

Government, Community, and Mobility Planning

Local governments determine many community features that influence our day-to-day lives. By planning and developing the right physical and social infrastructure local government can make communities more livable for people with dementia and their care partners. Dementia friendly practices can:

1. Minimize adverse health outcomes and improve quality of life for people with dementia, and reduce care partner stress.
2. Allow a person with dementia to remain at home longer, cutting costs tied to stays in health care facilities.
3. Create a community that is more livable for all residents, including older adults and people with disabilities.
4. Benefit local economies by fostering a more attractive, competitive, and sustainable community.¹

Emergency Planning and Response



Ready to implement dementia friendly practices? Follow the steps:

1

For Community Planning

- Help community stakeholders understand the impact of dementia^{2,3} and commit to dementia friendly principles.
- Assess and respond to needs related to dementia and community characteristics.

1. Help stakeholders understand impact of dementia and community needs:
 - Include public and private agencies, aging and dementia professionals, older adults, people with dementia, care partners, and the general public in assessments and decision making.
2. Apply dementia friendly principles/best practices for local governments:
 - Plan, assess, design and implement programs and services that value contributions of all generations, abilities, and community sectors.
 - Plan for safe, affordable, accessible and dementia capable housing, transportation services, public safety and emergency response, navigable streets, roads and way-finding, businesses, public health, social services, and recreation such as parks and libraries.
 - Be proactive and willing to partner with others, and

promote coordination among departments.

- Prepare to adjust budgets, adopt building or land use changes, update products and services, and change functions or approaches as needed.
- Integrate needs of people with dementia into comprehensive planning process.
- Provide training and resources to city/county staff, emergency responders, and to staff in public health/human services on serving and communicating with people with dementia.

3. Gather data:

- Assess home life, mobility, community life⁴, and public safety by gathering data, reporting and analyzing findings to understand characteristics such as the differences between rural and urban areas, ethnic and cultural considerations, needs and wishes of people with dementia and care partners in your community.

2

For Home Life

- Increase diversity of affordable housing options near transportation and services.
- Expand access to quality home modification and repair services that improve accessibility and meet changing needs.

Considerations for Home Accessibility Modification:⁵

- Design features in custom building or remodeling projects that recognize each person's unique home features and his or her mobility, sensory, and cognitive impairments.
- Promote coordination among professional trade organizations (home builders/remodelers, architects, occupational and physical therapists, interior designers) to develop standards and practices that would help consumers make informed choices to meet their needs.
- Make it easy for consumers and practitioners to learn about design guidelines, installation techniques, products, funding sources, and qualified practitioners.

3

For Mobility^{6,7,8}

- Improve planning and coordination of transportation and services.
- Support increased funding for transportation that serves older users and people with dementia.

1. Mobility planning and coordination:

- Meet mobility and assistance needs by integrating alternatives into transportation planning and services, streets and human services, and coordinate with land use and development planning.
- Develop policy that fosters complete streets, pedestrian safety and ease, and rural access.
- Promote easy-to-navigate public spaces that incorporate universal design features: visible, easy-to-read signs and schedules; trails and sidewalks that are wide, smooth, flat/low slope and non-slip.
- Recognize increased dependence on automobile, influence of person's location (rural/urban) on mobility, and effect of physical, sensory, and cognitive limitations.
- Develop awareness of problems faced by people when they can no longer drive and plan now to reduce

unnecessary isolation and dependence in the future.

- Plan and design dementia friendly, safe roads and walking/bicycling environments for drivers and pedestrians: walking/cycling paths are protected from heavy traffic; crosswalks have audible cues and appropriate timing.

2. Transportation considerations:

- Promote consistent, reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation options that expand and improve services to meet needs of people with dementia and their care partners by considering:
 - a range of mobility options from walking, driving, getting rides from others, and services provided by public agencies and private businesses such as taxis
 - improvements to design for access

- use familiar, easily understood features, e.g., easy-to-open lever handles on gates/doors
- training to help transportation operators understand, interact with, and assist people with dementia¹¹
- outreach to help people feel comfortable with riding the bus or other options available to them
- minimize street clutter, and ensure adequate lighting keeping in mind glare, textural and color contrasts, and noise

4

For Community Life

- Offer people with dementia opportunities to engage in community life.

How to support engagement with community life (see DFA Community Based Supports and Services sector guide):

- Promote participation in a range of social, leisure, faith-based, and neighborhood activities that are accessible, inclusive, and acknowledge the potential of the person with dementia.
- Challenge stigma and build understanding across generations.
- Develop welcoming, unthreatening physical environments with well-defined restrooms, shelter, and seating with arm and back rests.
- Signs should use large graphics, realistic symbols and color contrast (dark on light background).
- Know about and direct people with dementia and their care partners to services.
- Support programs (e.g., chore services) that allow people with dementia to remain independent as long as possible.
- Encourage dementia friendly and responsive businesses and services.

For Public Safety, Disaster Planning and Emergency Response

Foster community planning and family preparation that considers safety, security, and needs of people with dementia in disaster planning and emergency response:⁹

- Facilitate coordination among state and local emergency management offices and the aging services network.
- Develop special needs registries identifying people with dementia who may need help in the event of a disaster.
- Provide specialized education on disaster preparedness to people with dementia and their care partners and families.
- Include people with dementia and their care partners in the development of local emergency plans; integrate all ages and abilities into disaster planning, response, and recovery.
- Plan for people with dementia, who are increasingly vulnerable and may need additional support during disaster or emergency events.

References

1. **AARP, The Livability Economy**
<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2015/livability-economy.html>
2. **Tilly, J., Wiener, J., Gould, E., Dementia Capable States and Communities: The Basics**
http://www.aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/HPW/Alz_Grants/docs/BH-Brief-Dementia-Capable-Basics.pdf
3. **Alzheimer's Association, 2015 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures**
http://www.alz.org/facts/downloads/facts_figures_2015.pdf
4. **Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, Guide to Elder Friendly Community Building**
<http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us/documents/pdf/elderfriendly.pdf>
5. **Lifetime Home Project, Minnesota Home Accessibility Modification Services**
http://mn.gov/deed/images/IL_Home_Accessibility_Needs_Assessment.pdf
6. **American Public Transportation Association, Funding the Public Transportation Needs of an Aging Population**
http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/TCRP_J11_Funding_Transit_Needs_of_Aging_Population.pdf
7. **Bailey, Linda. Aging Americans: Stranded without options**
http://www.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/aging_stranded.pdf
8. **National Conference of State Legislatures, AARP Public Policy Institute : Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices**
<http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/aging-in-place-2011-full.pdf>
9. **Alzheimer's Association, RTI International: Disaster Planning: HCBS for People with Dementia and their caregivers**
http://www.aoa.gov/AoA_Programs/HPW/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit2_DisasterPreparedness.pdf
10. **Administration for Community Living, Keeping Older Americans and People with Disabilities Safe and Healthy During Emergencies**
http://www.acl.gov/Get_Help/Preparedness/Index.aspx
11. **Home Instead Business Training – Alzheimer's Friendly Business online course**
<http://www.helpforalzheimersfamilies.com/alzheimers-care-training/alzheimers-friendly-business-training/>

Additional Resources

Alzheimer's Association

- **Approaching Alzheimer's: First Responder Training**
<http://alz.org/care/alzheimers-first-responder.asp>
- **Living Well: A Guide for Persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) & Early Dementia**
http://alz.org/mnnd/documents/15_ALZ_Living_Well_Workbook_Web.pdf
- **Taking Action: A Personal and Practical Guide for Persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and Early Alzheimer's Disease**
http://alz.org/mnnd/documents/15_ALZ_Taking_Action_Workbook.pdf
- **24/7 Helpline, 1-800-272-3900**
<http://www.alz.org>

International Association of Chiefs of Police

- **Alzheimer's Training Center**
<http://www.theiacp.org/Alzheimers-Training-Center>
- **Identifying and Helping a Driver with Alzheimer's Disease**
<http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/documents/pdfs/IACP-Alzheimer-MotoristAssist.pdf>
- **Ten Warning Signs a Driver May Have Alzheimer's Disease, Ten Steps for Interacting**
<http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/documents/pdfs/IACP-AlzheimerPocketcard.pdf>

Others

- **National Conference of State Legislatures and AARP Public Policy Institute - Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices**
<http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/aging-in-place-2011-full.pdf>
- **Alzheimer's Society, Building Dementia-friendly communities**
http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=2283
- **Ball State University, School of Nursing, Alzhome, The Key to Keeping Your Loved One at Home**
<http://www.bsu.edu/web/nursing/alzhome>

- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, At Home with Alzheimer's Disease - Useful Adaptations to the Home Environment**
<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/60849e.pdf>
- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing Options for People Living with Dementia – Volume 1**
<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/60967.pdf?fr=1421178129190>
- **University of Southern California Andrus Gerontology Center, a project of the National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification and Fall Prevention Center of Excellence**
<http://www.homemods.org/>
- **National Institute on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center, Home Safety for People with Alzheimer's Disease**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/home-safety-people-alzheimers-disease/introduction>
- **AARP Public Policy Institute, Planning for Complete Streets for an Aging America**
http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/2009_02_streets.pdf
- **AARP, Livability Fact Sheets**
http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/livable-communities-fact-sheet-series.html?cmp=RDRCT-FCTSHT_JUL22_014
- **American Planning Association – Aging and Livable Communities**
<https://www.planning.org/resources/ontheradar/aging/>
- **Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)**
<http://www.ctaa.org> or 800.891.0590
CTAA is a membership organization made up of transportation providers, advocates, and users who are committed to enhancing the nation's support for mobility. Members from all 50 states work to educate federal and local government leaders about the importance of available transportation.
- **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, Tips for First Responders**
<http://www.nccdp.org/first-responder-tips.htm>

Local government is just one important part of the community. Working in tandem with other sectors, it can help the entire community become dementia friendly. Learn more about the process and how to help your community and others become more dementia friendly at www.dfamerica.org.



Adapted from ACT on Alzheimer's® developed tools and resources.