



**FORSYTH COUNTY
ACTION PLAN
FOR AGING ADULTS**



2020 - 2025



Prepared by
Age-Friendly Forsyth

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FORSYTH COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

May 31, 2018

Mr. Doug Dickerson, State Director
AARP of North Carolina
1511 Capital Center Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607

Dear Mr. Dickerson:

On behalf of Forsyth County and as Chair of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, I am pleased to provide this letter of support and commitment to creating an age-friendly community, and respectfully request membership to the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Our county recognizes the importance of encouraging and promoting age-friendly planning and policies to address changing demographics to enhance independent living. Additionally, we are committed to a process of continual improvement to support active and healthy aging and to create a community where people can live their best lives.

A variety of organizational partners, including health care, non-profits, corporate, education, and philanthropic agencies, as well as community members, have spearheaded local planning efforts through the initiative, Age-Friendly Forsyth (AFF). AFF began as a collaborative research process focused on six key areas impacting people aged 60 and older: physical and mental health, financial health, housing and safety, accessibility and mobility, support network, and empowerment and engagement. In order to determine community perspective on how Forsyth County was fairing in these focus areas, a community survey of more than 1,000 residents was conducted, and three World Café-Style Community Conversation events were held. Shortly after, key findings were presented to the community through a Planning Symposium, where more than 100 community members gathered to provide direction on priority focus areas for the initiative moving forward. Our next steps include developing AFF into a collective impact initiative where we will convene key stakeholders to begin building out a shared community plan.

We have developed a strong framework to build upon and are well-aligned with the WHO/AARP's eight domains that help influence the health and quality of life of aging adults. By committing our support, we recognize we are enabling organizations such as Senior Services and other members of AFF, as well as community members and representatives and staff of AARP to continue their work promoting efficient use of available resources and maximizing impact for all.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to join the WHO and AARP's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. We look forward to our next steps and the opportunity to partner with your organization.

Sincerely,


David R. Plyler, Chair
Forsyth County Board of Commissioners

DRP/ams



NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

In May of 2018, Age-Friendly Forsyth successfully worked with Forsyth County Commissioners and joined the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Forsyth County leaders recognized the importance of encouraging and promoting age-friendly planning and policies to address changing demographics, and has committed to a process of continual improvement to support active and healthy aging to create a community where people can live their best lives. Age-Friendly Forsyth serves as Forsyth County's approach to age-friendly and livable community work.



The AARP Livable Communities model includes eight domains as a way to organize and prioritize age-friendly and livable communities work. Age-Friendly Forsyth utilized the AARP Livable Communities model as guide, along with information from other age-friendly initiatives to inform focus areas of Age-Friendly Forsyth and community-level indicators the initiative plans to track over time. These focus areas and indicators are available in the Appendix section of this plan and result from many facilitated discussions with a wide variety of community partners.



Forsyth County completed many of the membership requirements of the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities prior to joining, including conducting a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of Forsyth County, and identifying indicators so progress can be monitored. Work towards establishing mechanisms to involve the aging community was already underway at the time Forsyth County was accepted into the Network. Since May of 2018, Age-Friendly Forsyth has continued to work with the aging community to develop a common plan to address aging-related community challenges. The following sections within this Action Plan highlights these efforts to date.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- | Introduction 1
- | Forsyth County Data Profile 2
 - Demographics
 - Living in Forsyth County
 - Location of Various Resources
- | Key Findings from Research 7
- | Age-Friendly Forsyth 8
 - Partnership Structure
 - Community Engagement
- | Community Planning Process 12
- | Strategy Teams 14
 - Services Awareness and Access
 - Home Repair/Modification Needs
- | Age-Friendly Forsyth Goals, Objectives, and Strategies 18
 - Services Awareness and Access
 - Home Repair/Modification Needs
- | Conclusion 27
- | Acknowledgements 28
- | Appendix and References 30

INTRODUCTION

The number of aging adults, or adults who are 60 years of age and older, is growing in Forsyth County, North Carolina. This trend in population dynamics was recognized in 2015 by four prominent CEOs within the corporate and healthcare community – BB&T (now Truist), Hanesbrands, Reynolds American, and Wake Forest Baptist Health. In a meeting with leadership from Senior Services, the group determined the need to gain more information to address the following questions: “When you think of an age-friendly community, what comes to mind? What needs to be improved to make Forsyth County the place to live your best life?”

Shortly after, a collaborative research process began. Over 50 organizational staff members from corporate, educational, healthcare, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors, along with community members and aging advocates, came together for a year-long effort to collect views and perspectives on aging in Forsyth County. The Community Report on Aging was released in May of 2017 and included a snapshot of the state of aging in Forsyth County. The data collected also established a baseline from which future growth could be measured. The Community Report on Aging served as one of the most comprehensive looks at aging adult perspectives that Forsyth County has had in recent history.

Following the release of Forsyth County’s Community Report on Aging , attention shifted to priority-setting and determining where to begin.

Over 30 leaders from organizations involved in the collaborative research process, along with community members and aging advocates came together for a year of planning. The overwhelming amount of data that was collected during the research phase pointed to a need for a more formal structure and process from which community improvements, age-friendly, and livability work could stem. Without question – community members, aging adults who are living the life day to day needed to be at the center and in the driver’s seat of any age-friendly work that would take place. This led to the development of Age-Friendly Forsyth.

This Action Plan describes Age-Friendly Forsyth in more detail, and outlines the process from which community goals, objectives, and strategies related to aging are set. Age-Friendly Forsyth is truly “building the plane while flying” as it relates to developing a community plan by identifying priorities based on community responses through series of focus groups and community conversations. The hope is to address each community challenge as comprehensively as possible, focusing on specific, realistic, and timely goals that allow for progress to be accurately measured. This Action Plan serves as a starting point and highlights goals, objectives, and strategies that Age-Friendly Forsyth plans to work on over the next 5 years.

FORSYTH COUNTY DATA PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHICS

The total population of Forsyth County is 368,745 people. About 20% (72,800) of the people in Forsyth County are 60 years and older.

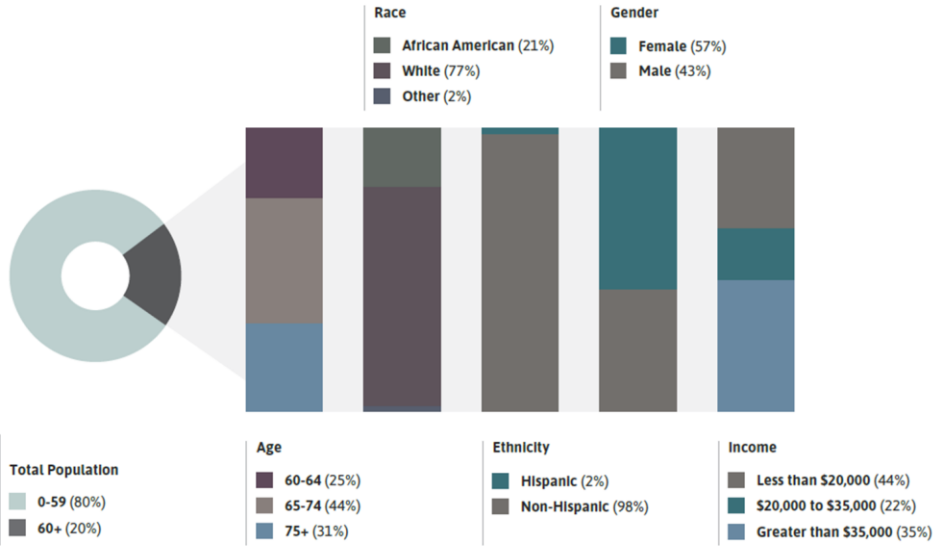
When looking specifically at the target population of adults aged 60+, 25% (18,500) are 60-64, 44% (32,000) are 65-74, and 31% (22,300) are 75+.

21% (15,200) of people aged 60+ are African American, 77% (56,300) are White, and 2% (1,500) are another race other than African American or White.

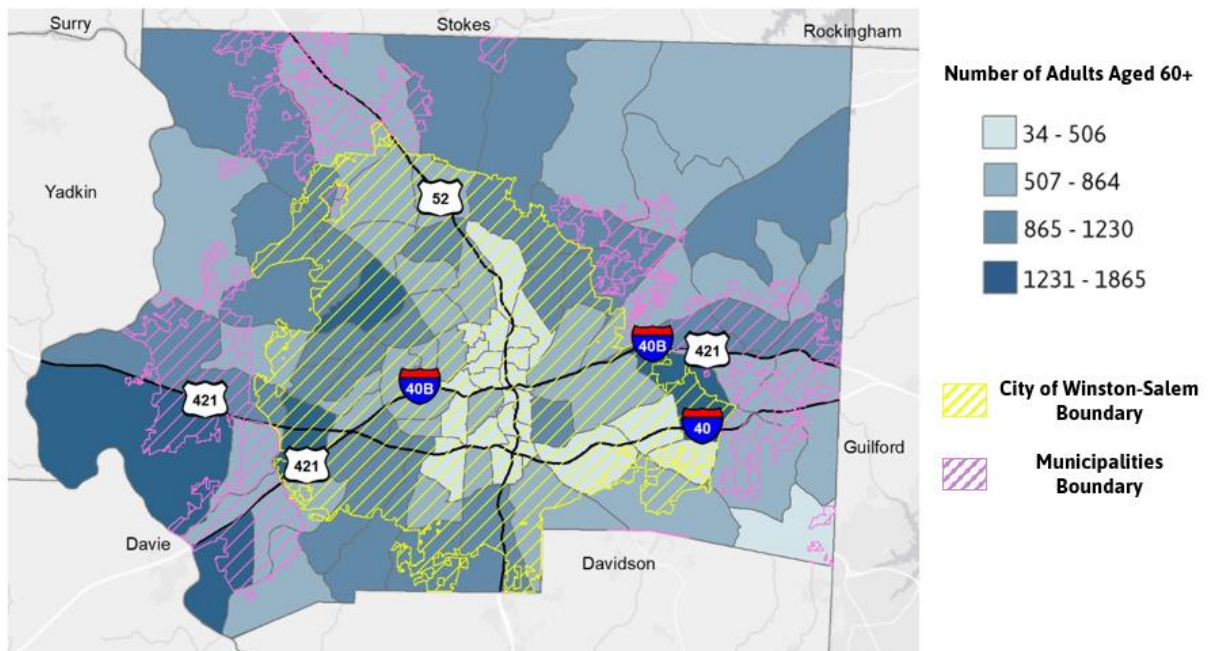
2% (1,500) of people aged 60+ are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

57% (41,600) of people aged 60+ are female. 43% (31,200) are male.

44% (31,700) of people aged 60+ have an income of less than \$20,000 per year, 22% (15,700) have an income of more than \$20,000 but less than \$35,000 per year, and 35% (25,400) have an income of more than \$35,000 per year.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2015 1-Year Estimate



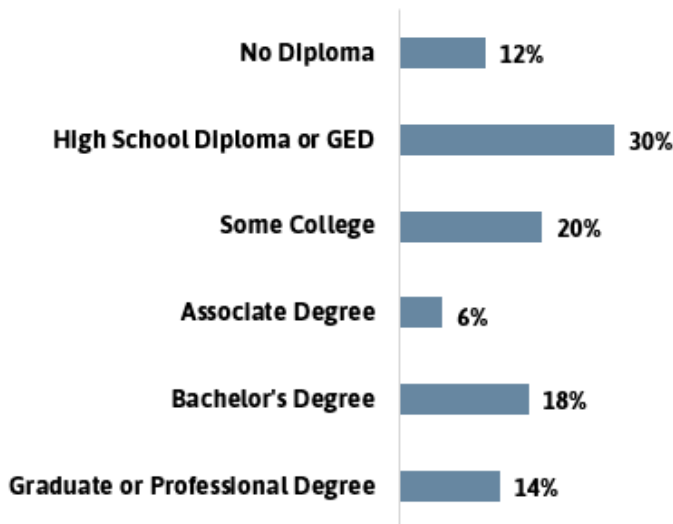
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015)

Employment Status



79% (57,500) of aging adults are retired. **17% (12,400)** of aging adults are working. **4% (2,900)** are unemployed. Generally, adults aged 60 and older who are still working are doing so because they **enjoy working, they need to cover living expenses, or they don't yet qualify for retirement.**

Education Attainment



Poverty Status

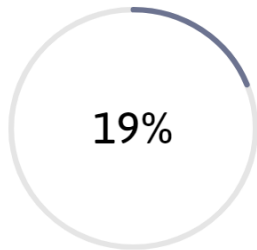
Demographic	Percent At or Under 200% Federal Poverty Line
Adults Aged 60+	27%
African American	41%
White	23%

African American adults aged 60 and older are almost twice as likely to live in a household that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line compared to White adults aged 60 or older.

13% of aging adults report they **do not have enough money to live comfortably**, roughly 9,500 people.

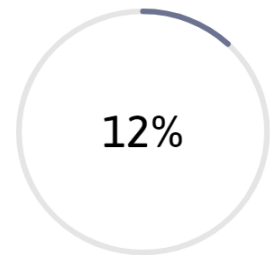
LIVING IN FORSYTH COUNTY

The following data points include the number of households in Forsyth County with aging adults, as well as information such as the length of time aging adults have lived in Forsyth County, home ownership status, housing type, housing costs, and food access.



Approximately **19%** of households (30,685) in Forsyth County house one adult 60 years or older.

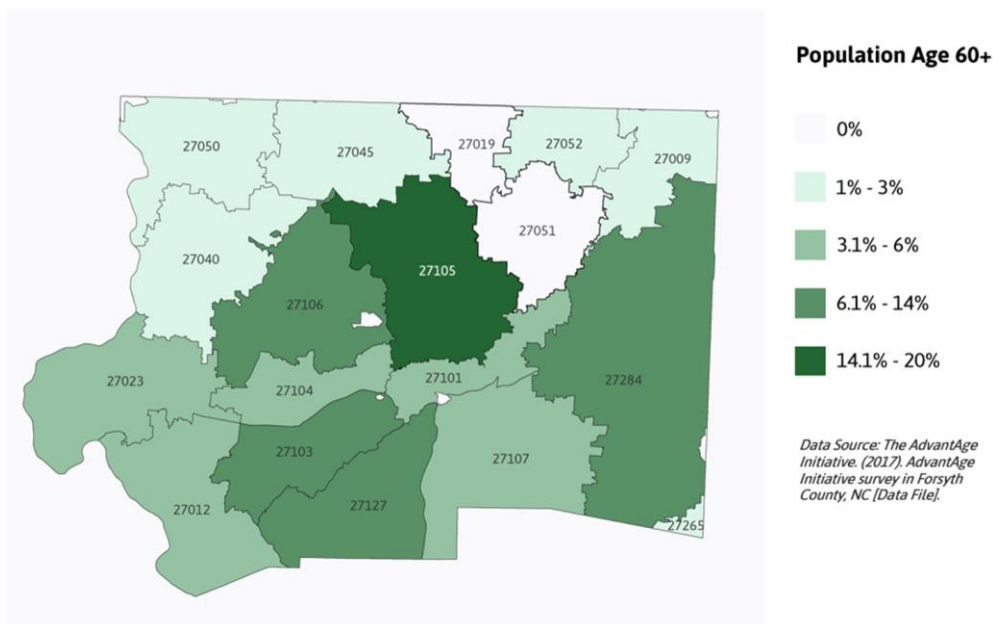
Approximately **12%** of households (18,480) in Forsyth County house two or more adults 60 years or older.



45% of aging adults **have lived in Forsyth County for 50 years or longer**, roughly 32,800 people.

90% of aging adults **would like to age in place**, roughly 65,500 people.

34% of aging adults **live alone in Forsyth County**, roughly 24,750 people. The visualization below shows the percentage of aging adults living alone by ZIP code



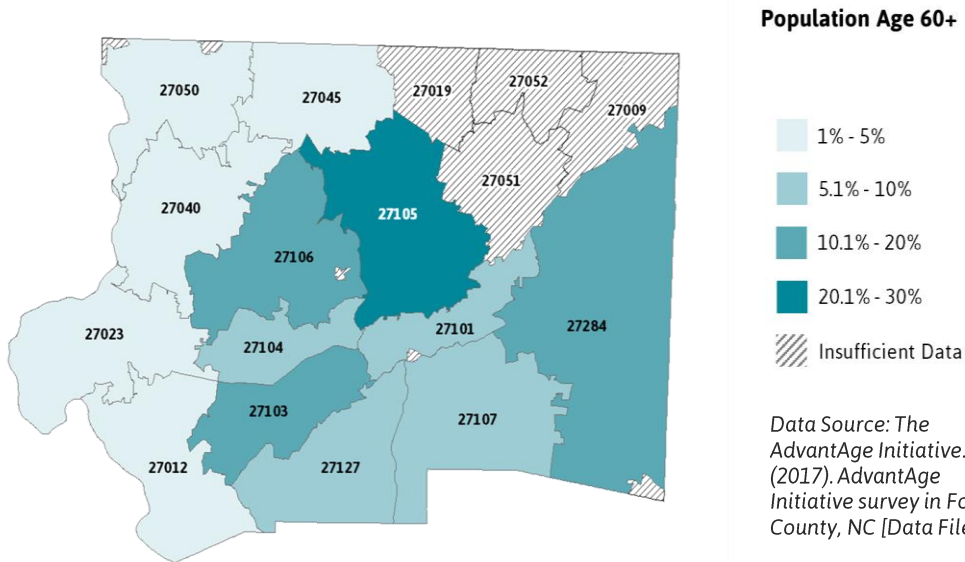
Home Ownership: Do you own or rent your home?



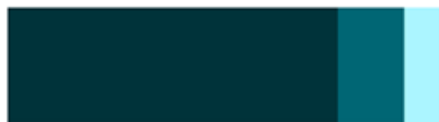
Own (80%) **Rent (20%)**

80% (58,200) own their home.
20% (14,600) rent their home.

The visualization below geographically depicts the percentage of aging adults who are renters in Forsyth County.



Housing Type: What type of housing do you currently live in?



A Single-Family House (82%)
An Apartment or Condominium (12%)
Other (6%)

82% (59,700) of aging adults live in a single-family house. **12% (8,700)** of aging adults live in an apartment or condominium.

\$165,500

Median Value of Homes in Forsyth County

\$830

Median Monthly Housing Costs

\$776

Rent Costs

\$4,215

Average Monthly Cost of Assisted Living

\$6,950

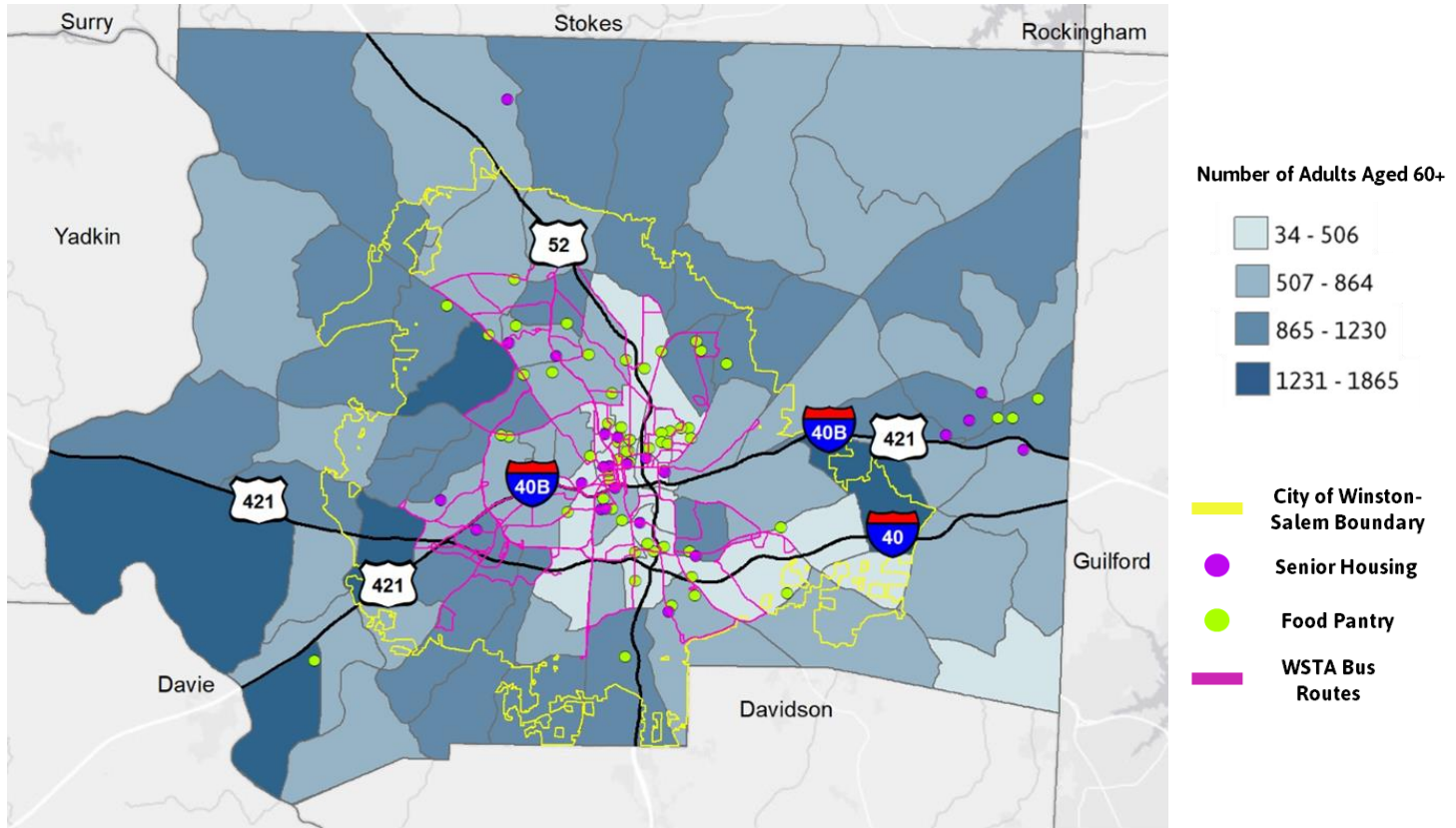
Average Monthly Cost of Semi-Private Nursing Home

\$7,330

Average Monthly Cost of Private Room Nursing Home

LOCATION OF VARIOUS RESOURCES

Forsyth County has an urban center (Winston-Salem) and is surrounded by rural and suburb areas. Resource distribution such as income-based senior housing, nutritional support services such as food pantries, and transportation services such as the Winston-Salem Transit Authority's bus routes are depicted on the visualization included below, with many of these support services located within the Winston-Salem city boundaries.



The following includes a highlight of the various services and resources that organizational partners within Age-Friendly Forsyth provide to aging adults. It is by no means a comprehensive list but is intended to offer additional context to the aging adult service system.

Non-profits such as Senior Services, the Shepherd's Center of Winston-Salem, and the Shepherd's Center of Kernersville have been serving the county for over 30 years and offer a wide variety of supports such as Meals on Wheels, adult day care, caregiver relief, older adult education, transportation, and home repairs to name a few; both Shepherd's Centers serve as certified senior center sites. Additionally, Senior Financial Care offers financial education and assistance to Forsyth County aging adults, and Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County provides home repair services. Trellis Supportive Care offers end-of-life support, as well as supportive services for caregivers and family members. The YMCA and Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks have a wide array of recreation and exercise opportunities for aging adults, including 8 YMCA locations and over 80 park sites. Forsyth County is also home to the Sticht Center for Healthy Aging and Alzheimer Prevention, and Wake Forest's Alzheimer's Disease Core Center—one of the three Centers located in the 12-state Southeast region. Additionally, a variety of corporate and philanthropic partners have made aging-related challenges a priority and have provided funding for aging research and planning.

While the majority of support services for aging adults are located within the urban boundaries of Winston-Salem, many provide services to the entire Forsyth County area.

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

Key Findings include highlights from research collected through the collaborative research process and were chosen using the following criteria:

- Significant differences among various populations exist
- Common themes were present across all research activities
- Data displayed high prevalence of negative perception

Many adults aged 60 and older have lived in Forsyth County for more than 50 years and **are satisfied** with Forsyth County as a place to live. Many aging adults **positively perceive**:

- access to health care
- the availability of food options
- their ability to influence decision-making in Forsyth County
- personal safety

Many aging adults have **home repair or modification needs**; the most common needs include the following:

- minor repairs
- help with uncluttering
- grab bar installation

Forsyth County is perceived positively; however, the following are the most prevalent **neighborhood issue areas**:

- need for improved public transportation
- streets and sidewalks needing repair
- heavy traffic
- inadequate number of benches
- lack of a sense of community

Most aging adults are facing **wellness-related challenges**, such as:

- not consuming enough fruits and vegetables
- not exercising enough
- pain as a barrier to exercise and daily activities
- falls that result in injury

Many aging adults are serving as **caregivers** and not receiving **relief from their caregiving responsibilities**, particularly people aged 75 and older. Reasons for not seeking caregiving relief include the following:

- mindsets such as, guilt, lack of trust, and pride
- availability and cost of caregiver relief services
- unaware of resources
- too few caregiver support groups

Aging African Americans and low-income groups face more challenges compared to the White population and higher income groups, respectively, in the following areas:

- increased income shortfalls
- higher negative perception of personal health
- higher emergency room usage
- decreased housing stability
- increased home repair or modification needs
- increased public transportation usage
- increased mobility device usage

Improved **awareness of resources and services** is a community need, specifically awareness surrounding the following services:

- home repairs or home modifications
- caregiver relief
- senior lunch programs
- home delivery of groceries and meals
- outdoor maintenance

AGE-FRIENDLY FORSYTH

AGE-FRIENDLY FORSYTH is a community alliance that engages and informs aging adults and community partners to create a livable community through strategic collaborative planning.

VISION

Aging adults in Forsyth County are living their best lives.

FOCUS AREAS

Focus areas and indicators of Age-Friendly Forsyth were developed through a comprehensive assessment of factors relating to aging through literature review and collaborations that took place during the early research phase. The focus areas of the initiative are included in the visualization below. The Appendix contains the comprehensive list of indicators, categorized by focus area, that the initiative will regularly track over time, based on community priority.



PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The structure of Age-Friendly Forsyth is intended to be highly collaborative, inclusive, and well-connected to other groups in Forsyth County that share similar priorities, with resident input playing a heavy role in priority and goal-setting.

- **The Leadership Team** consists of organizational funding partners and (5) Community Engagement Council members. The Leadership Team is responsible for funding the initiative, maintaining the initiative’s structure, participating in decision-making processes, and serving as champions/spokespeople. Age-Friendly Forsyth utilizes a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that Leadership Team members have a clarity around commitments and expectations.



- **The Community Engagement Council** consists of committed residents aged 60 or older (or their caregivers) who geographically represent the County’s aging population. The Council helps drive initiative work, and serves as a bridge to community members through **local resident groups**, which include existing community volunteer groups and residents who would like to be involved.
- Issue-specific **strategy teams** are work groups that include organizational staff members and community members. Strategy teams are built around the six focus areas of the initiative and are responsible for developing and implementing community objectives and strategies in collaboration with the larger Age-Friendly Forsyth network.
- **Advisory Groups** include elected officials, the faith-based community, as well as the Aging Services Planning Committee – a provider-based group that has historically met monthly to ensure collaboration among aging service providers remain intact within Forsyth County.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During the planning process of developing Age-Friendly Forsyth as a collaborative community initiative, organizational leaders within Forsyth County recognized that in order to have a greater, more sustainable impact, community members must be at the center of all initiative activities and decision-making processes. Aging adults must be empowered to be a part of change processes as they are the wealth of knowledge and experience. This led to the development of the Community Engagement Council.

The Community Engagement Council consists of 16 place-based members that help drive the work of Age-Friendly Forsyth and are heavily involved in all initiative decision-making processes. This resident leadership group also serves as a bridge, connecting work happening within the initiative to community members. The role is stipend, and includes leadership development training as well.

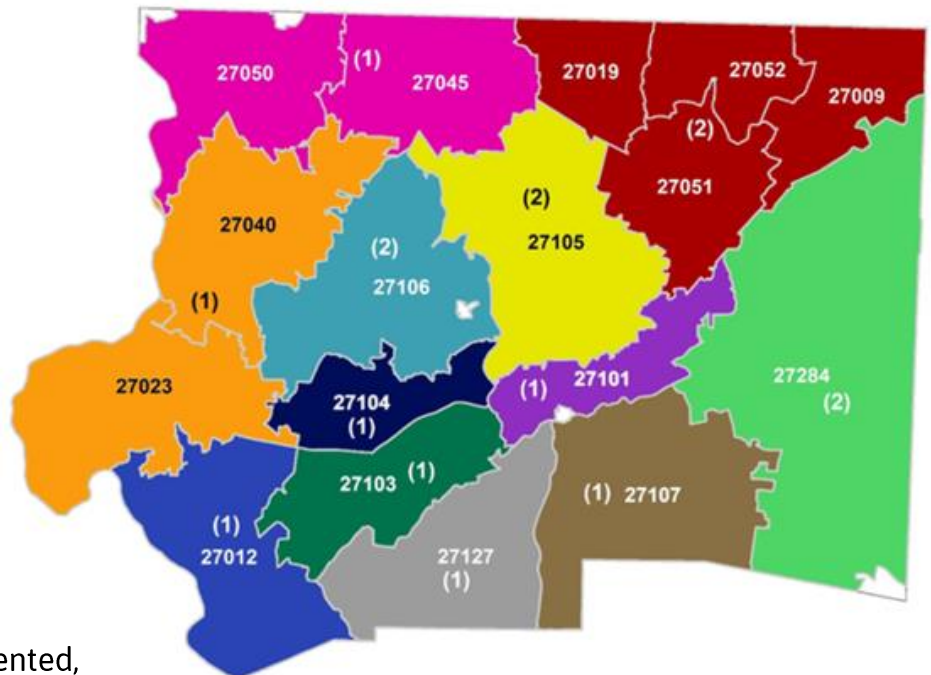
The primary function of a volunteer Community Engagement Council member is to serve at least a one-year commitment as the communication liaison for a designated area. This is accomplished through connecting with residents, hearing and communicating community needs and concerns, and having an active voice in sharing opinions on need areas at council meetings.

The Community Engagement Council is place-based, with members focusing engagement activities within their more local neighborhoods, while working together towards a whole-county approach.

In determining geographic “zones” of representation, a planning committee that focused on community engagement during the initiative's development process analyzed a wide variety of data from both the United States Census and results from the random-sample survey administered during the research phase. Data included in this analysis included population density of adults age 60 and older, race by census tract, income by ZIP code, and financial comfotability by ZIP code.

In order to ensure that community engagement was equitably represented, areas where data depicted increased challenges resulted in a higher number of Community Engagement Council

members within those areas. Overall, this process led to the identification of 12 zones with 16 Community Engagement Council members. The map above shows each color-coded zone, with the number of Community Engagement Council members for each zone in parenthesis. As Age-Friendly Forsyth and community engagement expands in future years, the intent is to also expand the Community Engagement Council.



Recruitment of Community Engagement Council members began in January 2019 and is still continuing to date. Many of the members serving on the Community Engagement Council also serve as neighborhood association leaders and community advocates. More specific membership requirements and responsibilities are outlined below.

Community Engagement Council Member Responsibilities

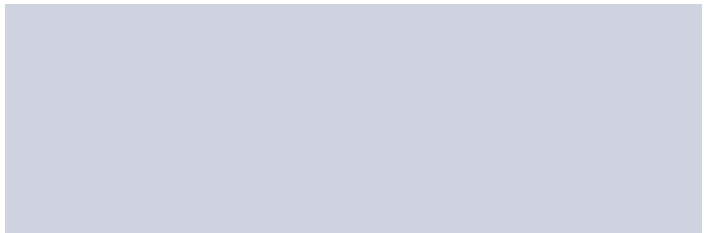
- Hold community events, listening sessions, and focus groups within geographic area
- Maintain communication between the initiative and local resident groups
- Assist with work in issue-specific teams as it relates to needs/interests
- Effectively represent constituency and effectively voice needs and concerns
- Understand that by serving on the Community Engagement Council, members are representing the entire county, not just the designated area

Community Engagement Council Member Requirements

- Must live within the neighborhood or area the member is representing
- Must be aged 60 or older or a caregiver of an adult aged 60 or older
- Are not a paid staff or on the board of a senior service related organization

Once an individual expresses interest in joining the Community Engagement Council, they receive an application and meet with Age-Friendly Forsyth staff members to discuss the role in more detail. Upon acceptance into the Community Engagement Council, each member receives an orientation that includes information on the history of Age-Friendly Forsyth, the initiative's process, how to conduct focus groups, and tactics that can be utilized to help engage the larger aging adult population. Age-Friendly Forsyth's staff includes a Community Engagement Coordinator that holds regularly scheduled check-ins with each member, as well as monthly meetings for the entire Council.

Additionally, the Community Engagement Council self-selects (5) members to also serve on Age-Friendly Forsyth's Leadership Team to ensure that community voice is well-represented, equitably.



COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Data and research obtained through the collaborative research process identified a wide variety of areas for improvement related to aging challenges within Forsyth County. Age-Friendly Forsyth is community-driven, which means that aging adults who have lived experience help determine the prioritization of community challenges. In 2019, the Community Engagement Council led an extensive research effort and held over 20 community conversations across Forsyth County to learn more about which issue areas the larger aging adult population within the County felt needed to be prioritized first. Overall, 770 aging adult voices were represented in this process.

Community Conversations

- Age-Friendly Forsyth conducted 21 community conversations from April-August 2019, with an estimated total attendance of 116 people.
- Community conversation responses were coded to determine common themes, using grounded theory approach.

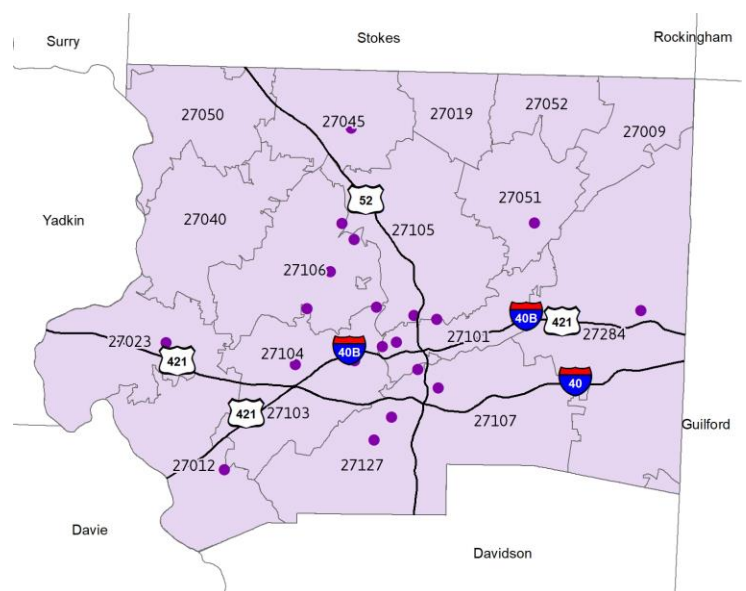
County-wide major themes were identified through qualitative analysis, resulting in a total of 25 identified issues deemed a priority by the larger aging adult community. Community Engagement Council members reviewed data from the larger data set for each issue, and applied the following criteria to assist with the voting process:

- Does the issue/challenge depict a represented need based on larger data sample?
- Is there existing community momentum?
- Is it feasible to accomplish at this point in time?
- Could Age-Friendly Forsyth have an ability to achieve an early win?

Through a voting process, six leading issue areas/community challenges were identified and submitted to the Leadership Team as recommendations for issue-specific strategy teams.

Survey Responses

- In May 2017, Age-Friendly Forsyth released its Community Report on Aging for Forsyth County, NC. This report included results from a random-sample, 93 question telephone survey administered to 1,002 adults aged 60 and older in Forsyth County.
 - The final question of the survey was open-ended, asking what respondents important changes that needed to be made to improve conditions for aging adults that live in the County.
 - 654 people responded; responses were coded to determine common themes, using grounded theory approach.



Leading Community Challenges

- Services Awareness and Access
- Improved Transportation Services/Transportation Access
- Home Repairs/Modification Needs
- Support for Social Isolation
- More Recreational Activities
- More Exercise Opportunities

Leadership Team members reviewed data related to the leading six issue areas/community challenges recommended by the Community Engagement Council and underwent the same criteria-applying and voting process activity. This community planning process led to the identification of Age-Friendly Forsyth's first two strategy teams: Services Awareness and Access, and Home Repair/Modification Needs.

Future strategy team identification will occur following the same process – holding multiple community conversation events throughout Forsyth County to learn more about community priorities, followed by a review process and recommendation identification by the Community Engagement Council, with leading challenges being vetted by the Leadership Team.

Strategy Team Selections

- Services Awareness and Access
- Home Repairs/Modification Needs

The number of strategy teams that are launched are dependent on capacity of the Age-Friendly Forsyth initiative. Early on, Age-Friendly Forsyth leadership recognized that in order to be effective community buy-in and a long-term approach to alleviate systemic challenges were needed. This led to the idea that Forsyth County's community plan would be an organically developed, living document and process. Developing strategy teams as a way to form the community plan places ownership of the plan in the hands of the community members that serve as the target population, rather than in the hands of organizations; it allows for community members to be in the driver's seat.

STRATEGY TEAMS

The goal of a Strategy Team includes developing a collective plan to improve conditions in our community related to the priority challenges/needs selected by the Age-Friendly Forsyth initiative. This is accomplished by collaboratively identifying community objectives and tactics or strategies, along with associated metrics that ultimately form the narrative of Forsyth County's Action Plan or Community Plan on Aging. Strategy Teams for each priority area include both organizational staff members and community members who are identified utilizing an "actor mapping" approach. With this approach, advisory and stakeholder groups within Age-Friendly Forsyth's structure have facilitated discussions and identify possible Team members and/or groups outlined in a visual map. Strategy Teams consist of about 15-20 members.

Age-Friendly Forsyth staff members engage in a conversation with each identified "actor" or potential Team member to determine if the suggested individual or group is interested in joining the effort. Orientation on requirements and expectations are also provided and members are provided with a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure there is clarity around participation.

Strategy Team Member Commitments

- Work together to achieve social and economic wellbeing of aging adults in Forsyth County
- Promote an equitable and inclusive approach
- Encourage quality, innovation, and asset-based community development principles to achieve positive results for the community as a whole
- Regularly attend and fully participate in Strategy Team meetings
- Provide leadership and expertise when working in sub-groups
- Collaboratively develop outcomes and tactics, and identify correlating metrics to measure progress to address community-identified needs
- Work with the larger Age-Friendly Forsyth initiative in developing Forsyth County's Community Plan on Aging
- Assist in the ongoing collection of community data, where appropriate and available
- Explore and provide recommendations on ways to implement opportunities for continuous improvement strategies and for the integration of services to achieve agreed upon outcomes when applicable
- Provide recommendations on best practices or existing programs that could be expanded
- When advisable and appropriate, join in Age-Friendly Forsyth's advocacy efforts at an organizational, local, state and/or national level
- Promote open and continuous communication among members
- Support and assist the efforts of Age-Friendly Forsyth staff in achieving agreed upon outcomes

SERVICES AWARENESS AND ACCESS STRATEGY TEAM

One of the leading community challenges identified through the community planning process includes lack of community awareness of and access to available supportive services. This led to the development of the Services Awareness and Access Strategy Team, which consists of 19 organizational staff and community members who meet regularly to identify goals, objectives, and strategies to help improve community awareness of and access to available supportive services. The following information provides a snapshot of service awareness needs among the aging adult community.

Service Type	Percent of Adults Aged 60+ Aware of Service
Meals on wheels or home delivered meals programs	84%
End of life or hospice care	81%
Exercise facilities, programs, or clubs	79%
Home health aides or personal care attendants	75%
Senior Services, the organization	74%
A special transportation service, such as TransAid	73%
Mental health services/counseling	70%
Housekeeping or cleaning services	68%
Legal aid or free legal services	65%
Visiting nurses or doctors who provide services in people's homes	64%
Financial planning or financial education services	64%
Adult day social programs	62%
Outdoor maintenance services, such as lawn work or snow removal	61%
Home delivery of groceries and meals from restaurants	57%
Senior lunch programs	55%
Respite services that help caregivers get a break from caregiving duties	47%
A service that helps with home repairs or home modifications	49%

Data Source: The AdvantAge Initiative. (2017). AdvantAge Initiative survey in Forsyth County, NC [Data File].

Where would you go in Forsyth County to get information on available services?

Contact	Percent of Adults Aged 60+
Family Members or Friends	53% (38,600)
Senior Services, the Organization	49% (35,700)
The Internet	43% (31,300)
A Doctor or Health Care Professional	43% (31,300)
A Place of Worship	40% (29,100)
A Phone Book	34% (24,800)
The Department of Social Services	31% (22,600)
The Shepherd's Center	31% (22,600)
211	24% (17,500)
Another Senior Center	20% (14,600)
A Local Elected Official	15% (10,900)
Library	1% (700)
Newspaper/Magazine/Television	1% (700)

Where in Forsyth County would you go if you needed help with a problem?

Contact	Percent of Adults Aged 60+
Family	67% (48,800)
A Friend or Neighbor	65% (47,300)
A Place of Worship	54% (39,300)
Senior Services, the Organization	34% (24,800)
A Local Elected Official	29% (21,100)
The Shepherd's Center	27% (19,700)
The Department of Social Services	27% (19,700)
A Senior Center	24% (17,500)
A Social Worker or Case Worker	22% (16,000)
Adult Protective Services	18% (13,100)
Police or Fire Department	4% (2,900)

Data Source: The AdvantAge Initiative. (2017). AdvantAge Initiative survey in Forsyth County, NC [Data File].

HOME REPAIR/MODIFICATION NEEDS STRATEGY TEAM

Another leading community challenge identified through the community planning process is the overwhelming need for home repairs or modifications that affect an aging adult's ability to age in place or live in their home for as long as they would like. This need led to the development of the Home Repair/Modification Needs Strategy Team, which consists of 16 organizational staff and community members who meet regularly to identify goals, objectives, and strategies to help improve the coordination and collaboration of the home repair/modifications service system. The following information provides a snapshot of home repair/modification needs among the aging adult community.



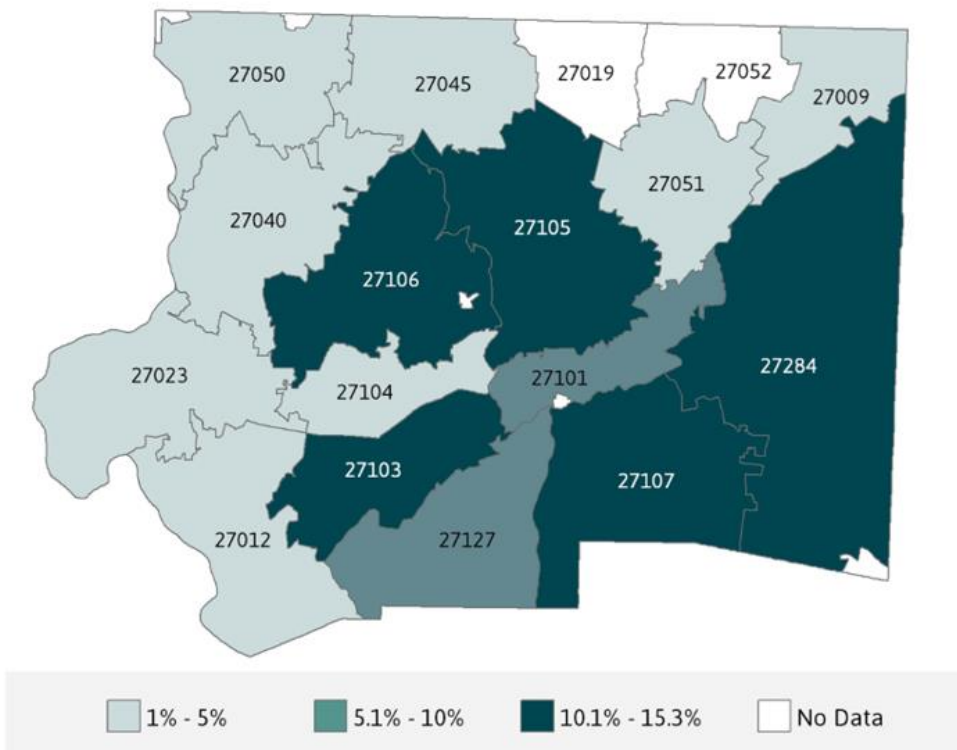
Does your current residence need any repairs or changes to improve your ability to live there as long as you want?

- Yes (20%)**
- No (80%)**

20% (14,600) aging adults have **home repair/modification needs**.

The most common repair needs include minor repairs such as **painting, help with home de-cluttering, and grab bar installation**.

The following visualization geographically depicts the percentage of aging adults who have home repair/modification needs.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The following goals, objectives, and strategies will be targeted by Age-Friendly Forsyth over a 5-year period (2020-2025) and span across bigger picture activities related to the growth and development of Age-Friendly Forsyth as a collaborative community initiative to more specific activities related to services awareness and access, and home repair/modification needs.

GOAL 1

Age-Friendly Forsyth establishes a presence as the network for aging services providers within Forsyth County and uses data-informed, collaborative processes to build a common community plan to improve outcomes for aging adults, and the overall age-friendliness and livability of Forsyth County.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 The Age-Friendly Forsyth Leadership Team partners continue to remain engaged in all initiative activities.

Strategy 1.1.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth operates under a self-funded model where Leadership Team partners contribute funding based on an agreed-upon contribution model.

Strategy 1.1.2 Leadership Team members meet monthly to collaborate and ensure the progress of the overall initiative.

Strategy 1.1.3 Leadership Team members support the efforts of staff and serve on various committees as needed, with six members serving on the initiative's Executive Team.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 Age-Friendly Forsyth continues to grow and expand key structural components and processes to ensure sustainability.

Strategy 1.2.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth further develops brand awareness in Forsyth County by creating a communications plan and forming a Communications Committee.

Strategy 1.2.2 Age-Friendly Forsyth forms a Development Committee that addresses fundraising opportunities and develops a funding plan to complement the initiative's self funded model.

Strategy 1.2.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth pursues 501c3 status.

OBJECTIVE 1.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth expands its network and establish strong connections and partnerships with other entities within Forsyth County.

Strategy 1.3.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth develops a faith-based advisory committee to enhance engagement within faith-based networks.

Strategy 1.3.2 Age-Friendly Forsyth builds upon collaboration with elected officials and provides annual updates to the Forsyth County Commissioners.

Strategy 1.3.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth works to make connections with mayors of local municipalities and cities by sharing information and offering opportunities for collaboration as applicable.

Strategy 1.3.4 Age-Friendly Forsyth aligns with other local initiatives and collaborative efforts on common issues, and engages in advocacy efforts as applicable.

Strategy 1.3.5 Age-Friendly Forsyth seeks to expand Leadership Team partnerships with other organizations and groups that share common goals.

OBJECTIVE 1.4 Age-Friendly Forsyth maintains strong connections with the Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee, a collaborative provider-based network originally convened by the Forsyth County Department of Social Services.

Strategy 1.4.1 The Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee serves as an advisory group to the Age-Friendly Forsyth initiative.

Strategy 1.4.2 Age-Friendly Forsyth serves a facilitator role for monthly Aging Services Planning Committee meetings and secures presenters on a variety of educational topics based on the needs and interests of the Committee.

Strategy 1.4.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth staff will develop and distribute a monthly Aging Services Planning Committee newsletter that includes information on upcoming activities among the organizations that comprise the committee, meeting minutes, and presentation information.

Strategy 1.4.4 Age-Friendly Forsyth Community Engagement Council members are regularly updated on activities, events, and programs offered by organizations and are connected to monthly Aging Services Planning Committee meetings to provide a more direct connection between service providers within the Committee and the larger aging adult community.

OBJECTIVE 1.5 Age-Friendly Forsyth maintains strong connections with the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities, and the local chapter, AARP of the Triad.

Strategy 1.5.1 An AARP of the Triad representative serves on the Age-Friendly Forsyth Leadership Team; AARP of the Triad provides in-kind support to help off-set some of the costs Age-Friendly Forsyth would otherwise incur.

Strategy 1.5.2 As available, Age-Friendly Forsyth participates and/or attends AARP events and conferences and provides information in an effort to assist other communities that are engaging in age-friendly and livability efforts.

Strategy 1.5.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth staff regularly collaborates with AARP of the Triad representatives to provide updates on progress and identify opportunities that further strengthen the partnership.

Strategy 1.5.4 Age-Friendly Forsyth contributes best practice and supporting information to the larger AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities as outlined in Forsyth County's commitments to being a member community within the Network.

OBJECTIVE 1.6 Age-Friendly Forsyth establishes strong connections with the local Area Agency on Aging and works with the Forsyth County Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee – the body responsible for funding of services through Title III of the Older Americans Act.

Strategy 1.6.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth staff members regularly attend monthly Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee meetings.

Strategy 1.6.2 Leadership Team and Community Engagement Council members join the efforts of the Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Committee and seek appointment to the Committee as available.

Strategy 1.6.3 Age-Friendly Forsyth requests that the current chair of the Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Committee serve as an ex-officio member of the initiative's Executive Team.

Strategy 1.6.4 Age-Friendly Forsyth seeks empowerment from the Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Committee and the local Area Agency on Aging to develop Forsyth County's Community Plan on Aging.

Strategy 1.6.5 Age-Friendly Forsyth provides data and information as requested by the Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Committee.

OBJECTIVE 1.7 Age-Friendly Forsyth launches multiple issue-specific strategy teams that will collaboratively identify community objectives and begin implementing strategies that will improve community outcomes.

Strategy 1.7.1 The Community Engagement Council holds multiple community conversations throughout Forsyth County to learn more about community priority related to challenges.

Strategy 1.7.2 The Community Engagement Council reviews data, and through a criteria application and voting process, offers recommendations on issue-specific strategy teams to the Leadership Team.

Strategy 1.7.3 The Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Community Engagement Council, identifies new issue-specific strategy teams through a vetting process.

Strategy 1.7.4 Strategy team members are identified through a collaborative actor mapping process; strategy teams meet consistently and members work together to identify collective community objectives and strategies to help alleviate systemic community challenges.

OBJECTIVE 1.8: Age-Friendly Forsyth continues to develop and expand community engagement efforts and empowers the Community Engagement Council in mobilizing residents around priorities, advocacy, and community action items in helping realize Age-Friendly Forsyth's vision.

Strategy 1.8.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth staff recruits community volunteers to serve on the Community Engagement Council.

Strategy 1.8.2 Community Engagement Council members receive leadership development training.

Strategy 1.8.3 Community Engagement Council members have the opportunity to serve on issue-specific strategy teams, the Leadership Team, and the Executive Team.

Strategy 1.8.4 Community Engagement Council members hold community meetings and community conversations to learn more about the needs and priorities of local residents.

Strategy 1.8.5 The Community Engagement Council meets monthly to collaborate and share community needs and priorities and work together to identify recommendations and opportunities to other stakeholder groups within Age-Friendly Forsyth's structure.

OBJECTIVE 1.9 Age-Friendly Forsyth collects and analyzes community data to monitor and track the progress of issue-specific strategy teams and other community-level interventions implemented by the initiative as a whole.

Strategy 1.9.1 Age-Friendly Forsyth plans and implements a second data collection and research process to complement original research efforts that led to the Community Report on Aging.

Strategy 1.9.2 Age-Friendly Forsyth conducts multiple service system analysis, driven by issue specific strategy teams, to better understand program and service capacity among aging service providing organizations within Forsyth County.

SERVICES AWARENESS AND ACCESS

GOAL 2

Aging adults report increased awareness of and access to services available within Forsyth County.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Increase awareness of services provided by organizational partners and stakeholder groups within the Age-Friendly Forsyth network among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.1.1 Work with community partners in the annual implementation of the Senior Expo Event.

Strategy 2.1.2 Promote Forsyth County's "one-stop-shop," Senior Services' Aging Resource Department, in collaborative marketing efforts to point aging adults to a pre-existing, comprehensive information source available in the community.

Strategy 2.1.3 Increase distribution of the comprehensive Directory of Services, utilizing the Age-Friendly Forsyth network.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Increase awareness of COVID-19 support services provided by organizational partners and stakeholder groups within the Age-Friendly Forsyth network among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.2.1 Collect information, such as program closures, adjustments, and/or creation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic from organizational partners and stakeholder groups within the Age-Friendly Forsyth network through survey implementation.

Strategy 2.2.2 Collect community data to determine COVID-19 related needs and concerns of the larger aging adult population in Forsyth County.

Strategy 2.2.3 Implement ad-hoc activities based on community and stakeholder data results and in collaboration with community partners within the Age-Friendly Forsyth network.

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Increase awareness of and assess access to caregiving respite services and support groups among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.3.1: Conduct a service analysis with community partners who offer caregiving respite services and support groups to assess capacity and outline key program details.

Strategy 2.3.2: Collaboratively develop marketing materials related to available caregiving respite services and support groups to disseminate to the larger population.

Strategy 2.3.3: Offer educational community events and informational material that will include presentation of caregiving data specific to Forsyth County, and highlight the work of specific caregiving respite programs and support groups available in Forsyth County.

Strategy 2.3.4: Share data from the *Community Report on Aging* with caregiving respite service providers and support group organizers to assist providers in their own outreach efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2.4 Increase awareness of and assess access to nutrition support services among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.4.1: Conduct a service analysis with community partners who offer nutrition support services to assess capacity and outline key program details.

Strategy 2.4.2: Collaboratively develop marketing materials related to available nutrition support services to disseminate to the larger aging adult population.

Strategy 2.4.3: Offer educational community events and informational material that will include presentation of nutrition related data specific to Forsyth County, and highlight the work of specific nutrition support services available in Forsyth County.

Strategy 2.4.4: Share data from the *Community Report on Aging* with nutrition support service providers to assist providers in their own outreach efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2.5 Increase awareness of and assess access to mental health support services among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.5.1 Conduct a service analysis with community partners who offer mental health support services to assess capacity and outline key program details.

Strategy 2.5.2 Collaboratively develop marketing materials related to available mental health support services to disseminate to the larger aging adult population.

Strategy 2.5.3 Offer educational community events and informational material that will include presentation of mental health related data specific to Forsyth County, and highlight the work of specific mental health support services available in Forsyth County.

Strategy 2.5.4 Share data from the Community Report on Aging with mental health providers to assist providers in their own outreach efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2.6 Increase awareness of and assess access to recreation and/or exercise opportunities among the Forsyth County aging adult population.

Strategy 2.6.1 Conduct a service analysis with community partners within the Age-Friendly Forsyth network who offer recreation and/or exercise activities.

Strategy 2.6.2 Collaboratively develop marketing materials related to available recreation and/or exercise activities to disseminate to the larger aging adult population.

Strategy 2.6.3 Share data from the Community Report on Aging with community partners who offer recreation and/or exercise opportunities to assist providers in their own outreach efforts.

HOME REPAIR/MODIFICATIONS

Age-Friendly Forsyth is intentional on maintaining flexibility to adjust and adapt to changes within the aging adult service system. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 had grave impacts on the home repair/modification service landscape, with many providers pausing in-home repair programs. This temporary shift caused Age-Friendly Forsyth to pause collaborative planning efforts within the Home Repair/Modification Needs Strategy Team. However, prior to this pause in planning, the Team identified the following goal and associated strategies that will allow for efficiencies in planning once efforts resume.

GOAL 3

The home repair/modification service system has increased capacity to help alleviate home repair/modification needs of aging adults that impact their ability to age in place.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 Organizations that provide home repair/modification services within the aging adult service system are collaborating and have an understanding of program capacity in relation to reported needs.

Strategy 3.1.1 A comprehensive database that consists of available home repair services and programs, along with program capacity, wait lists, and criteria is developed to provide a complete picture of the home repair/modification service system landscape within the aging adult community.

Strategy 3.1.2 Home repair/modification service providers within the aging services network meet regularly to identify ways to collaborate and partner as applicable to improve efficiencies and maximize program impact.

CONCLUSION

Changing demographics within Forsyth County includes a growing aging population. Over the past four years organizational partners and community members have worked together in identifying key community challenges and developing Forsyth County’s response to addressing these challenges – Age-Friendly Forsyth. Partnerships within the aging services network have strengthened and collaborations have expanded. More importantly, organizational and community leadership have recognized the importance and strength of community-driven approaches in addressing larger systemic challenges.

Age-Friendly Forsyth’s approach to livability work is inclusive, and relies on data-informed process and community and organizational level participation. Foundational components of the initiative have been set in place to ensure that Forsyth County has a sustainable approach to community improvement processes related to aging.

While this Action Plan outlines goals, objectives, and strategies Age-Friendly Forsyth intends to collectively make progress towards over the next five years, the initiative remains flexible to the ever-changing environment within the aging adult service system, and will make any adjustments in the community planning process as needed.

Forsyth County, North Carolina is a wonderful place to grow and thrive, as witnessed by the many aging adults who have lived here for 50 years and beyond. Age-Friendly Forsyth is excited to serve as this community’s approach to truly making Forsyth County the place where aging adults can live their best lives.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX

Physical and Mental Health

Health and End-of-Life Care	Health Care Access, Preventative Care, Palliative Care/Hospice Satisfaction, Health Care Source, Insurance Coverage, Palliative Care Access/Utilization
Morbidity and Mortality	Fall Status, Morbidity, Life Expectancy
Wellness	Physical Activity, Opportunity to Exercise, Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, Mental Health Status, Counseling Access, Quality of Life

Financial Health

Employment	Employment, Reasons for Working, Educational Attainment
Living Costs	Income, Income Shortfalls, Poverty Status

Housing and Safety

Housing Stability	Home Ownership, Desire to Stay in Home
Housing Satisfaction	Home Modification Needs, Housing Satisfaction
Residential Care	Quality of Assisted Living
Neighborhood Satisfaction	Crime Rate, Safety Perceptions, Neighborhood Satisfaction, Neighborhood Issues

Accessibility and Mobility

Transportation Options	Public Transportation, Transportation Sufficiency, Vehicle Availability
Mobility	Activities of Daily Living, Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, Mobility Devices
Public Accessibility	AARP Livability Score
Access to Food	Proximity to Grocery, Food Options Satisfaction

Support Network

Family, Friend, and Community Support	Services Awareness, Caregiving Status, Caregiving Relief, Support or Assistance Needs
Socialization	Socialization Satisfaction, Socialization Opportunities

Empowerment and Engagement

Volunteer Opportunities	Volunteering, Barriers to Volunteering,
Enrichment Opportunities	Participation in Community Activities, Fulfillment of Community Activities, Barriers to Community Activities
Empowerment	Voting Rates, Voice in Community, Continuing Education

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LEARN MORE



Explore all the data and read the Community Report on Aging online!

Visit www.AgeFriendlyForsyth.org



Age-Friendly Forsyth

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