

Building Age-Friendly Communities

AGE-FRIENDLY CHECKLIST

This checklist incorporates information from the *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* developed by the World Health Organization; and *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide*, developed by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors.

The checklist provides a guide for your community as you undertake an age-friendly assessment. The checklist outlines the features and elements found in an age-friendly community and is organized around major aspects of community life.

A downloadable version of the Age-Friendly Checklist is available at www.health.alberta.ca

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Sidewalks, Pathways and Trails

- Sidewalks, pathways and trails are accessible, well-maintained, well-lit and cleared of snow and ice.
- Sidewalks are continuous, with low curbs and can accommodate mobility devices such as walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers.
- Snow removal is prompt and considerate (e.g. consideration is given to how snow is piled for those who need to get in and out of cars, and for those who may be using walkers, wheelchairs, scooters or strollers).
- Parking lots are well-maintained and cleared of snow and ice.
- Streets are well-maintained.
- Rain shelters are available to support pedestrians and are accessible for people using mobility devices.

Public Restrooms and Rest Areas

- Public washrooms are accessible and can accommodate people with a variety of disabilities (e.g. accommodations include push buttons, wide doors, hand rails and locks that are easy to open).
- Public washrooms and rest areas are located at convenient locations with proper signage (e.g. large print, good colour contrast, Braille).
- Accessible benches are located along sidewalks, paths or trails, and are spaced at regular intervals.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

Safety and Security

- Programs and policies are in place to support community safety and crime prevention.
- Neighbourhoods and trails are well lit.

Buildings

- Public buildings and businesses are accessible and have:
 - ramps with a slope appropriate for people using walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers;
 - few, or no, stairs to get into buildings and within buildings, or alternative ways to enter and access buildings;
 - non-slip flooring;
 - doors that are easy to open;
 - accessible washrooms located on the main floor; and
 - parking that is well-maintained and easy to access (including considerations such as use of tactile markers and good colour contrast).

Amenities (places such as grocery stores, churches, government buildings and community centres)

- Services are grouped together, located in close proximity to where people live.
- Services and stores can be easily accessed (e.g. they are located on the ground floor of buildings, include wheelchair ramps, etc.).

Building Age-Friendly Communities

TRANSPORTATION

Roads

- Roads are well-maintained, well-lit and are supported by clearly visible signage.
- Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Traffic lines on pavement are clear and visible.
- Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- Pedestrian crossing controls allow adequate time for people with limited mobility to cross.

Parking

- Parking lots and street parking are located close to amenities.
- Parking regulations are enforced (e.g. preventing people from parking in emergency zones and parking spaces for persons with disabilities).
- There are sufficient numbers of parking spots for persons with disabilities.
- Parking and drop-off areas are safe and sufficiently marked.

Snow Removal

- Snow removal of public sidewalks, roads and parking areas is prompt.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

Transportation Services

- Accessible, affordable and convenient public transportation options are available.
- Public transportation services are clear, with well-marked routes and vehicles.
- Public transportation services are reliable and frequent, and meet the needs of citizens.
- Vehicles used for public transit are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- Where public transportation is limited, volunteer and/or private transportation services are available.
- Affordable and accessible community transportation services (e.g. shuttle vans) are available to take citizens to medical appointments, shopping excursions and community events.
- Affordable and accessible community transportation services are available to take citizens to appointments and events in larger centers.
- Taxis or similar options are available, accessible and affordable to citizens who need them.
- Accessible transportation for persons with a variety of disabilities, including mobility challenges, is available across the range of transportation services.

Information

- Information is provided to seniors and persons with disabilities in alternate formats (including large print) about the range of transportation services (public and private) available to them, including information on how and where to access them, schedules and fees.
- The use of public and alternative transportation is promoted in the community.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

HOUSING

Housing Options

- A range of appropriate and affordable housing options (including for sale and for rent) are available, such as apartments, independent living, smaller condominiums and family homes.
- Housing is located in close proximity to public, commercial and religious services.
- Housing options (including houses and apartments) are available that are responsive to local needs, including the needs of seniors, persons with disabilities and young families.

Aging in the Right Place

- Home supports (e.g. home maintenance and personal care) are available to enable older Albertans to live at home.
- Systems are in place and available to assist citizens who live alone (e.g. volunteer services, networks of neighbours or community members) who may have mobility or health challenges.
- Housing modifications are available and affordable, with financial assistance provided for those on fixed incomes.
- New housing is built to accommodate individuals and families at different life stages and/or to allow people to adapt their homes to meet changing needs.
- New housing is encouraged to consider principles of universal design. (For example, interior spaces have even surfaces and are wheelchair accessible to allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.)
- Information on financial assistance programs for home modifications is readily available and easily accessible by those who need it.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Events and Activities

- There are a range of events and activities for people of all ages, including physical and recreational activities, spectator sporting events, church and school related events, cultural events, etc.
- Activities available include outdoor and indoor activities.
- Community events and activities are intergenerational and designed to appeal to people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Community events and activities are held in locations that are served by affordable and accessible transportation.
- A range of enrichment and learning opportunities are accessible and affordable and located in places that are served by public transportation (e.g. community centres, universities, colleges).
- Community activities are well-publicized to all community members through a variety of methods, including those appropriate for persons with disabilities.
- Community activities and events are held in locations that are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.

Preventing Isolation

- People who do not, or cannot, leave their homes receive visits from community agencies, organizations or volunteers.
- There are ongoing outreach efforts to include people who are at risk of social isolation.
- A culture of inclusion and “neighbours helping neighbours” is promoted in the community.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- All citizens are treated respectfully.
- Programs are available to children and youth that focus on how to treat other members of the community with respect and empathy.
- Citizens of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to provide their input on community matters, and are encouraged to participate in community dialogues and conversations.
- People who provide services to the public (including health care, commerce, and public services) are courteous, helpful and attuned to the needs of citizens with varying degrees of physical and cognitive abilities.
- Community-wide settings, activities and events are accessible to all citizens.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Civic Participation

- Citizens of varying ages, abilities and backgrounds are well represented on councils, boards and committees.
- A range of volunteer opportunities are available that meet the interests of community members, including seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Volunteering options allow for intergenerational interaction.
- Opportunities for volunteering are flexible to accommodate people with differing interests, needs and preferences.

Employment

- Hiring policies encourage diversity in age and ability as well as skills and experience.
- Workplaces offer flexible work scheduling options such as part-time or seasonal employment, job sharing, and/or compressed work weeks.
- Employee development opportunities, such as training in new technologies and career development, are available to all workers.
- Retirement programs and policies support the participation of all citizens, regardless of age, should they choose to remain in the labour force.

Building Age-Friendly Communities

Accessibility

- Transportation is available and accessible to older adults who want to participate in volunteer, civic or paid employment.
- Workplaces are willing and able to adapt worksites to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and those with reduced mobility.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Widespread Communication

- There is regular and reliable distribution of information about events and programs (including contact information) through local government and/or voluntary organizations.
- There are regular and reliable mechanisms to disseminate information about community events and programs (including contact information) and topics of interest.
- Information is disseminated/posted where residents conduct their daily activities — such as the post office, financial institutions, grocery stores, places of worship, local centres and town halls.
- Information is provided to citizens who are socially isolated from service providers through mechanisms such as volunteer callers and visitors, home support workers, hairdressers, or caretakers.

Accessible Communication

- Written communication is clearly printed in large letters and is easy to read.
- Information is available in alternate formats (e.g. electronic, captioning, Braille).
- Literacy programs are available, including computer literacy programs.
- Telephone answering services give clear and concise messaging to callers and provide an option to speak with a real person.
- Access to computers and the internet is available at a local centre open to the public (i.e. the library).

Building Age-Friendly Communities

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Home Health and Support Services

- An adequate range of health and community support services are offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Affordable and available health and home support services (e.g. personal care, housekeeping, home maintenance) are in place and available in a timely manner.
- Affordable meal options are available in the community (e.g. meals on wheels, regular community dinners).
- Delivery services (e.g. of groceries, medicines, etc.) or escorted shopping services are available in the community.

Facilities

- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Housing options (including supportive living and long-term care accommodations) are located close to key services.
- Health and community service facilities are fully accessible by citizens with all levels of mobility.

Community and Information

- Citizens are kept well-informed through a variety of media of the services they may be eligible for and how they are accessed.
- Information is provided to families who are, or will be, caring for others.
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of all citizens.