

Local Government

Government, Community, and Mobility Planning

Local governments determine many community features that influence our day-to-day lives. By planning and developing the right physical and social infrastructure local government can make communities more livable for people living with dementia and their care partners. Dementia friendly practices can:

1. Minimize adverse health outcomes and improve quality of life for people living with dementia, and reduce care partner stress.
2. Allow a person living with dementia to remain at home longer, cutting costs tied to stays in health care facilities.
3. Create a community that is more livable for all residents, including older adults and people living with disabilities.
4. Benefit local economies by fostering a more attractive, competitive, and sustainable community.¹

Emergency Planning and Response



Ready to implement dementia friendly practices? Follow the steps:

1

For Community Planning

- Help community stakeholders understand the impact of dementia^{2,3} and commit to dementia friendly principles.
 - Assess and respond to needs related to dementia and community characteristics.
1. Help stakeholders understand impact of dementia and community needs:
 - Include public and private agencies, aging and dementia professionals, older adults, people living with dementia, care partners, and the general public in assessments and decision making.
 2. Apply dementia friendly principles/best practices for local governments:
 - Plan, assess, design and implement programs and services that value contributions of all generations, abilities, and community sectors.
 - Plan for safe, affordable, accessible and dementia capable housing, transportation services, public safety and emergency response, navigable streets, roads and way-finding, businesses, public health, social services, and recreation such as parks and libraries.
 - Be proactive and willing to partner with others, and

promote coordination among departments.

- Prepare to adjust budgets, adopt building or land use changes, update products and services, and change functions or approaches as needed.
- Integrate needs of people living with dementia into comprehensive planning process.
- Provide training and resources to city/county staff, emergency responders, and to staff in public health/human services on serving and communicating with people living with dementia.

3. Gather data:

- Assess home life, mobility, community life⁴, and public safety by gathering data, reporting and analyzing findings to understand characteristics such as the differences between rural and urban areas, ethnic and cultural considerations, needs and wishes of people living with dementia and care partners in your community.

2

For Home Life

- Increase diversity of affordable housing options near transportation and services.
- Expand access to quality home modification and repair services that improve accessibility and meet changing needs.

Considerations for Home Accessibility Modification:⁵

- Design features in custom building or remodeling projects that recognize each person's unique home features and his or her mobility, sensory, and cognitive impairments.
- Promote coordination among professional trade organizations (home builders/remodelers, architects, occupational and physical therapists, interior designers) to develop standards and practices that would help consumers make informed choices to meet their needs.
- Make it easy for consumers and practitioners to learn about design guidelines, installation techniques, products, funding sources, and qualified practitioners.

3

For Mobility

- Improve planning and coordination of transportation and services.
- Support increased funding for transportation that serves older adult users and people living with dementia.

1. Mobility planning and coordination:

- Meet mobility and assistance needs by integrating alternatives into transportation planning and services, streets and human services, and coordinate with land use and development planning.
- Develop policy that fosters complete streets, pedestrian safety and ease, and rural access.
- Promote easy-to-navigate public spaces that incorporate universal design features: visible, easy-to-read signs and schedules; trails and sidewalks that are wide, smooth, flat/low slope and non-slip.
- Recognize increased dependence on automobile, influence of person's location (rural/urban) on mobility, and effect of physical, sensory, and cognitive limitations.
- Develop awareness of problems faced by people when they can no longer drive and plan now to reduce

unnecessary isolation and dependence in the future.

- Plan and design dementia friendly, safe roads and walking/bicycling environments for drivers and pedestrians: walking/cycling paths are protected from heavy traffic; crosswalks have audible cues and appropriate timing.

2. Transportation considerations:

- Promote consistent, reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation options that expand and improve services to meet needs of people living with dementia and their care partners by considering:
 - a range of mobility options from walking, driving, getting rides from others, and services provided by public agencies and private businesses such as taxis
 - improvements to design for access

- use familiar, easily understood features, e.g., easy-to-open lever handles on gates/doors
- training to help transportation operators understand, interact with, and assist people living with dementia¹¹
- outreach to help people feel comfortable with riding the bus or other options available to them
- minimize street clutter, and ensure adequate lighting keeping in mind glare, textural and color contrasts, and noise

4

For Community Life

- Offer people living with dementia opportunities to engage in community life.

How to support engagement with community life (see DFA Community Based Supports and Services sector guide):

- Promote participation in a range of social, leisure, faith-based, and neighborhood activities that are accessible, inclusive, and acknowledge the potential of the person living with dementia.
- Challenge stigma and build understanding across generations.
- Develop welcoming physical environments with well-defined restrooms, shelter, and seating with arm and back rests.
- Signs should use large graphics, realistic symbols and color contrast (dark on light background).
- Know about and direct people living with dementia and their care partners to services.
- Support programs (e.g., chore services) that allow people living with dementia to remain independent as long as possible.
- Encourage dementia friendly and responsive businesses and services.

For Public Safety, Disaster Planning and Emergency Response

Foster community planning and family preparation that considers safety, security, and needs of people living with dementia in disaster planning and emergency response.⁹

- Facilitate coordination among state and local emergency management offices and the aging services network.
- Develop special needs registries identifying people living with dementia who may need help in the event of a disaster.
- Provide specialized education on disaster preparedness to people living with dementia and their care partners and families.
- Include people living with dementia and their care partners in the development of local emergency plans; integrate all ages and abilities into disaster planning, response, and recovery.
- Plan for people living with dementia, who are increasingly vulnerable and may need additional support during disaster or emergency events.

References

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