

Age-Friendly Minnesota Community Grants have been awarded to organizations across the state to help Minnesota become a better place to grow older.

June 14, 2023

Age-Friendly Minnesota Community Grants have been awarded to 93 entities across the state. Grantees' proposed projects are intended to make Minnesota a better place to grow older. The Age-Friendly Minnesota (AFMN) Council, in collaboration with the MN Department of Human Services, launched the AFMN Grants Program in 2022 to help communities initiate or advance age-friendly efforts. The Council is committed to making diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) the foundation of AFMN, including this grant initiative.

A total of \$2.9 million was invested in the grant program to advance age-friendly communities' efforts through March 31, 2024. The Community Grants will be funded between \$5,000 and \$99,000 and are being awarded to cities, nonprofit service providers, for-profit businesses and others.

Community Grant recipients who need support in implementing their grant projects may receive no-cost technical assistance from AFMN Technical Assistance Provider grantees. Together, the goal is the successful implementation of these transformative projects, including for organizations with limited experience or capacity in undertaking grant-funded work.

The grant recipients are (listed by region):

Central Minnesota

- [City of Wyoming](#): Hire age-friendly coordinator to advance age-friendly work in the city and work on a community garden.
- [*Tri-County Action Program, Inc.](#): Efforts, including a needs assessment, to expand a volunteer driver program that supports rural, low-income older adults.

- [*Whitney Senior Center- City of St. Cloud](#): In response to findings from a recent needs assessment, build capacity to address ageism and racism and overall DEIA efforts.

Northeast Minnesota

- [Aitkin County Friends of the Arts](#): Support for construction of an age-friendly outdoor gathering and arts space in Aitkin's downtown.
- [*Arrowhead Regional Development Commission](#): Analysis of recreation facilities on MN's North Shore to lead to determining accessible age-friendly sections of those facilities and then market them as such.
- [*Biwabik Area Civic Association](#): Adding ADA elements to the Bavarian Market to make this important community tourism site more accessible.
- [*Churches United in Ministry, dba CHUM](#): Supporting ADA improvements to one unit in a 43-unit former hotel that houses older adults with a history of homelessness and health conditions.
- [Community Action Duluth](#): Purchase of accessible bus to serve as the Mobile Food Market, which pops up at low-income, low-access sites.
- [*Cook County Public Health and Human Services](#): Support community needs assessment to inform joining of AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.
- [ElderCircle](#): Support expanding a resource and referral network; hire a DEIA consultant; and research and implement a volunteer enrollment, engagement, and recruitment platform for ElderCircle and other organizations.
- [*Friends of the Finland Community](#): Establish a collaborative network of resources to support aging in place. Connect existing home service providers with the Lake County HRA and local contractors to address home modification needs. Additionally, support the continuation of an existing project to plan and design a community-led housing development to provide affordable and accessible intergenerational housing.
- [HH Operations, Inc. dba Oak Hill Assisted Living](#): Funds to support housing development of single-family homes using universal design and suited for aging in place, including in-home services if desired.

- [ISD 0001, dba Aitkin Public Schools](#): Support efforts to make public school "maker's spaces" (labs for woodworking, welding, engine work, embroidery, etc.) open and available to community members as opportunity for creative work and social connection.
- [Itasca County Family YMCA](#): As part of a of broader project to create opportunities for physical activity and social connection, support purchase and installation of equipment for an outdoor fitness circuit that community members of all ages can access at no cost.
- [Jim Gillach Memorial Fund](#): Support conversion of downtown Aurora's tennis courts into pickleball courts that will be available to the region's residents at no cost.
- [Northland Foundation](#): Support for project to link individuals who have the left the workforce, including for retirement and caregiving responsibilities, to employers who will offer "returnships" to help them re-enter the workforce.
- [Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Inc.](#): Physical improvements to the organization's building site to improve safety and accessibility for all who visit the building, including older adults and physically disabled individuals who attend activities at the center.

Northwest Minnesota

- [Big Ole Bike Club, Inc. on behalf of Cycling Without Age Alexandria](#): Funding a year of operations for Cycling Without Age, which pairs volunteer pilots with older adults and others of restricted mobility for bike rides.
- [City of Halstad](#): Repurposing a former public-school building to develop a multi-generational community center, including ADA improvements and emergency preparation elements.
- [*City of Moorhead](#): Support for converting one tennis court into two pickleball courts at a city park.
- [*City of Wendell](#): Support plans for a housing development geared toward older adults that would also include services.
- [*Clay County Fair and Agricultural Society](#): Support costs for new fairground restrooms to make them accessible and family friendly.

- [Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County, Minnesota, Inc.](#): Create an accessible entrance to the grantee's offices, a hub for volunteers, program participants, community partners, and donors; also support Aging-In-Place Specialist Certification for one staff member.
- [ISD 2342, dba West Central Area School District](#): Expand and strengthen programs and opportunities for older adults, including through connections with high school students.
- [Living at Home of the Park Rapids Area](#): Efforts to increase collaboration between partners to develop coordinated calendars and communications to help connect older adults to social activities.
- [Northwest Community Action, Inc.](#): Create an age-friendly communities coordinator position to engage residents and build partnerships to help make four rural counties in northwestern Minnesota more livable for all ages.
- [*Perham Area Activity Center, Inc., dba Perham Area Community Center \(PACC\)](#): Support for wheelchair accessible fitness equipment as part of significant renovations to Perham's community center.
- [Stevens County Fair Board- The Stevens County Agricultural Society](#): Purchase of electric scooters as mobility aids for use by fairgrounds visitors.

Southeast Minnesota

- [*Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce](#): Conducting a community needs assessment and preparing to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.
- [*City of Red Wing](#): Improve recreational boating access to Mississippi River for people with mobility challenges.
- [*City of Winona](#): Support for accessibility/ADA improvements to the entrance of an important community center in Winona.
- [Family Service Rochester, Inc.](#): Support efforts to identify and develop strategies to respond to barriers that impede aging-in-place.
- [Northfield Senior Citizens, Inc., dba FiftyNorth](#): Modify an underutilized outdoor public space for all ages, abilities and backgrounds at a building that includes FiftyNorth as well as numerous other tenants that include diverse organizations and visitors.

- [River Bend Nature Center, Inc.](#): Community-wide initiative to learn from diverse older adults about how they would like to spend time outdoors and barriers to participation.

Southwest Minnesota

- [Aging Services for Communities](#): Various efforts, including rebuilding a website, to recruit volunteer drivers and volunteers who provide housekeeping and errand-running for older adults to help meet great demand for these services.
- [*City of Bird Island](#): Contribute to construction costs for converting old tennis courts to pickleball courts in a very rural area with few opportunities for recreation, fitness, social connection.
- [City of Gibbon](#): Support for park improvements, especially sidewalks, in key areas to increase accessibility.
- [City of Lamberton](#): Support plans to repurpose the local public-school building as a multi-generational community center.
- [City of Tracy](#): Contribute to costs to design and construct a community center in this rural town that includes a sizable Hmong community.
- [City of Truman](#): Support critical repairs to the Truman Community Building, a key facility for social and civic activities in the city and surrounding area.
- [City of Willmar](#): Support for a community needs assessment, including plans to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.
- [*Generations Home Care Services](#): Funds will support purchase of a wheelchair accessible vehicle to allow this grantee to expand its transportation services to clients who use wheelchairs.
- [*Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District \(SWCD\) and Renee Ehlenz](#): Organizing and implementing a multi-generational community tree-planting effort.
- [*The YMCA of Worthington, MN](#): Support for inter-generational social engagement efforts in this increasingly diverse community.

- [VINE Faith in Action](#): Convene local leaders and community members in Mankato and North Mankato to form a task force related to joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities--including some needs assessment work and developing an action plan.

Tribal Nation/Affiliation

- [*American Indian Family Center](#): Finalize program development for Elder American Indian Community members in and near Ramsey and Hennepin Counties.
- [*Great River Passage Conservancy](#): Conduct community engagement, including significant tribal engagement, related to reviving the East Side River District in St. Paul and reconnecting it to the community and its tribal origins.
- [LiveLife Therapy Solutions Co \(Susan Redepenning\)](#): Efforts to help older Minnesotans of Tribal descent in the Twin Cities area access home- and community-based services from the State of Minnesota so that they can benefit from funding available to support things like assistive technology and home modifications.
- [*Northwoods Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers](#): Host two community forums, in Bemidji and at the Red Lake Reservation, with facilitated discussions focused on age-friendly domains to determine how communities can better serve and include older members.
- [Upper Sioux Community](#): Support purchase of a wheelchair accessible van to provide transportation to Upper Sioux Community's older members in southwest Minnesota.

Twin Cities Metro Region

- [*African Community Services, Inc.](#): Needs assessment of ethnic African older adults in South Minneapolis to better understand this community and empower people to take steps toward social inclusion and interactions that they prefer.
- [*African Immigrants Community Services](#): Needs assessment of elders and caregivers in the Somali and East African refugee community across the metro area to determine what supports are wanted and needed to help people remain living at home and socially connected and improve overall well-being.

- [*Audubon Neighborhood Association](#): Needs assessment of marginalized older community members in Minneapolis' Audubon neighborhood to understand obstacles preventing people from thriving.
- [CARE Resource Connection](#): Strengthening and expanding CARE Resource Connection, which connects Fire Departments with older adults following 911 calls to ensure those individuals access needed resources to improve longer-term outcomes and build community connections.
- [*City of Hilltop](#): Contribute to costs of constructing a new emergency tornado shelter and site that will double as a City Hall in a community where 70% of housing is manufactured homes.
- [City of Maple Grove](#): Contribute to costs of pickleball courts and park improvements, including community engagement, trail connections, and pedestrian amenities.
- [*City of North Oaks](#): Community visioning to identify improvements, ordinances and programs to help North Oaks become more age-friendly.
- [City of Shakopee](#): Funds elements of Shakopee's Senior Resilience Initiative: activating an outdoor space for additional programming; develop gardening program/community garden; and plan absentee voting events at assisted living communities.
- [Community Area Busing, dba WeCAB](#): Strengthen volunteer driver recruitment and retention in the southwest metro region.
- [*Community Deliverance Church](#): Develop Action Response Template as part of emergency preparedness for older members and others in the Sierra Leonean community, including community engagement of elders.
- [FamilyMeans](#): Inter-generational community engagement to better understand needs of Latine elders and their families related to services and caregiving; includes training and employing community youth to undertake engagement.
- [Friends & Co \(formerly Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly\)](#): With a focus on social isolation, hold Community Conversation lunches at public housing communities in Minneapolis and in several regions of the state.
- [Hearts & Hammers- Twin Cities, Inc.](#): Paint and supplies for this grantee who does painting and exterior home repairs for low-income older adults.

- [Hennepin County Public Health](#): Conduct a feasibility study to explore offering the CAPABLE program, which originated at Johns Hopkins University and takes a holistic approach to aging in place.
- [*Hmong American Partnership](#): Support for the *Hnub Tshiab (New Day) Project*, which addresses the intersectionality of race and age through dismantling stereotypes and prejudices against aging Hmong people.
- [*Kaleidoscope-Kawm Thiab Siv, LLC](#): Engage Hmong elders in a needs assessment to develop a Hmong healthy aging framework.
- [*Keystone Community Services](#): Conduct a needs assessment of grantee's diverse program participants to develop new culturally relevant Active Senior program offerings in St. Paul.
- [Korean Service Center](#): Support efforts to transform key common spaces in Minneapolis Public Housing into a traditional Korean cultural space that will impact 45 Korean elders at Cedars Apartment complex and hundreds of other intergenerational Koreans within the state.
- [Open Access Connections](#): Expand supports for older adults with a history of homelessness - including focus groups to better understand needs and experiences, and developing a tablet lending library.
- [Queermunity Collaborative, LLC](#): Create a plan for age-friendly programming and inclusive architectural considerations at the organization's new space for LGBTQ+ Minnesotans, expected to open in 2024.
- [Rainbow Health Minnesota](#): Intergenerational wall hanging, inspired by the 1985 AIDS Memorial quilt, in Rainbow's new space, which opened in April 2023. Participants will work with an artist to develop the piece.
- [Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church](#): Support creation of an outdoor, accessible labyrinth at this large church campus used by a range of diverse community groups, including many older residents who live nearby.
- [*SEWA-AIFW \(Asian-Indian Family Wellness\)](#): To assess the number of South Asian older adults residing in assisted living and determine their personal and civic needs; and raise awareness of the rights of immigrant older adults.

- [The Loppet Foundation, Inc.](#): Support creation of an action plan for the Age-Friendly Loppet Foundation initiative to help expand engagement with and offerings to older adults in Hennepin County, especially North Minneapolis, and those are who from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented communities.
- [*The Sanneh Foundation, on behalf of Age-Friendly Equity Alliance, Ramsey County](#): Support for a series of community listening sessions across Ramsey County and intended to capture voices from a range of cultures and communities.
- [The Sunshine Initiative](#): Support for "Mindful Moments, Happy Talks" project aimed at cultivating socially and emotionally enriching interactions between Hmong youth and elders.
- [*TRUST, Inc.](#): Develop IT training for older adults to help address social connection, emergency preparedness, and communications.
- [*University of St. Thomas](#): Support efforts for grantee to become an Age-Friendly University through assessment of courses, trainings, research and community engagement.
- [Vision Loss Resources, Inc.](#): Train staff at senior housing communities how to be more inclusive of people with vision loss.
- [Vital Aging Network, Inc., on behalf of the Age-Friendly Oakdale Task Force and Oakdale Wellness 50+](#): Conduct a transportation needs assessment for Age-Friendly Oakdale to identify needs and barriers, explore options and plan solutions.
- [Volunteers of America of Minnesota](#): Provide expertise and guidance to professionals within Minneapolis' community healthcare clinics to ensure that their staff are equipped to educate community members on the importance of having a Health Care Directive (HCD), alternatives to guardianship, and community resources that encourage and support individual choice and autonomy.
- [*Wonderlust Productions](#): Podcast and theater production focused on the experience of caregiving.

Multiple regions

- [Able Solutions, LLC](#): Funds will support physical improvements, including accessibility elements, to a community garden started in Dakota County in 2021 by a group of 18 Swahili-speaking families from East Africa.

- [Age Well at Home](#): Build capacity in various parts of the state to develop and offer person-centered, trauma-informed home modification services.

Statewide

- [*Access Resource, LLC \(Karen Skow\)](#): Develop and share two educational videos about real-time captioning that allows hearing impaired people to be included and engage across multiple environments.
- [*Ayvaz Consulting](#): Provide support to the Age-Friendly Minnesota team and Community Grantees.
- [*Carey Consulting](#): Provide support to the Age-Friendly Minnesota team and Community Grantees.
- [ConnectAbility of MN, Inc.](#): Strengthen and expand mobility equipment donation program that collects and distributes used wheelchairs, walkers, shower chairs, etc. for low-income older adults.
- [Joelle Hoelt](#): Support for the *Landscape Analysis of Older Adult Outdoor & Nature-based Opportunities in Minnesota*, which will examine statewide needs, opportunities, strengths, and challenges regarding older adult and nature-based experiences.
- [Leah Hill](#): Provide support to the Age-Friendly Minnesota team and Community Grantees.
- [Lotus LTC Pharmacy, LLC](#): Broaden the inclusivity of healthcare access by developing and implementing an Age-Friendly Community Pharmacy framework and service model.
- [Minnesota Center for Health Care Ethics](#): Conduct a comprehensive ethics needs assessment, relationship and partnership building among stakeholders, and a report to State of Minnesota on ethical challenges in Continuing Care Retirement Communities (including independent living and assisted living).
- [Morken Consulting](#): Provide various support to Age-Friendly Minnesota team and Grantees, including analysis and communication of Community Grants program; assisting and advising TAP Grantees as they work with Community Grantees; and developing a report on how Community Grants benefited emergency preparedness efforts for older adults in Minnesota.