

FUTURE OF AGING COLORADO STATEWIDE CONFERENCE 2024

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: BUILDING CONNECTIONS ACROSS AGES SESSION SUMMARY



Participants engaged in interactive discussions, sharing successes, challenges and ideas for fostering social connections across ages. We explored examples from across Colorado of age-inclusive neighborhoods and community spaces and highlighted initiatives that promote meaningful intergenerational connections. The session culminated with identifying actions that can be taken by the Colorado Commission on Aging and by each of us as individuals to create and sustain age-friendly communities that build connections across ages.

What Can We Do?

For the Colorado Commission on Aging (CCOA):

- **Funding and Resources:** Allocate financial support for age-friendly communities, especially in rural areas, with flexibility for both small and large-scale projects.
- **Leverage School Resources:** Create opportunities to utilize vacant school buildings, buses, and other resources by advocating for policy and regulatory changes.
- **Shift Messaging Around Aging:** Reframe the narrative about older adults from a deficit approach to the benefits of older adults in the workforce, including their extensive experience, loyalty and commitment. Calculate and share the actual return on investment of an aging population.
- **Meaningful and Expanded Data Collection:** Collect comprehensive data that portrays the full story of older adults, beyond the traditional narrative of retirement meaning the end of work.
- **Intergenerational Inclusion:** Develop programs that include both older and younger generations, ensuring no age group is excluded.
- **Age-Friendly Advocacy in Various Sectors:** Encourage CCOA members to serve on multi-sector boards and councils, promoting age-friendly initiatives within these groups.

For Individuals:

- **Routine Engagement:** Engage in simple, everyday interactions, like looking up and saying "Hi" at the grocery store or community events, to organically build connections.
- **Communication and Education on Age-Friendly Practices:** Educate the community about what it means to be age-friendly and the importance of intergenerational connections.
- **Advocacy in Boards and Councils:** Champion age-friendly initiatives in multi-sector groups and organizations beyond aging.
- **Leverage Arts, Culture, and Music:** Recognize and use these mediums as effective ways to connect across generations.
- **Resource Sharing:** Share stories and information about age-friendly efforts in your communities as a way to learn and grow from statewide efforts.
- **Utilize HOA Funding for Infrastructure:** Advocate for the use of HOA funds to enhance community infrastructure, making it more age-friendly with improvements like sidewalks and curb cuts.
- **Inclusive Planning:** Ensure that community planning involves all age groups, directly engaging them in action planning.

By implementing the suggested strategies, together we can play a significant role in creating and sustaining age-friendly communities where people of all ages can interact, learn from each other, and thrive.

To view the session materials, [click here](#).

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“We believe that community should be inclusive and accessible to all who live, work, and play there as they grow up and grow older.”

RACHEL B. COHEN

Founder and CEO

