

CHANGEMAKER (def.):
Someone who imagines a new reality, acts, and collaborates with others to bring that new reality into being. Working as a coalition of CHANGEMAKERS is the most powerful way to make a difference in our communities.

Charter Arrowhead Changemakers:

The Regional Age-Friendly Collaborative

Minnesota's Age-Friendly Landscape

We are in the midst of a longevity revolution! Research shows most older Minnesotans want to remain in their homes and communities as long as possible, but we must act to build communities that are great places to grow up and grow old and assess infrastructure investments through the lens of longevity.

Minnesota is experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift related to a population that grows older and more diverse each day. In 2020, for the first time, the number of Minnesotans 65 and older exceeded the number of children 18 and under, and rural Minnesota is aging faster than urban areas. This unprecedented demographic shift calls for us to reframe how we think about aging; it presents several opportunities and challenges for decision-makers to consider in areas including financial security, housing, transportation, health care, employment, and social service needs. An age-friendly community enables people of all ages to participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age. **But what does it mean to be "age-friendly," and how does this look in your state, community, or organization?** Lasting change takes a multifaceted approach; Minnesota is embarking on shared efforts to implement age-friendly policies, programs, and practices on state, regional, and local levels.

In 2019, Governor Tim Walz established the Governor's Council on Age-Friendly Minnesota and formalized his commitment to making Minnesota the best state to live in at any age. The Council was tasked with developing a comprehensive assessment and action plan to coordinate work across state, local and tribal governments, non-profits, communities, businesses, and others to support aging adults in Minnesota. In August 2020, this group submitted its report of eight recommendations to make aging a state priority. In a 2021 Special Session, the legislature approved the continuation of the Council and approved funding to ignite age-friendly work on a local level.

Age-Friendly Definition

An Age-Friendly community values and includes people of all ages, stages, abilities, race, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is one that prioritizes safety, has affordable and appropriate

housing and transportation options, and offers community features and opportunities that nurture personal agency, purpose, social engagement and connectedness, activity, and belonging for people of all ages. Age-Friendly communities design and align resources to enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life.

Age-Friendly Network Designation

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities serves as a catalyst to educate local leaders (elected officials and engaged residents) and encourage them to implement changes that make communities more livable for people of all ages, especially older adults. The availability and quality of community features referred to as the "8 Domains of Livability" have a powerful impact on the well-being of older adults.

In an age-friendly community, this framework is used to organize and prioritize the shared work needed to become a more livable place for people of all ages.



Civic Participation
and Employment



Health Services and
Community Supports



Communication
and Information



Transportation



Outdoor Spaces
and Buildings



Housing



Social
Participation



Respect and
Social Inclusion

The Network provides cities, towns, counties, and states with the resources to become more age-friendly by tapping into national and global research, planning models, and best practices. The Age-Friendly designation is not a milestone to achieve; instead, it is a commitment by the community and the people in it to ensure we have vibrant communities where all can choose how they live as they age.

Members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities commit to an assessment process and cycle of continuous improvement, the steps of which typically require the member community to:

1. Establish a way to include older residents in all stages of the age-friendly planning and implementation process
2. Conduct a community needs assessment
3. Develop an action and evaluation plan based on the assessment results
4. Submit the plan for review by AARP
5. Implement and work toward the goals of the plan
6. Share solutions, successes, and best practices with AARP
7. Assess the plan's impact and submit progress reports
8. Repeat!

Purpose of Arrowhead Changemakers

Arrowhead Changemakers serve as ambassadors to make meaningful, lasting change that helps their community become a better place to grow up and grow old. Changes can be made in big or small ways. Changemakers are critical in bringing localized issues and experiences to inform the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging, the Governor’s Council on an Age Friendly MN, and other local leaders working on age-friendly policies and practices that prioritize longevity and quality of life for all community members.

Arrowhead Changemakers strive to:

- Be grounded in an understanding of Age-Friendly communities and work collectively to prioritize and implement positive societal change for older residents across the Arrowhead region.
- Connect with other Changemakers to discuss topics related to older adults and people of all ages, including but not limited to housing, workforce development/civic engagement, transportation, social participation, emergency preparedness, public spaces, health services, community support, emergency preparedness, and more!
- Embrace the concept of Age-Diversity as a net positive.
- Determine if, when, and where it makes sense for communities to enter the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities—or determine alternate means to influence community planners, businesses, or government units.
- Provide advocacy and awareness to local businesses, organizations, government units, and other groups regarding changing demographics and subsequent implications.
- Support local businesses in adopting an age-friendly lens through disseminating the regional Aging Impact Award or other means as appropriate.

Leadership

We must ensure aging is a strategic priority on a local, regional, and state level. The Arrowhead Changemakers is co-facilitated by Duluth Aging Support (Mimi Stender) and the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging (Georgia Lane). Ms. Stender also serves as a community representative on the [Governor’s Council on Age-Friendly Minnesota](#).

Composition, Commitment & Expectations

We seek local community members and leaders who have a passion for impacting decisions that enable people to age successfully in their communities and advocate for the needs and wants of older adults.



Composition

- Up to two representatives per county: Aitkin, Cook, Carlton, Itasca, Lake, Koochiching, Northern St. Louis County, and Southern St. Louis County, and representation from tribal nations. Additional members considered upon request.
- We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and will seek representation from BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disability communities.

Time Commitment

- Commit to serving on this collaborative for one year.
- Meet every other month, virtually five times, two hours each meeting.
- Meet once in person to provide training and education to equip Changemakers with the tools needed to be effective.
- Individual community engagement and outreach activities in your community at your discretion (recommend a minimum of one monthly activity).

General Expectations

- Serve as an Arrowhead Changemaker, aging ambassador, in local communities.
- Learn and maintain a general understanding of the basic concepts and framework for aging demographics, Age-Friendly Communities and Age-Friendly Minnesota and participate in relevant learning opportunities as requested. (It is not a requirement to be an officially designated AARP Age-Friendly Community or County) Training and ongoing information sharing will be provided!
- Individual communication monthly between each Changemaker and one of the co-chairs.
- Engage in community in ways that work for each Changemaker, examples include:
 - Connect with faith communities, businesses, local government or community groups to share information on aging demographics and tools for community sectors to become more Age-Friendly
 - Write a letter to the editor or identify other public communication platforms to share facts, messaging, and calls to action.
 - Advocate for older community members and caregivers within personal and professional networks
 - Intentionally convene older community members and caregivers to learn from their experiences and report back to the Arrowhead Changemakers group
 - Assist with developing regional age-friendly messaging to inform stakeholder groups

Stipend

- Mileage reimbursement and a \$500 stipend is available upon request.

For more information about the Arrowhead Changemakers, please contact:



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