



After Action Report

After Action Plan –
2015-2018

Bethel Region Age-
Friendly Community
Initiative

2019

Introduction

This After Action Report illustrates the Bethel Region AFCI's efforts in pursuing the action steps as outlined in its "Interim Action plan," dated December 9, 2016. The performance period for this report is October 2016 to February 2019.

The Action Plan was organized into three broad categories:

- A. Those on-going projects and activities that were already in place or were being put into place at the time the action plan was written, that were to continue to be supported by this initiative;
- B. Those projects that were expected to have been completed and/or moved to 'sustaining' status by the end of the period covered by this plan; and
- C. Those projects that were deemed to be complicated and long-term, requiring multiple phases and many resources to be accomplished.

During the performance period of the Action Plan, the Bethel Region AFCI was awarded by AARP a Community Challenge grant in August 2017, that enabled the initiative to perform a number of projects under the broad umbrella of "home safety." Although these home safety-oriented projects were not covered in the Interim Action Plan, they are reported as Category D projects in this after action report.

The results for each of the action plan's projects are summarized in Table 1. Two auxiliary summaries have been reviewed by the AFCI Board and are available upon request. (1) More detailed reports were completed by each of the task forces and serve as valuable resources for our work going forward. (2) AFCI annual reports for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 are on our website and have been shared with municipal officials of our six member towns.

Resources

Funding

The funding of the Interim Action Plan program was provided by municipal appropriations, foundation grants and private donations.

Municipal Appropriations

The six towns embraced by the Bethel Region AFCI (Bethel, Gilead, Greenwood, Hanover, Newry, Woodstock) contributed a combined total of \$5250 during the performance period of the Action Plan.

Foundation Grants

Two grants were awarded by Maine Community Foundation (MCF) for a total of \$4500, and a Community Challenge Grant of \$5600 was awarded by AARP.

Personnel Support

As specified in the Interim Action Plan, task forces were established for the most resource intensive projects:

- b. Communication and Outreach
- c. Exercise
- d. Morning Greeting
- e. Home Safety
- f. Adaptive Toolkit

Overseeing the initial governance of the AFCI, an Advisory Council was formed. Subsequently, a Board of Directors was formed upon incorporation of the Bethel Region AFCI on June 25, 2018.

The AFCI is strictly a grass-roots, bottom-up endeavor comprising 50 volunteers who either served as Council/Board members, task force members or those who supported special AFCI-sponsored events..

After Action Results

The results of the Action Plan are tabulated in the table below. A review of the table indicates that the activities/projects were completed and suggests that they in fact have made a difference in the Bethel regional community.

AFCI Interim Action Plan After Action Report

Action item/project	Goal or project	Outcome
Category A: Sustain and maintain (those activities of benefit to an age-friendly community that are already being carried out by other organizations)		
A.1 Development of an Advisory Council	To put in place a fully-functioning group that reports to the towns and oversees the progress of the Action Plan	An Advisory Council, initially convened in December, 2017, was formed comprising a representative appointed by each of the 6 AFCI towns and 7 members-at-large. AFCI incorporated 25 June, 2018 and became a 501c3 organization. A Board of Directors was formed at this time comprised of 6 town representatives and 4 members-at-large. Bylaws were developed and adopted for both of these governing bodies. Both the Advisory Council and the Board of Directors report annually via an "Annual Report" to each of the member towns on the progress of each or the projects. On average the Council/ Board has met at least every two months since their respective inceptions.
A.2 Community Assets and Needs Assessment	To assess on a regular basis the needs and assets of the community, using surveys, one-on-one interviews and focus groups as appropriate	Community and needs assessments were conducted through the reporting period with focus groups, one-on-one interviews and task force meetings. These assessments resulted in adjustments to the selected projects.
A.3 Communication	To continue the process of communicating information to the community through "hard copy" and digital means, and social media.	Monthly newsletters (hard copy and electronic), and weekly AFCI columns in <i>The Bethel Citizen</i> were published and distributed throughout the Bethel area. The AFCI web site (www.agefriendlybethel.org) and Facebook were utilized .
A.4 Support of age-friendly programs offered by other groups and individuals	To support the many programs other groups, e.g., Senor College, adult ed, SeniorsPlus, Community Concepts, are already providing by partnering, sharing resources and information, etc.	Presentations on "Isolation" and "Home Safety (Fire and Falls)" were offered in conjunction with the Senior College's To Your Health program. The first year of AFCI's volunteer driver program was conducted in collaboration with Community Concepts. AFCI collaborated with SeniorsPlus in the offering of tai chi classes and the Matter of Balance course.
Category B: Action items that could be carried out in the next 12 months		
B.1 Development of a prototype transportation system	To develop a sustainable, more robust transportation system for our area	The Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) volunteer driver program was implemented to provide free rides, medical and non-medical, to seniors 60 and over within the local Bethel area as well as medical rides within a 25-mile radius of Bethel. Since its inception in October 2017, N2N's 15 volunteer drivers (trained, vetted, insured) have provided 355 rides (3945 miles) to its 33 clients. Primary needs for rides have been medical appointments (93%), church (23%) , errands (18%) and classes (17%). A recent client survey completed by 13 clients indicates complete satisfaction with the N2N program.
B.2 Winter exercise program	To provide Bethel area residents, including seniors, with an opportunity to walk, to socialize, and to do gentle exercise in a safe place, focusing on improving mobility, flexibility, and strength.	In collaboration with Gould Academy and Bethel's Recreation Committee, AFCI is offering its third season (Novembr through April) of the Walking the Gym program at Gould Academy's Bingham Gym. One-hour sessions are offered two times a week. Total number of participants is 44 with an average number of walkers at 6 for each session. Beginning in 2018 a one-hour Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention class was offered two times a week by AFCI and Adult Education following the Walk the Gym program.

AFCI Interim Action Plan After Action Report

Category B: Action items that could be carried out in the next 12 months (continued)

B.3 Universal Access Trails	To support the building of a two-mile universal access trail, to be completed in 2017.	The universal access trail was completed in late 2017. Volunteers from numerous organizations, including the Mahoosuc Land Trust, Maine Adaptive Sports, and AFCI, worked together to implement the almost 2 mile trail at MLT's Valentine Farm. In 2018 MLT added free snowshoe use for this trail system.
B.4 Street safety: placement of stanchions on Main St. crosswalks	To make motorists within the village of Bethel more aware of pedestrians in crosswalks.	Warning stanchions have been placed at two heavily used crosswalks on Bethel's Main Street. A noticeable decrease in the number of accidents has occurred since the placement of the stanchions by Bethel's Highway Department.
B.5 Morning Greeting program	To create a system for seniors and the isolated in the area to feel more secure that someone will check on them if they fail to respond to or check in with daily calls.	A Morning Greeting program has been implemented in which seniors and isolated individuals received morning telephone calls by volunteers. A recent Morning Greeting Task Force report provided qualitative data indicating how the Morning Greeting clients have been impacted by calls that they receive. Three volunteer callers have placed daily calls to a total of six clients since the program's inception.
B.6 Resource directory	To create a comprehensive on-line directory of services available to residents, to include seniors, in our community.	<u>A Resource Directory was developed and posted on the AFCI web site for anyone to access. (www.agefriendlybethel.org)</u> In addition print copies were distributed to area town offices and libraries.

Category C: Long term action items (These are complex projects requiring many resource. We may be able to start Phase I.)

C.1 Heart & Soul	To support the Heart & Soul Initiative by having one of our Council /Board members on the Heart & Soul team.	The two-year H&S initiative was completed in December, 2018, and its findings were folded into the work of the Bethel Area Non-profit Collaborative. A number of the priority action items pertained to older adults. Throughout the two years AFCI collaborated closely with H&S to collect and process the volumes of data. Now BANC and AFCI are collaboratively planning a major community event in May, 2019, titled <i>Community Conversation: Listen to Your Elders</i> . Partially funded by the Maine Community Foundation, we hope the event will help AFCI put its mission and work on the larger community stage and engage the wider community in improving AFCI's capacity to address these needs.
C.2 Community Center	To support the development of a distributed community center, making use of various facilities until such a time as a physical center can be developed. The distributed Community Center makes information available about venues including The Gem, The Bethel Airport, Methodist Church Annex, West Parish Congregational Church and the Bethel Historical Society.	A Morning Greeting program has been implemented in which seniors and isolated individuals received morning telephone calls by volunteers. A recent Morning Greeting Task Force report provided qualitative data indicating how the Morning Greeting clients have been impacted by calls that they receive. Three volunteer callers place daily calls to a total of six clients since the program's inception.

Category D: Additional Home Safety projects and activities supported by the AARP Community Challenge Grant received in August 2017

D.1 Adaptive Toolkit	To introduce adaptive tools to Bethel residents and other age-friendly communities in Maine and to provide an effective way to engage various groups in conversations about safety in the home and the overall AFCI age-friendly program.	Four adaptive toolkit displays were fabricated by the Congo Craftsmen. Through the use of these four displays, the toolkit has been demonstrated at numerous local locations and activities within the six-town region. One toolkit display was designated as a "loaner" which made its rounds to four age-friendly communities (Old Orchard beach, Readfield, Vassalboro, and Hallowell) in the State. The toolkit was on display for viewing by 100 attendees at the annual SeniorsPlus Living Well Aging and was shared with providers at a regional HealthReach Community meeting in Augusta. Lastly, a toolkit was provided to a local hardware store which offers an assortment of adaptive tools for sale to local residents. The popular toolkit catalog which provided information on pricing and sources of various tools were distributed to viewers of the display. As anticipated, the toolkit served as an effective way to engage the community and to provide an opportunity for AFCI to become an age-friendly ambassador throughout the State of Maine.
D.2 Falls prevention programs	To offer an evidence-based falls prevention and a gentle exercise program to the residents of the Bethel region.	In collaboration with Seniors Plus, two Matter of Balance courses were offered to a total of 14 individuals. A Walk the Gym program was initiated in collaboration with Gould Academy, which provided use of its gym. The three-year program has an average of 7 individuals per session. A tai chi program, in collaboration with Seniors Plus was initiated with an average of 10 people in each class, current class has 25 participants.
D.3 Fall prevention personal home assessments	To offer free personal home assessments designed to prevent falls	Thirteen free personal home assessments were provided by an Occupational Therapist to local residents who were identified by the Bethel Family Health Center as people who were prone to falls. Information was provided of suggested improvements with names of vetted contractors who could do those improvements, at homeowner's cost.
D.4 Smoke alarm installation	To put free smoke detectors in the homes of everyone who requests them.	In collaboration with the American Red Cross who provided free detectors and four local towns' fire departments who installed the detectors, at least 30 fire detectors have been installed in homes of those who requested the detectors.