

## Building a Steering Committee

The first step to a successful aging-friendly initiative is to build a team that will work on the initiative together. The team can be organized by a municipal official, service provider, or citizen advocate. The steering committee will keep the aging-friendly effort organized and on track.

Here are a few tips for recruiting people to your team. The attached tool will help you think about the contribution that each person will make to the work.

People to recruit:

- Older residents who have a good understanding of community values, experience working with community-based organizations, and/or knowledge of aging issues.
- Identify a municipal official with an interest in aging-friendly community development. A member of the Select Board or Town Council can be an important connector between the team and the municipality.
- Represent the diversity found in your community. In some place, it could be artists and farmers, in another residents who can trace their lineage for hundreds of years in the community and people who have moved to the community after retiring. Community engagement is stronger when more diversity is represented on your committee.
- Include other community organizations—such as the Town Recreation Department and Planning Board, public health, service clubs, food pantry, voluntary associations, churches, arts organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, Library, Social Services Agencies, schools, senior center, etc. These people will be valuable partners because they will connect the age-friendly effort to the work already being done by other organizations.

Strategies to find the people you need:

- Start by talking with people informally about the need for age-friendly community. Are you a member of a book club? Garden club? Knitting circle? Are you on the library board? Serving on a municipal board? Do you have a group of people that you meet regularly for breakfast? All of those are great places to start a conversation.
- After you have started to gather a team, think about the different groups in your community. Develop a list of groups that are not represented and recruit people who fill the gaps. Would you like to have someone join the Steering Committee who has ties to the comprehensive planning committee, local businesses, to your local hospital or university?
- Think about the people who are already on the committee. Do any of them have ties to groups that aren't represented? Ask the people you initially engaged with the team to brainstorm who to recruit to fill the gaps and how to approach that person or organization.
- Present the benefits of an age-friendly community to your Chamber of Commerce to try to engage local businesses.

### Building your Steering Committee<sup>1</sup>

Groups to be included in your steering committee	Steering Committee Members			
	Name	Interest	Community Connection	Preferred Contact
Older Residents who represent some of the different “groups” in town.				
Representative(s) of your town or city government				
Representative(s) of local Business				
Representatives of local voluntary, religious, and service associations— Mason, Library Board, Food Pantry, Churches, etc.				

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from University of Waterloo (2013). Age Friendly Communities: Tools for Building Strong Communities. Online: <http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/index.html>

