

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Places for People of All Ages

Age-friendly communities are places that aim to be inclusive and accessible to people regardless of their age. By creating spaces that seek to bring people of all ages together, communities can strengthen their sense of community and increase the number of interactions amongst people from younger and older generations, as well as those who are middle-aged.

Age-friendly communities establish places that are designated to facilitate a positive interaction between the built and social environment, which encourages people of all ages to come together.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one in every five Americans will be 65 years or older by 2030. With this demographic shift come new challenges that will require planning efforts that emphasize an aging population, while at the same time ensuring that younger generations are included in the planning process.

As the population continues to age, communities will need to provide adequate amenities and resources for an aging population. Age-friendly planning practices provide communities with an opportunity to connect different age groups and provide a way to increase community interaction and cohesion.

By striving towards age-friendly planning principles and practices, communities can continue to be an attractive destination for people of all ages. Incorporating these design and planning principles is a long-term effort that will require policy changes at the local level.

Continue reading on next page



Image Source: Giffels Webster

Age-Friendly Planning Practices

- Universal design for sidewalks and public spaces
- A mix of affordable housing options
- Programs that encourage interactions among different age groups
- Facilities (healthcare, social services, childcare, etc.) located in close proximity with one another
- Multigenerational businesses that cater to a wide range of needs
- Accessible public transportation
- Safe walking and biking paths
- Shared mobility options
- Inclusive playgrounds

Definitions /Terms to Know



- **Multigenerational Planning:** Multigenerational planning strives to plan for and accommodate the needs of the younger population and older population. This approach focuses more on physical well-being and access to public spaces and the built environment.
- **Intergenerational Planning:** Intergenerational planning differs from multigenerational planning by focusing on the emotional and social well-being of different groups. Additionally, this approach strives to provide spaces and opportunities for people of different ages, not just the younger and older population, to form relationships and engage with one another.
- **Universal Design:** Universal design is a method of design that prioritizes increasing access to spaces for people of all ages and abilities. This design principle provides a way for public spaces to become accommodating for all users and aid in facilitating positive interaction between all members of the community. Examples of universal design include:

- Automated doors
- Wayfinding design elements (contrasting colors, textured ground surfaces, etc.)
- Smooth, wide sidewalks and pathways
- Curb cuts that provide access for wheelchairs, strollers, bikes, etc.
- Seats and benches
- Zero-step entries



Source: AARP



Image Sources: Giffels Webster

Additional Resources

- AARP – [Livable Communities](#)
- American Planning Association – [Policy Guide on Aging in Community](#)
- American Planning Association – [Intergenerational Community Planning](#)
- World Health Organization – [Age-Friendly Environments](#)
- Giffels Webster Newsletter – [Universal Design and Visitability](#)

For more information, please contact Giffels Webster at 866.271.9663. www.giffelswebster.com