

## Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*August 17, 2020*

# RECOMMENDATIONS *from the* Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota

## *Recommendation #1:*

### **Support efforts for the State of Minnesota to enroll in the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.**

#### **Supporting Information:**

The Executive Order (the Order) signed by Governor Walz on December 11, 2019 establishing the Governor's Council on Age-Friendly Minnesota set in motion the work of this Council and provides the basis for this recommendation. While the Order could not for legal reasons reference specific organizations, the intent was clearly to chart the course for the State of Minnesota to enroll in the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

The relevant language from the Order is as follows:

A national organization for older adults and an international health organization award "age-friendly" designations to governmental jurisdictions in recognition of coordinated, multi-agency statewide age-friendly efforts. Achieving such a designation would be beneficial for all Minnesotans. Such designations focus on eight domains of livability: outdoor spaces and buildings, housing, transportation, work and civic engagement, respect and social inclusion, social participation, communication and information, and community and health services.

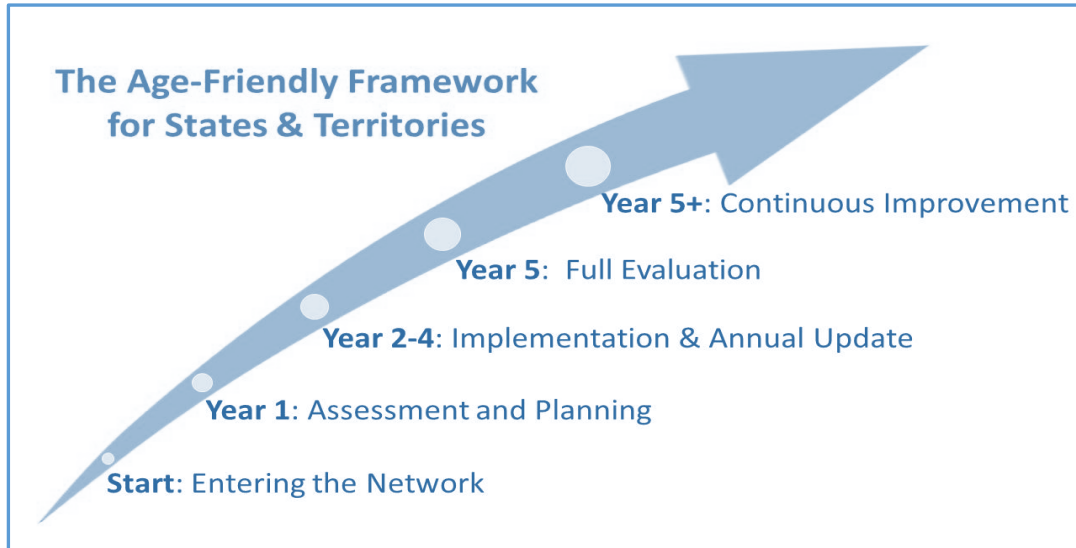
The Order goes on to acknowledge "the benefits of achieving an age-friendly Minnesota," and finally, among other things, orders that Minnesota: "Coordinate work across sectors, including state government, non-profits, communities, businesses, and others to ensure we are an age-friendly state." We must also honor the government to government relationship between Minnesota's 11 tribal nations<sup>1</sup>, in keeping with Executive Order 19-24.

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota has 11 federally recognized tribal governments: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Lower Sioux Indian Community, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Prairie Island Indian Community, Red Lake Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Upper Sioux Community, and White Earth Nation.

**Specific Policy Recommendations:**

To support the enrollment of states, territories, and communities into the network, AARP has developed a five-year process for members to follow when they enroll. The process is structured in three phases: Entering the Network; Planning; and Implementation and Evaluation.



For the purposes of this recommendation, we will focus on entering/enrolling in the network. The baseline requirements for entering the network are to a) complete the application form, and b) attach a letter of support from the Governor indicating a commitment to the Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities planning, implementation, and continuous improvement framework.

One additional consideration for the Governor’s Council would be to seek an additional legislative endorsement that would work in tandem and be submitted along with the application and the Governor’s letter of support. The legislature will be critical to the success of this work going forward, through both appropriations and policy. Securing bipartisan legislative endorsement of MN’s enrollment in the network could help ensure buy-in and support (financial and otherwise) for such work going forward.

**Equity Implications:**

The 12/11/19 Order identified equity as a core component of this work going forward, and the Governor’s Council has treated it as such, identifying equity implications for each recommendation. Enrollment in the network provides states and communities a high level of flexibility to address key issues, domains, or other bodies of work that reflect gaps and/or opportunities.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

*Lead:* MN Board on Aging; Minnesota’s 11 tribal governments

*Supporting:* AARP

**Legislative Action Requested:**

No legislative action requested.

**Resources Needed:**

The recommendations that follow detail how to make this work long-lasting and permanent and what state resources will be required to do that.

In the immediate, it will be important that members of this Council – both at large and state agency representatives – play a key role in pushing forward in a timely manner the enrollment of MN in the network. These same individuals, as well as other entities aligned with the age-friendly work, can be important players in securing the state’s enrollment *and* the aforementioned legislative endorsement. Coordination of this work will be important among Council representation and with other organizations – both traditionally within the aging “space” but also, importantly, new partners in other sectors who have a vested interest in creating a more age-friendly Minnesota.

Furthermore, we recommended that this Council dedicate additional resources and energies to engage residents of our state and specifically older adults in this process *now*. Older resident engagement is the heart of age-friendly work. But beyond this key principle, broad engagement of residents across our state will ensure that their voices can be activated, if needed, to support the enrollment of MN in the network and to ensure the provision of the necessary resources to do the work.

There are, additionally, benefits that states and communities accrue from AARP by joining the network.

They include:

- Access to a global network of participating municipalities and to technical advice from aging and civil society experts at AARP
- Access to key information about the Age-Friendly Network of States & Communities, such as the latest news and information about best practices, events, results, challenges, and new initiatives
- Opportunities for partnership with tribal governments, other states and territories, both domestic and international
- Learning collaborations, mentoring, and peer networking with other state and territory members of the network
- Public recognition of the state’s commitment to become age-friendly
- Promotion through AARP’s media channels

*Recommendation #2:*

**Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion in all age-friendly work at the outset of all issues.**

**Issue:**

Minnesota boasts a high quality of life and has much to recommend it as a good place to grow older. However, older adults from a number of groups<sup>2</sup> experience significant health, economic, and social disparities compared to their peers. Covid-19 has exposed many of these inequities to an even greater degree. A new level of inclusion, cultural humility, and investment is needed to ensure that all older Minnesotans are valued and served more equitably.

**Supporting Information:**

Equity implications exist across all eight domains<sup>3</sup> associated with livable communities, as well as in emergency response and preparedness,<sup>4</sup> which will be added as a ninth domain for Age-Friendly Minnesota. Policy and intervention strategies are needed to ensure that conditions allow everyone to experience optimal health and aging.

1. Value all individuals and communities equally
  - a. Acknowledge differential valuations by making it plain, naming racism, and looking at the mechanisms of decision-making—i.e., who has a place and influence at the table where the decisions are being made.
  
2. Recognize and rectify historical injustices
  - a. Social and economic inequities are the key contributors to health and aging disparities and ultimately are what need to change to achieve equity. Racism is a public health issue and should be recognized and addressed as such.
    - i. Structural racism — the normalization of historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal dynamics that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for Black, Asian, Latinx, and American Indian communities — is rarely talked about. Revealing where structural racism is operating and where its effects are being felt is essential for figuring out where policies and programs can make the greatest improvements.

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<sup>2</sup> This recommendation references individuals from numerous groups identified in the General Note on page 7.

<sup>3</sup> Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect & Social Inclusion; Work & Civic Engagement; Communication & Information; and Community & Health Services

<sup>4</sup> See Recommendation #7.

- ii. Recent events have laid bare the reality and toll of longstanding systemic racism, motivating broad community interest and energy to address racial and ethnic inequality. Deliberate attention at every step, working in tandem with noted communities, will ensure that equity and inclusion will guide and overlay all work undertaken through Age-Friendly Minnesota.
3. Provide direction needed to achieve optimal health outcomes.
  - a. Increase affordability/access to high-quality, culturally-responsive healthcare. Improving the aging outcomes of those who experience the greatest inequities will result in better health and aging outcomes for all.
  - b. Support culturally appropriate hospital care, long-term care and other services.
  - c. Remove barriers that mainstream service providers face in building the relationships needed to effectively serve these communities.
4. Recognize and treat broadband as a basic need, including for older adults.
  - a. Access to the internet is fundamental to principles of equity. As such, broadband service not only must be made available to all, it also must be affordable in the manner of other basic utilities. Older adults need reliable, affordable broadband access as urgently as other age groups. Broadband unlocks doors to information, telemedicine, opportunities to maintain social ties, and vital services such as transportation.

Holes in broadband service afflict portions of greater Minnesota as well as sections of the Twin Cities metro. Covid-19 has increased reliance on the Internet for access to work, school, services, and information from home, highlighting inequitable broadband access in Minnesota and beyond.

### **Specific Policy Recommendations:**

To supplement investment by the State, develop relationships with the philanthropic community, non-profits, and informal groups to creatively find a non-General Fund source of funding to support this work.

- Age-Friendly Minnesota will use an asset-based approach to this work, recognizing that individuals from communities referenced in this recommendation hold a wealth of knowledge and lived experiences and are best positioned to identify problems and solutions.
- Build capacity for age-friendly communities by providing grants and technical assistance, especially train the trainer model.
- Support the growth and statewide expansion of work with older adults across various cultural and ethnic communities, including translation services.
  - Utilize cultural navigators or equivalent services who can work on engagement strategies.

- Work with MN Leadership Council on Aging—Diverse Elders Coalition to lead a coordinated effort to build capacity with cultural navigators across the state.

**Equity Implications:**

This recommendation centers on prioritizing equity for all older Minnesotans—including, but not limited to, those groups and communities identified in the General Note below.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

*Lead:* MDH; DEED (for broadband access component)

*Supporting:* One Minnesota Council on Inclusion and Equity, Chief Inclusion Officer at the Governor’s Office, Cultural Heritage Commission representation (advisory)/Disability Council, Minnesota Diverse Elders Coalition

**Legislative Action Requested:**

An appropriation to support this activity is included in the budget proposal.

**Resources Needed:**

As indicated in budget proposal

***General note:*** The Governor’s Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion work must acknowledge and address the needs of those identified in, but not limited to, the following groups and communities.

Older adults who:

- are low-income
- identify as indigenous American Indian<sup>5</sup>
- identify as Black, African-American, Asian, Latinx
- identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ)
- are new immigrants and/or refugees
- have limited English proficiency
- live in rural areas
- are veterans
- have disabilities.

The Council is committed to advancing inclusion and equity for these older adults to ensure that they are free from discrimination and inequities due to their social identity—including race, ethnicity, class, nationality, disability, health, gender, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs.

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<sup>5</sup> Indian Country is defined as Minnesota Indian Country consisting of Indian reservations, Dependent Indian communities and Indian allotments. In addition, this includes rural communities, towns and cities where AI/AN Elders reside and caregiving supports from friends, family and/or neighbors are needed or currently exist.

### *Recommendation #3:*

## **Provide resources and support to local communities to adopt age-friendly policies, plans, and practices.**

### **Issue:**

Undertaking age-friendly systems change requires dedicated work and some expertise over an extended period. Presentations to the Council from four Minnesota communities, and conversations with numerous others, made clear that funding is all but essential to undertake a substantive age-friendly effort. Some degree of technical assistance and/or subject matter expertise often is needed, as well, whether the work is being initiated by a local government or community organization/collaboration.

### **Supporting Information:**

In many cases communities can accomplish significant work with small seed funding to spur action. In larger and more complex municipalities, more resources might be required. Funding could come in the way of a streamlined (easy to apply, no match requirements, etc.) mini-grant pool available to communities (defined broadly<sup>6</sup>) to support age-friendly work—which could include enrolling in the network, age-friendly technical assistance for cities, dementia friendly communities efforts, age-friendly health systems, age-friendly universities, or other age-friendly related initiatives, including planning efforts. Technical assistance should be available broadly. The program must ensure that funding or other support is readily accessible to tribal nations, urban American Indian organizations, rural communities, and culturally diverse organizations.

### **Specific Policy Recommendations:**

Create a streamlined mini-grant program through which communities (as defined broadly) can access funds to support age-friendly assessment, planning, implementation, or evaluation. Grants should be managed by an entity with flexibility to work with not only formal organizations, but community collaborations. The program should have a simple application and reporting process.

### **Equity Implications:**

The streamlined mini-grant program should emphasize work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each application should include a question on how the community intends to work towards eliminating disparities or increase access (broadly defined) by underrepresented groups. Further, because small organizations and collaborations are often the entities leading age-friendly work in these communities, the process to apply for,

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<sup>6</sup> Communities may refer to cities, other municipalities, nonprofit organizations, collaborative community efforts, informal groups, and other such entities.



receive, and report funding should be simplified, and assistance should be available to applicants who need support in the process.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

MN Board on Aging (on transitional or temporary basis) until the establishment of a permanent entity

**Legislative Action Requested:**

An appropriation to support this activity

**Resources Needed:**

As indicated in budget proposal

#### *Recommendation #4:*

### **Create a sustainable, ongoing infrastructure within the administration to support Age-Friendly Minnesota work.**

#### **Issue:**

To ensure Minnesota is successful in transforming systems, policies, and communities, an office whose sole purpose is to focus on Age-Friendly Minnesota must be established. Too often aging is relegated to existing infrastructures without resources. By doing that we shortchange the work designed to support the millions of older Minnesotans and their family caregivers across the state. Population aging will make the inadequacies of that approach increasingly evident.

#### **Supporting Information:**

The importance of bold new approaches to aging will not fade, and all Minnesotans stand to benefit from investments made in this work. Age-friendly work is multi-state agency and both public and private. The identified entity will lead the state's overall strategy and efforts, including working across agencies to help ensure aging is being incorporated into the planning and funding decisions of each. When determining what entity should lead Age-Friendly Minnesota efforts, the following questions must be considered:

1. How effectively can the entity propose strategies and act upon those strategies free from unnecessary oversight? (Consider level of autonomy and independence.)
2. How influential is the entity in collaborating with other state agencies or compelling partnership and ensuring accountability? (Consider policy/political persuasion or influence, perception of leader or reputable.)
3. How streamlined and nimble are the entity's processes, and how effectively does it leverage them to inspire—rather than deter—participation and collaboration?
4. How passionate is the entity about the full expansive view of aging?
5. How passionate is the entity about diversity, equity, and inclusion?
6. How inclusive, collaborative, and able to engage effectively is the entity? (Consider grassroots as well as grasstops, and partnership rather than regulatory driven.)
7. How effectively does the entity utilize evidence/data, and how well does the entity understand impact and informed decision making? (Consider evaluation knowledge, evidence/data driven.)
8. Does the entity have or is willing to advocate for necessary resources to accomplish work goals? (Consider not settling for status quo, seeking private resources.)

In addition, a brief analysis of potential models for structuring this entity is included in the Appendices.

#### **Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

The identified entity will be responsible to an established Age-Friendly Minnesota Council.

**Equity Implications:**

One of the Core Values/Strategic Priorities for the position or permanent Council should be related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Legislative Action Requested:**

1. Make permanent the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council into state law.
  - a. Funding for the new entity/existing office
  - b. Select an appropriate model to ensure work continues, either:
    - i. Age-Friendly Minnesota Council Director
    - ii. Governor’s Office Age-Friendly Minnesota Lead

**Resources Needed:**

As indicated in budget proposal

### *Recommendation #5:*

**Support the development of a framework and/or analytical tool that State agencies can use to analyze their policies and programs through an age-friendly lens—both an initial evaluation and ongoing analysis.**

#### **Issue:**

State government must address aging issues in a coordinated manner with unified priorities and comprehensive vision. We must shift to shared goals and strategies that work consistently and collectively for older Minnesotans and their families. Programs, policies, and services must routinely adhere to age-friendly principles. This work must reflect a holistic view of modern aging, beyond the realms of health and services—with implications and opportunities in every agency.

#### **Supporting Information:**

In addition to an initial assessment of existing programs and policies, this recommendation includes creating a mechanism designed to help State agencies ensure that age-friendly considerations are consistently integrated into policies, systems, and programs going forward. This work must recognize the reality and implications of ageism (which has been on heightened display during Covid-19). Socially ingrained negative perceptions of older age are obstacles to developing good policies, and the assessment tool should be designed with this in mind.

Potential models for this work<sup>7</sup> offer insights into a model that could be developed by the entity designated to lead Age-Friendly Minnesota.

#### **Specific Policy Recommendations:**

Opportunity to establish a “report card”

- Use criteria like “opportunities to improve” or a stoplight format

Establish a dashboard in year 2 of the enrollment

- State agencies inventory age-friendly work/policies
- State agencies identify their own criteria for the dashboard
- Develop truly impactful criteria
- Utilize technical assistance provided by the entity identified to lead Age-Friendly Minnesota

Establish metrics/dashboard comprehensively

- Connect what may be disparate dashboards across state agencies into a “mega dashboard”
- Use to help maintain focus on the topic

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendices on page 8 of the report for examples.

**Equity Implications:**

One of the measures could be its impact on disparities.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

*Lead:* The entity developed or identified per Recommendation #4

*Supporting:* Governor's Office

**Legislative Action Requested:**

None

**Resources Needed:**

As indicated in budget proposal

### *Recommendation #6:*

## **Establish a repository of resources to inform the Age-Friendly Minnesota process and initiative for policymakers, the public, and professionals in the world of aging.**

### **Issue:**

Resources related to age-friendly issues are scattered among various nonprofit, public, and private organizations and websites. The dispersion of these resources can slow or prevent valuable information from reaching key audiences who will be engaged in advancing Age-Friendly Minnesota.

### **Supporting Information:**

A central inventory housed at the Age-Friendly Minnesota website would help policymakers, State agencies, other stakeholders, and the public track down specific information and experts, including tribal liaisons and cultural navigators, as well as browse topics related to services, policies, research, and the Age-Friendly Minnesota initiative itself, among others. This inventory need not be developed from scratch but could serve as a high-level repository for existing resources. Organizations with existing databases that can leverage this work must be considered. New efforts, research, or data also could be included and hyperlinked from the Age-Friendly Minnesota website. (Examples of content include gaps analyses, MN 2030, comprehensive plans, and MN Diverse Elders Long-Term Supports and Services study, among others.)

### **Specific Policy Recommendations:**

All State of Minnesota agencies will identify resources relevant to Age-Friendly Minnesota's domains to be compiled into an inventory that will be available to aid policymakers, state agencies, local/county officials, professionals in the world of aging as well as those in other relevant sectors, and especially older Minnesotans, their families, and care providers. The inventory should include public, non-profit, and private listings of information and expertise, and be routinely monitored and updated.

### **Equity Implications:**

Resources must include those that knowledgeably serve the many groups within the older adult population as identified in Recommendation #2. Resources must also be readily accessible to all groups. Partner with organizations such as the MN Diverse Elders Coalition to help connect all residents to this information.

Information sources should be available in multiple forms (e.g., web-based, listings, help-lines, etc.) and languages (based on Census 2020 listings of top languages spoken at home).

### **Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

*Lead:* The entity developed or identified per Recommendation #4

*Supporting:* MN Management & Budget; Metropolitan Council

**Legislative Action Requested:**

Appropriation funding to develop the repository and maintain it over time.

**Resources Needed:**

As identified in Budget Proposal.

## *Recommendation #7:*

### **Add emergency preparedness as a unique domain in Age-Friendly Minnesota's ongoing work.**

#### **Issue:**

Public emergencies can take many forms, as evidenced by the coronavirus pandemic, recent turmoil surrounding race relations, and an increasing number of extreme weather events. Such hazards disproportionately threaten older adults who need extra care or assistance due to physical, cognitive, or medical issues. Recent events have also demonstrated that multiple crises can hit simultaneously, intensifying the overall impacts and vulnerability.

#### **Supporting Information:**

Many partners have a role in preparing to keep vulnerable older adults safe during an emergency—municipalities, faith communities, service providers, businesses, advocacy groups, and nursing homes, among others. A concerted preparation effort that includes widespread, coordinated communications can empower vulnerable older people and their care partners to stay safe during and after a natural disaster or other emergency. It must also be noted that older adults who are not vulnerable can be a tremendous asset in helping those who are.

Over the past two decades, a great deal of experience (e.g., 9/11, Hurricane Katrina) and research has produced invaluable recommendations that should help strengthen Minnesota's emergency planning for vulnerable older adults. An analysis of the handling of Covid-19 in Minnesota and beyond also will be instructive. The fact that these recommendations have been developed in the midst of Covid-19 as well as George Floyd's killing has significantly informed what they contain. Among other things, those crises have helped to surface many areas of needs (see list of examples below under Equity Implications) that tend not to get addressed following other more common emergencies such as flooding or tornadoes.

Actions should address (and link) planning and preparation *before* an emergency with on-the-ground response *during* an emergency and keeping people safe *after* an emergency.

#### **Specific Policy Recommendations:**

Assess State's current emergency plans to determine gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities in planning specifically for vulnerable older adults. Incorporate lessons learned from recent crises (e.g., Covid-19) and other recommendations (e.g., from the Centers for Disease Control, AARP, and many others). Assessments should include tools designed to help Minnesotans create plans for themselves and their families, and look at participation rate if available.



Identify strategies for periodic assessment of emergency plans for older adults considered vulnerable, including incorporation of new lessons learned from emergencies that transpired in the interim.

Identify ways for the State to encourage and support municipalities in stepping up their emergency planning for vulnerable older adults; such planning should include known best practices and coordination between all levels of government.

**Equity Implications:**

Many older Minnesotans (see General Note in Recommendation #2) historically have had less access to quality care and services and may have fewer resources to tap in the event of an emergency. These groups also have higher rates of risk factors such as chronic conditions and transportation insecurity that make them more vulnerable during an emergency. Such longstanding disparities must be taken into account when developing an equitable emergency preparedness strategy.

In addition, emergency preparedness must account for the following equity considerations:

- Various disabilities may require different responses (vision or hearing impairment, cognitive decline, chronic conditions requiring medication and/or special devices, etc.).
- Lack of broadband access may prevent timely delivery of information and services to some residents.
- Food insecurity both during and after an emergency is a critical concern.
- Older adults who require medications must be able to get them before, during, and after an emergency.
- Outreach to ethnic and cultural communities (e.g., through faith communities) must be part of planning, and may include targeted public health messaging paired with train the trainer outreach.
- Socially isolated older adults must be specifically considered.
- Overall delivery of health services can be compromised during and after an emergency at a time when it may be needed most acutely.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

*Lead:* Entity developed or identified per Recommendation #4

*Supporting:* DEED (for broadband/technology component), DHS, MDH, DPS, Met Council, West Central Minnesota Communities Action

Potential external partners include: League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Townships, Association of Minnesota Counties, and others to be identified.

**Legislative Action Requested:**

Age-Friendly Council is activated as part of statewide emergency operations.

**Resources Needed:**

Determine whether entities have access to assessment tools and are using them.

*Recommendation #8:*

**Develop a plan to integrate age-friendly work into the legislature and relevant committees.**

**Issue:**

Given the importance of a significant legislative role in state-level age-friendly work, a concerted effort must be made to engage this body of decision- and policy-makers in a meaningful way. The legislature to date has not been part of the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council's work or discussions.

**Supporting Information:**

The MN State Legislature is instrumental in ensuring age-friendly policies and resources are supportive and available to communities across Minnesota. The Age-Friendly Council should present to key committees to inform them of the Council's work, highlighting the critical role of the legislature. The newly created structure discussed in Recommendation #4 must somehow include legislative leaders.

**Specific Policy Recommendations:**

Identify how legislative proposals/priorities align and intersect with Age-Friendly Minnesota. The ability to connect with key committees beyond those designated for aging is needed to elevate aging as a greater priority for the state and demonstrate the more expansive view of aging that defines age-friendly workp.

**Equity Implications:**

The keen attention to advancing equity across all groups (as noted in Recommendation #2) within the older adult population must be highlighted to legislators as a fundamental tenet of Age-Friendly Minnesota. Any policy, budget, or other legislative support should address how it will help to reduce disparities and promote equitable conditions for all.

**Lead/Supporting Agencies:**

Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota

**Legislative Action Requested:**

Opportunity for an informational hearing. Have legislation offer a 5-year plan for implementation with certain goals and metrics that align with the report's vision for an Age-Friendly state.

**Resources Needed:**

None

## Additional Considerations

Over the course of the Council's work, it heard of and identified significant service gaps affecting older Minnesotans related to the areas listed below. The Council urges attention to these issues as well as research and analysis to identify additional needs.

- 1. Tribal governments:** It is critical that the work of Age-Friendly Minnesota be undertaken collaboratively with tribal communities in keeping with E.O 19-24, which states, "*Meaningful and timely consultation between the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Tribal Nations will facilitate better understanding and informed decision making by allowing for collaboration on matters of mutual interest and help to establish mutually respectful and beneficial relationships between the State and Minnesota Tribal Nations.*"
- 2. Culturally sensitive services for all groups identified in Recommendation #2.** Culturally and linguistically appropriate services are an unmet need on many fronts, at great cost to the wellbeing of Minnesota's many diverse older adults and their families. Advocacy and cultural organizations stand ready to address this issue when needed funding becomes available to do so.
- 3. Hearing impairments, visual impairments, and dental issues** Unaddressed hearing, vision, and/or dental issues often lead to or intensify isolation and take a preventable toll on quality of life. Barriers related to health insurance coverage, cost, and access to appropriate professionals must be identified and addressed.
- 4. Workforce Development.** Workforce development gaps are twofold.
  - a) Older adults in the workforce.** Many older adults want and/or need to work—for enjoyment, income, social connections, a sense of purpose, etc.—but, for various reasons, have trouble connecting to employment. However, there is great benefit to business in accessing the talent needed for empowering the growth of the Minnesota economy for everyone.
  - b) Professions that involve care of older adults.** Caregivers and personal care assistants (PCAs) in the state of Minnesota play a vital role in the system and help delay or prevent the need for long-term care, yet these workers are often marginalized. Seek to understand issues including compensation, benefits, training, honor, and respect. The roles of these essential providers need to be recognized and addressed in terms of provision of equipment, continued learning, and compensation.
- 5. Advanced Care Planning and Health Directives** Advance care planning (ACP) helps ensure that individuals who are dying receive the care of their choosing. It also eases the burden of family members in navigating care and choices during this process. Some evidence suggests that ACP can also

reduce healthcare costs. A strategic coordinated effort—modeled on existing best practices (for example, building on the Honoring Choices initiative from Twin Cities Medical Society)—could help increase rates of ACP among older Minnesotans. The work must recognize possible barriers, including potential need for assistance to complete complex and/or overwhelming forms; faith-based concerns about end-of-life decisions; misunderstanding the purpose or nature of such documents; fear of mortality; etc.

#### **6. Social Isolation and Loneliness**

Social isolation and loneliness are widespread concerns that take a very significant toll on both emotional and physical health. There is also great public cost. A 2017 study by the AARP Public Policy Institute and others found that social isolation is associated with \$6.7 billion of federal Medicare spending each year. This issue must be elevated and addressed with the seriousness it deserves.

#### **7. Housing Rehabilitation**

There is a lack of adequate resources or providers/contractors to provide health, safety, and other improvements that help older adults remain in their homes and communities. Many older adults cannot afford additional monthly payments to cover costs associated with home modifications. Programs offered through Minnesota Housing can help, but they aren't funded at adequate levels to meet the needs.

## GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL FOR AN AGE-FRIENDLY MINNESOTA

### Budget Proposal

The following budget proposal accompanies the recommendations made by the Governor’s Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota. It attaches costs to various aspects of the work described in the recommendations—including staff, grant funding, and other expenses.

	Year 1	Year 2	Ongoing
Initial Development	\$ 250,000		
Age-Friendly Community Grants		\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000
Age-Friendly MN Director	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
Grants Administrator	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Work	\$ 125,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Age-Friendly MN Expenses	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Engagement & Outreach		\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Communications	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Technical Assistance Grants	\$ 375,000	\$ 375,000	\$ 375,000
Age-Friendly Repository	\$ 100,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,375,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,910,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,410,000</b>

1. **Initial Development** of an entity to lead Age-Friendly Minnesota
2. **Age-Friendly Community Grants** to support a variety of age-friendly efforts on the community level around the state. See Recommendation #3 for more detail.
3. **Age-Friendly Minnesota Director:** Annual salary for staff person to lead new entity
4. **Grants Administrator:** Annual salary for staff person to administer grants
5. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work** funds could be used for a staff person, engagement efforts, and/or to help train cultural consultants in age-friendly work who could then be available for communities to hire.
6. **Age-Friendly MN Expenses** for travel and other miscellaneous items.
7. **Engagement and Outreach:** This includes development of analytical tools and is distinct from Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work.
8. **Communications** funds will support a variety of efforts and projects related to communications.
9. **Technical Assistance Grants** will specifically fund age-friendly technical assistance to communities.
10. **Age-Friendly Repository:** This funding will cover costs related to developing the resource repository (initial development plus maintenance over time). See Recommendation #6 for more information.