monkey to collect electronic survey responses. Collect hard copy surveys as well.

Question 3: What are the underlying needs and assets in the community?

Leverage Your Assets

Consider the potential skills and resources (programs, organizations and champions) that already exist within your community and might be willing and able to accelerate and strengthen your work. If your local municipality is leading or supporting your AFC movement, your efforts will benefit greatly from the experience of municipal staff or councillors. Other successful strategies that committees have used include:

1. Collaborating with a university or college. Faculty and students are often looking for ways to integrate their research with meaningful community initiatives, and most will have the skills and resources needed to facilitate a needs assessment.
2. Getting advice and technical assistance from professionals in a relevant field (e.g., community planners, professors or medical practitioners), from a community-based research organization, or the knowledge broker from the AFC Outreach Program.
3. Accessing the experience and expertise of other AFC committees that have already completed a needs assessment in their community. A shared commitment to the value of the AFC movement has been, and will continue to be, central to its success.
4. Submitting a grant application for funding to support a needs assessment.

The Assets and Capacities of our AFC Initiatives Worksheet (Toolkit) will help your group consider and build on your local strengths.

Carry out a Community-wide Needs Assessment (Survey)

Your community can and should create a custom needs assessment designed for your unique geographic, social and demographic circumstances, with questions addressing local realities. This will ensure that any new programs, strategies or initiatives directly address your community's current and unique needs.

Create a Draft List of Questions

To facilitate this task, you can select questions for your assessment from [a database of questions compiled from existing AFC and quality-of-life surveys](http://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-AFC-Instrument-Database.xlsx) (<http://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-AFC-Instrument-Database.xlsx>). This database provides easy and efficient access to a range of age-friendly and quality-of-life questions but does not prescribe what questions you should ask. It will save you the time of crafting questions from scratch and allow you to draw on the expertise that other communities and organizations offer through questions that have been developed and refined through research and/or practice.

In the database, the survey questions have been classified into the WHO's eight age-friendly domains, so you can quickly find questions related to the priorities you have identified. If you have identified specific priorities and issues in earlier phases of your AFC process, you may

want to focus on questions from those AFC domains. Some communities select questions across all 8 domains and choose ones that represent the local context and issues understood to-date.

Given enough time and (financial and human) resources, you may wish to structure your needs assessment so that it asks questions about both:

- **People:** what are the issues and needs of older adults?
- **Environment:** what assets and resources are available that could help them?

Assessing what a community needs to become age-friendly is about the fit between people and their community environment, or person-environment fit, and one approach to building a needs assessment is to pose questions and obtain information about both. For more on how to create person-environment pairs for your needs assessment survey, refer to the Toolkit.

Distribute the Survey and Collect Data

Once your survey is finalized, have it translated as needed into any additional languages for your community. You may also wish to pre-test your survey before sending it out to your community to check for problems. There are resources in the Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit to help with this. Once your survey is ready for distribution, many communities have used a combination of the following strategies to distribute the survey to a broad and diverse number of older adults:

- **Hard copy survey:** Have print copies of the survey available at places that older adults frequent in your community. In

addition, work with your community partners (e.g. local libraries, services like Meals on Wheels that reach isolated seniors) to help share and collect surveys. If you are hosting a community meeting, have print copies available at the meeting for participants to complete and make sure facilitators are available to provide assistance if needed. Note: When designing print copies of your survey, make sure the font is easy to read. [Age-Friendly Communication: Facts, Tips and Ideas](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf) (<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf>) is a great resource to help with this.

- **Online Survey:** Use an online service (e.g. Survey Monkey) to distribute and collect survey responses electronically. Many communities post the survey link on their municipal website and asked their partners to share the link out to their clients.
- **Telephone Survey:** Some communities have hired consultants to conduct a telephone survey.

Using multiple methods is a great way to ensure you are reaching a representative sample of the older adults and key stakeholders in your community. Remember, if you are using more than one of the above methods, make sure you plan time to have all hard copy or telephone survey responses transcribed electronically (into a spreadsheet or database table) so that all responses can be analyzed together.

Community Tip:

“Leverage language-specific social groups/festivals to engage local older adults” – Northwestern Regional Network Participant

Hosting focus groups/community meetings with existing groups or distributing surveys to group members will help broaden the reach and depth of your engagement.

Recognize that there is diversity among the target population including those who are isolated, those from diverse cultural groups, those with accessibility challenges, vision problems etc.” – Eastern Regional Network Participant

Work with community partners to help you reach all older adults in your community. For example, can meal delivery or home care workers take surveys in to social isolated seniors? Make sure perspectives from various sub-groups of older adults are integrated including but not limited to rural, Indigenous, newcomers, ethno-cultural, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), Francophones, LGBTQ, low-income, and other relevant diverse populations in your community.

Interview Local Stakeholders

Conducting key informant interviews with committed local service providers and business owners can illustrate the positive effects of becoming age-friendly, and help you understand what AFC dimension(s) are most significant in your community. Interviewing these stakeholders can also

provide insights and lead to further partnerships with people who can influence local policy, mobilize staff and offer other valuable resources. Find out which AFC dimensions stakeholders think are most important — their responses will help you prioritize your AFC actions. Use a list of questions as a guide but allow open-ended responses from stakeholders. The [Online Resource List](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide) (<https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide>) has several items that provide tips on conducting key informant interviews.

Conduct Focus Groups

Focus groups are small group discussions led by a facilitator that explore the opinions and views of the participants. The World Health Organization (WHO) held focus groups in 33 cities/towns as part of its participatory research and published the Vancouver Protocol, a guide for conducting AFC focus groups that provides the necessary prompts to collect the information needed on the AFC domains in your community (Toolkit). When discussing local issues, the WHO recommends first presenting some basic demographic, geographic, social and economic characteristics of your community – the information you collected from existing sources and interviews is a great start. Ideally, someone with facilitation experience should lead the focus groups, which should include a diverse range of stakeholders:

- Older adults (who live in the local region but also reflect those living rurally and near urban centers)
- Persons with disabilities who are aging, and/or older adults who acquire disabilities as they age.

- Caregivers
- Service providers
- People of various races, ethnic backgrounds and income levels
- Indigenous populations
- Francophones
- Local businesses

A key question to ask during your focus groups is which AFC domains are most important to your community. Read out or distribute a list of the 8 AFC dimensions and generate a discussion or conduct a vote based on it. You will need this later when you prioritize your AFC goals.

Host Community Meetings

Community meetings are another valuable way of collecting information. Although community meetings tend to produce less detailed information than focus groups, they typically reach a wider audience. They are also a great way to generate excitement and interest about your AFC initiative and to connect stakeholders with similar interests and motivations.

Ideally, a community meeting would include diverse participants such as older adults, persons with disabilities who are aging, community stakeholders, volunteers, politicians and municipal staff. Again, a key question to ask during your meeting is which AFC domains people think are most important.

Update your Age-Friendly Community Profile

After you have conducted consultations within your community, revisit the community profile developed during

Step 1. Update the profile to include any information about context and key messages that have emerged during the consultation process. This community profile will be included later as part of your Action Plan and will help describe what makes your community unique.

Describe the Consultation Process

Provide a summary of the procedure used to collect information from older adults and key stakeholders about the strengths and challenges within the community. This description will be later included in your Action Plan. Any other key developments that have occurred since your initiative started could be included here. Consider including:

- Key community partnerships and individual champions that carried the initiative;
- The processes you followed to conduct focus groups and the community-wide needs assessment, including the sampling approach that you used;
- An overview of the sample you obtained during focus groups and the needs assessment; and
- Key limitations to the methods that you used.

Describe the Current State

The current state of your community will include an overview of the current community environment, with a focus on describing the physical and social environments, and the programs and services that are essential to the daily lives of older adults. Draw on key findings from Steps

1 and 2 and consider organizing your information by the 8 AFC domains. Keep in mind that the current state includes what the community has already done to support the needs of older adults (**strengths/assets**), as well as what needs to be done in the future (**gaps**). This information will later be included in your AFC Action Plan.

Community Tip:

"Apply an age-friendly lens to common priorities and initiatives (e.g. dementia-friendly, fall prevention)"

– Northwestern Regional Network Participant

Consider as well how the needs of older adults are represented in organizational and municipal plans. This contributes towards long-term culture change within communities.



STEP 3:

Develop an Action Plan



AFC Planning Questions	Key Tasks
4. What are the short-term and long-term goals, target populations, and objectives? (Goals)	• Select priorities • Refine goals • Select objectives
5. What changes, interventions, or programs should be used to reach your AFC goals and objectives? (Best Practice)	• Identify strategies (actions) to address gaps • Identify leads
6. What actions need to be taken so that the selected strategies “fit” the community context and need? (Fit)	• Assess the Fit between Proposed Actions and Community Needs and Capacities
7. What organizational capacities, partnerships and resources are needed to implement the Action Plan? (Capacities)	• Identify timelines and resource allocation • Create program logic model • Draft Action Plan • Present AFC Action Plan to council

In this step, you will learn how to select specific actions that address the key gaps in your community's p-e fit and develop an age-friendly Action Plan that includes short and long-term strategies to enhance older adults' quality of life. The Action Plan should be a stand-alone document that can supplement existing policies that may be included in other local plans (e.g. City's official plan).

Broadly, AFC Action Plans include the following sections:

- Community profile (See Steps 1 and 2)
- Description of consultation process (See Step 2)
- Current State (See Step 2)
- Future State – The Action Plan

Question 4: What are the short-term and long-term goals, target populations and objectives?

Select Priorities

Once you have collected information via a combination of the methods outlined in Step 2, your AFC planning group can now select the priorities that will be the focus of your Action Plan, and for which you will further refine your initial goals and objectives. The Developing Priorities Worksheet (Toolkit) can help you organize your findings and clarify priorities. You may also want to consider hosting another community gathering and taking the needs assessment findings

back to the community. Local older adults, stakeholders and municipal partners can successfully help you interpret findings, and prioritize action based on “low-hanging fruit” (i.e. actions that are easy and quick to implement). See Kensington-Chinatown Case Study in [Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf>) for an example of this process.

Not all actions need to be completed immediately. When considering timelines for implementation of each action, some communities identify short- medium- and long-term goals; others identify specific years within which each action will be completed. These decisions require an understanding of the current priorities and capacities of the key partners, as well as the urgency and scope of each action. To support these conversations, consider having your steering committee and partners start to complete an impact-effort matrix (Toolkit). By plotting actions along the two dimensions of the matrix, this graph will help teams quickly filter out solutions which are not worth doing (fill in jobs/thankless tasks) and pick out solutions that get the biggest impact from the least effort (quick wins and major projects).

Refine Goals

You will have already had conversations with your steering committee about the goals of your AFC initiative. Ask yourselves:

- What are we trying to accomplish by making our community more age-friendly?
- How would we like conditions (i.e., needs and resources) to change?

- What results do we want to see?
- Do our original goals still make sense, given the current state of our community and findings from the needs assessment?

Select Objectives

For objectives to be useful, describe the changes you expect will happen as a direct result of your Action Plan. An objective should say what will change, for whom, by how much, and by when. There will probably be more than one objective for each goal and objectives should be ordered and logically linked to show how the goal will be achieved. When writing objectives, aim to make them S.M.A.R.T i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Consider the following:

- What do you expect the immediate changes to be for the target population(s) of older adults as a result of your AFC initiative?
- What changes can reasonably be expected?
- How would you be able to see whether the outcome(s) of the objective have been reached? For evaluation, what measure(s) would you need and can you use or access it (them)?
- There will probably be more than one objective for each goal.

Community Tip:

“Piggyback domains or actions on other focus areas as well as ongoing events”

– Eastern Regional Network Participant

You don't need to start over, nor do you need to do everything yourself. Pool together resources, establish partnerships and share information about programs, services and events already being led by other groups.

GTO® Tools in the Toolkit

- Developing Goals Worksheet
- Developing Objectives Worksheet

Question 5: What changes, interventions, or programs should be used to reach your AFC goals and objectives?

Identify Strategies (Actions) to Address Gaps

Now it is time to describe what your community will need to do to become more age-friendly (i.e. the plan). To make your community more age-friendly, your Action Plan will need a coherent set of changes, interventions and/or programs that address some or all of the eight AFC domains in response to local needs and assets. The key to creating a successful Action Plan is to link actions to the guiding principles and vision statement

you developed during Step 1, while also thinking ahead to the eventual implementation of the plan.

Look at existing programs and best practices to see whether they might be worth adopting or adapting, and/or whether you will have to design your own local innovations. You can look at communities near you and across the province to learn more about the range of possibilities. The Ontario AFC Outreach Program has an [online listing of AFC programs and initiatives for each AFC in Ontario](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) (<https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/>). In many cases, local Action Plans and other planning and evaluation documents are also available to download. You can also review [Ontario Interactive Maps](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-ontario-interactive-maps/) (<https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-ontario-interactive-maps/>) to see initiatives communities have tested specific to each of the 8 AFC domains. Often, these programs or initiatives can be replicated or adapted to meet your local needs and address gaps.

Community Tip:

“Leverage opportunities to link AFC with younger generations – this lends legitimacy to AFC planning” – Western Regional Network Participant

The goal of Age-Friendly Community development is not to create communities that meet the needs of one population, but rather to create communities that meet the needs of all. Reflect this in your Action Plan by exploring programs, services and initiatives that bring together generations.

Identify Leads

The most important resources at your disposal are the experience and connections your steering committee has developed, as well as key stakeholders and other partners.

Not all interventions have to be implemented by the AFC planning group; in fact, many actions (for example, improving access to transit for older adults, seniors and persons with disabilities etc.) require involving specific municipal departments, service providers and community organizations. Involving these stakeholders in developing the plan generates their commitment and puts the proposals of your Action Plan on a practical and feasible path. Your municipality could integrate elements of the Action Plan into other key municipal plans, such as official plans, secondary plans, accessible housing strategies, accessible transportation and transit master plans, urban design guidelines and street designs.

When determining who will be responsible for implementing various strategies in your plan, find out what person or group of persons 'personally care' about the issue of AFC. If you cannot identify such a person or group, you may need to look at different partnerships. Remember, in any strategic exercise, people (not organizations) are at the centre of change. Consider each action and what organization or person will be most appropriate to lead implementation. Some actions naturally align with existing or planned work of specific municipal departments or other community organizations. Conversely, some actions will require

new sub-committees or working groups to be developed to support implementation.

Involve stakeholders (community service providers, local members of the business community and other community leaders) in the action planning process. Rallying support in the community means your age-friendly resolutions will have more support when you place them before city/town council.

Question 6: What actions need to be taken so that the selected strategies “fit” the community context?

Assess the Fit between Proposed Actions and Community Needs and Capacities

Before moving ahead, it is important to pause and see how well your proposed actions fit the needs of your target population and community. Is the community ready for what the AFC Action Plan aims to accomplish? What barriers can be anticipated?

Survey for Review and Discussion of AFC Action Plan Fit within your Community (Toolkit) provides a template for discussion with your steering committee. Ask each member of your AFC planning group and stakeholders to answer the questionnaire on their own and then discuss as a group. See where there are either consistently low ratings or disagreements – what needs to be done to resolve differences?

Since you will be seeking official recognition from municipal or regional council, try to balance visionary solutions with a plan that is practical within the local socio-economic context. Only through collaboration, using creativity and insight, can you strike this balance.

Question 7: What skills, organizational capacities, partnerships, and resources will be needed to implement the Action Plan?

Identify Timelines and Resource Allocation

It is important to assess whether your steering committee and partners have the capacity, time and resources to implement the proposed actions to make the intervention work in your community. Consider:

- Human Resources – Does the action require the time or focus of a specific person or organization in your community? Does it require new staff to be hired?
- Partnerships – Do multiple stakeholders need to collaborate for the action to be successful?
- Finances – Does the action require additional funding for implementation? Is this funding available already? What is the estimated cost?
- Readiness – Does the action require a certain political climate or prioritization from stakeholders?

Consider the resources needed and capacity of partners when identifying timelines for each action. Revisit the Impact Versus Effort Matrix (Toolkit) developed for Question 4 and look for your community's "quick wins" – these are considered the 'low-hanging fruit' and are likely actions that can be acted on quickly and add maximum value to your community. Many AFC planning groups have found that those quick wins can be initiated even before the Action Plan is completed and help communicate progress and commitment to the broader community. Table 8 suggests language to use when indicating timelines for each action.

Table 8:

Communicating Timelines	
Time Frame for Actions	Timing of Action
In progress	Action on this item is already underway
Immediate/Short Term	Target of 1-2 years
Future/Long-Term	Target of 3-5 years
Future – Contingent	Action is contingent on additional resources (i.e. funding, human, partnerships)

Community Tip:

“Align domains and actions with emerging trends, priorities and opportunistic funding pots” – Northwestern Regional Network Participant

“Seek small grants [early] for pilots and start-up projects” – Western Regional Network Participant

- 4. Shows how your AFC Action Plan has been designed and implemented.
- 5. Provides a foundation for program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- 6. Creates dialogue and shared understanding among stakeholders.³¹

A PLM Template is included in the Toolkit. In Table 9, you can see how a program logic model will link activities and outcomes to the problems and needs they are addressing.

Create a Program Logic Model

A big step toward communicating your AFC vision and Action Plan is to create a Program Logic Model (PLM) that is a road map for how your community's vision to become more age-friendly will be achieved. A PLM:

- 1. Is a picture of why and how you believe your AFC initiative will work.
- 2. Shows a chain of reasoning that links resources and activities with results.
- 3. Is a series of “if-then” relationships that lead to the desired outcomes.

GTO® Tools in the Toolkit

- Developing Assumptions Worksheet
- Building Your Logic Worksheet

Table 9:

Sample Template for Program Logic Model						
Needs and Assets that the AFC Action Plan will address through its activities	Resources (eg people, partner-ships, financial, comm-unity) available to implement our Action Plan	Groups or areas of related activities	IF we access these resources, THEN we can use them to implement these activities in our AFC	IF we implement our planned activities, THEN we expect to deliver this no. or amount of activities	IF we accomplish our planned activities, THEN we expect these short-term positive impacts	IF we achieve our short-term outcomes, THEN we expect these significant long-term benefits
Identified Need	Inputs and Resources	Components	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes

For each component in your PLM, list the planned activities. For each activity, identify the outputs, or tangible, countable results that it will produce. List collaboration partners for each component and their roles, as well as potential implementation barriers. Working Through Roadblocks Worksheet (Toolkit) may help you with this process.

Importantly, a Project Logic Model is not a fixed blueprint. Think of it as a living document or snapshot of the best possible guess, or hypothesis, of how your Action Plan is intended to work. If the Action Plan has to be adapted because of changes in the situation, the model can be updated accordingly.

Draft Action Plan

You should now have the information needed to develop and design your Action Plan.

Order the proposed actions using the 8 AFC domains you used in your community assessment. Using these eight dimensions to structure your Action Plan ensures that a comprehensive set of strategies is developed and offers continuity to the process. Most communities use such a table to organize their actions (Table 10). An Action Plan Template can also be found in the Toolkit.

Table 10:

Sample Action Plan Template				
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
AFC Domain	Action/Strategy	Lead	Timeline	Resource Allocation

Remember that the final design of your document is an opportunity to ensure your message comes through clearly. Consider what branding is needed and in which format you will be presenting your Action Plan. Making accessible print and web-based documents requires more consideration than just font size. Consult [accessibility resource guides](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-information-businesses#section-1) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-information-businesses#section-1>) for information about how to create an accessible AFC Action Plan.

The simple planning tools presented here will help ensure that your AFC initiative and its programs, services, and projects are implemented to maximize success and sustainability. These planning tools will also help anticipate what evaluation activities will be needed before, during, and after implementation.

GTO® Tool in the Toolkit

- Identify AFC Action Plan Components Worksheet

Present AFC Action Plan to Council

Having your municipal council officially adopt your Action Plan will increase the likelihood that key strategies will receive continued attention from the community. Prepare for the council vote. Schedule a deputation — a presentation — to the council that focuses on the benefits of age-friendliness to the community, the key messages heard from your needs assessment, and a high-level presentation of proposed actions. Note that in some cases, only municipal staff can present a plan to council for adoption and the city needs to play a leading role in the Plan for presenting to council to be a consideration.



STEP 4:

Implement and Evaluate



AFC Planning Questions	Key Tasks
8. How will the Action Plan be implemented? (Plan)	• Capitalize on quick wins • Leverage funding opportunities • Adjust governance structure • Seek out academic partnerships
9. How will the implementation of the Action Plan be monitored? (Process Evaluation)	• Identify primary users • Define the purposes of evaluation • Monitor implementation activities • Conduct process evaluation
10. How well did the Action Plan perform? (Outcome evaluation)	• Choose outcome evaluation questions • Choose indicators • Choose an evaluation design
11. How can the quality of the Action Plan be improved over time? (Quality Improvement)	• Perform quality improvement • Report back to stakeholders

COVID-19 Advisory:

In-person activity may not be appropriate in your community while COVID-19 remains active in Ontario. All planning, implementation and evaluation activities and actions must follow local public health advice to prevent and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Read the [Remote Events Planning Resource](https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf) for information and tips on hosting safe and accessible virtual meetings.

In this step, you will learn how to begin implementation, identify primary users, determine the purpose of your evaluation, plan for both process and outcome evaluation activities and improve your existing AFC Action Plan.

The goal of the process thus far has been to explore and embrace the unique character of your community and develop an AFC Action Plan that responds to its needs and capacities. A thorough evaluation of the Action Plan increases the likelihood that the plan (and the evaluation results) will influence future decision-making. Evaluation can help secure future funding, demonstrate proof of concept and help communicate both progress and impact.

Question 8: How will the Action Plan be implemented?

Capitalize on Quick Wins

As mentioned previously, quick wins are the “low-hanging fruit”. These are actions that take little effort but have a positive impact. Starting with these strategies and interventions will give you early successes, build the case and garner support for larger scale projects. These quick wins also demonstrate early to your community that you are committed to change.

Share your AFC goals and Action Plan with others; you may find that one of your actions lends itself to a new partnership or aligns with the priorities or work of another group. Implementation of an AFC Action Plan does not rest solely on the shoulders of one individual or planning group; rather it takes the commitment, energy and time of a diverse group of partners. Talking regularly with others about your AFC Action Plan often surfaces new collaborative opportunities and accelerates implementation activities.

GTO® Tools in the Toolkit

- Identifying Anticipated Outputs Worksheet
- Planning Each Program Component Worksheet
- Implementation Plan Worksheet

Leverage Funding Opportunities

Some of your age-friendly actions may require funding to be implemented. This funding may come from local sources (e.g. municipality, community partners, local businesses), or provincially/federally (e.g. government grants, other grants such as Ontario Trillium Foundation). Often grant applications require you to articulate the community need and intended program to address that need. Through your needs assessment process and Action Plan development, you have already collected this information and are primed to be able to more quickly turn around strong applications for funding.

The more diverse your own professional network is, the more likely you will hear about funding opportunities as they arise. Seek out funding opportunities from sources that may have a direct interest in the proposed action (e.g. Ministries of Transportation, Health or Long-Term Care). Consider also proactively seeking out funding. If you have actions that align with local, regional or provincial priorities, approach potential funders and communicate how your proposed work will be mutually beneficial.

Finally, some communities have secured funding from private businesses through sponsorship opportunities, which has enabled them to move forward on specific actions including a local seniors expo, or development of an information guide for older adults. Get creative and consider who would have the most interest in the outcomes of your proposed action.

Adjust Governance Structure

As your AFC planning group begins moving forward with implementation, you may find that the original governance structure of your group no longer makes sense. Given the specificity of actions to each of the 8 age-friendly domains, new partners may be required to support implementation, yet it may not make sense to have these partners participate as part of a larger steering committee. Many communities have found it helpful to develop working groups or sub-committees to support implementation. These groups are often organized by the 8 age-friendly domains, or instead by the local AFC goals of the initiative. These groups report back to the larger steering committee, but the focus is more directly on action and less on strategic direction.

Seek out Academic Partnerships

There may be opportunities to engage academic partners at this point in your process to support implementation of a specific action, or garner support for further evaluation activities. Reach out to academic institutions to see if there may be a researcher interested in partnering with you. In addition, many academic programs require students to complete a community practicum placement. Students from multiple disciplines can provide invaluable time and expertise to move age-friendly actions forward.

Question 9: How will the implementation of the Action Plan be monitored?

Identify Primary Users and Target Audiences

Think ahead about how you will know whether the program has been implemented successfully. Planning for evaluation begins with asking whom the evaluation is for and how will they use the information from it. Identify the specific people, group(s) and/or organization(s) who will use the results of evaluation activities, and who have the capacity to make changes to the initiative and its programs, services, or projects. These are the primary intended users for the evaluation. They need to be part of the planning for evaluation from beginning to end to make sure that the process, findings, conclusions and learning are useful.

You may find that your primary user is an individual or group already involved in your AFC process, although this does not necessarily mean they will be responsible for implementing the project or program being evaluated.

Also, there may be many different target audiences who will be interested in knowing the results of the evaluation, but not necessarily in an active way, and so do not have to be involved in planning it. Identifying their interest early in the process will however, help inform what data should be collected and how it should be shared.

Define the Purposes of Evaluation

Bring together your primary users and stakeholders (e.g. via a small working group that includes members from, and reports back to the steering committee, champions, staff, administrators, program participants) for ongoing dialogue about planning the evaluation, which will be designed to respond to their needs.

Decide on the purposes and uses of evaluation. Start with questions like:

- Why are we going to do this?
- What is the purpose(s) that the evaluation is going to serve?
- Who will use the information and how?

The discussion will flow into key evaluation questions, the timing of evaluation activities, and finding feasible ways of answering the key evaluation questions.

Monitor Implementation Activities

Once implementation is underway, monitoring and evaluation are needed to understand how well the activities in the Action Plan are implemented. Monitor the initiatives you've started by collecting data as they happen. Tools such as the [Age-Friendly Dashboard created by Hamilton's Age-Friendly Committee](https://sagelink.ca/creating-an-age-friendly-dashboard-to-monitor-and-communicate-progress/) (<https://sagelink.ca/creating-an-age-friendly-dashboard-to-monitor-and-communicate-progress/>) can help your community track and communicate progress of your age-friendly actions. Collecting and using this type of information is called process evaluation. The focus of process evaluation is learning and improvement.

Process evaluation questions are along the lines of the following:

- Were the Action Plan and its activities implemented?
- How well were the Action Plan and its activities implemented? Were they implemented as intended?
- What were the barriers to, and facilitators of program activities?
- Did activities and programs/services in the Action Plan reach their target populations? Are participants being reached as intended? Who participated? How many? Who did not participate?
- What outputs resulted from the activities?
- How are AF programs/services operating?
- What is the quality of the AF programs/services?
- What are users' perceptions of the programs/services?
- What external factors influenced the implementation of the Action Plan and its activities? How?

Conduct Process Evaluation

A process evaluation will help your community see if your age-friendly activities are achieving the goals and objectives they were originally designed to accomplish. Start from the AFC Action Plan and program logic model and with your AFC planning group, work through the steps outlined in Table 11 to plan your process evaluation.

Table 11:

Process Evaluation
1. Brainstorm evaluation questions. What is it that you and your stakeholders want to know? You can use the questions above as a starting point.
2. Sort the questions you have generated into groups or categories that matter to stakeholders/intended users.
3. Decide which questions to answer. The most important ones are those that: a. Are important to intended users and stakeholders. b. Respond to identified needs. c. Build on assets. d. Can be answered with available resources. e. Can be answered within the timeframe that matters to intended users and stakeholders. f. Yield information that can be used for improving the Action Plan, its activities, and programs/services.
4. Review the evaluation questions you have chosen to make sure they are connected to your Action Plan.
5. Figure out who, what, and how to collect the data.

The above process was adapted from Evaluation ETA Evaluation Brief.³²

In drawing conclusions from your process evaluation, consider that there are two main requirements for getting to intended outcomes:

1. A program that has been found by others to respond to the need that was identified; OR a theory about how your program deals with the causes of the problems it is meant to address.
2. High quality implementation. Knowledge about the quality of implementation from a process evaluation can help guide your AFC planning, as shown below in Table 12.

GTO® Tool in the Toolkit

- Process Evaluation Planning Tool

Table 12:

Getting to Intended Outcomes ¹⁷		
If the process evaluation showed:	And the outcome evaluation showed:	Then it is likely that the Action Plan used:
High-quality implementation	Positive outcomes	Appropriate activities and program theory
High-quality implementation	Negative outcomes	Inappropriate program activities and program theory
Poor-quality implementation	Negative outcomes	Appropriate OR inappropriate activities and program theory

Question 10: How well did the Action Plan perform?

Choose Outcome Evaluation Questions

Outcome evaluation measures the effects of the program in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is intended to achieve. Think ahead about how you will be able to measure whether your AFC initiative, program, service or project meets its intended goals, and achieves its desired outcomes. Outcome evaluation questions have to do with what changes are expected to take place as a result of your Action Plan. Here are some examples:

- To what extent did the AFC Action Plan meet its intended goals and achieve

its intended results? In which AFC domains?

- For whom, in what ways and in what circumstances?
- Which plan components were most effective? Which components need improving?
- What unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were produced?
- To what extent can observed changes be attributed to the program?
- What was the influence of other factors?
- What evidence is there that funders should reinvest in the AFC Action Plan and its continuing and/or future activities?
- Were the results worth the cost of particular age-friendly strategies and programs?

- Can those strategies and programs be sustained?
- What is needed to continue or change the Action Plan?

Additional Tools in the Toolkit

- Outcome Evaluation Tool

Choose Indicators

Having determined the key outcome questions to be addressed during the evaluation will then influence the choice of indicators. Remember, outcome indicators are a "specific, observable and measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively) characteristic or change that represents progress towards a goal."²⁷ A good indicator is specific and measurable. Choose at least one indicator for each outcome; having more than one indicator for an outcome will provide more information on which to draw conclusions about the effects of your AFC initiative.

Look first at indicators that are already available. A great place to look is the Public Health Agency of Canada's [Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide](https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/indicators-indicateurs-v2-eng.pdf) (<https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/indicators-indicateurs-v2-eng.pdf>) to learn about the selection and use of indicators to measure the outcomes of AFC initiatives. The PHAC Guide has a list of 43 indicators across the eight AFC domains, and four indicators of longer-term health and social outcomes, along with suggested ways to use them for developing an AFC Action Plan and

measuring a community's progress toward becoming age-friendly. The indicators recommended by PHAC can be used to assess the impact of a large initiative aimed at several or all AFC domains, or for a single, small project targeted at one AFC domain. If the indicator(s) is not available, consider whether and how it might be feasible to collect the data. Ultimately, the overriding concern will be the usefulness of the data you collected. In other words, will results obtained from alternative methods be accurate, cost-effective and useful?

Consider contacting your municipality's Public Health Unit (PHU). The public health units in Ontario are responsible for a population health approach in the following areas: assessing the health of their local populations, the social determinants of health, healthy behaviours and healthy communities. They administer health promotion and disease prevention programs to inform the public about, among others, healthy lifestyles, healthy growth and development, and health education for all age groups. Your municipality's PHU has qualified team members who are experienced in accessing and using Statistics Canada and provincial health system data for community health planning purposes. PHU staff may also be able to offer advice on selecting evaluation design and methods. Other sources for potential outcome data can be found on the [Online Resource List](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) (<https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/>).

Choose an Evaluation Design

The kind of design you use will determine how well it is possible to know that your AFC initiative was the cause of any changes in outcomes. Your evaluation questions will point to the design that will provide the most confidence in attributing changes to the initiative. In choosing an evaluation design, there is always a tradeoff between rigour and relevance. Select the methods that will be used and make a plan for collecting the data.

Question 11: How can the quality of the Action Plan be improved over time?

Perform Quality Improvement

An important way to ensure that your AFC Action Plan reaches its goals and objectives is to improve its implementation in an ongoing way by using the data from its process and outcome evaluations. Originally developed to reduce errors in manufacturing, quality improvement can be applied to implementing community health improvements. The “Plan-Do-Study-Act” (PDSA) cycle³³ is a straightforward way to test a program or strategy within a small focused setting, make small incremental adjustments and slowly expand the program. Table 13 provides an overview of the PDSA Cycle and a PDSA Worksheet is included in the Toolkit.

Table 13:

The PDSA Cycle	
Plan	What the strategy or initiative intends to do
Do	Implement the new strategy or initiative within a small focused setting.
Study	Ask and answer “Did we do the plan as it was intended? Your evaluation data can be used to answer the question. Consider whether any additional sources of information are needed – if so, this information needs to be easily and quickly available. Then ask: Did the plan produce the intended results? If the plan was implemented as it was intended to be and the results are poor, then the plan needs to be changed. If the plan was not implemented as intended, then the implementation needs to be changed.
Act	Based on “study” findings, decide if the group will adopt the change, adapt the change or abandon the change.

More information about the PDSA cycle and other approaches to quality improvement is available on the [Online Resource List](https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/) (<https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/>).

GTO® Tool in the Toolkit

- Quality Improvement Worksheet

Report Back to Stakeholders

The primary users identified at the beginning of this step, as well as the many stakeholders, older adults and other partners who have contributed to the process along the way will be interested to know about successful change and outcomes of age-friendly implementation. The format within which you share information will depend on the intended audience. Consider the following methods to share your successes:

- Draft a high-level progress report to share publicly within the community that highlights successes and impact;

- Draft a more in-depth evaluation report for evaluation primary users;
- Share specific success stories via local media channels (newspaper, radio);
- Share success stories and lessons learned with other AFCs via regional networks or the provincial AFC website; and/or
- Hold a community forum to present the Action Plan and celebrate progress.

Communicating your progress and success will help with future age-friendly decision-making, generate new collaborative opportunities and add to the credibility and accountability of your initiative.



Maintain Momentum and Sustain Success



Question 12: If the Action Plan is successful, how will it be sustained and refreshed?

Both momentum and sustainability will be needed to keep your AFC initiative and its programs/services going. Sustainability is the ability to continue at a certain level over time. How can AFC planning and implementation be sustained to respond

effectively to the rapid and durable demographic shift underway to an aging population?³³ To achieve long-term goals, AFC initiatives will require iterative cycles of planning and implementation supported by resources, activities, engagement with the community and collaboration among institutional stakeholders in an ongoing way over many years. Table 14 summarizes the factors that successful AFC initiatives in Ontario have identified as contributing to sustainability.

Table 14:

Factors that Support Sustainability – Aligned with AFC Process
1. Funding • Seek flexible funding from multi-sources • Leverage existing funding from aligned initiatives • Use a business case that speaks to aspects that are value-added for groups such as businesses, municipality, health care etc.
2. Leadership, governance and infrastructure • Connect age-friendly planning and activities to the priorities of key partners (e.g. municipalities, public health, etc.) • Include champions who represent various stakeholder groups and geographic areas within the community • Dedicate a staff person/portfolio • Coordinate and communicate efforts between upper and lower tier municipalities (if applicable) and between municipal departments • Establish a key sponsor/lead that can commit resources • Establish/strengthen municipal-community partnerships (including MAACs)
3. Strategic alignment • Align with municipal, regional, provincial and federal priorities • Leverage opportunities such as elections, budget setting timelines etc.

Table 14: *Continued*

Factors that Support Sustainability – Aligned with AFC Process

4. Communication strategies

- Share locally relevant messages and stories
 - Use a broad media strategy to connect with a wide audience
 - Consider whether you will need to provide materials and communications in other languages, including identifying if your community is in a designated francophone area
 - Establish bi-directional communication channels
 - Avoid applying large urban city communication solutions to rural communities
-

5. Long-term strategies

- Embed AFC lens / language in important local and provincial priorities (e.g. accessibility and transportation plans) and established organizations and programs
 - Consider succession planning throughout the 4 AFC steps
-

6. Inclusivity of diverse populations

- Be aware of diverse needs of the community
 - Engage all groups meaningfully and appropriately
 - Provide cultural sensitivity training
-

7. Involving academics

- Use students and interested academic partners as a resource
 - Access academic skills and experience in grant writing, evaluation, survey techniques, indicator development, data analysis, etc.
-

8. Establish a critical mass

- Engage older adults
 - Network with stakeholders
 - Participate in regional and provincial networks to share knowledge and experiences
 - Ensure broad cross-sector partnerships from public, voluntary and private sectors
 - Ensure planning and implementation is informed by a bottom-up versus top-down approach
 - Apply an intergenerational focus
-

Cases

The following nine case studies explore initiatives that communities have implemented to improve their age-friendliness across the eight domains. Each case describes the initiative that was implemented, as well as program partners, funding, challenges, impact and plans for sustainability. These initiatives:

- are adaptable and represent a mix of both innovative as well as 'tried and true' approaches;
- include a mix of partners (municipalities, private business, academics, community service providers); and
- include representation across geography and community size.

For more initiative examples across all domains, visit the [AFC Interactive Maps](https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities-interactive-maps) (<https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities-interactive-maps>).

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings – Age-Friendly Outdoor Spaces in London

City of London, population: 383,822 (2016)

Background: In 2013, the City of London developed the City's first Age-Friendly Action Plan in consultation with over 500 older adults, caregivers, and stakeholders. The need for more seating in parks and trails throughout the city was identified as a priority in the Action Plan, as well as

improving the overall age-friendliness of parks (i.e. walkability, accessible parking, and clear signage).

Initiatives: Age-Friendly Checklist: The Outdoor Spaces & Buildings Working Group, in partnership with students from Western University's Gerontology in Practice course, investigated how an Age-Friendly Parks Checklist might be used to identify the age-friendliness of parks and opportunities for improvements. The Working Group chose to adapt an existing age-friendly parks checklist created by Age-Friendly Philadelphia. With permission from Age-Friendly Philadelphia, and informed by London's Facilities Accessibility Design Standards, the Checklist was modified to suit the local context in London and has been revised since its creation in 2013 to incorporate additional safety considerations. The intended users of the [City of London Age-Friendly Parks Checklist](https://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/London-AFParksChecklist_2017.pdf) (https://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/London-AFParksChecklist_2017.pdf) are municipal staff; however, the checklist is user-friendly and could be used by anyone. The Checklist was added to the World Health Organization's Global Database of Age-Friendly Practices and is shared with other age-friendly communities upon request.

Changing Outdoor Spaces: New benches were installed along the Thames Valley Parkway (TVP), the longest pathway system in London. The decision to install more benches along the TVP aligned with existing Corporate objectives to improve seating and encourage walking and recreational use of pathways. New benches that were installed had a more age-friendly design that also met Accessibility for

Ontarians with Disabilities Act requirements. Design features include arms on the benches and seats that were higher off the ground. New signage was also installed that met current accessibility guidelines and improved way-finding for pathway users.

Funding: The benches, signage, and Age-Friendly Parks Checklist projects were all completed using existing resources and the in-kind support and guidance of the City of London Parks and Recreation staff and Western University's Gerontology in Practice course.

Partners: Critical partners for this project included the City of London Parks and Recreation, Neighbourhood, Children, and Fire Services, and students in the Gerontology in Practice course at Western University.

Challenges: Challenges encountered in this project include:

- Creating a checklist that incorporated all the essential features of an age-friendly park while still being concise and user-friendly.
- Completing projects within existing resources.
- Time, capacity and resources needed to complete park assessments.

Impact:

- 2013 – 15 benches, directional signage and mileage markers were installed along the Thames Valley Parkway.
- 2014-2015 – 31 new age-friendly benches with arms were installed in parks and along trails; new directional signage and new guidelines for way-finding in parks and along trails were developed to make it easier to

find washrooms, hours of operation, and other amenities; and 377 parks were scored using the checklist.

- 2015-2016 – 20 additional benches were installed and new signage was developed for park entrances to identify the locations of washrooms.

Sustainability: Benches continue to be installed within existing budgets. The Age-Friendly Parks Checklist is used and updated on an ongoing basis as new parks projects are implemented.

Housing – Accessible Housing Units for Seniors in Petawawa

Town of Petawawa, population: 17,187 (2016)

Background: During age-friendly consultations in Petawawa in 2016, it was identified that there were older adults and those with accessibility needs who could not remain in the community as a result of lack of reasonable and affordable accommodation. This confirmed that accessible housing units for seniors were a high priority for this community. By undertaking the Age-Friendly Community Planning process, Petawawa was able to bring together diverse stakeholders to collaboratively continue to bring the project forward and ultimately obtain financing to ensure the accessible units were realized.

Initiative: Fourteen new units were attached to an existing housing unit run by the Petawawa Housing Corporation. This provided some cost savings for the new build, but some unique challenges in terms

of site plan needed to be addressed. Four of the fourteen units were fully accessible while the other units were designed with accessible features. All fourteen units are affordable as it is required that they be rented at 20% under market value.

Funding: The Petawawa Housing Corporation actively petitioned the County of Renfrew in 2017 and made applications for financing the affordable accessible housing units. At the same time, they commenced their fundraising efforts and came before Council to make a presentation and obtain the necessary endorsements for upper tier requirements as well as request funding support from Petawawa towards the project. The total project cost was \$3 million. The majority of funding came from a \$2 million grant from the Ontario Investment in Affordable Housing program. The remaining \$1 million was covered by: a \$200,000 mortgage and a fundraising campaign; \$325,000 from reserves contributed by the County of Renfrew; and \$100,000 made in equal payments during 2017 and 2018 budget years by the Town of Petawawa.

Partners: The Petawawa Housing Corporation (PHC) was the lead applicant of the project and are the facility management. They worked with the local municipal government, the County of Renfrew, as well as the Ontario government through their Investment in Affordable Housing program. The PHC has a very dedicated board of directors with reach and influence, which has helped realize the project in the span of just over two years and will allow for sustainability.

Challenges: Funding was a stumbling block to this initiative. The estimate for the build came in higher than the envelope

of money available and plans had to be modified to bring the build in line with the budget. Fundraising the \$200,000 was a difficult as many other worthy efforts were being solicited for at the same time. The fundraising committee got creative and did what they could to reach the goal.

As utility costs continue to rise, maintaining the units at 20% less than market value remains a challenge. The mix of unit models provides some leverage to ensure success. The original build had 21 units (16 rentals that were geared to income and 5 available at full market value). There are now 14 additional units available at the reduced rental rate.

Impact: All units in both the original and newly built sections are now full; however there remains a need for additional units in the community. As a success to this story, the original build is now fully mortgage free, which was also a key consideration in the PHC being able to finance a mortgage for the new build section.

Sustainability: There are no additional plans by PHC to build any more units, nor is there space in their current land envelope to do so at this time. Money available to support these types of builds is currently not available. However, a developer who participated in the Age-Friendly workshops has undertaken a new rental accommodation build, which will realize 39 additional apartment rental units within the community. While they are not restricted to being offered under an affordable rental program, this build will have units with fully regulated accessible features, required now under the building code, and will offer more housing options in the Petawawa community.

Transportation – Let's Get Moving in Hamilton

City of Hamilton, population: 539,917 (2016)

Background: In 2013, the Hamilton Council on Aging (CoA) partnered with the City of Hamilton and the Seniors Advisory Committee to develop Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly City. The Age-Friendly Plan includes several recommendations to improve how older adults move in and around the city.

Research data indicates that while older adults value the importance of physical activity, they have the lowest exercise rates of all Canadians.³⁴ Physical activity plays an important role in improving well-being and preventing illness and dependence.

The Let's Get Moving Project responds to the Age-Friendly Plan recommendations, as well as current research findings to enhance social participation and further promote physical activity to help older adults maintain health, reduce the risk of falls, and enhance overall health and well-being.

Hamilton has a unique infrastructure that it is in a position to promote active transportation as a form of getting around and also to increase physical activity. In 2017, the decision was made to align existing initiatives (Let's Take the Bus and Let's Take a Walk) and incorporate a cycling component as part of a combined Let's Get Moving workshop series.

Initiative: Let's Get Moving (2017-2019) consists of 30 free workshops for older adults, each with an educational and experiential component. There are three

parts to the workshop series: Let's Take the Bus, Let's Take a Walk, and Let's Ride a Bike. The core structure of each workshop is the same, though some are tailored to meet the needs of targeted groups. Participants sign up for single workshops in any of the three series.

Let's Get Moving: An Age Friendly Guide to 18 of Hamilton's Outdoor Recreational Trails (<https://coahamilton.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2014/09/ALG49659-HCA-Walk-Book-web.pdf>) is a primary resource for the program and includes information about Hamilton's outdoor trail systems, bus stop information, and locations of Hamilton's Social Bicycles (SOBIs).

1. Let's Take the Bus Workshops:

These workshops introduce and reintroduce older adults to Hamilton's public transit system and address any barriers that may prevent the use of public transit. Workshops are structured over 3 hours and include:

- **Presentation** (45 minutes) – Presentation about taking the bus
- **Demonstration** (15 minutes) – Participants board the bus. The bus driver provides a tour that highlights the accessible features of buses, demonstrates how to board with an accessibility device, points out storage areas for groceries and answers participants' questions.
- **Bus Ride** (30 minutes) – The bus driver takes participants on a bus ride, replicating an actual route to a pre-determined destination for lunch. Destinations are planned to be relevant to various groups of seniors (e.g. for seniors who have a membership valid at two loca-

tions, the trip might demonstrate the ride between both sites).

- **Lunch** (1 hour) – Lunch adds fun and incentive to the workshop and provides an opportunity for participants to engage with facilitators and each other.
- **Bus Ride Back and Evaluation** (30 minutes) – Ride back to point of origin and evaluation.

[Read a brochure about the workshops.](https://coahamilton.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2016/05/Lets-Take-the-Bus-Brochure-May-2017.pdf)
(<https://coahamilton.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2016/05/Lets-Take-the-Bus-Brochure-May-2017.pdf>)

While the focus of this workshop is on utilizing public transit, information is also provided about alternative transportation options available in the community. Participants are encouraged to speak with the Project Coordinator or Facilitator for more information about these alternatives.

2. Let's Take a Walk Workshops

These workshops educate older adults about the benefits of walking and encourage use of Hamilton's outdoor trails. Workshops are structured over 3 hours and include:

- **Presentation** (1 hour) – Presentation by the Project Coordinator about the benefits of walking and the Let's Get Moving Trail Guide.
- **Guided Walk** (1 hour) – An older adult volunteer leads a walk along an age-friendly trail within proximity to the host location while discussing the benefits of walking. The project team also works with community partners and local fitness instructors to include a special walk for each workshop (e.g. Nordic pole walking) to offer participants an oppor-

tunity to try other available programs that they may wish to explore further.

- **Lunch** (1 hour) – Lunch back at the host site.

3. Let's Ride a Bike Workshops

These workshops reintroduce cycling fundamentals and resources, and help older adults gain confidence to get back on their bikes. Hamilton's SOBIs and helmets are available for participants. Workshops are three hours and modeled after the CanBike Program.

- **Presentation** (1 hour) – Presentation about the benefits of cycling, cycling basics, riding skills, SOBIs and cycling resources.
- **Bike Ride** (1 hour) – Cycling coaching session and group ride along an outdoor trail.
- **Lunch** (1 hour) – Lunch

Funding: Let's Take a Bus (2011) was funded by a New Horizons grant. Let's Take a Walk (2013-15) was resourced by the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund. Let's Get Moving Workshops (2017-2019) are funded by the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund.

Let's Get Moving workshops are organized by a Project Coordinator. For all the workshops, senior volunteers act as facilitators. Senior volunteers are recruited through community partners and communication channels. Facilitators for each workshop have expertise on the subject matter: Let's Take the Bus facilitators ride the bus regularly, Let's Take a Walk facilitators are typically retired health and wellness professionals, and Let's Ride a Bike facilitators are intermediate to expert cyclists.

Let's Take the Bus and Let's Take a Walk are a train-the-trainer model. For Let's Ride a Bike, facilitators must attend and pass a 2-day CanBike Coach Training. Training costs were covered through the current grant.

In-kind resources include: buses provided by the City, staff time from numerous partners and workshop space.

Partners: The current Project is led by the Hamilton CoA, with members from the City of Hamilton, Seniors Advisory Committee and Retired Teachers of Ontario (Chapter 13) on the Steering Committee. Additional partners included in the specific workshops include: Hamilton Street Railway, DARTS, Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club, McMaster University Rehabilitation Sciences, New Hope Community Bikes and Hamilton SOBI.

Challenges: The workshops can be weather dependent. It is difficult to know if the program is reaching all of the people who would really benefit (e.g. those who are not typically joiners). To expand the Let's Take the Bus workshop to a new demographic, a workshop will be offered in partnership with the local Alzheimer Society that will focus on transportation options for those who may have been car-dependent and now no longer drive due to memory loss.

Impact: With the current funding, it is anticipated that 600 older adults will participate. Many participants indicated that they are more confident riding the bus, they plan to walk along Hamilton's trails, and they are more confident about cycling.

Sustainability: The in-kind contributions listed above, as well as the complementary resources (i.e. Let's Get Moving Resource

Guide, Let's Take the Bus brochure in different languages, and Directory of Local Walking Groups) contribute to the sustainability of the program. However, the Hamilton CoA continues to seek funding for staff coordination time, as well as workshop lunches that provide extra incentive for people to attend the workshops.

Social Participation – Sip and Learn in Temiskaming Shores

City of Temiskaming Shores, population: 9,920 (2016)

Background: In 2015, an age-friendly survey that was conducted in Temiskaming Shores showed a need for community social groups that were focused more on socialization and discussion versus specific interest areas (i.e. card games or sports programs). The community also identified the need to offer bilingual programming in both main communities that make up the City of Temiskaming Shores. The community also identified communications gaps and indicated an interest in receiving more information about local services and supports.

Initiative: In response to the needs identified above, SipNLearn was established by the Temiskaming Shores and Area Age-Friendly Community in 2017. SipNLearn is a regular social program for older adults with an educational component. It is an opportunity for older adults to socialize in a meaningful way with other community members at no cost. The Program is intended to benefit those who are at lower income and/or risk of social isolation. The Program is run at a

local bookstore/café in one community and at a local motel common room in the other.

During each session, the City of Temiskaming Shores Age-Friendly/GetActive! Coordinator greets everyone and provides an introduction to the guest speaker. SipNLearn is a bilingual program; it is preferred that the guest speaker is also bilingual (or accompanied by someone who is). Participants take ownership of the Program; they assist with arranging tables and chairs, preparing and cleaning up, as well as request topics and speakers of interest.

A communication strategy was developed to support the Program:

- **Radio** – The Age-Friendly Coordinator goes on the local radio station monthly to discuss upcoming programs and activities.
- **Newspaper** – The City buys a weekly page in the local weekly newspapers. Age-Friendly programs (including SipNLearn) are included.
- **Posters** – Program information is posted on throughout the community and monthly calendars outline upcoming speakers.
- **Social Media** – Information is shared on the City of Temiskaming Shores Facebook page and often shared by Timiskaming Health Unit, and other community groups and programs.
- **Email distribution list** – Older community members as well as local businesses and professionals receive monthly 'Age-Friendly updates.'
- **Presentations** – Presentations are made to groups of older people and professionals working in the area.

Funding: SipNLearn received a 1-year grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program for \$10,200 with a municipal contribution of \$1,000. In-kind support was provided by two local businesses that provided space for the program. Annual funding set aside by the City of Temiskaming Shores covers the relatively small cost of coffee and tea after the initial grant expired. A designated coordinator, as well as organizations interested in guest speaking, have been vital in the continued success of SipNLearn.

Partners: The City of Temiskaming Shores partnered with local businesses and organizations to host the Program. In total, over 40 different community groups, services, health care organizations and clubs have attended SipNLearn as guest speakers. Presenters have included: the local MPP, the Temiskaming Art Gallery, the Canadian Hearing Society, the City of Temiskaming Shores recycling and waste management program, archaeologists and dental hygienists.

Challenges: Offering consistent bilingual SipNLearn sessions can be a challenge as not all guest speakers are able to provide bilingual presentations. Where possible, the Coordinator brings in another Franco-phone community group to present on the same topic. At times, the help of a bilingual translator is enlisted if necessary.

Initially, the Program was held weekly. Once the funding expired, participants expressed that they were interested and committed in seeing the program continue. As a result, the program moved from weekly to monthly sessions, and instead of offering a nutritious snack during each session, the business partners contribute coffee and tea only.

It can be difficult to ensure everyone in the community is aware of the program and understands there is no specific 'target audience' (i.e. there is no age requirement); all are welcome and valued regardless of age, gender, and/or linguistic preference. Continued advertising efforts have assisted in promoting the program to all members of the community.

Impact: SipNLearn participation numbers have improved substantially over time. The Program draws 17-25 participants per session; over 200 community members have attended to-date. Several participants have noted that they feel better equipped with knowledge when speaking with health professionals. Some participants have indicated that the 'meetings' have become important in their schedules. Temiskaming Shores does not have a designated Older Adult Centre, and SipNLearn has become a de facto 'seniors centre'. Community partners expressed that they have gained insight from the discussions and are now better able to understand the needs of the community. For example, following a presentation to the group, the local 'Golden Age Club' saw their membership numbers increase.

Sustainability: The City of Temiskaming Shores has set aside money to fund age-friendly projects. SipNLearn costs \$30/ location to contribute toward space usage and coffee/tea for participants. Guest speakers that have taken part in the program have a mandate to engage with the public as part of their job and therefore do not require payment.

Respect and Social Inclusion – Sewing for Ages Intergenerational Program in Simcoe County

Simcoe County, population: 479,650 (2016)

Background: During the Simcoe County Age-Friendly Communities' consultation process in 2016, older adults cited a lack of opportunities to interact with youth. The Simcoe County Age-Friendly Communities Advisory Committee endorsed increasing intergenerational programming as a priority within the 2018-2023 Positive Aging Strategy. As a result of this recommendation, the Sewing for Ages Intergenerational Program was implemented by Sunset Manor to increase the delivery of intergenerational programs.

Initiative: The Sewing for Ages Intergenerational Program was initiated in 2018 by a retired nurse and volunteer at Sunset Manor, a municipal Long-Term Care home in Collingwood, Simcoe County. This champion noticed that there was a need to increase social stimulation for residents and met with the Programs and Support Services Supervisor of Sunset Manor to propose a new opportunity to engage both young and old in a mutually beneficial Sewing for Ages Intergenerational Program.

The program was facilitated by the activation staff at Sunset Manor and led by a volunteer. The Programs and Support Services Supervisor of Sunset Manor and the volunteer created posters asking

for donations of sewing machines and materials to start up this new program. Word-of-mouth quickly spread through the community and eight sewing machines and other items were donated to the Program.

Program staff used word-of-mouth, social media and a newspaper article to recruit children ages 8-12 from the community. Parents called to enroll their child in the program. Program staff hung posters in each 'home area' of Sunset Manor, the elevator, and public bulletin boards to recruit residents. The Program was also added to the monthly resident program calendars and staff encouraged participation.

Eleven pairs of children and residents were then matched and a meet-and-greet was organized to provide the participants an opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the project. Each child was provided with a sewing kit, which included thread snips, two measuring tapes, a daily journal and a bag. The program was held in a common area where other residents were welcome to observe and join in. Family members would also bring and accompany their loved one to the program.

Over an eight-week period, the children were taught introductory sewing skills using the machines and with the support of residents. The participants worked for an hour and a half on creating customized fidget blankets. Fidget blankets are polar fleece lap-sized blankets covered in items like patches, pockets, zippers, buttons and small toys intended to engage individuals living with dementia. At the end of the Program, participants presented their handmade gift to another resident living with dementia at Sunset Manor.

Funding: No funding was obtained to run this program. All programming equipment, supplies and snacks were donated by volunteers and members of the community (i.e., sewing machines and material).

Partners: The Simcoe County Age-Friendly Advisory Committee partnered with Sunset Manor for this Program. The Program was facilitated by staff at Sunset Manor and led by a volunteer with advanced sewing experience.

Challenges: At first, participants were a little timid in getting to know each other. To address this, children attended an orientation session to learn about aging and the purpose of the Program.

Impact: As a result of the impact of this program, two separate sewing classes are being held to accommodate local interest. The Program continues to receive donations of sewing machines and fabric from the community and receive calls from parents interested in enrolling their child in this program. Similar programming will be initiated at the other three County of Simcoe long-term care homes in 2019.

Sustainability: The Program is now being expanded at Sunset Manor to two evening sessions per eight-week period so more children can participate. During future sessions, children will sew nightgowns for residents who are palliative, as well as bags that can be hung on assistive devices such as walkers and wheelchairs. In addition, the program will include a tour of the home so children can see where their senior partner lives and engage with other seniors prior to starting their projects.

Respect and Social Inclusion – Capital Aging: An Age-Friendly Businesses Initiative of the Council on Aging of Ottawa

City of Ottawa, population: 934,243 (2016)

Background: In 2013, The Council on Aging (CoA) of Ottawa launched an Age-Friendly Business (AFB) initiative to encourage older adults to nominate “senior consumer choice” local businesses as age-friendly. An information package was developed for both older adults and businesses that included a bilingual checklist and nomination form available on the Age-Friendly Ottawa website. Since its inception, the AFB initiative in Ottawa recognized 20 ‘senior-nominated’ businesses. Businesses were awarded a certificate and a window decal to display the recognition. In 2016, the AFB Working Group was reconvened to evaluate the effectiveness of this program. A student undertook the evaluation activity and visited 16 of the 20 recognized businesses. The certificate and window decal were only visible at the store front in one business.

Despite the free publicity through the website and newsletter, businesses did not see the value of the program. Though AFB met the objective of engaging older adults, it did not engage businesses to actively promote themselves as age-friendly. A larger impact on how seniors were served by businesses was missing. This was iden-

tified as the problem and became the strategy behind the Capital Aging Initiative. In addition, the Ontario government introduced mandatory accessibility standards for businesses to better service Ontarians with disabilities. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation provides standards for Customer Service, Information and Communications, Transportation, Employment, and Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment). Standards are currently being developed for Health Care and Education.

Initiative: The goals of Capital Aging are to increase the number and types of businesses who serve older adults well in Ottawa and generate sustainable revenue for CoA Ottawa. With funding, CoA Ottawa was able to hire a social enterprise coach to further develop the business model of Capital Aging. The following were identified as priorities for the initiative: training/education, networking, recognition, and market research about older consumers.

With the support of the coach and the guidance of the Capital Aging working group (six volunteers representing older adults and businesses that serve older adults), a survey with business partners was completed, as well as testing of two of the service offerings: networking and market research. Additionally, meetings were held with key leaders in the business community including West Ottawa Board of Trade, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, and Ottawa Tourism. In December 2017, CoA Ottawa hosted a pilot breakfast networking event that was attended by 12 business leaders to provide feedback on the model and concept of Capital Aging. The market research paper, Tapping into

Ottawa's older consumer market: Worth \$12.6B a year and growing!, was released at the breakfast networking event.

Funding: CoA Ottawa applied for funding through Innoweave to further develop Capital Aging and both prototype and test the two service offerings: networking and market research. In addition, several business leaders in both the profit and non-profit sector volunteered their time as members of the Capital Aging working group to help develop the concept.

Partners: Several working group members are business leaders in the profit and non-profit sectors and have been crucial partners in further developing the concept. These members also brokered introductions to the wider business community, including the West Ottawa Board of Trade, the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce and Ottawa Tourism.

Promotion: The events to date, as well as the market research paper were promoted through the CoA Ottawa newsletter and website. The joint breakfast networking event was hosted by West Ottawa Board of Trade and was promoted through their network of 700+ members.

Challenges: The CoA Ottawa board is supportive but wishes to proceed cautiously to minimize risk and ensure success while further developing the initiative. In addition, a change in partners occurred during the process; right after the breakfast networking event the West Ottawa Board of Trade merged with Ottawa Chamber of Commerce to create a new single entity serving the business community. This relationship is now slowly rebuilding. Finally, competing priorities

have seen the attention shift to other emerging age-friendly issues.

Impact: The survey of business leaders received 76 responses and confirmed most leaders saw being age-friendly as a competitive advantage. Over 40 business leaders attended the networking breakfast event, which included a presentation of key findings from the paper and a panel discussion from the perspective of the community, tourism sector, and retirement living sector. Presently, 25 corporate members have been engaged and this number continues to grow.

Sustainability: A plan to seek another seed funding to complete a feasibility study and address operational readiness for the Capital Aging initiative is slowly moving ahead.

Civic Participation and Employment – Age-Friendly Thunder Bay Senior Service Award Program

City of Thunder Bay, population: 107,909 (2016)

Background: The Age-Friendly Thunder Bay Senior Service Award Program was developed to honour older adults who have made an outstanding voluntary contribution to enrich the social, cultural or civic life of the community in the areas of arts, leadership, community service, health living or humanitarian activities.

Initiative: To be eligible for the award, the older adult must be 65 years or older;

contributed to the enrichment of the social, cultural, or civic life of the Thunder Bay community; made the commitment without thought of personal or financial gain; provided the special work or service during/after the age of 65.

A Nomination Review Committee, made up of other older adults in the community, reviewed the nominations and voted on the best candidate based on eligibility criteria that covered need, impact, focus, diversity, leadership, originality, and volunteer time.

A reception was held in June, during Seniors Month, where the award recipient was presented with a framed certificate and \$100.00 in gift certificates to the local Country Market.

Funding: Age-Friendly Thunder Bay secured a single sponsor to contribute \$500 towards the Senior Service Award Program. Program costs included:

- Refreshments for the reception (approximately \$100)
- Four gift certificates for the award recipient in denominations of \$25 (\$100).
- Hiring of a student to design the certificate (\$75) *this design will be used for future awards.
- Frame for the award (\$15)

Partners: Nurse Next Door agreed to be the lead sponsor of the Senior Service Award Program. The Owner/Manager of Nurse Next Door has agreed to continue the sponsorship in the future. The NorWest Community Health Centres hosted the reception and the Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health provided a video of the award winner, which was shown at the reception.

Promotion: All members of Age-Friendly Thunder Bay (approximately 50 organizations/ individuals) promoted the Senior Service Award Program. The Award Program was also promoted through the Age-Friendly Thunder Bay website, social media, print media, fax/email blast through the Lakehead Social Planning Council, and public service announcements.

Challenges: The Senior Service Award Program required upfront time to develop eligibility and review criteria and secure the sponsor, but it is anticipated that this time would be significantly reduced for future years now that a process is in place. For the next year, Age-Friendly Thunder Bay will try to obtain more nominations.

Impact: In 2018, six nominations were received, and one award recipient was selected, so as not to dilute the intent of the award. The Senior Service Award Program received support from Council and extensive media coverage. The award recipient was very appreciative of the recognition and gift certificates.

Sustainability: The award will be continued on an annual basis. Nurse Next Door has agreed to sponsor the Senior Service Award Program again.

Communication and Information – Age-Friendly Seniors Expo in Wasaga Beach

Town of Wasaga Beach, population: 20,675 (2016)

Background: The Town of Wasaga Beach's Age-Friendly Community Plan (2016) included recommendations to both increase coordination of local services, and to raise awareness about existing services and supports for older adults. This recommendation was an item selected by the Wasaga Beach Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee when establishing an action plan framework.

Initiative: The Advisory Committee decided to offer an annual Expo event to help connect older adults in Wasaga Beach to local information and services. During the first Expo (2017), there were guest speakers, politicians, door prizes and 25 information booths. To help predict food quantity, attendees were asked to pre-register through the library and the 100-ticket cap was reached several weeks prior. The first Expo was free for exhibitors and attendees.

For the second Seniors Information and Active Living Expo (2018), a larger venue was chosen, a working sub-committee was established to plan, organize and coordinate the event. Four speakers provided presentations throughout the day on topics such as seniors and fraud, cognitive decline, interactive benefits of active living, and transitioning to long-term

care. 50 exhibitors provided information about local housing, financial, health and other community services. There was no fee for non-profit agencies; for-profit agencies were charged \$20 per table. All 50 exhibitors were asked to contribute a door prize. The Expo ran from 10-2 at the Town's Recreation Complex.

Funding: The first Expo was funded by a New Horizons grant, which allowed the Advisory Committee to purchase t-shirts, nametags, a catered lunch, and print materials for the Advisory Committee to be used annually. Leftover funds made the second Expo possible. Additionally, a community partner provided a \$500 donation for food, and the Town of Wasaga Beach donated the room rental. The Advisory Committee contributed their time organizing and running the event and the Wasaga Beach Public Library provided additional staff on the day of the event.

Partners: Both years, community partners on the Advisory Committee each had exhibitor tables at the event: Wasaga Beach Public Library; Red Cross; South Georgian Bay Community Healthy Centre; Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit; Town of Wasaga Beach; County of Simcoe Social Housing Department; Wasaga Beach YMCA and Healthy Community Network. During the second year, some of the partners were also guest speakers.

Promotion: The event was promoted via the local newspaper, radio, printed flyers, press release, Town of Wasaga Beach Age-Friendly Website, Age-Friendly Facebook page, Town of Wasaga Beach Recreation Guide, as well as at community speaking engagements.

Challenges: Some challenges include:

- More exhibitor demand than could be accommodated in the space.
- In 2018 the catered lunch was changed to pre-packed lunch bags to reduce cost; however, there was no pre-registration for the event and the group ran out of food.
- With speakers in the same room as exhibitors, it was difficult to hear the presentations. In the future, the Advisory Committee will plan to have a secondary room for speakers or offer only the information booths.
- The facility prohibited the selling of products and some potential vendors were disappointed that the event was for information purposes only.
- It is difficult to establish an annual event without funding.

Impact: The Expo increased in reach from the first to second year; growing from 100 participants and 25 exhibitors to close to 500 participants and 50 exhibitors. Awareness about the Advisory Committee and its initiatives has increased dramatically throughout the area.

Sustainability: The Advisory Committee collected a contact database of potential exhibitors for future promotion efforts, and many community partners confirmed their interest for the next year's event.

Community Support and Health Services – Age-Friendly Communities and Fall Prevention (Stay On Your Feet) in the North East LHIN

City of North Bay, population: 51,553 (2016)

Background: With funding from the North East Local Health Integration Network (North East LHIN), the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit began implementation of the Stay on Your Feet (SOYF) strategy in 2009. The need to increase the number and type of stakeholders beyond the health sector, especially in the municipal sector, was recognized as a factor for success of the strategy.

Many community partners, including the Mayor, felt passionate about improving the quality of life and maintaining independence for our local senior population. Connecting SOYF and Age-Friendly communities across the north east reduces duplication of work and resources and builds a larger base on which to improve the quality of life for an aging population. Though the SOYF Pillars and the 8 AFC domains are complementary, both frameworks share a common goal: building healthy public policy.

SOYF Pillars	AFC Domains
Strengthen Community Action	Social Participation
	Respect and Social Inclusion
	Civic Participation and Employment
Develop Personal Skills	Communication and Information
Create Supportive Environments	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
	Transportation
	Housing
Re-Orient Health Services	Community Support and Health Services
Build Healthy Public Policy	

Initiative: SOYF is the fall prevention strategy now being implemented by the North East LHIN, five North East Public Health Units and multiple partners and stakeholders across the region. SOYF aims to reduce the rate and severity of falls among adults 65+ years of age through offering a variety of falls prevention resources, free exercise classes in the community, and opportunities for networking, and training. Community collaboration and action is the cornerstone of this best practice strategy. SOYF works across all sectors: public health, primary care, acute care, home and community care, residential care, long-term care and others like municipalities, paramedicine, social services and YMCAs.

The priorities of SOYF follow the five pillars of the Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion: strengthen community action,

develop personal skills, create supportive environments, develop health policies and re-orient health services to focus on prevention. Activities include: education on nine risk factors, promotion of free exercise classes for older adults, community events, region-wide campaigns and distribution of SOYF resources. Integrating best practice standards into the work flow of primary care and long-term care help expand the reach of the strategy. Activities are scheduled throughout a fiscal year and are dependent on the capacity of the coalition members and network.

Funding: Three years of funding from the North East LHIN for two public health units for SOYF began in 2009 and was renewed from 2015 – 2018 for five public health units. As a minimum, in-kind contributions from the local public health units must match the LHIN funding provided. In-kind

resources from community partners, such as meeting rooms and distribution of resources throughout the district, were contributed.

Partners: There are many groups and organizations that network together to make SOYF happen. At the regional level, the North East LHIN and five public health units work together to operationalize the SOYF strategy at the local and regional level. The regional strategic committee works to create links both regionally and provincially. Each of the five public health units involved work to connect the age-friendly initiatives within their areas. Some community partners belong to the core of the SOYF coalition and others are part of the network and assist as capacity permits (or depending on the activity). Members of the coalition include multiple partners from across all sectors: acute care hospitals, long term care homes, retirement homes, community support agencies, Red Cross, older adult volunteers, primary care, family health teams, community health centre, North East LHIN home and community care, lifeline, care link, indigenous friendship centres, First Nations health centres, senior mental health outreach, paramedicine, YMCA, paramedicine and more.

Promotion: SOYF activities, campaigns, messages and events are promoted through paid and earned media, and social media. Community partners also help promote SOYF through their communication channels. The health units distribute information about SOYF through community partners, at activities and at events, such as the North Bay Seniors Expo.

Challenges: It can be difficult to balance the priorities and capacity of community partners.

Impact: In the first 6 months of 2018-2019, 100 older adults have been involved with SOYF planning at a local level and over 2,500 have participated in SOYF activities. Additionally, screening at one nurse practitioner clinic and 8 family health teams across the NE LHIN identified that 40% of older adults screened were deemed at risk for a fall, of these 50% were at risk of malnutrition.

Sustainability: SOYF has renewed funding and partnership agreements between the North East LHIN and the five public health units that spans 2018-2021. One key priority is to embed SOYF into the day-to-day activities of key stakeholders, so that if the funding is no longer available, the fall prevention work continues. [Get more information on SOYF in North Bay.](https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/stay-on-your-feet.asp) (https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/stay-on-your-feet.asp)

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Resource Summary

Hyperlink descriptive text	URL
Advancing Accessibility in Ontario framework	https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario
AFC Outreach Program	https://agefriendlyontario.ca/age-friendly-communities
AFC Ontario Interactive Maps	https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-ontario-interactive-maps/
Age-Friendly Communication: Facts, Tips and Ideas	https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf
Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide	https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/indicators-indicateurs-v2-eng.pdf
Age-Friendly Community Remote Event Planning Resource	https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-communities-remote-events-planning-resource-en-2021-01-01.pdf
Age-Friendly Dashboard created by Hamilton's Age-Friendly Committee	https://sagelink.ca/creating-an-age-friendly-dashboard-to-monitor-and-communicate-progress/
City of London Age-Friendly Parks Checklist	https://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/London-AFParksChecklist_2017.pdf
Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Diverse Populations Addendum	https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-diverse-populations-addendum-en-2021-01-01.pdf
Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Toolkit	https://files.ontario.ca/msaa-age-friendly-community-planning-toolkit-en-2021-01-01.pdf

Resource Summary: *Continued*

Hyperlink descriptive text	URL
Database of questions compiled from existing Age-Friendly Community and Quality-of-Life surveys	http://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-AFC-Instrument-Database.xlsx
Designing an Information Guide for Older Adults	https://sagelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Seniors-Guide-tips-FINAL.pdf
Find accessibility resource guides.	https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-information-businesses#section-1
Find more information on Stay on Your Feet (SOYF) in North Bay.	https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/stay-on-your-feet.asp
Guide to Program and Services for Seniors	https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-programs-and-services-seniors
Let's Get Moving: An Age Friendly Guide to 18 of Hamilton's Outdoor Recreational Trails	https://coahamilton.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2014/09/ALG49659-HCA-Walk-Book-web.pdf
Ontario AFC Recognition Program (2018)	https://www.ontario.ca/page/honours-and-awards-community#section-0
Online Resource List: an interactive list of age-friendly resources from Age-Friendly Ontario.	https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities-ontario/age-friendly-communities-planning-guide/
Read a brochure about the Let's Take the Bus Workshops.	https://coahamilton.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2016/05/Lets-Take-the-Bus-Brochure-May-2017.pdf
Visit the 211 website.	https://211ontario.ca/

