

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, 51st Floor
(206)684-0706 * TTY (206)684-0274 * FAX (206)684-0689
Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

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Members Present – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams, Paul Mitchell

Members Absent – Sheila Mary, Claudette Thomas, Dr. Brenda Jackson

HSD/ADS Staff – Michael Bailey, HSD Deputy Director, Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director, Dinah Stephens, Karen Winston

I. Age Friendly Seattle: 5 Year Accomplishments

Dinah Stephens is the new Age Friendly Manager for the City of Seattle. She started her position in December and will soon be relocating to Seattle. Dinah's background includes nonprofit work involving women's health and women's rights, and she is passionate about health equity.

What is Age Friendly Seattle?

Dinah started with the definition of Age Friendly. *Age friendly environments foster health and well-being and the participation of people as they age. They are accessible, equitable, inclusive, safe, secure, supportive, promote health, and prevent or delay the onset of disease and functional decline.* Globally, we are all aging. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides the global framework for age friendliness. The WHO has asked cities around the world to consider how they are creating environments where older adults will be able to thrive. In the United States, AARP is the entity that administers the Age Friendly Program, and the City of Seattle, as an age-friendly city, is the local entity implementing the program.

- By 2050, 1 in 6 people in the world will be over age 65 (16%), up from 1 in 11 in 2019 (9%). In Europe and North American, the projection is 1 in 4.
- By 2034, older adults (65+) will outnumber children for the first time ever!
- The number of older adults in the Puget Sound region is projected to grow to 85% from 2020 to 2050
- About 12.5% of Seattle residents are 65+ (up 2% from 2010)

History of Age Friendly Seattle

An advocacy coalition was formed in 2017, comprised of City staff and community members, to advocate for Seattle to become an Age Friendly city. In 2018, Seattle received the official designation as an Age Friendly city, established through a City Resolution. This was followed by a needs assessment, and over 2,000 people provided input on priority needs. Based on feedback from the needs assessment, an Action Plan was developed and launched to cover the span of 2018 – 2021. Then came the COVID pandemic, however, in

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spite of the pandemic the Age Friendly team did a remarkable job on many of the goals.

Age Friendly Goals

The WHO lists eight domains of livability that all Age Friendly cities are asked to address. The Age Friendly Seattle Plan includes action items on all eight domains for a total of 87. Of the 87 action items, progress was made on 69 of them, which is excellent, considering the COVID pandemic.

The chart below lists the eight domains of livability and shows where a lot of action/activities were concentrated, including transportation, housing, and community and health services. Once the pandemic hit, attention pivoted to focus more on communication, providing older adults with information, and providing opportunities for people to connect, especially as people were becoming more isolated.

DOMAIN OF LIVABILITY	ACTION ITEMS COMPLETED/ADVANCED
Transportation	16 / 18
Housing	11 / 13
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	3 / 4
Social Participation	3 / 5
Respect and Inclusion	7 / 8
Civic Participation and Employment	8 / 10
Community and Health Services	12 / 16
Information and Communications	9 / 13

Dinah provided highlights on accomplishment for the last five years.

Transportation, Housing, and Built Environment

Promoted Universal Design (Designing built environments that are accessible to as many people as possible)

- Supported the NW Universal Design Council
- Demonstration project at the Seattle Design Festival – Created a universal designed doorway

Improved the age-friendliness of Seattle’s streets (especially for those who use mobility devices)

- Conducted multiple walking audits that led to tangible improvements
- Promoted effective wayfinding

Provided input on housing and transportation plans

- Coordinated interdepartmental efforts for an online inventory of housing assets
- Supported MCAAE’s 2018 neighborhood preference policy recommendation
- Proposed implementation of visitability standard for new housing

Social Participation, Respect & Inclusion, and Communications

Connected and informed older adults (especially during the pandemic)

- Pivoted to provide Civic Coffee online
- Started a new Close to Home online series
- 57 events held during 2020-2021; received over 11K total event views

Improved inclusivity for non-English speaking elders

- Prioritized and added live interpretation and translation in 11 languages

Advanced accessibility of events

- Produced a widely used guide for hosting accessible events (featured by AARP)
- Hosted an event at City Hall

Nationally recognized as leaders

- American Society on Aging Award received for Excellence in Multicultural Aging
- USAging Aging Achievement Award

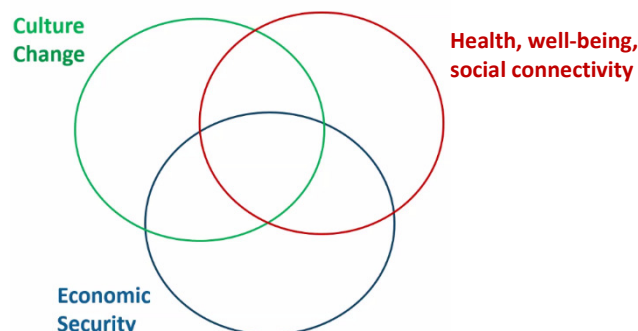
Age Friendly Seattle does not operate in a silo. In fact, Age Friendly is supported Citywide through the Seattle Public Library, Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Seattle Department of Transportation, the Seattle Office of Planning and Development, and also the King County Assessor's Office.

2022-2027 Age Friendly Action Plan

Dinah discussed the development timeline for the next Age Friendly Plan 2022-2027. Since the start of the year, staff have been focused on the following projects:

- System improvement (ex: expanding the use of Gold Cards)
- Creating anti-agism training for City employees
- Collaborating with Parks and Recreation
- Informing transportation planning
- Hosing panel-style events (with live interpretation)
- Embarking on business outreach efforts
- Re-launching the NW Universal Design Council
- Strengthening community relationships

The goal is to launch the new plan in July 2022. The new plan will have many overlapping goals, with three major focus areas. Action items for these focus areas will be determined from survey results and other feedback.



Dinah identified ways that MCAAE members can continue to stay engaged with the Age Friendly team. She and her team are open to collaborating on future events or other opportunities to work together.

- Support dissemination of the AF community survey
- Provide input on the priority needs of African American elders
- Suggest experts to involve in AF efforts
- Review draft plans and ideas
- Support ongoing accountability
- Think of Age Friendly Seattle as an ongoing resource

Dinah concluded her presentation by discussing the Age Friendly discount cards. The **Gold Card** for healthy aging is for Seattle and King County residents age 60+. The **Flash Card** is a discount and identification card for adults ages 18-59 with qualifying disabilities. Since members were not familiar with the Gold Card, she offered to mail one to them!

Question – What is Age Friendly doing to help businesses become more age friendly? Will there be a training for businesses to learn how to interact with individuals experiencing memory loss?

Response – Currently, there is a training available specifically for City employees. There is also an effort called the Age Friendly Business Plan, that will be carried over to the new plan. This includes a website for businesses to access a self-assessment form to determine how friendly they are. The site also has a booklet that helps businesses become better at providing services in an age friendly way.

Question – Does Age Friendly provide training for home care and transportation services?

Response – No trainings are provided to these types of agencies, but Age Friendly products, such as the Gold Card, are promoted to businesses.

Comment – When I moved to Seattle in 2019, my daughters were trying to get me involved and sent me a link to the Age Friendly Seattle website, and that’s how I learned about the MCAAE. So, people are definitely aware!

Response – Glad to know that Age Friendly has been a conduit in getting people connected to opportunities to serve on boards and commissions!

II. ADS & Legislative Updates – Maria Langlais provided the following updates.

State

- The WA State legislative session ended March 18. It was a short session, that ended on time, and included funding for the aging network! Most of what we advocated for was included in the budget in the full amounts requested, including:
 - **Medicaid long-term care Case Management Program** - \$24 million (\$12m state & \$12m federal)
 - **Personal Needs Allowance** – Was increased (more than doubled) and is now at \$2,400 a month.
 - **WA Cares Program** – Improvements were made to allow individuals close to retirement to still access benefits.

- **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program** – Funding increased which will allow more people to access the program. Eligible participants will also receive larger vouchers to purchase food.
- **Hospital Transitions** – Did not get the full amount requested, however, the funding should be enough to demonstrate the effectiveness of this program, which provides social work support to patients transitioning from the hospital back to their home and community.

HSD

- Michael reported on the ADS director hiring process. HSD is working aggressively to ensure an equitable and inclusive recruitment process for the ADS director. Mary has done a fantastic job as the ADS interim director and has been invited to compete for the position, however, to ensure that it is a fair process, she will not be participating in the recruitment/hiring process itself.
- Volunteer Options – An email will be sent inviting community individuals to participate in the recruitment process. This can include reviewing job descriptions, job posting review, identifying multi-cultural advertisement channels, reviewing resumes, or participating in interviews. Once you receive the email, feel free to contact Michael with any questions.
- Michael also reviewed the hiring process timeline. If all goes according to plans, the goal is to have the position filled by August 2022.

III. Digital Equity Learning Network (DELN)

Charlotte provided an update on [HB1723](#) – The bill passed and was sent to the Governor for his signature. There were a few changes, but basically it does include a **Broadband Assistance Program** to provide discounted rates on eligible voice and broadband services for low-income residents, including older adults. It took a lot of effort, and Charlotte was able to provide comment at three public hearings!

Charlotte also discussed **Cyber Seniors** which is now a part of the DELN. The goal is to provide webinars and phone-tech support to get seniors connected. They are working on revising a video about the program, to make it more diverse.

Lastly, Charlotte announced an upcoming Digital Equity Summit scheduled for March 30, from 10:30 to 2:30. Anyone can attend. Registration required. There will be several speakers and also a panel discussion on digital equity.

IV. MCAAE 2022 Advocacy Agenda – The data presentation has been rescheduled for the May meeting.

V. Announcements

Karen congratulated Paula for her article “Scamming the Scammer,” that will appear in the April issue of AgeWise. Her article focuses on fraud against older adults. Find the article at: bit.ly/3uFo540.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting will be on **Friday, April 15, 2022**.