

Named person Sue Robbio

Describe the named person's roll

Director of Senior Services, City of Providence

Provide a brief summary of the community's policies and programs that are targeted toward older people and how the community plans to become more age friendly. Providence is a city with many diverse neighborhoods. We don't have just one senior center but eight throughout the city's neighborhoods. The City of Providence has a Department of Senior Services that advocates for seniors and helps them navigate city services, recreational options, and wellness programs. Our exercise program continues to be our most popular. We offer Zumba and chair exercise in eight locations around the city. Farm Fresh provides nutritional information and hands on learning about healthy foods and food security. The Financial Literacy program has helped our older adults to think before they spend and most importantly remind them of the scams that are targeted to older adults. This program is in addition to our Identity Theft program that we partner with the Providence Police Dept. and the Attorney General's office. The City of Providence also has bus transportation to ensure seniors have access to social events, theatre, and shopping. This vital service allows seniors to feel connected to their community, independent, and assures a better quality of life.

How will the community engage and involve older people in the process of becoming more Age-Friendly? Our plan is to host listening sessions at all the senior centers, meal sites, and community centers that have a senior program. We will identify a senior adult volunteer in each community to act as a liaison to the Department of Senior Services. To achieve the status of Age-Friendly PVD we would need to create an advisory team consisting of senior providers, senior advocates, city department heads and community leaders.

Describe the mechanisms the community has or is planning to put into place to facilitate collaborative planning and implementation between different agencies and departments. The City of Providence works with many partners in the community: RI Elder Minority Task Force, Governors Commission on Aging, Age Friendly RI, senior high-rises, and senior centers; other partners include the United Way of RI and the RI Division of Elderly Affairs. We meet regularly and have a large network of participants. We will also explore private-public partnerships for the purpose of building and strengthening the economic sustainability of public-sector initiatives and improving our city's sociability for all. In the long run we would like to inform and invest in people of all ages and abilities to positively affect their own health and well-being through engaging in healthy behaviors as well as understanding and working to improve the social conditions that influence how will people age. In order to achieve this goal we would need to collaborate with city departments to provide consistent programming. Teaming up with our Healthy Communities Office will allow us to insure folks have access to smoking cessation programs, healthy food access, our Rec Department for exercise, and intergenerational programming, our Parks Department for clear walking paths and outdoor programs and our Planning and Development Department to create age friendly neighborhoods.

How do you hope to contribute to the Age-friendly network of Age-Friendly states and communities and the World Health Org global network of Age- Friendly communities? Providence is proud to be a leader and partner with other cities pursuing innovative solutions to social challenges. Our goal is to be able to share best practices with the AARP network and learn from other communities and states that have the same demographics. We hope to become the first Age-Friendly Community in Rhode Island, and to use our experience to support and encourage other

What motivated your community to join the AARP network of Age-Friendly states and communities and the World Health Org global network of Age- Friendly communities?

We are committed to ensuring Providence is an age-friendly community by enhancing the quality of life for Providence seniors and residents of all ages through advocacy, and planning of services provided to our most vulnerable. By being a part of a much larger Age-Friendly community we will have access to information that will help us with this goal. According to the RI Aging in Community State Executive report “The Rhode Island Statewide Planning Office projects that by 2030 the percent of persons age 65 and over will increase from 15.8% in 2014 to 23.1%. In sheer numbers this will mean almost 100,000 more persons in Rhode Island aged 65 and over. By 2040, there will be a 100% increase in persons ages 74 to 84 and a 72% increase in persons age 85 and over. These latter age cohorts are more likely to need support services to help them to remain living in their community”