State: Massachusetts

Community Name: Town of Ware

Population Size: 9903

Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 24

Community Structure: Town

Other:

Community Type: Small Town

Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment
Name: Stuart Beckley
Title: Town Manager

Office Mailing Address: 126 Main St Ware MA 01082

Community Contact Name: John Zienowicz
Email: [Email Address Hiding]
Position: Executive Director - Council on Aging
Telephone: [Telephone Number Hiding]

Role: As the Executive Director of the Ware Council on Aging, John works directly with the staff and volunteers of the Senior Center to implement the mission and vision established by the Council on Aging. He represents the Council on Aging's interests on seven different Boards and Committees throughout the Town of Ware and helps to organize two monthly food distributions within the Town of Ware one of which is specifically targeted at seniors that are food insecure. John also also co-hosts a popular talk show on the Ware cable access channel highlighting people and services available to the people of the Quaboag Hills Region in which Ware resides.
Older Adult Involvement: The Senior Center will hand out surveys and informational flyers at the daily grab and go lunch. There are also three food bank distributions during each month to distribute these at as well. A secure drop box is available at the Town Hall and Library if return of paperwork (surveys) is necessary. The Library Director can help residents complete surveys either by hand or via computer or tablet. The pandemic may soften in person experiences at this time, but outdoor socially distanced forums and listening sessions will be planned for the spring and summer. Locations such as the local parks, senior center, and having tables set up at the summer concerts can also occur. Social media, the Town webpage, and the Code Red auto call system can all be tools used to reach the community and, in cases, seniors in particular. The Ware Business & Civic Association will be utilized as a resource and means of involving businesses. Cedarbrook Living, a new senior living facility, will be actively involved engaging their residents and participating in community engagement. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is assisting with a study of Age Friendly Communities for this region, which includes Ware.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination: Monthly department head meetings facilitate conversation and communication across departments are already in place. Cross-departmental trainings will prove beneficial to listen to ideas and strategies of all departments as well as to discuss previously started plans and procedures. Monthly to bi-monthly Coordination Meetings with Police, Fire, Building Inspector, Town Planner and Manager are already in place. Training for town employee that interact closely with the public will be planned to identify how to better serve an aging community. The Senior Outreach Service Program assists seniors through 'chore providers' that service Ware and two other neighboring towns. Due to the small-town rural nature of the Quaboag Region, including Ware, agencies have a great history of collaboration on many tasks and services. The agency and department representatives will use the communication and implementation mechanisms already in place in order to plan for Age Friendly improvements.

AARP Team Member Contact Info: The Town of Ware has an increasing population of elderly. Costs of assisted living is out of affordable means for many of the town’s aging residents. Embracing changes within the community to aid and support these residents that are able to age in place while still taking advantage of town resources, services, and culture is necessary to mitigate a sustainable future for the community members.

Most Instructive Area of Work: Current include daily grab and go lunches, door-to-door food bank distribution, Quaboag Connector transportation, and the Senior Outreach program. Future planning events and functions (especially outdoor pandemic safe events in the summer) that are specific to the elderly but also can include the community as a whole.

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Website: http://www.townofware.com/

Twitter 2:

Facebook 1: https://www.facebook.com/TownofWareMA

Facebook 2:

Additional Social Media: