



# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

Now in our second year of our 2022-2027 Age Friendly Seattle Strategic Framework, we continue to focus on creating a city where older adults can maintain their economic, health, and social resources. This non-exhaustive report highlights just some of our efforts throughout 2023. Every activity has been done in collaboration with government or community partners, and we are continually inspired by the cross-sector enthusiasm to make Seattle a great place to age.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

**A. Created and launched anti-ageism trainings for City of Seattle staff.** This three-module training totals 60 minutes and covers demographic trends, ageist biases, and tips for being more anti-ageist in personal and professional spaces. Already, over 200 employees have engaged with the trainings, representing 13 different city departments. We will adapt these for public use in 2024.

**B. Held a Universal Design demonstration at the Seattle Design Festival.**

We teamed up with the Northwest Universal Design Council and Jensen Hughes to construct and showcase a full-scale model bathroom with accessible features. Our team of staff and volunteers had over 700 meaningful conversations and interactions with festival goers, and many more of the 9,000 attendees got a peak at our installation.

**C. Advanced in-home personal care innovation.** Our team helped convene internal and external stakeholders to continue exploring a promising approach to the provision of homecare. Caregivers provide essential services that allow many older adults to age in place and retain their independence; with a looming workforce shortage, it is critical to find way to support these professionals and ensure people receive the care they need.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

**D. Increased discounts available to older adults and people with disabilities.** Age Friendly Seattle administers a discount program and in early 2023, we surveyed users and learned that 87% feel this program supports their sense of belonging and social connectivity. This motivated us to grow the program by recruiting 20 new businesses, distributing over 6,500 Gold and FLASH cards to new users, and improving our online directory interface with the help of UW capstone students.

**E. Held first-ever Age Friendly Seattle Candidate Forums for Seattle City Council seats.** With multiple City Council seats up for election in 2023, we provided four separate opportunities for more than 100 older adults to engage with candidates, ask questions, and educate future elected officials about issues important to older adults.

**F. Supported a multi-sector convening on accessibility and city code.** Co-led by the Northwest Universal Design Council and the City of Redmond, this convening brought together more than 50 city planners, design industry professionals, and community advocates to discuss opportunities for incentivizing accessible design through city code and regulation. We hope this is the first of several such gatherings on this important subject.



## One Year Later...

A 2023 panel discussion we helped organize for the Friends of the Waterfront has led to increased prioritization of accessibility in the design of programming at the Seattle Waterfront. We are thrilled to see plans to address mobility, vision, and sensory needs.

The new dementia caregiver training we helped bring to Washington State in 2022 is now going strong, with trainers providing 18 classes to 229 participants in 2023. Momentum is building for 2024!

A partnership begun in 2022 to enhance emergency readiness for older adults culminated last year when we worked with King County Department of Human and Community Services and the King County Area Agency on Aging to assemble and distribute over 350 emergency kits to adults age 85+ who live in Housing Authority units and are particularly vulnerable to extreme heat and cold caused by climate change.

In late 2022, we convened an Age Friendly Housing Forum. Connections made there continue to blossom and have led to progress on in-home personal care and accessible design in affordable housing.



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## SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

**G. Evolved our Civic Coffee events to promote inclusivity.** For the first time, we brought our monthly series into the community by hosting 10 events across Seattle’s diverse neighborhoods. Just under 400 older adults attended a live event (either in-person or online), with more than 3,000 people catching the YouTube recordings later. We also forged a new partnership with Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods to provide live interpretation in multiple languages. These events are monthly opportunities for older adults to connect with government and community leaders, and we continue to adapt our format to best serve community members.

**H. Reached a range of audiences with positive messages about aging.** Research indicates that talking about aging is key to helping people prepare and thrive in later years. We ramped up our education and engagement with people of all ages, including presentations to a range of (sometimes unlikely!) audiences that included a third-grade class, UW nursing students, King County’s Women’s Advisory Board, and other local networks on aging. We participated in community events like Yes Fest and other resource fairs, and we hosted more interns than ever before. In addition, we helped drive the public narrative about aging by being featured in the Seattle Times and other media outlets.

**I. Supported neighbor-to-neighbor snow-shoveling pilot.** Helped Seattle’s Departments of Transportation, Neighborhoods, and Police offer snow shovels and ice melt to nearly 500 Neighborhood Block Watch captains and other enthusiastic volunteers. This empowered community members to support one another during inclement weather—we’ve already heard reports of kids using this equipment to shovel the driveways of older neighbors!

## Race and Social Justice Commitment:

Our 2022-2027 Framework affirms our commitment to advancing race and social justice. In 2023, we realized this by enhancing language access at our Civic Coffee events and holding these in partnership with community-based organizations. We also prioritized the recruitment of business discounts in geographic regions currently lacking these benefits, and we highlighted intersectional “isms” in our anti-ageism training. We look forward to continually challenging ourselves to advance equity while creating age-friendly city.

Demonstrating our commitment to partnership, our team members continue to serve on multiple community and government workgroups. In 2023, this included City of Seattle interdisciplinary teams ranging from digital equity, transportation safety, comprehensive city planning, and community outreach. We also engaged in several external transportation committees, supported a request for funding proposal for community-based transportation services, contributed to the King County Area Agency on Aging’s 2024-2028 Area Plan, and presented to the Seattle City Council’s Public Safety and Human Services Committee. We look forward to continuing these partnerships with elected officials, community leaders, government colleagues, and the residents of Seattle to make our city truly age-friendly.

