Age-Friendly Public Health Systems
Creating & Leading Change

Creating and leading change in Age-Friendly Public Health Systems requires engaging partners from across the age-friendly ecosystem. Using a life course approach to aging can advance healthy aging policies and programs. Developing a common agenda to promote healthy aging with partners can aid in engagement and sustainability for AFPHS projects.

A life course approach to health aims to ensure people's well-being at all ages by evaluating community conditions that support health, identifying vulnerable populations, and improving both preventive and clinical services. It is a complex interplay of risk and protective factors and must consider the cumulative effect of events that happen early in life that may impact health over time. Public health practitioners are uniquely positioned to lead coordinated action at all levels and across all sectors to set the stage for healthy aging and address the social determinants of health. Leaders can plan and work towards long-term sustainability of an infrastructure that supports an age-friendly ecosystem in partnership with other agencies and sectors. Such leadership is essential given the unique needs, challenges, demographics, and strengths of every state and community.

Developing an age-friendly public health system may involve leading the policy and systemic changes to improve the public health infrastructure and expanding data collection on older adult health, as well as for their caregivers. It should include identifying and addressing health disparities and inequities and working across sectors to align programs and services in all settings. Working within state and community health improvement processes is a key strategy to prioritize healthy aging and target interventions where they are most needed.

Trust for America's Health's 6Cs Framework for Creating Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) organizes public health roles in aging. Public health can enhance healthy aging outcomes by:

- ✓ Creating and leading AFPHS policy changes to improve the lives of older adults
- ✓ Connecting multi-sector state and community partners to build an age-friendly ecosystem through cross-sector collaboration
- ✓ Collecting and analyzing data on older adults and caregivers and elevating needs through the community health improvement process
- ✓ Coordinating initiatives and strategies that focus on healthy aging and improve screening, access, and delivery of services to older adults
- ✓ Communicating about public health programs with services or resources that currently or have the potential to support older adults (e.g., emergency preparedness plans)
- ✓ Complementing existing healthy aging services to support older adults