TFAH's Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS)

Recognition Program Step-by-Step Guidance

Program Description:

Through its Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) initiative, Trust for America's Health (TFAH) prioritizes the public health roles in healthy aging and encourages all state and local public health departments to make healthy aging a core function. To further incentivize this transition, TFAH has developed an AFPHS Recognition Program that sets out 10 foundational actions that, if achieved, will reflect a health department's commitment to healthy aging. To help health departments achieve recognition, TFAH has developed this guidance that includes examples and resources for the 10 steps. TFAH will offer additional tools and trainings on each of the actions to further build the capacity of state and local health departments to become age-friendly.

Program Benefits:

Health departments that commit to the program will:

o Be featured in the AFPHS newsletter and on the new AFPHS website beginning March 2021;
o Receive a certificate and virtual badge that can be used on websites, email signatures, department resources, and social media;
o Be recognized for having achieved expertise and competency in an emerging public health issue;
o Be able to leverage recognition with potential partners and funders; and
o Establish a path to more fully achieve their mission of serving their population.

Enrollment:

o All state, territorial, local and tribal public health departments are eligible to participate in the Recognition Program.
o Health departments that desire to enroll in the Program should send an email to afphs@tfah.org and designate a point of contact.
o TFAH will respond to the email with a link to an overview webinar and the AFPHS Quarterly Report Form. The form will include the 10 action steps that the health department must complete for recognition, as well as additional resources, such as examples of the action steps and best practices.
    o If there is an upcoming live webinar, the applicant will be encouraged to attend

- Achievement of action steps should be reported quarterly, or upon completion of all 10 steps. Reporting should be by email to afphs@tfah.org and include evidence of completion, such as:
    - Documentation of collaboration through an email or letter from partner organization or department
    - Documentation (e.g. brochure, flyer) highlighting the expansion of a program to include older adults
    - Documentation of review of emergency preparedness plan, or link to a plan that addresses older adults
- TFAH will track the applicant's progress.
- TFAH will provide technical assistance throughout the process of achieving recognition through one-on-one meetings and providing trainings on specific action steps with examples of achievement and resources.

Descriptions and evidence of completion of action steps:

1. Data: Collect, analyze and disseminate data and other information on the health and well-being of older adults.

   Public health uses data to call attention to the needs and assets of a community's population to inform the development of interventions through community-wide assessment, a critical step to set goals and define measures for health improvement. This data collection and dissemination can help document older adult health status by collecting and analyzing data from multiple sectors and sources.

    - Provide a report or summary of data on older adult demographics and/or health (e.g., Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative community profiles)
    - Provide link to data profiles (ex. Florida Department of Elder Affairs Older Adult Profiles)
    - Provide link to data website
    - Provide sample of a resource developed to share data with community stakeholders

2. Voice: Engage older adults to identify and address priority issues on their health and well-being (social determinants of health).

   Local public health collaborative efforts are driven by the participation, experiences, and goals of community members and the local public health system partners. Hearing directly from populations impacted by health policy decisions is a crucial step in ensuring that their needs are appropriately addressed. Mechanisms for receiving older adult input include town hall meetings, community forums, surveys, and individual interviews.

- o Provide notes from session with older adults (ex. County or State Commission or Council on Aging - Massachusetts, Maryland)
- o Provide summary report
- o Provide a report of the recommendations generated
- o Provide other evidence of focus group, e.g., as required for Community Health Assessment

3. Collaboration: Meet and partner with organizations serving older adults such as the local Area Agencies on Aging and AARP.

   Addressing the full range of individual and community needs to support healthy aging requires the active contribution of a variety of stakeholders. In many communities, these stakeholders have already joined to leverage their networks, resources, and staff capacity to meet the health and social challenges of their older adult residents. Public health can contribute to existing coalition activities and lead these efforts where they do not already exist.

   - o Letter of support
   - o Letter or memo noting the partnership, coalition, collaboration
   - o Link to coalition website
   - o Other evidence of partnership, e.g., description of Age-Friendly Communities efforts

4. Leadership: Designate one or more staff persons to be the department's coordinators and lead and champion its healthy aging efforts.

   In order maintain the momentum of the initiative, it is important to designate an aging champion within the Department. This person will support the department's leadership and facilitate coordination between the Department of Health and the Aging Network.

   - o Name and affiliation and one of the components listed below
   - o Memo, note, or email indicating designation (ex. Colorado's Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging (SAPGA))

5. Assessment: Review existing public health programs to assess if and how they serve older adults.

   In addition to community health assessment and planning, public health can lead community assessments of current programs and services for older adults, identifying existing resources, understanding community strengths and deficiencies, identifying short- and long-term priorities, and working with partners to implement strategies that contribute to healthy aging.

- Listing of public health programs in the area and if they serve older adults, and how
- Copy of assessment document(s) or survey (e.g., community health assessment, Age-Friendly Communities survey) (ex. [Boomer Bond Assessment Tool](#))

6. Adaptation: Adapt work of existing programs to address the needs of older adults.

   Existing public health programs address a wide range of health issues and are focused on the entire life course, providing programs and promoting policies, such as maternal and child health, workplace safety, and tobacco-free initiatives, that ultimately support healthy aging later in life. Each of these current activities could be assessed to determine if it is adequately meeting the needs of older adults and, when necessary, modified to better do so.

   - Assessment of community programs that address older adults
   - Description of the changes/enhancements being made to existing programs
   - Description of policy recommendations needed to adapt existing programs, if necessary, and plan for achieving these changes

7. Emergency Preparedness: Ensure that public health emergency preparedness addresses the needs of older adults, particularly the most vulnerable, and their caregivers.

   Navigating the wide variety of supports and services for older adults can be confusing and overwhelming for older adults, their families, and other professionals. Public health can coordinate existing supports and services to avoid duplication of efforts, identify gaps, and increase access to services and supports, such as ensuring that emergency preparedness planning is centralized and that these plans appropriately address older adult needs.

   - Provide a link to the emergency preparedness plan that addresses older adults and their caregivers (ex. [Emergency Preparedness and Response - Florida Department of Health in Sarasota](#))
   - Provide plans to review and incorporate older adult health needs, including caregivers, into emergency preparedness plans

8. Training: Participate in AFPHS trainings and educational programs offered by TFAH and others. (TFAH will track participation.)

9. Age-Friendly Communities: Engage with and support AARP/WHO Age-Friendly Communities efforts.

   The Age-Friendly Communities initiative, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and sponsored in the United States by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), encourages the creation of livable communities for all by transforming

planning, practice, and policy around 8 domains: housing, transportation, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, and outdoor spaces and buildings. These domains of livability closely align with the social determinants of health so public health engagement in creating a Age-Friendly Community is a valuable and beneficial role for public health.

- Memo, letter, or email highlighting the engagement
- Partner with an Age-Friendly Community effort on an event/program and provide a copy of the flyer
- Roster of Age-Friendly Community coalition noting participation of health department

10. Age-Friendly Health Systems: Engage and align with hospitals and health systems participating in the Age-Friendly Health Systems's movement.

Age-Friendly Health Systems is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). The goal of the initiative is to encourage and promote age-friendly care through adoption of the 4Ms Framework by addressing: What Matters to older adults, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility.

- Letter or email indicating initiation of collaboration
- Memo or email describing collaboration