



State: Massachusetts

Community Name: Belchertown

Population Size: 15098

Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 15

Community Structure: Town

Other:

Community Type: Rural

Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment

Name: Gail Gramarossa

Title: Select Board Chair

Office Mailing Address: 1 South Main Street Belchertown, MA 01007

[Redacted text]

Role: [Redacted] has been employed by the Town of Belchertown as the Director of Senior Services for the Belchertown Senior Center since 2018, prior to that she was the Director of the Granby Senior Center for five years. Her job is to oversee the daily operation of the center as well as supervise its 23 employees and many volunteers. She is responsible for the yearly operating budget as well as applying for State and Federal grants. The Center is committed to enhancing the lives of senior citizens, through services, programs, and activities that educate and advocate on behalf of the elderly.

Older Adult Involvement: Offering the age friendly livable community survey for the residence of Belchertown's consideration will be the first step in involving the older adults in the age friendly process. Their participation is vital and understanding specific needs that need to be addressed and/or corrected through the age friendly designation process. Once invested in the process by completing the survey, hopefully older adults remain interested in learning more about the results, the project and the process. Participation will be encouraged in listening

sessions in discussions. The public will be informed of I?m going decisions and plans through print, monthly mailings and social media. Working with the partnering agencies within the community of Belchertown, ideas will be brainstormed and a campaign for participation of older adults throughout the entire community will be put forth. Each agency has their own ways of connecting with the older population and those will be used to the advantage of the team in order to be sure that as many participants are included as possible. Currently town buildings, including the senior center are closed to the public due to COVID-19. Therefore, any in person communications are delayed. Once the center is allowed to re-open in participants return, word-of-mouth asking for participation and opinions will be other ways in which older in adults are invited to get involved.

**Increasing
Collaboration
and
Coordination:**

In Belchertown's efforts to become a more age friendly community an increase in collaboration and coordination among community department is expected due to the need to work together to accomplish goals. Cross-departmental trainings and meetings will prove beneficial to listen to ideas and strategies of all departments as well as to discuss previously started plans and procedures. The Town of Belchertown and its many departments are committed to receiving an age friendly designation and will come together to work successful at this. Town departments and community agencies such as the police department, town planning, Christopher Heights Assisted Living, Select Board members and some older adult residents are already working together with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and take part in monthly Zoom meetings to discuss a variety of topics including age friendly. We feel that working with other Town departments enables employees to be quicker and more effective in their work, as compared to people who work on projects on their own. Collaborating also makes employees more responsible, which goes a long way in raising their motivation levels, especially during COVID when departments will need to do must work virtually. A bond of trust between Town departments will form when working together on such an important project and ultimately a trust between the Town departments and the Belchertown residents will form as well. Belchertown is committed to becoming a livable community to promote health and sustainable growth and contribute to the well-being of residents of all ages. Our goal is to ensure our aging neighbors have the resources to be healthy, independent and integrated into community life.

**AARP Team
Member Contact
Info:**

**Most Instructive
Area of Work:**

Although all communities are unique and face different challenges our hope is that any advancement the Town of Belchertown makes towards becoming Age Friendly could be used as an example by a surrounding, to rework and make it their own. Why reinvent the wheel when there are many communities out there willing to share their successes? The Senior Center currently has working relationships with all surrounding town's Senior Center. The Center's

share information between themselves, piggy backing off ideas of another Center. This new age friendly work will fall nicely into the category of shared information and will only sharpen our ability to work together for a common goal.

Optional

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Logo or Image: Error in form input for this field only.

Website:

Twitter 2:

Facebook 1: www.facebook.com/BelchertownMASeniorCenter

Facebook 2:

**Additional Social
Media:**