Health Services and Community Supports Workbook
Book 5 in the AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection

Available online at AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap
AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection
Strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages

Book 1  AARP Roadmap to Livability
Book 2  AARP Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit
Book 3  AARP Roadmap to Livability: Housing Workbook
Book 4  AARP Roadmap to Livability: Transportation Workbook
Book 5  AARP Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook
Book 6  AARP Roadmap to Livability: Economic Development Workbook

A publication of
AARP Livable Communities
Community, State and National Affairs
AARP.org/Livable

Available for download at AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership of more than 37 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services.
# Health Services and Community Supports Workbook

## Book 5 in the AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection

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“Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities in which they live, learn, work, and play. Strategies to improve the public’s health are multifaceted and involve multiple entities, including federal and state governments, health providers, faith- and community-based organizations, and individuals.” — AARP Policy Book
“A Livable Community is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster their engagement in the community’s civic, economic and social life.”
— AARP Policy Book

The Health Services and Community Supports Workbook is a companion publication in the AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection. The workbook provides tools and worksheets to help engage a community in the development and implementation of an action plan for becoming a better place for people of all ages to live, work and play.

Every community is different and each has its own goals for health services and community supports. This AARP workbook can be used to guide a wide array of efforts to improve the health and well-being of residents in the community, including efforts that seek to:

- Develop a community para-medicine program
- Start an intergenerational child care and adult day care program
- Increase access to a local food pantry
- Work with a regional dental school to establish a monthly free dental clinic

The people working to improve health services and community supports in a town, city or neighborhood will work with residents and other partners to identify the types of projects that will make a community more livable. Our goal is to provide a framework that can be used to assess, plan, evaluate and implement the efforts that are right for your community.

The takeaway from this workbook will be a clear action plan that’s crafted from:

- A list of the community leaders who make or influence decisions about health services and community supports, so the team can target and work with them
- A strategy for developing core allies into a team and partnering with people and organizations across the community
- An assessment to identify existing strengths in health services and community supports and to ask community members about the needs and improvements they identify as priorities
- A description of how to prioritize needed improvements based on resident input, feasibility and community leadership
- A path for implementing the changes identified in the assessment
- An assignment chart for implementing action items with the core team and partners
- A list of metrics for measuring the progress of the action plan
- A communications worksheet that maps how to engage and inform the community about the needed changes, and the progress the team will be making

Book 5's Collection Connection
The AARP Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook is the fifth title in the six-part AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection.

The steps detailed in this guide, created as a resource for individuals involved in making livability changes to enhance health services and community supports, correspond with those in Book 1, which provides a broad overview of strategies and solutions that can make a community a great place for people of all ages.
A Bit of Background

At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. At some point in our lives, we all interact with health services and/or community supports.

Many of the health-related examples in this workbook focus on the needs of people aging with chronic illness or a disability. However, the principles addressed here — and in the rest of the Roadmap to Livability series — apply to people of all ages and abilities.

Initiatives seeking to increase access to health services and community supports benefit from including people who have expert knowledge about what already exists in the community and the region.

Health Services

The health of people in a community depends on access to a wide array of health services, including primary care providers and specialists, mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, preventive and health maintenance programs, quality rehabilitation programs, pharmacy services and dental care. Recreational opportunities that encourage people to maintain or improve their health are essential, too. When residents of a community are healthy, they’re more likely to shop at local businesses, volunteer their time and be active in civic affairs.

Community Supports

Local services — such as an active intergenerational community center and recreation programs — make it easier for people to connect with one another and build community ties. Programs that promote food security, help residents make critical repairs to their homes, and provide affordable recreational opportunities enable residents to participate fully in community life — regardless of age, economic level or ability.

“Public health professionals and various partner groups help ensure that community health is an explicitly stated goal in community planning processes as it relates to such specifics as density and design, housing mix and type, transportation infrastructure and land conservation.”

— from the article How to Work With Public Health to Advance Livable Communities, AARP.org/Livable
“Livable communities are communities that people want to be in. I challenge anyone to tell me what city in the U.S. — or the world — is vibrant and livable yet filled with a lot of sick people.”

— Rose Gowen, M.D., commissioner, City of Brownsville, Texas

A Note About Money Matters
The focus of the AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection is on creating a strong plan that will guide the implementation of a livability initiative. Funding is, of course, an absolute necessity for implementation, and you can find some information about funding on page 20 of Book 1. However, the topic of financing change — through fundraising efforts, grant proposals, or receiving financing from a municipality — is not covered comprehensively in this series.

Let’s Get Started!

Reading List
See page 42 to find online articles, reports and resources, including:

- Public Health and Age-Friendly Communities, AARP.org/Livable
- How to Work With Public Health to Advance Livable Communities, AARP.org/Livable
- A-Z Archives: Community Health and Wellness, AARP.org/Livable
Put Together a Team

Identify strong leaders and champions who believe in the work and will commit to it. These people are the “core team.”

Worksheet: The Starting Lineup

Leaders: Who is going to make sure this initiative moves forward and will follow it through to completion?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Community Affiliation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</table>

Champions: Who has the authority to make decisions about this initiative (elected/appointed officials/decision-makers)? Who has connections with elected and appointed officials or decision-makers and is well respected (by elected officials and residents) for ability to make change in the community?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Community Affiliation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Team Members: Who else is invested in this issue and should be part of this planning team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Community Affiliation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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To add to the core team, complete the worksheet on page 10.
Selecting Members
If the initiative is multifaceted, it will help to include core team members who have experience or a specific interest in the different aspects of the work. A wide base of support on the team will help in marketing the identified needs and changes, increasing the likelihood of community acceptance.

Under Title/Community Affiliation, list the community or regional connections of each core team member. (For instance, if a person serves on the board of directors of the Area Agency on Aging or is an active member of a farmer’s guild, this is the place to note it.)

Enter information about each member’s interest in the initiative.

---

Sample Health Services and Community Supports Goals

1. Develop an intergenerational garden
2. Create a lending library of seasonal recreational equipment, such as cross-country skis, pickleball or croquet sets, and alpine ski poles and walking sticks
3. Host an annual wellness walk for people of all ages
4. Establish a local warming or cooling shelter

---

Building a team requires reaching out by social media, telephone, text, email and in person.
Worksheet: **Expand the Team** (Think about who else can join the effort.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Area of Interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core team, including chairs and co-chairs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government representative(s) — such as elected or appointed officials and staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of local nonprofit, religious and service associations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative(s) of local businesses and/or universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents who represent the demographics and diversity of the local population</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Affiliation</td>
<td>Email</td>
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</table>
Invite Stakeholders

A successful livable communities initiative is based on broad collaboration. A crucial step in developing an initiative is to find, inspire and equip a diverse group of stakeholders to become engaged.

Begin by creating a list of people, groups or organizations that might be interested in or concerned with the outcome of the work. The team probably won’t recruit someone in each sector. Use this as a guide to think about how to broaden the base of community support.

Use the Circles of Involvement Exercise described on pages 16 and 17 in Book 1, the Roadmap to Livability, to brainstorm about people who can be involved in the work.

For ideas about national partners and resources, see Appendix 1.

Worksheet: Make a List

Beneficiaries (Who benefits from the work? Who’s the customer? On whose behalf is the work being done?)

Volunteer Sector (Examples: faith community, nonprofits, fraternal organizations)

Public Sector (Examples: local or regional government, education, public figures)

Private Sector (Examples: businesses, media, investors, funders)
Informal Sector (Examples: relatives, interest groups and clubs, neighbors)

Policy Partners (Examples: authorizers, management, the board)

Resource Partners (Examples: suppliers, networks)

Service Providers and Practitioners (Examples: local experts, professionals, employees)

Others (Examples: anyone who doesn’t fit into the aforementioned categories)
Make Assignments

After the team has compiled a list of who is currently involved with the initiative and a list of others who should be involved, note the related groups or organizations in the left-hand column of the Expand Participation worksheet (opposite).

Then identify a person to contact in the group or organization, if one is known. If a contact isn’t known, reach out through the organization’s general information line or website contact page. Think about how each group should, ideally, be involved with the livable community effort.

Assign each group or organization to one or more of the Circles of Involvement based on the level of involvement that will advance the work.

For example, the town government could assign a staff person or select a board or council member to attend each core team meeting. A subcommittee focused on emergency preparedness might be working with the police and fire departments to ensure that the needs of residents with special needs are met in an emergency situation and that people know what to expect if an emergency is declared.

Organizations and groups can be engaged with the livable community initiative in more than one way. On the worksheet, mark the Core Team, the Circle of Engagement, Circle of Champions and Circle of Information and Awareness — or the Circle of Possibility — as appropriate.

**TIP:** Use a color system to mark cases where the current level of involvement does not match the level of involvement the team thinks would be ideal.
### Worksheet: **Expand Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle of Involvement</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Name of the Contact Person</th>
<th>Core Team</th>
<th>Circle of Engagement</th>
<th>Circle of Champions</th>
<th>Circle of Information and Awareness</th>
<th>Circle of Possibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Should Be Involved</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Gather Information and Identify Priorities

Great communities provide health services and community supports for people of all ages, incomes and abilities, so everyone can enjoy an active, healthy and engaged lifestyle.

The *AARP Livability Index* (found at AARP.org/LivabilityIndex) evaluates how livable a community is in seven livability categories:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Neighborhood
4. Environment
5. Opportunity
6. Health
7. Engagement

The livability score is based on a diverse set of metrics and considers policies and programs that can enhance community livability over time.

For more about the *Livability Index* and your community’s scores, see Appendix 2.

Social determinants of health — such as access to employment, education, housing, healthy foods, safe streets and neighborhoods, and social supports — are important predictors of health outcomes and health behaviors.

Find the community's baseline Health Services and Community Supports Score

________________________
By the Numbers

A community’s livability scores can be used to assess the area’s access to health services and community supports.

Housing Score
Housing is a central component of livability. Deciding where to live influences many of the topics the Index covers. We spend more time in our homes than anywhere else, so housing costs, choices and accessibility are critical. Great communities provide housing opportunities for people of all ages, incomes and abilities, allowing everyone to live in a quality neighborhood regardless of his or her circumstances.

Transportation Score
How easily and safely we’re able to get from one place to another has a major effect on our quality of life. Livable communities provide their residents with transportation options that connect people to social activities, economic opportunities and medical care; they offer convenient, healthy, accessible and low-cost alternatives to driving.

Neighborhood Score
What makes a neighborhood truly livable? Two important qualities are access and convenience. Compact neighborhoods make it easier for residents to reach the things they need most, from jobs to grocery stores to libraries. Nearby parks and places to buy healthy food help people make smart choices; diverse, walkable neighborhoods with shops, restaurants and movie theaters make local life interesting. Additionally, neighborhoods served by good access to more distant destinations via transit or automobile help residents connect to jobs, health care, and services throughout the greater community.

Environment Score
Good communities maintain a clean environment for their residents. Great communities enact policies to improve and protect the environment for generations to come. The Livability Index looks at air and water quality. It measures communities’ actions to create resilience plans to prepare for emergencies and natural disasters, and it awards points to states that have policies promoting energy efficiency and that protect consumers from having their utilities cut off during extreme weather events.

Opportunity Score
America was built on opportunity — and our nation’s many thriving communities are no different. The degree to which a community embraces diversity and offers opportunities to residents of all ages and backgrounds is important to overall livability. Backed by a strong regional economy and fiscally healthy local government, welcoming communities provide residents an equal chance to earn a living wage and improve their well-being, from jobs to education.

Health Score
Community conditions influence health behaviors. Healthy communities have comprehensive smoke-free air laws, offer easy access to exercise opportunities, and have high-quality health care available. Because health is so deeply related to quality of life, many other categories of livability in this Index include metrics related to health. For example, access to healthy foods, jobs and education, number of walk trips, lower speed limits, social engagement measures, and air and water pollution are all related to health.

Engagement Score
A livable community fosters interaction among residents. From social engagement to civic action to Internet access, residents’ individual opportunities to connect and feel welcomed help lessen social isolation and strengthen the greater community. The Index explores and examines the different ways in which residents engage with and support their communities, and how they impact livability as a whole.

Now complete The Health Services and Community Supports Asset Inventory on the next two pages to identify the community’s strengths and areas where support and services are needed. This information will help set a baseline, measure the changes that result from the initiative and determine priorities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worksheet: The Health Services and Community Supports Asset Inventory</th>
<th>Does It Currently Exist?</th>
<th>Is It Adequate?</th>
<th>Is It a Priority Issue?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Volunteerism by people of all ages</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Clear and accessible information about local activities and events</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Clear and accessible information about health and social services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A single point of entry where older people can turn for information and referrals (e.g. Aging and Disability Resource Center)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A program to answer the legal questions of people who cannot pay full legal fees</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Home visitors or programs where postal carriers are trained to look for problems, etc., as related to homebound seniors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Widely available information about how to contact a Health Care Ombudsman</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Support for people with dementia and training for family caregivers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>☐ A grocery store in the neighborhood or community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ A pharmacy in the neighborhood or community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ At least one pharmacy and one grocery store deliver to private homes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>☐ Affordable recreational opportunities for active adults and children and for people who want to maximize their wellness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Community emergency planning that takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of people with disabilities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Food security programs, such as a food pantry, summer school lunch program and Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Accessible and widely publicized lifelong learning opportunities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A community center, senior center or other place where people can gather for social and recreational events</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>
## Worksheet: The Health Services and Community Supports Asset Inventory

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<tr>
<th>Does It Currently Exist?</th>
<th>Is It Adequate?</th>
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**OTHER (initiatives, funding, opportunities)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does It Currently Exist?</th>
<th>Is It Adequate?</th>
<th>Is It a Priority Issue?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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Assess the Community

The following methods can be used when conducting a community assessment. Feel free to combine them with other resources. What matters is that at the end of the assessment, the team has gathered the data it needs to start defining goals and creating a strategic plan to move the initiative toward those goals.

Option 1: Do a Survey
If the livable community team designs a survey, it may want to include one or more of the sample questions listed here.

Different communities need to ask different types of questions. The purpose of each question is to learn what people need and want in order to get the work done and improve health services and community supports where they live.

Sample Survey Questions
When deciding which questions to include, consider how the resulting information will or can be used on behalf of the community.

1. In the past 12 months, have you needed help with any of the following? Were you able to get the help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you need help?</th>
<th>Could you find help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Filling out forms or preparing taxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Completing household chores or routine home maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Making home repairs/weatherization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Managing yard work, gardening, snow removal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Looking into home modification program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Doing errands — shopping, banking, picking up medications, returning books to the library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Taking medications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Preparing meals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. How likely do you think it is that you will need the following services in the next five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>Not Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Personal care at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Housecleaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Caregiver support group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Wellness/fitness classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Home maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Home-delivered meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Safety checks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Library services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How often do you engage in some form of physical exercise (such as walking, running, biking, swimming, sports, strength training, yoga, stretching)?

- [ ] Every day
- [ ] Several times a week but not every day
- [ ] About once a week
- [ ] About once or twice a month
- [ ] Less than once a month

4. How important is it to you to remain physically active for as long as possible?

- [ ] Extremely important
- [ ] Somewhat important
- [ ] Not very important

Continued ➤
5. Does the community where you live have the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Health and wellness programs and classes in areas such as nutrition, smoking cessation and weight control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Fitness activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Conveniently located health and social services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>A service that helps older adults find and access health and supportive services</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Conveniently located emergency care centers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Easy to find information on local health and supportive services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Home care services including health, personal care and housekeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Well-trained certified home health care providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>A variety of health care professionals, including specialists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Mental health care services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Health care professionals who speak different languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Easily understandable and helpful hospital or clinic answering services</td>
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**Option 2: Hold a Listening Session**

Surveys do a great job of revealing how many people share a concern about community supports and about access to health services.

However, surveys don’t do a good job of explaining why people answered the survey questions the way they did. Surveys don’t provide space for people to talk about an aspect of health services and community supports the survey might not have addressed.

For example, a survey we know of didn’t ask questions about emergency preparedness, but during focus groups, the livability team learned that it was a primary concern.

Community-based organizations and municipalities developed community listening sessions as a tool to inform people about important issues, to build support for a cause, and to discuss potential solutions to problems facing their communities.

Ideally, a listening session will not include more than 25 people, but accommodations can be made for larger groups.

**Option 3: Host a Focus Group**

Focus groups bring together a small group of people (typically 8 to 12) to discuss a specific issue — such as determining a location and the hours for an urgent care medical clinic.

Focus groups are a good tool for providing clarity to information or ambiguous survey data that has already been gathered from the community.

Another important use of focus groups is to obtain specific community perspectives on themes that emerged from a larger forum, such as a community listening session.

**Check Out Book 2**

The Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit explains how to conduct a community listening session and focus group.
Sample Questions

One way to find out how well existing health services and community supports are meeting the needs of residents is to ask them. Possible focus group or listening session questions include:

- “Tell me what you do for physical exercise. How do you find out about recreational opportunities that interest you?”

- “Have you or a friend or a neighbor ever needed help finding a service — such as for affordable home health care, getting help around the house or securing resources needed by a caregiver? What was it like to search for that service? Were the resources found? Where did you look for them?”

- “What is it like to access the social services in your community?”
  [The interviewer can list a few local providers, such as a community action agency, counseling agency, food pantry, the Area Agency on Aging, etc.]

- “What is it like to get services from medical providers in your community?”
  [The interviewer can list a few local providers, such as physical therapists, primary care doctors, specialists, home care agencies and other types of medical services.]

- “What is the best way to get word out to the community about disaster preparedness or another public health initiative?”

NOTES:

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Continued ➤
Worksheet: Establish Priorities

Now that the team has completed the assessment, it’s time to bring the asset inventory together with the findings from the survey and listening sessions or focus groups to identify the direction for the work.

- What services, policies and initiatives does the community have in place that are working well?

- What services, policies and initiatives are lacking or not working well?

- What might affect the ability and/or success of addressing potential priorities?

The Impact/Feasibility Grid on page 26 is a useful exercise because no team has enough time to address all of the needs identified by an assessment or to complete all of the activities that could contribute to a specific goal. Use of the matrix will help the team map the priority issues and concentrate its time on the types of high-value activities that will keep the initiative moving forward.

- **High Feasibility/High Impact** activities are “quick wins” that don’t require outside resources and can be accomplished relatively easily. An example would be hosting a walk to raise funds for a local food pantry.

- **High Impact/Low Feasibility** activities have the ability to make a significant impact but require funding or cooperation with outside agencies. These can be thought of as “major projects,” such as starting a volunteer service to help residents make critical repairs or modify their homes to make them safer and easier for people to live there if they have a disability.
Activities that fit into the **Low Impact/High Feasibility** category are things it would be nice to do but that receive a lower priority than the higher impact, more feasible projects or the higher impact, low feasibility projects. These can be thought of as “fill-ins” while the team is working on larger projects. An example of a fill-in activity could be identifying free space in the community to host activities that, in the future, would take place at a community center the team is working to raise funds to build.

Low priority activities fit into the **Low Feasibility/Low Impact** category. An example is working to create an urgent care clinic in a small community that already has three urgent care clinics.

As the team moves through this process, be sure to engage community members in the discussions.

For a larger, usable diagram, see page 26.

This could be an opportunity to conduct listening sessions to share the results of the assessment. Feel free to copy and enlarge the diagram on page 26 and give participants sticky notes so everyone in the room can have input. And don’t feel restricted by the small amount of space for writing responses on the worksheets, especially when conducting a community listening session. Just bring extra paper!

Based on what has been learned and discussed, it’s time to prioritize the areas of focus and come to a decision. Identify an issue that has high impact and high feasibility and place it in the green box. By identifying an issue that is relatively easy to address and will have a significant impact on the community, the team will be able to identify a success that community members and other stakeholders will notice. Quick successes increase community engagement.

For the next two priority issues, think about the effect on people’s health and well-being and the local economy. Think about the difficulty of implementation. Don’t include an issue in the red box unless it’s critical for the health and well-being of the community. Try to stick with issues the community agrees belong in the yellow or orange boxes.

*Continued ➤*
Worksheet: Impact/Feasibility Grid

- High Impact/High Feasibility
- High Impact/Low Feasibility
- High Feasibility/Low Impact
- Low Feasibility/Low Impact
Worksheet: **Top 3 Priority Areas**

1. 

2. 

3. 

---

AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap
Write the Action Plan’s Mission, Vision and Goals

An action plan includes the mission, vision and goals that the core team establishes to make the community more livable. Guided by team values, the plan also identifies activities or actions the team will take to meet the goals, and it establishes key indicators to use in evaluating the measure of success.

There are many ways and methods to organize this work besides the one listed below, so use whatever method fits best within the initiative’s framework.

Worksheet: Develop the Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement
(a sentence that explains the work’s goals and describes why this group of stakeholders is being convened)

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Vision Statement
(an aspirational statement that describes the long-term effects resulting from the work)

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Team’s Values
Ask each member of the core team to share what he or she thinks are the most important values for the work being done in the community. Combine the values that all members are comfortable adopting in order to identify three or four that will guide the community’s livability work. See the Roadmap to Livability, pages 28 and 29, for more information about creating statements and identifying values.

1. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
Worksheet: Create SMART Goals and Outcomes

Now set goals that are: Specific ... Measurable ... Attainable ... Relevant ... Timely
(In other words, set SMART goals as described on pages 30 and 31 in Book 1, the Roadmap to Livability.)

- **A Long-Term Goal** will take one to five years (or more) to accomplish. It might require funding or developing multiple partnerships to complete.

- **A Medium-Term Goal** can reasonably be accomplished in three months to one year. It might require partnering with another group in order to implement change.

- **A Short-Term Goal** can reasonably be accomplished in three months.

An Outcome Statement can be phrased as follows: “If we accomplish ________________________________ then we can expect ________________________________ and ________________________________ to occur.”

Goal Examples for Health Services and Community Supports

1. Create a neighborhood-based intergenerational after-school program
2. Maximize awareness of resources to prevent becoming the victim of a scam and provide fraud-prevention training
3. Increase and promote community awareness about warming and cooling centers
4. Advocate for the creation of a disaster preparedness plan that includes the needs of all people
5. Promote awareness of municipal property tax reduction programs
6. Develop and expand a community center with programs for people of all ages — from toddlers to centenarians
7. Organize a neighborhood block party
8. Partner with a local organization to provide mental health and dementia awareness training for first responders and municipal employees
9. Create a free clothing closet
### Develop the Action Plan’s Strategies and Tactics

A strategy is a comprehensive action plan that’s implemented to achieve the goals of the initiative. Strategies explain what the team is trying to accomplish. Strategies are a guide to a set of tactics for accomplishing a goal. Think of a strategy as the *What* and the tactics as the *How* and *By Whom*. The following chart compares strategies and tactics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TACTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall action plan for addressing a specific goal</td>
<td>The <em>How</em> and <em>By Whom</em> statements that explain how the strategy will be implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**
Address the need for more information about available health services and community supports (*The Goal*) by partnering with municipal government, social service organizations and health care providers to increase awareness of the programs, services and activities available in the community (*The Strategy*).

**Examples:**
1. Edward (*Who*) will attend the regional service provider meeting (*How*) to introduce the plan.
2. Maria (*Who*) will meet with the Healthcare Coalition (*Who*) to learn which organizations offer wellness programs that are open to everyone in the community (*How*).
3. Rose (*Who*) will meet with the website coordinator (*Who*) to learn if it’s possible to put a resource list on the town website (*How*).

**Example:**
Address social isolation (*The Goal*) by developing a community garden (*The Strategy*).

**Examples:**
1. Shelby (*Who*) will contact Neighbor City (*Who*) to find out what process it followed to develop its community garden (*How*).
2. Tony (*Who*) will contact the state AARP office (*Who*) to find out if it has guidelines for developing community gardens that can be enjoyed by residents of all ages and abilities (*How*).
3. Ali (*Who*) will contact the municipal public health office, parks and recreation, and the Downtown Association (*Who*) to see if they are interested in partnering on the project (*How*).
**Worksheet: Adapt (as Needed) for Action**

There is usually more than one path to a desired outcome. One way to gather information about the different routes to a goal is by researching how other communities have implemented a plan to meet a similar goal. The following worksheet can help determine whether a program or service that was implemented elsewhere can work in the team's community. Questions the core team should ask about an initiative before implementing it:

1. **Is a program similar to this one already at work in the team’s community?**  
   *(if yes, consider partnering with that program to enhance the work it is doing)*  
   - [ ] No  
   - [ ] Yes, ________________________________________________

2. **Was there a previous program similar to the one the core team is planning?**  
   *(if yes, why did it stop?)*  
   - [ ] No  
   - [ ] Yes, ________________________________________________

3. **What side effects (good and bad) might accompany the implementation of the initiative?**

4. **Have other municipalities implemented a similar approach?**  
   - [ ] No  
   - [ ] Yes

   *(If yes, list the name of the municipality and the contact information of someone the team can speak with about the implementation experience)*
   
   Municipality: _____________________________  Contact: _____________________________

5. **After speaking to a representative from a community that has implemented the idea, list and consider how that community is similar and different (in size, resources, geographical area, etc.) from the one the team represents.**  
   ________________________________________________

6. **How will the differences of the team’s community affect the implementation of the initiative?**  
   ________________________________________________

7. **What “lessons learned” did the other community share when talking about its experience?**  
   ________________________________________________

8. **To avoid some of the pitfalls experienced by the other community, how will the core team plan for those challenges (and successes, too)?**  
   ________________________________________________

*Continued ➤*
**Worksheet: Put It All Together**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The initiative ...</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Questions/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses the needs identified in the livable community assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lines up with the livable community project mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is practical for the community</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is likely to be effective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will be cost-effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Will be easy to put into practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires hiring an outside consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires change to a law or policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs money to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be accepted by those the core team hopes will use it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be embraced by the community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Housekeeping Tips

- No matter how well the core team has planned, nearly every program that is implemented needs further adjustments to meet the needs of a particular community. One way to determine when changes are needed is to include a regular evaluation of the work.

- As the core team moves into the implementation phase, complete two worksheets: The Action Plan (page 38) and The Communications and Marketing Plan (page 40).

- A livable community initiative is dependent on goodwill from community members, the municipal government and other community and regional partners. It’s important that the target population knows how the work is making the community more livable. If people don’t know what’s being offered, they won’t be able to enjoy the new services, programs or improvements.

- The initiative’s goals, as well as its successes when goals are met, should be shared with the community partners, the municipal government, the community at large and funders. When involved with community development work, it’s good to brag!

- It’s also important to celebrate the success of any partnerships. The core team couldn’t have achieved what it did without its partners, so be sure to express gratitude to them privately and publicly when appropriate.

- Community partners will enjoy receiving media accolades for their involvement, and coverage increases awareness about the overall livable community work. Media coverage can help attract new volunteers and new partners — and ensure that the existing partners sign on again.
Determine the Evaluation Process

In the final column of The Action Plan worksheet that starts on page 38 of this guide, there’s space to identify metrics for evaluation.

If you need help establishing effective metrics, refer to page 36 of Book 1, the Roadmap to Livability.

Or consider the following ideas:

- Access to medical services and community supports is key for the health and well-being of residents of all ages, especially the youngest and oldest in the community. Some communities have emphasized food security. Others have looked at elder abuse prevention, started a warming shelter, advocated for a local urgent care clinic, or developed an enhanced disaster preparedness plan.

- If an initiative wants to make sure people with disabilities, people in residential care facilities and people with pets are included in the community’s disaster preparedness plan, ask the town or county government for a copy of the plan and document the way it includes special populations and pets.

- If the initiative’s focus is food security, look at the American Community Survey data (factfinder.census.gov) to find out what percentage of people in the community who are eligible for benefits from the federal government’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) get them.

- You also might want to find out if there are people in the community who are food insecure but don’t use the food pantry. You might be able to help the food pantry by mounting a publicity campaign or recruiting volunteers. The American Community Survey data is slow to change, but an increase in the number of people participating in the pantry or volunteering will be evident a few months into the initiative.

Evaluation Methods

There are different ways to measure the overall success of each goal and the impact the initiative has had on the community.

Common evaluation tools include:

- Satisfaction surveys
- Reports
- Focus groups
- Interviews with participants and community members
- Community indicators (such as the number of income-eligible people who are using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)
- Program and public data (such as the number of people who participated in a program)
Evaluation Essentials

- **INPUTS** are the resources that had to be present for the livability initiative to be implemented.

  For example, for a program that matches teens with older adults who want to learn more about technology, the inputs are:

  1. The place where equipment can be accessed
  2. Computers and other devices that older adults want to learn more about
  3. Students and older adults willing to participate in the program

- **OUTPUTS** tell what was created — what the team is doing and whom the work reaches. Outputs are the direct result of the input, the activity, program or service that was implemented.

  An example of an output for a campaign to raise awareness of wellness programs offered at a community center might be the number of participants who sign up to take a class for the first time during the campaign, and the number who sign up six weeks after the campaign has ended.

- **OUTCOMES** report the changes that have occurred because of the livability initiative.

  For example, outcomes of a wellness walk to raise funds for a food pantry could be:

  1. Knowledge by residents about the resources and programs offered by the food pantry
  2. An increase in the number of volunteers and cash donations to the food pantry
  3. Experience walking a safe, clean and welcoming route could lead to an increase in the number of people walking the route
Ready, Set, Go!

The planning is over. It’s really time to get started! The Action Plan (see page 38) will lead the way. Remember:

- Stay flexible and adaptable to changes that will happen while working on the goals.
- Keep the mission and vision firmly at the forefront to keep the team focused and motivated.
- Don’t forget to praise one another and make sure every team member feels appreciated.
Spread the Word

Now that the livability team has moved to the implementation stage, it’s important to get the word out. Effective communication begins by raising awareness about the action plan. One of the first steps in a marketing campaign is to share the action plan with everyone, whether someone has already been part of the work or not, including but not limited to:

- The community’s leaders and decision-makers
- Local social service and health care providers
- Local business owners and employers
- Family and friends of livability team members
- Community members who will benefit from participating in the livability initiative
- The community at large

The Communications and Marketing Plan on page 40 can help the team in its outreach efforts.

No municipality or citizen group alone has all of the financial and human resources that are needed to address the action plan.

In addition to helping ensure that community residents know why the team is focused on a particular issue and what it hopes to accomplish, community support can inspire residents to get involved by contributing their time, ideas and, sometimes, money.

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**Worksheet: The Action Plan**

Community Name: _______________________________________________________________________

The Initiative’s Vision: __________________________________________________________________

The Initiative’s Goal(s): __________________________________________________________________

Partner Organization(s): __________________________________________________________________

Other Involved Group(s): __________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
<th>By When</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What needs to be done?</em></td>
<td><em>Who will be responsible for the task completion?</em></td>
<td><em>By what date will the action be done?</em></td>
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Person/People Responsible for Maintaining and Updating Information: ______________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Frequency and Schedule of Meetings: ...........................................................................................
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources and Support</th>
<th>Potential Barriers or Resistance</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources Available</td>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
<td>Which individuals and organizations might resist? How?</td>
<td>Which individuals and organizations should be informed about or involved with these tasks?</td>
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</table>
Worksheet: The Communications and Marketing Plan

Livable Community Initiative: ________________________________

Primary Spokesperson for the Marketing Campaign: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
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National Organizations

Search the Internet for the websites of organizations with information about health services and community supports. Here are a few to start with:

- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)
- Alzheimer’s Association
- Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors
- Eldercare Locator
- Faith in Action
- Hearing Loss Association of America
- Long-term Care Scorecard
- National Cancer Society
- National Council on Aging
- New Eyes for the Needy

AARP Resources

Visit AARP.org/Livable, the website of the AARP Livable Communities initiative, and search for the following articles, fact sheets and guides. (Policy materials can be found via AARP.org/LivablePolicy.)

- AARP HomeFit Guide and Worksheets
- AARP Policy Book: Health
- AARP Public Policy Institute
- AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Online Tool Kit
- A-Z Archives (Community Health and Wellness)
- “How to Work With Public Health to Advance Livable Communities”
- “Public Health and Age-Friendly Communities”

Visit AARP.org/Caregiving to download the free AARP guides Prepare to Care: A Resource for Families and A Helping Hand: For Those Caring For a Loved One. (Available in English, Spanish and Chinese.)
AARP Livability Index

What is the AARP Livability Index?
The AARP Public Policy Institute developed the Livability Index as a Web-based tool to measure community livability. Users can search the Index by address, ZIP code or community to find an overall livability score, as well as a score for each of seven major livability categories: housing, transportation, neighborhood, environment, opportunity, health and engagement. Users also can customize the Index to place higher or lower emphasis on the livability features of most importance to them. The Livability Index website provides resources to help consumers and policymakers use livability scores to effect change in their communities. It is the first tool of its kind to measure livability broadly at the neighborhood level for the entire country, and it is intended to inform and encourage people to take action to make their communities more livable.

Why did AARP develop the Livability Index?
As the U.S. population ages, we face a serious challenge: Our communities are not prepared for an aging society. In an effort to address this urgent problem, AARP sought to help consumers and policymakers decide whether their communities are places where residents can easily live as they get older. Taking a multifaceted approach to assessing livability at the neighborhood level, AARP developed this ground-breaking tool to jump-start community conversations about livability and encourage action by consumers and policymakers alike.

What measurements does the Index consider?
Taking a holistic approach to assessing community livability is important, because every place has unique strengths. Central neighborhoods in major cities have the advantage of being close to job opportunities, shops and entertainment options, while rural towns often have more affordable homes, safer streets and less pollution. The Livability Index measures housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement and opportunity characteristics. For each category, the Index evaluates current conditions using a diverse set of metric indicators, and considers policies and programs that can enhance community livability over time.

Housing Score

Metrics
- Housing accessibility: basic passage
- Housing options: availability of multifamily housing
- Housing affordability: housing costs
- Housing affordability: housing cost burden
- Housing affordability: availability of subsidized housing

Policies
- Housing accessibility: state and local inclusive design laws
- Housing affordability: state and local housing trust funds
- Housing options: state manufactured-housing protections
- Housing affordability: state foreclosure prevention and protection
- Commitment to livability: state and local plans to create age-friendly communities

Transportation Score

Metrics
- Convenient transportation options: frequency of local transit service
- Convenient transportation options: walking
- Convenient transportation options: congestion
- Household transportation costs
- Safe streets: speed limits
- Safe streets: crash rates
- PPI Data Explorer data about traffic fatalities by state, age and type
- Accessible system design: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-accessible stations and vehicles

Continued ➢
Policies
- Safe streets: state and local Complete Streets policies
- Convenient transportation options: state human services transportation coordination
- Convenient transportation options: state volunteer driver

Neighborhood Score

Metrics
- Proximity to destinations: access to grocery stores and farmers markets
- Proximity to destinations: access to parks
- Proximity to destinations: access to libraries
- Proximity to destinations: access to employment by transit
- Proximity to destinations: access to employment by auto
- Mixed-use neighborhoods: diversity of destinations
- Compact neighborhoods: activity density
- Personal safety: crime rate
- Neighborhood quality: vacancy rate

Policies
- Mixed-use neighborhoods: state and local transit-oriented development (TOD) programs
- Commitment to livability: state and local plans to create age-friendly communities

Environment Score

Metrics
- Drinking water quality
- Air quality: regional
- Air quality: near roadways
- Air quality: local industrial pollution

Policies
- State utility disconnection policies
- Local hazard mitigation plans
- State energy efficiency scorecard
- State and local plans to create age-friendly communities

Opportunity Score

Metrics
- Income inequality
- Jobs per worker
- High school graduation rate
- Multigenerational communities

Policies
- Local fiscal health
- State minimum wage increase
- State expansion of family and medical leave act
- State and local plans to create age-friendly communities

Health Score

Metrics
- Healthy behaviors: smoking prevalence
- Healthy behaviors: obesity prevalence
- Healthy behaviors: access to exercise opportunities
- Access to health care: health care professional shortage areas
- Quality of health care: preventable hospitalization rate
- Quality of health care: patient satisfaction

Policies
- Healthy behaviors: state smoke-free laws
- Commitment to livability
Engagement Score

Metrics
- Broadband cost and speed
- Civic engagement
- Voting rate
- Social engagement
- Cultural, arts, and entertainment institutions

Policies
- Internet access
- Voting laws
- Local human rights commission
- Local LGBT anti-discrimination laws
- State and local plans to create age-friendly communities

Best Practices: Health Services and Community Supports

In **Brownsville, Texas**, the *CycloBia “Open Streets” program* reduces the rates of chronic disease among the city’s residents by promoting healthy eating and active living. Surveys indicate that people who come to the CycloBia have increased their physical activity after attending. Studies about ciclovias in other cities have also shown increased physical activity for participants. A more active community results in lower rates of obesity and, consequently, fewer people with Type 2 diabetes.

In **Newport, Vermont**, the *Fresh Start Community Farm*, an intergenerational urban community garden, helps provide access to food in a place where some residents find it difficult to get nutritious and affordable ingredients for meals.

In **Littleton, Colorado**, the *Littleton Aging Well Resource Center* helps connect older residents to resources in the community.

In **Rochester, New York**, a *weekly dance* at a local Whole Foods supermarket is a fun social activity for people of all ages that also benefits cardiovascular health, coordination, flexibility, cognitive skills and memory. “People can dance forever,” says a local dance instructor. “Our feet might not move as fast as when we’re older, but the music and the energy are still there even if we’re sitting down.”

In **Watertown, Massachusetts**, the quarter-mile *Braille Trail* enables people with impaired vision to spend time outdoors and walk along the Charles River without any help. Instead, a guide wire with different kinds of beads distributed along it indicates the presence of nearby features such as signage and benches.

Read more about these examples at [AARP.org/Livable-Lessons](http://AARP.org/Livable-Lessons).

The AARP Public Policy Institute is always looking for better ways to measure livability. The metrics used in calculating scores may change. Find the *Livability Index* and more information at [AARP.org/LivabilityIndex](http://AARP.org/LivabilityIndex).
Read, order or download the
*AARP Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook*
and other resources at AARP.org/Livable

To stay informed about livability efforts nationwide and receive our newest livability materials, subscribe to the free, award-winning *AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter*
Sign up now at AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe

We want to hear about your community and its progress.
Complete the form at AARP.org/SharingLivableSolutions

Find the AARP state office near you at AARP.org/States

Email the AARP Livable Communities initiative at Livable@AARP.org

Contact AARP at 1-888-OUR-AARP

The *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* is a collaborative effort of AARP Livable Communities “Core Team” members
Director: Danielle Arigoni | Senior Advisors: William Armbruster, Melissa Stanton (Editor), Mike Watson | Advisor: Rebecca Delphia
as well as consultants Victoria Lemley and Patricia Oh.
The *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* was designed by Jennifer Goodman

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Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit Image 25524437
Roadmap to Livability: Housing Workbook Image 39788676
Roadmap to Livability: Transportation Workbook Image 23833327, 32509317
Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook Image 14551235
Roadmap to Livability: Economic Development Workbook Image 45625568
Strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages.

AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap