

# AGE-FRIENDLY DC 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN





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# LETTER FROM MAYOR

## MURIEL BOWSER

Our Age-Friendly commitment here in Washington, DC began nearly six years ago. As a member of the DC Council, I worked with my colleagues to challenge our community to embrace age-friendly policies and planning, and to make my hometown the best possible city to age in place. Since that time, we have come a long way, but much work remains to be done.

Neighborhoods in all 8 wards continue to thrive. And, as our city continues to grow, the Age-Friendly DC initiative has brought our community together and helped us build a safer, stronger and more vibrant city for residents of every age. We are committed to ensuring Washington, DC remains a city where residents of every age – whether they’re 100 days old or 100 years old – can live, age, and thrive.

As such, in September, I was proud to cut the ribbon on Plaza West, a 223-unit affordable housing community for seniors and families in Ward 6. This unique development, located in the growing and transit-centric Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood, includes 50 units designed for grandfamilies. Plaza West is the first residential housing of its kind in the District designed for grandparents raising their grandchildren. It is within walking distance of four Metro stations and bus routes, and close to a grocery store, multiple churches, recreation and dining options, and a library. Washington, DC is the ninth city nationwide to have a residential grandfamilies program.

In addition, the following are Age-Friendly highlights from my “A Fair Shot” Fiscal Year 2019 Budget that went into effect October 1:

- \$4.5M investment in the Safe at Home program;
- \$1.5M in capital funds to expand the Model Cities and Congress Heights Senior Wellness Centers and continued \$4M investment for improvements at senior centers all across DC;
- \$11.4M committed in capital funds to building a new, citywide senior site focused on holistic health and nutrition in Ward 8;
- \$2M investment in the Transport DC Program, providing efficient curb-to-curb service through taxicabs for residents who are MetroAccess customers;
- \$250,000 in historic homeowner grants to help low-and moderate-income households living in specific historic districts pay for repairs that restore or rehabilitate their homes;
- \$28M for 50 new permanent supportive housing units for senior women; and
- Cutting in half how much seniors’ property taxes can go up so that their property taxes won’t go up by more than 5% a year.

It is because of budget enhancements like these and our collective work over the past few years that I could not be prouder that the World Health Organization and AARP last year recognized our Age-Friendly DC program for its bold and progressive vision, and the work we are doing together to turn that vision into action. This recognition places Washington, DC, alongside some of the most progressive and forward-looking communities for aging in the world. Thank you for all that you do, I am grateful for your advocacy—let’s keep pushing!

Muriel Bowser  
Mayor



# ABOUT AGE-FRIENDLY DC

Age-Friendly DC is an initiative of the DC Government to coordinate community members and public agencies to make the District an easier place to grow older. Last year, the District was recognized as a top city in the world for Age-Friendly policies by the World Health Organization and AARP. The initiative is now led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

In the last ten years, the number of Washingtonians over the age of 60 has grown by nearly 15,000 to 117,223.

## Since the launch of DC's Age-Friendly initiative, the District has:

- Launched the Safe at Home Program to help DC residents 60 and over and adults with disabilities with home modifications and assist with private security camera installations;
- Opened Plaza West, which will provide 223 units of affordable rental housing, including 50 units reserved for grandfamilies - grandparents raising grandchildren;
- Advocated for DC Medicaid reimbursement to support creation of affordable neighborhood assisted living residences;
- Piloted an intergenerational gardening program to maintain school gardens over the summer;
- Recognized more than 70 local businesses as Age-Friendly Businesses, spread out across all eight wards;
- Launched the Alternative Pathways to Employment Program to refresh the job skills of residents who are 50 years old or older and place participants with employment opportunities;
- Provided "Senior\$afe" training to financial securities firm personnel on how to spot and report financial exploitation of seniors.



The report is divided into three pillars – built environment, changing attitudes about growing older, and lifelong health and security. Each pillar is then comprised of several policy domains.

**PILLAR ONE:  
Built Environment**

 **OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS**

 **TRANSPORTATION**

 **HOUSING**

**PILLAR TWO:  
Changing Attitudes About Growing Older**

 **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

 **RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

 **CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

 **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

**PILLAR THREE:  
Lifelong Health & Security**

 **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES**

 **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE**

 **ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND FRAUD**

 **FINANCIAL SECURITY\***

 **LIFELONG LEARNING\***

 **PUBLIC SAFETY\***

 **CAREGIVING\***

\*Denotes new domain



## PILLAR 1

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment accounts for how human-made structures affect where we live, work and play. Decisions about transportation, land use, parks and other aspects of city and regional planning have an enormous impact on quality-of-life for everyone, especially as we age.

### Goals and Strategies

1. Transportation, housing and outdoor spaces and buildings are safe, affordable, livable, and accessible for residents of all ages and abilities.
  - a. Continue to improve access to real-time data of service reports and prioritization for repairs of pathways and parking spaces.
  - b. Promote intergenerational programs and events through home sharing, car share programs, community service and recreational initiatives.
  - c. Continue to improve lighting, signage and accessibility for roads, sidewalks and recreational paths.
  
2. Residents will be empowered with information about safe, healthy and accessible housing, transportation and recreation programs.
  - a. Promote and enhance clinical and community linkages to physical activities and nutrition programs for residents 50 and over through the expansion of Bikeshare, DC, Produce Plus, Park Prescription Program and Department of Parks and Recreation fitness programs.
  - b. Promote accessible and navigable websites, print materials and telephone resources.





## PILLAR 1

### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES THAT ARE AGE-FRIENDLY**

#### **SAFE AT HOME**

The DC Office on Aging (DCOA) Safe at Home program provides safety adaptations in and around the homes of qualifying seniors and adults with disabilities to make aging and living in place easier. More than 1,500 older adults in the District have received home safety adaptations through Safe at Home.

#### **VISION ZERO**

Vision Zero aims to improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation safety by showcasing effective local actions, empowering local leaders to take action, and promoting partnerships to advance pedestrian and bicycle safety.

#### **SUSTAINABLE DC**

Sustainable DC is the District of Columbia's major planning effort to make DC the most sustainable city in the nation.

#### **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**

Accessory Dwelling Units, also known as ADUs, are secondary units that are attached to a primary dwelling unit. ADUs provide another home sharing option for older adults to age safely and affordably in place.

#### **DC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The District of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year framework that guides future growth and development.





# DOMAIN 1 & 2

## OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS



### OUR VISION:

A city where everyone has access to recreational facilities, activities and services; moves easily indoors and out; and routinely experiences nature

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 97 percent of DC residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park
- 14,147 trees planted and 38 percent tree canopy cover
- DC named a LEED for Cities Platinum City in recognition for its high standards for green buildings

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Publish the proportion of District buildings and parks that are accessible
- Increase opportunities for intergenerational and community gardening that will beautify neighborhoods

## TRANSPORTATION



### OUR VISION:

A city with a variety of transportation modes, including walking, biking and scooters, that are safe and affordable for travelers of all ages and abilities, easy to find and use and able to connect residents and visitors to jobs, goods and services

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 37,000 square feet of sidewalk improvements
- Non-compliance with public transit stops cut in half
- More than 400 alleys improved since 2015

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Improve access and real time data of reports for service requests
- Support and track \$500,000 in grant funding devoted to Vision Zero goals of increased bicycle, pedestrian and personal mobility device safety
- Ensure transit stops are compliant with accessibility guidelines



# DOMAIN 3

## HOUSING



### OUR VISION:

A city that provides access to a continuum of safe and affordable housing options that allow residents to age in place

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 500+ new units of below market-rate housing underway for older residents, including first-ever units at Plaza West designed for grandparents raising grandchildren
- Zoning laws changed to increase allowance of Accessory Dwelling Units
- Fair Housing complaints cut in half since 2012

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Explore and develop options for expanding the supply of neighborhood-scale assisted living for DC residents with incomes below 50% area median income
- Research and promote home-sharing options
- Encourage implementation of accessory dwelling units (also known as ADUs or “granny flats”) in more residential zones



## PILLAR 2

# CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT GROWING OLDER

Older Washingtonians bring enormous value to their neighborhoods through their life experience, knowledge base and strong ties to community institutions. Age-Friendly DC celebrates their contributions.

### Goals and Strategies

1. Inform and connect older residents to arts, recreation and educational activities.
2. Create a network of partners to help distribute communication materials, including a quarterly newsletter that aggregates news, events, and information for district residents 50 and older. Promote career, civic and meaningful volunteer opportunities through faith-based communities and online databases.
  - a. Enhance usability, increase choices and better match residents age 50 and over with volunteer opportunities.
3. Support the engagement of LGBTQ, Latino, immigrant, non-English speakers and seniors with disabilities by building networks of communication that provide the same opportunities as any other group.
  - a. Meet with LGBTQ service and support organizations to explore opportunities to educate the public about reversing negative attitudes and biases against LGBTQ aging individuals.
  - b. Promote training programs for agencies and businesses that encourage inclusive practices of various groups such as the LGBT-friendly Certification through SAGECare.





## PILLAR 2

### **CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT GROWING OLDER THROUGH AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES**

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGES**

DC has more grassroots-formed villages per square mile than any state. Associating with neighbors-helping-neighbors brings social opportunities among all generations and awareness of community resources that can help to age in place.

#### **NO WRONG DOOR PLAN**

The No Wrong Door Initiative is a network of government and non-profit organizations focused on enhancing the front door experience for District residents in need of Long Term Services and Supports and their families. The front door experience begins with the first encounter between agency staff and a person seeking long-term support services.

#### **DCOA LGBTQ OUTREACH**

The DC Office on Aging engages regularly with LGBTQ seniors, including through education about existing resources and innovative programming. The agency also works with local LGBTQ organizations and the senior service network on programs and activities.

#### **AMERICORPS AND SENIORCORPS**

AmeriCrops and SeniorCorps are respected programs that engage millions of Americans in service.





# DOMAIN 4 & 5

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



### OUR VISION:

A city where leisure, cultural, intergenerational and creative activities are widely available and accessible for residents age 50 and over

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 54.3 percent of DC householders 60 and older reported living alone in 2015, according to U.S. Census Data
- Older area residents volunteering 94 hours per year on average
- 2,000 residents age 60 and older are using Senior Wellness Centers
- More than 400 events and programs are offered through DC Department of Parks and Recreation every year

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Promote, determine, and measure future intergenerational social activities and programs for underserved populations
- Produce a “State of Volunteerism in the District” report, assessing volunteerism by age group, activity, and organization

## RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



### OUR VISION:

A city that actively empowers older adults by improving public and private services, as well as public perceptions of aging

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Multiple DC agencies include cultural sensitivity in employee training
- Nonprofit organizations offer a range of health, financial and legal services to LGBTQ seniors
- Age-Friendly Business Initiative continues to grow and serve as a model for meeting the needs of customers of all ages

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will:

- Improve customer services at frontline, public-facing government agencies
- Develop and conduct public relations campaigns to mitigate negative attitudes and biases against aging individuals



# DOMAIN 6 & 7

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT



### OUR VISION:

A city where full and part-time work opportunities are available for the most experienced workers

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Unemployment rate for older residents down from 8.5 percent to 6.2 percent
- 75 Age-Friendly Businesses in DC, a 74 percent increase since 2017
- 200 direct service providers trained in LGBTQ cultural competency

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will:

- Work with long term care employers to train 50 and over residents to work in long term care positions close to home, focusing on part time opportunities
- Explore technical assistance and financial incentives to help small and local businesses become more age-friendly and provide entrepreneurship opportunities for older adults

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



### OUR VISION:

A city that uses all forms of communication to keep older residents connected to their community, friends and family

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 23 percent more residents connected to the internet
- 400,000 older adults reached each month through the Beacon Newspapers

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Compile a list summarizing tech training opportunities available to DC seniors
- Create and distribute a guide for age-friendly communications reflecting all forms of media

### CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT GROWING OLDER--AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

Savvy businesses attract customers by making their website and stores easy to visit, and by training staff to be friendly and respectful. What is good for older customers also helps all shoppers. Age-Friendly Businesses want you to know who they are. When you shop, make sure to ask: "Are you an Age-Friendly Business?" Best practices and an application can be found at <https://agefriendly.dc.gov/page/age-friendly-businesses>, along with a list of the growing number of current Age-Friendly businesses.



## PILLAR 3

# LIFELONG HEALTH AND SECURITY

As Washingtonians age, they are increasingly likely to engage with the health care system, whether through home care, clinic visits, wellness program or prescription medication. It is critical that seniors be equipped to continually assess their health needs and be savvy decision-makers about medical care.

### Goals and Strategies

1. A stronger feeling of physical, mental, and financial security for older adults in the home, in the community, and while traveling around the city
  - a. Promote intergenerational relationships through home-sharing, caregiving and transport services to create a sense of safety and well-being.
  - b. Build on the Vision Zero and Safe At Home programs to create a safer environment for residents to carry out their lives.
2. Provide adults age 50-100 and older with the information they need to make informed choices about their health.

## LIFELONG HEALTH AND SECURITY INITIATIVES THAT ARE AGE-FRIENDLY

### DC GREENS PRODUCE PLUS

Produce Plus is a program in which DC residents can receive \$10 worth of Produce Plus coupons when they visit a participating DC farmers' market, up to two times per week.

### RIGHT CARE, RIGHT NOW

Right Care, Right Now is Mayor Bowser's initiative to connect DC residents to appropriate health care services during non-emergency 911 calls.

### ALERT DC

AlertDC is the official DC communications system that sends emergency alerts, notifications, and updates to your devices

### TRAINING AND RESPONSE FOR OLDER VICTIMS

DC TROV is the District's collaborative training and response system for victims of elder abuse.

### WISER WOMEN

As the only organization to focus exclusively on the unique financial challenges that women face, WISER supports women's opportunities to secure adequate retirement income through research, workshops and partnerships.



## PILLAR 3

### THE INVESTOR PROTECTION TRUST

The Investor Protection Trust works to help adults build and safeguard their future. Founded in 1993 as part of a multi-state settlement to resolve charges of misconduct, the Investor Protection Trust serves as an independent source of non-commercial investor education.

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Neighborhood Watch is a community-based crime prevention program where neighbors look out for each other's safety, property and homes in a systematic and sustained way.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES READING AND CALCULATING

Age-Friendly DC is striving to make it easier for older adults to obtain the next step in their education, whether that means completion of a college degree or overcoming challenges with reading and arithmetic. No matter a person's age, DC offers opportunities to make dreams a reality:

- Go to <https://osse.dc.gov/service/adult-college-completion-initiative-acc> if you want to finish your college degree
- Go to <https://www.consortium.org/programs-for-senior-citizens/> if you want to take a college course on any subject and find out if you can find what you want free or how much it will cost.
- Go to <http://aohdc.org/> to help a friend who wants to learn to calculate, read, or read better.
- Go to <https://www.oli-dc.org/>, OSHER Lifelong Learning Center DC to teach if you are 60 up or enjoy learning with others 60 and over



# DOMAIN 8 & 9

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES



### OUR VISION:

A city that promotes wellness and active aging through achieving excellent health outcomes at all ages

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 99.2 percent of DC residents over 65 have health insurance
- DC ranked third fittest city in America in 2018, according to American Fitness Index
- My Health GPS program helps Medicaid beneficiaries diagnosed with multiple chronic conditions get the care they need

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Introduce or expand primary mental and behavioral health screening programs for older adults
- Evaluate the impact of evidence-based falls reduction programs underway in DC
- Increase awareness of and access to healthful foods and senior SNAP participation

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE



### OUR VISION:

A city that ensures the readiness, immediate safety and resiliency of all residents and communities before, during and after an emergency

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 170,000 residents reached by AlertDC system
- DC is one of 100 Resilient Cities, as recognized by Rockefeller Foundation

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Continue to provide uniform trainings on preparedness, mass care, emergency response, access and functional needs, behavioral health, CPR/first aid and resilience
- Create and assist community supported, neighborhood networks across the city that are accessible to all income levels



# DOMAIN 10 & 11

## ABUSE, NEGLECT AND FRAUD



### OUR VISION:

A city where older adults can expect to live free of financial exploitation, neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 300 police detectives and 200 judges trained in elder abuse

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Increase prosecution of elder abuse crimes by 20 percent
- Coordinate an increased social media presence on issues related to elder victims' rights and resources
- Through the Senior \$afe Initiative, increase awareness among banks of the ability to freeze assets that have been compromised through scams and financial exploitation

## FINANCIAL SECURITY



### OUR VISION:

A city where financial well-being of DC residents and strategies for savings are promoted throughout life.

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Less than half of DC residents 60 and older have retirement income, according to 2015 Census data
- The Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking "Money Smart for Older Adults" and other programs help to cultivate financial literacy

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly DC 2023 will work to:

- Distribute a survey to DC residents to assess their financial preparedness and planning
- Engage residents 50 and older with socially involved supplemental income opportunities such as home sharing and ride sharing
- Make progress in financial readiness and preparedness through education and behavioral changes



# DOMAIN 12 & 13

## LIFELONG LEARNING



### OUR VISION:

A city where residents of all ages will have opportunities to fill knowledge gaps, pursue interests and new career directions

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- 22 percent of DC residents age 60 and older have only a high school diploma only, while 41.2 percent earned a bachelor's degree or higher, according to 2015 U.S. Census data

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly DC 2023 will work to:

- Promote awareness of adult literacy education opportunities offered in public and charter schools
- Create and distribute literature instructing DC residents on enrolling in higher learning courses
- Track on growth of lifelong learning and museum education programs for participants 50 and older

## PUBLIC SAFETY



### OUR VISION:

A city where residents 50 and over feel safe no matter the time or location.

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Penalties are increased in DC for crimes committed against seniors

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly 2023 will work to:

- Spread awareness of and access to Safe At Home so 60+ Residents can live in a safe and more comfortable home
- Support MPD in reducing property crimes affecting older adults
- Engage the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in violence interruption



# DOMAIN 14

## CAREGIVING



### OUR VISION:

A city where those who care for others are supported

### DEFINITION OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Definition of Family Caregivers: The Age-Friendly DC Task Force Committee provides the following definition of caregivers to ensure a clear understanding on the type of caregiver the District is focusing on: A family caregiver is an unpaid individual, family (biological relative) or family of choice (a spouse, partner, friend, or neighbor), involved in assisting an older adult 60 and older in his/her care and with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, etc.) and/or medical tasks and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) such as transportation, shopping, finances, etc. This includes unpaid family caregivers most at risk due to caregiving.

### WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- An estimated 70,000 caregivers are located in DC, according to AARP

### WHERE WE ARE HEADING:

Age-Friendly DC 2023 will work to:

- Conduct a caregiver needs assessment composed of a survey and focus groups to better understand the needs of unpaid caregivers in DC
- Survey legislative barriers facing caregivers and proposed methods to remove them
- Explore the creation of an online training program for family caregivers

### AGE-FRIENDLY RESEARCH

The aim of Age-Friendly DC to transform the city into an easier jurisdiction in which to grow older has been unanimously endorsed by the Consortium of Universities of the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. Consortium members are committed to addressing research questions that the Age-Friendly DC Task Force would like addressed by examining existing data sources and collecting information to address issues. One data source that researchers will use, you can explore and learn about how your neighborhood stacks up, compared to other places in DC and across the country. Go to <https://livindexhub.aarp.org/>.



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