EngAging Illinois

A Comprehensive Plan for Living Well

Embracing **age-friendly** *principles makes communities better for everyone. EngAging Illinois encourages inclusive, innovative efforts in all settings to make Illinois a great place to grow up and grow old.*

Preparing Illinois for an Age-Friendly Future



EngAging Illinois: A Comprehensive Plan for Living Well is an exciting multisector plan for aging that sets out a comprehensive strategy to improve the lives and address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. With an emphasis on fairness and inclusion, ***EngAging Illinois*** offers ideas to improve important services, programs, and policies that benefit all of us as we age. It also encourages us to think differently about aging and recognizes the knowledge, experience, and contributions older adults bring to our communities.

EngAging Illinois provides a framework to ensure Illinoisans can live healthy, connected, and financially secure lives as we age. Encouraging more sectors, fields, and localities across the state to become more livable, connected, inclusive, and age-friendly is central to this work.

Why is becoming age-friendly important?

Multisector plans for aging – like ***EngAging Illinois*** – show that when housing, transportation, health, social services and other fields work together, communities become more livable for everyone, not just older adults. Age-friendly communities support independence, strengthen local economies, and ensure residents of all ages can stay connected and engaged.

What does it mean to be age-friendly?

Our physical and social environments play a major role in how we age and what opportunities are available to us. Age-friendly environments, activities, and design allow people of all ages and abilities to be included and meaningfully contribute to our communities. This approach encompasses both built infrastructure – buildings, outdoor spaces, and housing – and social infrastructure, such as health and social care, volunteering, employment, and civic engagement opportunities.

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Age-Friendly or age-friendly

It's easy to be confused! When capitalized, "Age-Friendly" refers to a formal designation by a variety of organizations. We use lowercase "age-friendly" to refer to the broader goal of recognizing the opportunities and challenges for all of us as we age and creating communities that are good for growing up AND growing old.

There are Many Ways to Make Illinois the Best Place to Age Well!

Whether your town is already a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, or your health system, city or institution wants to pursue age-friendly efforts less formally – there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and make your local community a more welcoming place for people of all ages and abilities!

Get Involved

The EngAging Illinois Community Roadmap: Implementing the Multisector Plan for Aging at the Local Level is designed to support the efforts of local governments, community organizations, businesses, and individuals to make their part of Illinois better for people of all ages. The guide suggests steps for creating local initiatives, along with links to helpful resources and inspiration.

Access the guide at: **https://bit.ly/ILcommunityroadmap**



Opportunities for Formal Age-Friendly Designations

There are several organizations that offer formal Age-Friendly designations.
These groups have processes and criteria to be recognized as officially Age-Friendly.

Local Governments and Community Leaders

- Membership in the ***AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities*** means that a community's elected leadership has made a commitment to actively work with residents and local advocates to make their town, township, city, county or state an age-friendly place to live. Apply to join at **aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/joining-the-network.html**
- ***Dementia Friendly America*** is a national network working to ensure that communities across the U.S. are equipped to support people living with dementia and their care partners. Learn more about pursuing a Dementia Friendly Community designation at **dfamerica.org/overview/**

Healthcare Organizations

- ***Age-Friendly Health Systems*** reliably provide a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the "4Ms," to all older adults in their care: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. For more information, visit **ihi.org/partner/initiatives/age-friendly-health-systems**.

Higher Education

- ***The Age-Friendly University Global Network*** is a consortium of higher education institutions committed to promoting healthy aging and enhancing the lives of older members of the global community through education, research, and engagement opportunities. Apply to become a member at **afugn.org/become-a-member**

Let us know about your age-friendly efforts and inspire others across the state – share your work with us!

For more information and to get involved in EngAging Illinois, visit:
https://bit.ly/engagingillinois

Questions? Contact: *Aging.MultisectorPlan@illinois.gov*

IDoA
Illinois Department on Aging