

Age Friendly Communities in the Rockingham Region

Planning for the needs of older residents now and in the future

What's an Age Friendly Community?

The term “Age Friendly” describes communities that enable residents to thrive at every age and stage of life. The project will draw on a national framework developed by [AARP](#) that has been used widely in New Hampshire in recent years and considers elements such as health services and community supports, transportation, housing, design of outdoor spaces and building to accommodate all ages, opportunities for civic and social participation, respect and social inclusion, and communication and information flow.

Why Rockingham County and Why Now?

The number of older adult residents age 65+ in Rockingham County will nearly double in the next two decades. The goal of the project is to work with communities to better understand the needs of older residents, and how to best address those needs now and into the future.

The project will also build on lessons from the COVID19 pandemic. COVID has spotlighted the challenges of physical and social isolation for older adults living alone to meet their basic needs, particularly if they no longer drive. The pandemic has also spurred innovation in services for older adults with expanded home meal delivery, telemedicine appointments and virtual activities for older residents.

The project will build on efforts by regional planning commissions in the Greater Manchester, Monadnock and Strafford regions, an initiative in the Mt. Washington Valley led by AARP and the Gibson Center, and work by individual communities such as Portsmouth. It will likewise draw on the 2019 State Plan on Aging and statewide efforts by the New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging (AHA).

Who is Involved?

The project is made possible by a two-year grant from the [Tufts Health Plan Foundation](#) to the Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Program (RNMOW) and the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC). [AARP New Hampshire](#) is also a collaborating sponsor of the project.



Work at the regional level will be guided by a regional Project Advisory Committee including representatives from participating municipalities, the public health, senior services, housing, transportation, planning, nutrition and home healthcare sectors as well as older adult citizen members.

What Assistance Will Communities Receive?

Each of the six communities selected to participate in year one of the pilot project will receive approximately 60-70 hours of technical assistance from RPC to conduct a local Age Friendly Communities Assessment. Key elements of each assessment include:

- Formation of a local steering committee to guide the assessment process.
- A community-wide survey of older adults to gather input on aspects of their community residents value and would make them want to age in place, concerns they may have about aging in their community, and thoughts on unmet needs and how to address them.
- A local Age Friendly Communities Forum to share survey results and spur further discussion of local needs and opportunities.
- A final Assessment Report summarizing findings from the survey, forum and meetings of the local steering committee.

Year two beginning in July 2022 will include assessments for 3-4 additional communities; and an opportunity for towns that participated in year one to apply for supplemental assistance to implement a local project addressing need(s) identified through their initial assessment.

How will Local Communities Guide their Assessments?

Local Steering Committees are envisioned to include a mix of town staff and residents with knowledge of local needs of and services for older residents. These committees will be asked to help customize and circulate the assessment survey, encourage participation in the local Community Forum, and share personal and professional knowledge to ensure the assessments accurately capture local strengths and unmet needs. In Year 1 each steering committee is envisioned to meet four times between January and July 2022.



For More Information:

Contact Scott Bogle with Rockingham Planning Commission at sbogle@therpc.org or 603-658-0515. Project website coming soon.