



Partners for
Livable Communities

AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVE



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

National Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Aging In Place Work Program

Process Overview

The Aging in Place program is an 18-month community engagement process to assist communities to improve their livability for older persons and in turn, increase livability for all people. At the end of 18 months your community will have:

- ❑ Increased awareness of the opportunities the approaching aging demographic offers,
- ❑ Engaged a team of local powerful stakeholders to address aging issues,
- ❑ Launched a demonstration project that illustrates your objectives, and
- ❑ Developed a five-year game plan for an elder-friendly community.

The engine for this project comes from you—the most powerful spokesperson for your community. Partners, n4a and our consultants (aka The Project Team) will be available throughout the process to guide your community's needs. The Project Team will serve as a knowledgeable resource center to support your inquiries via phone, email or fax. Partners and n4a strongly believe that citizens must be engaged throughout the program. To facilitate public awareness and involvement, a quarterly newsletter highlighting local government activities in Aging in Place along with links to funding and recent articles related to the topic will be sent to each community.

Each participant will be provided with resource materials to guide them through the 18-month process. The Aging in Place Resource Binder will give participants background information on aging and program resources. It will also walk each committee through the process, supplying creative solutions to issue areas. The binder will contain:

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| * A white paper | * Staff directory |
| * An annotated resource directory | * Aging In Place Work Program |
| * National Aging Best Practices | * Aging In Place Worksheets |

PHASE I: Strategic Organizing

Step 1: Convening the Steering Committee

Phase I is the first element to a successful program. In this phase, each community will select a steering committee that will follow the project until completion. This committee should be comprised of 8-12 members from the governmental, non-profit, business, civic and philanthropic arenas. They will be responsible for identifying community Aging in Place challenges and opportunities, solidifying the scope of the community agenda and pinpointing a local “banner” issue that the community will address. The committee should have a broad-based leadership core. Each member should be well versed in one of these eight areas:

- Health, Social and Public Safety Services
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Educational, Cultural & Social Opportunity
- Recreational Opportunities
- Local Leadership
- Transportation
- Community Design and Planning

It is assumed Partners and n4a’s initial point of contact will act as secretariat. The secretariat’s first job will be to convene a group of individuals as the steering committee. The steering committee will determine how the group will best function and develop a leadership structure that will most benefit the committee and community. Partners and n4a will be on speakerphone for the first meeting to aid the secretariat, to outline the effort, answer any questions and ensure a smooth introductory meeting.

Step 2: Beginning to Work Together

After the steering committee has been formed, each committee should use their first meeting to become familiar with the program, walk through the 18-month process, critique and evaluate community engagement plan and your community’s strengths and weaknesses in this area and begin to feel comfortable with the steering committee and the role of Partners and n4a. This is also a crucial time to identify any people who are missing from the core local group. Partners/n4a will be available to participate in a conference call to help facilitate this process. The purpose of the conference call will be to address any lingering questions or comments on the 18-month process.

Step 3: Understanding and naming the issues of your community

Initial committee meetings should focus on familiarizing the group on the local problems of Aging in Place for your community. Materials in the Resource Binder will guide each community through the eight key areas of the Aging in Place program, provide pertinent reading, community checklists, a resource directory, best practices and a host of other helpful materials. This is to be used to educate each steering committee member on the impact an aging population will have on your community. The program has been designed to aid communities on a broad level, but also to pinpoint a particular area such as transportation, the elderly as economic generators or improved service delivery that the steering committee feels is the most critical issue for the community as it prepares to address the needs of an increasing aging population. Selecting a local ‘banner’ issue is important to move the community forward in its efforts to address Aging in Place. By recognizing one issue, the community will be able to demonstrate commitment and action in addressing the needs of a growing older population.

After the committee is familiar with the eight main issues of Aging In Place and have selected a “banner” issue to address, it will then create a mission statement. The mission statement will serve two purposes. First, it will stress the community’s major aging challenging opportunity and second, communities can package it to get the attention of the public and high profile individuals. This will be most helpful for phase II.

Timeline: 2 Months

PHASE II: Expanding the Circle

Step 1: Secure a stakeholders group

The purpose of Phase II is to identify key stakeholders and resources that haven’t necessarily acknowledged aging as an important issue. The steering committee must solicit potential candidates who they feel will fill the role of an instrumental civic leader and promote the issue at large. Key stakeholders might include the Chamber of Commerce, important community and political figures, local faith-based groups, United Way, local community foundations, a TV or newspaper owner and the Mayor. This stakeholders group should be 20-35 members, including the steering committee. Questions the steering committee should pose in developing the stakeholders group are:

- Why is this a key issue for community members?
- Who are potential candidates and what are their interests?
- Will these candidates be an asset and aid civic action?

- How will your group secure these people's commitment?

These questions can serve as a way to evaluate candidates and package the cause. A staff member of Partners/N4A will be at the initial meeting to help facilitate the meeting and answer questions participants might have.

Step 2: Community action plan

The steering committee should familiarize the stakeholders team with the issues of Aging in Place and, if time permits, renew discussion of the community's "banner" issue. The more your steering committee can sell the importance of this initiative, the more enthusiastic your stakeholders group will be. Partners/n4a will facilitate the first meeting of each community's stakeholders group to frame the national perspective on issue (if desired) and to assist the group to move from mission to action. The Project Team will also aid communities develop their action plan.

With key stakeholders now invested in Aging in Place, each community will be ready to delve into an action plan. The community action plan should produce some form of public outreach in order to mobilize the public on the issue of an elderly-friendly community. The emphasis of this step is to peak public interest and to develop community buy-in to the process, not to create an elaborate program. Therefore, projects should focus on a very specific issue and a outcome that is achievable during the project timeframe. Examples of such outcomes would be: conducting a community forum on housing modification to enable older residents to Age in Place, sponsoring a Senior Transportation Forum to assess the mobility needs of an aging population and the resources available to assist them; holding a forum with local educational institutions to discuss Lifelong Learning opportunities. This is a chance for each community to reveal their knowledge on the issue and willingness to embrace this initiative. It is also a chance to see how the Stakeholders Committee undertakes a civic action plan.

Timeline: 7-9 months

PHASE III: Defining a Multiple-Year Game Plan

Step 1: Tailoring the Plan

Within 18 months, it is the goal of Partners and n4a to get each participating community excited and committed to create an elder-friendly community. While it is important to lay a strong foundation, it is crucial to continue with the Aging in Place agenda beyond the 18-month contract. This is the purpose of Phase III. Partners and n4a will work with the Stakeholders Committee to develop a strategic plan for the

next five (5) years. Each community's specific action plan will be tailored to focus on the banner issue and demographics to formulate a local, realistic long-term agenda. The final phase will allow the Aging in Place initiative to become embedded into each community which will ultimately improve transportation, housing, service delivery and the overall quality of life not only for a community's older adults but for all generations.

Partners and n4a see the five-year strategic plan as the major product of the 18-month program. Each community will know best what is needed make it "a good community in which to grow up and to grow old", thus, the stakeholders group will be the best group to guide the game plan. The stakeholders team should facilitate focus groups or town hall meetings to mobilize a visioning process with the help of the community. The final product will be a comprehensive plan of the community's vision, public engagement techniques, and an overview of projects that will be undertaken.

Step 2: Public Launch and Celebration

The development of the multi-year plan and the work leading up to it deserve to be showcased and celebrated. Partners and n4a encourage each community to decide a visible format or event to achieve this important goal. Celebrating the efforts on Aging in Place achieved to date will help to give public visibility to the effort and progress made to achieve the community's vision for creating an elder friendly community. Ideas for the public launch/celebration might include: special feature article in the local paper highlight the community demographics, defining the community's Aging in Place vision, plan for the future and progress made to date; Community Aging in Place fair with speakers and exhibits on home modification/universal design options in home building, new technology to monitor older adults health needs at home, older driver safety training, etc.; during Older Americans Month (May) holding a series of community forums and exhibits on the Community's Aging In Place initiative with local neighborhood and other civic groups.

PHASE IV: A National Aging in Place Blueprint

Partners and n4a will compile the good work of all of the participating communities to develop a National Blueprint on Aging in Place. The finished publication will include broad solutions to the Aging in Place challenges and opportunities confronting communities across the nation, specific community solutions, products produced, and the comprehensive plans of all participants.