

WASHINGTON AGE- AND DEMENTIA- FRIENDLY STATE DESIGNATION

PARTNERSHIP WITH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY, AND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES



WHAT IS AGE-AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY?

Age-friendly communities consider goals that promote high quality of life for each person regardless of age, allowing older people the opportunity to remain active in their community. Age-friendly designation comes with acceptance into the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#).

Dementia-friendly communities promote awareness of dementia, educating residents about how to best support people touched by dementia and introducing systemic changes within businesses, government, and neighborhoods. Dementia-friendly designation comes with acceptance into the [Dementia-Friendly America \(DFA\) network](#).

Together Age- and Dementia- Friendly state designations support the initial steps of the Washington Multi-sector Plan on Aging (MPA). Other states, such as [Massachusetts](#) and [California](#), leveraged their Age- and Dementia-Friendly designations to build a robust and community-led MPA.

Members of both the AARP and DFA Networks gain access to expert-level technical assistance, connections to the full peer network, private group forums, and resources to guide and inform the development of an action plan and involve community members. Washington State's designations would leverage work already carried out with Trust for America's Health Age-Friendly Public Health Systems and would serve to support potential MPA and Aging Summit.

WHAT IS ALREADY HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON?

Puyallup, Seattle, Tacoma, Renton, and White Salmon have already joined the AARP Age-Friendly Network. Washington is well-suited to continue and strengthen existing work that can be considered for Age-And Dementia-Friendly designations from across the state, such as:

- **[Center for Health Care Strategies \(CHCS\) MPA Learning Collaborative:](#)** As a collaboration between Department of Health (DOH), Health Care Authority (HCA), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Washington Association of Agencies on Aging (W4A), and AARP Washington, Washington State was accepted into the 2023-24 CHCS learning collaborative to support a potential MPA.
- **[Dementia Action Collaborative \(DAC\):](#)** Since 2016 the DAC has developed dementia-specific resources for individuals, families, and care partners, drafted the 2023-28 State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias, and developed guidance materials for health care professionals.



- **Aging and Long-Term Support Administration's (ALTA) Strategic Plan:** ALTA recently updated their strategic plan with over 18 cross sector participants to ensure the needs of the full community were accounted for across sectors. Participants included state agencies, tribes, local partners, private partners, and the state of Virginia.

WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Washington has the second longest lifespan in the country and is home to an increasingly diverse aging population. Becoming Age- and Dementia-Friendly could improve the quality of life for all Washingtonians. The focus of these efforts are to:

- Improve health equity
- Address the emerging needs of a more diverse aging population

These efforts could mean:



Active inclusion and engagement of older adults in their communities and neighborhoods.



Focus on policies, systems, and environments to embed aging into statewide initiatives.



Reduce stigma and ageism of older adults, people living with dementia, and their care partners.



Potentially improve Medicaid savings by supporting health at all ages.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

This effort is led by three state agencies: DOH, HCA, DSHS. The core team is collaborating with key stakeholders and coordinating with other state agencies, local health departments, Tribal Nations, and private partners to build a statewide initiative for Age- and Dementia-Friendly designations and ultimately the MPA.

WHAT DATA SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

- By 2040, a vast majority of counties in Washington will have at least one in five residents over age 65.
- In 2022, more than 2.6 million visits to Washington food pantries were by older adults.
- Based on the 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1 in 11 Washington adults ages 45+ are experiencing subjective cognitive decline.
- One in three older adults live with at least one disability. Sixty-one percent of Washington transportation stations and vehicles are ADA-accessible.
- Racialized health disparities across the life course result in higher rates of dementia among people who are Black/African American or American Indian/Alaska Native.
- The number of working adults to support people over the age of 75 is decreasing from 6 working adults per older adult to 3 working adults by 2040.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- [AARP Age-Friendly Network](#)
- [Dementia-Friendly America](#)
- **DOH Contact:** [Marci Getz](#)
- **HCA Contact:** [Jamie Teuteberg](#)
- **DSHS Contact:** [Lynne Korte](#)
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