

WASHINGTON AGE- AND DEMENTIA- FRIENDLY STATE DESIGNATION

PARTNERSHIP WITH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY, AND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES



WHAT IS AGE-AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY?

Age-friendly communities consider goals that promote high quality of life for each person regardless of age, allowing older people the opportunity to remain active in their community. Age-friendly designation comes with acceptance into the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#).

Dementia-friendly communities promote awareness of dementia, educating residents about how to best support people touched by dementia and introducing systemic changes within businesses, government, and neighborhoods. Dementia-friendly designation comes with acceptance into the [Dementia-Friendly America \(DFA\) network](#).

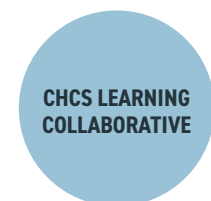
Together Age- and Dementia- Friendly state designations support the initial steps of the Washington Multisector Plan on Aging (MPA). Other states, such as [Massachusetts](#) and [California](#), leveraged their Age- and Dementia-Friendly designations to build a robust and community-led MPA.

Washington was recognized as an Age- and Dementia-Friendly state by AARP and DFA in April 2024. As a member of the AARP and DFA Networks, Washington gains access to expert-level technical assistance, connections to the full peer network, private group forums, and resources to guide and inform the development of an action plan and involve community members. Washington State's designations leverage work already carried out with Trust for America's Health Age-Friendly Public Health Systems and serve to support the Aging and Longevity Summits and an emerging Multisector Plan for Aging (MPA).

WHAT IS ALREADY HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON?

Seattle, Tacoma, White Salmon, Renton and Puyallup have already joined the AARP Age-Friendly network. Seattle, Spokane, and Orcas Island have joined the Dementia Friendly Communities network. Washington is well-suited to strengthen these efforts through the following:

- **[Center for Health Care Strategies \(CHCS\) MPA Learning Collaborative:](#)** As a collaboration between Department of Health (DOH), Health Care Authority (HCA), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Washington Association of Agencies on Aging (W4A), and AARP Washington, Washington State participated in the 2023-24 CHCS national learning collaborative to support development of MPAs.
- **[Dementia Action Collaborative \(DAC\):](#)** The DAC, with cross-sector public and private partners, has developed dementia-specific resources for individuals, families, and care partners, updated the WA State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias 2023-28, and developed guidance materials for health care professionals.



Leads states through the process of developing their MPA



Offers recognition for work happening in WA and creates access to expert-level tools and resources



Upcoming cross-agency meeting. More information to come.



A culmination of the other activities that builds on work across the state and makes WA more livable for all.

- **Aging and Long-Term Support Administration's (AL TSA)**
Strategic Plan: AL TSA recently updated their strategic plan with over 18 cross-sector participants to ensure the needs of the full community were accounted for across sectors. Participants included state agencies, tribes, local partners, private partners, and the state of Virginia.

WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Washington has the second longest lifespan in the country and is home to an increasingly diverse aging population. Age- and Dementia-Friendly designations could improve the quality of life for all Washingtonians. The focus of these efforts are to:

- Improve health equity
- Address the emerging needs of a more diverse aging population

These efforts could mean:



Active inclusion and engagement of older adults in their communities and neighborhoods.



Focus on policies, systems, and environments to embed aging into statewide initiatives.



Reduce stigma and ageism of older adults, people living with dementia, and their care partners.



Potentially improve Medicaid savings by supporting health at all ages.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

This effort is led by three state agencies: DOH, HCA, DSHS. The core team is collaborating with key stakeholders and coordinating with other state agencies, local health departments, Tribal Nations, and private partners to build a statewide initiative for Age- and Dementia-Friendly designations and ultimately the MPA.

WHAT DATA SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

- By 2040, a vast majority of counties in Washington will have at least one in five residents over age 65.
- In 2022, more than 2.6 million visits to Washington food pantries were by older adults.
- Based on the 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1 in 11 Washington adults ages 45+ are experiencing subjective cognitive decline.
- One in three older adults live with at least one disability. Sixty-one percent of Washington transportation stations and vehicles are ADA-accessible.
- Racialized health disparities across the life course result in higher rates of dementia among people who are Black/African American or American Indian/Alaska Native.
- The number of working age adults to support people over the age of 75 is decreasing from 6 working adults per older adult to 3 working adults by 2040.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- [AARP Age-Friendly Network](#)
- [Dementia-Friendly America](#)
- **DOH Contact:** [Marci Getz](#)
- **HCA Contact:** [Jamie Teuteberg](#)
- **DSHS Contact:** [Lynne Korte](#)
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