

Activity-Friendly Communities Support Older Adults Being Active

Benefits of Activity-Friendly Communities for Older Adults

Designing communities with everyone in mind—regardless of age or ability—helps ensure that older adults can stay active, independent, and connected to others. Activity-friendly communities include spaces for people to walk, bike, and roll to everyday places.



Individual benefits of physical activity include:



Improved quality of life



Better management of existing chronic conditions



Reduced risk of depression



Lower risk of chronic disease and fall-related injuries

Community benefits include:



Increased property values and retail revenue



Improved social connections

What Is Being Done?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity is:

- ✓ Supporting strategies for increasing physical activity including community environments to support physical activity.
- ✓ Providing state and local funding for ways to make it easier to walk, roll, and bike to everyday places.
- ✓ Gathering and distributing national and state data on health, physical activity, and related policies in the Data, Trends, and Maps application.

AARP is:

- ✓ Providing quick-action grants through the AARP Community Challenge to help communities become more walkable for residents of all ages.
- ✓ Using the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities to educate residents and local leaders about the importance of communities being age-friendly.
- ✓ Publishing informative resources, how-to guides, and the weekly AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter.

How Decision Makers Can Create Activity-Friendly Communities for Older Adults



Show your support by passing an Active People, Healthy NationSM Proclamation.

Download the [Proclamation Template](#).



Determine opportunities for improving environments to support physical activity for people of all abilities.

Example resources include [The Active Communities Tool](#), [Rural Active Living Assessment](#), [County Health Rankings and Roadmap](#), and walk and bike audits.



Work with community members and leaders [across sectors](#) to develop community design strategies.

Examples include older adults, [transportation officials](#), [community planners](#), [park and recreation leaders](#), and [public health professionals](#).



Start [demonstration projects](#) supporting activity-friendly communities for older adults, with the goal of making these projects permanent.

Examples include hosting placemaking events and installing temporary features such as crosswalks, public seating, transit stops, and traffic barriers.



Promote [social supports](#) that help older adults stay active and enjoy the benefits of activity-friendly communities.

Examples include walking groups, buddy systems, and other activity groups for older adults.

For more information please visit:

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao

AARP
AARP.org/livable

Published
February 2026