



Grant Awards to increase Age-Friendly Efforts for Minnesotans

Age-Friendly Minnesota Community Grants awarded to 35 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 Minnesota 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 creating spaces and opportunities that are intentionally designed to be welcoming and inclusive to all Minnesotans.

A total of \$1.3 million was invested in the grant program to advance age-friendly communities' efforts through May 31, 2026. The Community Grant awards range between \$9,000 and \$75,000 and grantees include cities, nonprofit entities, for-profit businesses and others.

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

The projects below are organized by the four domains highlighted in [Minnesota's Multisector Blueprint for Aging](#): 1) Connected Communities; 2) Emergency Preparedness, Individual Rights and Safety; 3) Optimized Health and Longevity; and 4) Economic Security and Vitality. Each domain showcases different strategies for making Minnesota inclusive and equitable as we age.

Grantees in Domain 1: Connected Communities

Age-Friendly Equity Alliance, Ramsey County Saint Paul

A continuation of the community assessment and planning for action process includes hosting a series of community listening sessions. These sessions will focus on the compilation of background data from dozens of county assessments, health care organizations, Ramsey County city comprehensive plans, the YMCA Community Health Living Index, and many others. This project will actively involve the community to ensure equitable inclusion of the multicultural and diverse area.

Bemidji Senior Center Bemidji

This project focuses on building and program improvements at the Bemidji Senior Center, with the goal of addressing safety concerns at the building and making it a more welcoming place for all. Activities will include replacing the floor in the multi-purpose room and conducting a survey and focus groups with members to explore social networks, interests, and barriers to participation.

Brink Senior Center Baudette

This multi-faceted project will update the intergenerational community space. Upgrades include purchasing and installing a new sanitizing dishwasher, a digital sign for providing information and a computer for public access and use.

Byron Public Schools, ISD # 531 Byron

The Community Education team will conduct a needs assessment and strategic planning process, using an age-friendly lens, to enhance adult enrichment programming and optimize the built environment at the Community Education Center. These efforts will address the growing demand for age-friendly public spaces and programming in Byron, particularly for older adults, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Community Education Center as a hub for lifelong learning and engagement.

Central Lakes College Foundation Brainerd

This project consists of two initiatives aimed at enhancing community engagement for adults aged 55 and older. These include 55+ Listening Sessions at Central Lakes College for prospective and current students; and Chatty Hour, a program to foster social connections among older adults. These efforts promote an inclusive, age-friendly environment by supporting social engagement and lifelong learning.

City of New York Mills New York Mills

This project places shaded seating areas along a city owned walking trail. Rest areas will be covered bench areas with benches that are open on one side for wheelchair accessibility. This will create a more accessible space for everyone.

City of Roseau Roseau

Funding will be used to purchase equipment to maintain dedicated snowshoe and cross-country ski trails within the community. As a recreational activity, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are an ideal activity for our aging population. This project will provide local access to outdoor physical and mental winter activity involving snowshoeing and cross-country skiing for all ages through our parks on well-groomed, marked, and beginner friendly trails.

Ecolibrium3 Duluth

Funding will help establish holistic home assessment protocols that combine energy efficiency, electrification, healthy housing, aging-in-place, and disaster resilience to benefit Minnesota households of all ages. A curriculum will be used to expand workforce training on age-friendly built environment approaches. To move toward greater housing affordability, regional stakeholders will be convened to develop a partnership plan to increase public awareness of the importance of the age-friendly lens and actions to make housing more affordable and accessible.

ElderCircle Grand Rapids

This project will research and develop a plan to incorporate medical and essential ride transportation program that has the possibility of billing Medicare or other insurances for individuals who live in rural Itasca County. Outcomes may help other rural communities that struggle with accessible, reliable transportation options in rural Itasca County.

Hallock Area Senior Center, Inc Hallock

Grant funds will be used to obtain an accessible vehicle, improve the current transportation system, and strengthen the community volunteer driver program. This project will also incorporate an age friendly component to the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment scheduled to be completed by the Kittson Healthcare Organization and Kittson Healthcare Public Health Department.

Headwaters Regional Development Commission Bemidji

Funds will be used to create a regional housing plan with extensive community involvement. This plan will include design, accessibility, zoning, land use and in-home service considerations. A regional housing strategy will ensure that all people have a range of safe and affordable housing choices to create a healthy and prosperous future, including eliminating racial disparities in housing access.

Theatre 55 Saint Paul

Theater 55 will develop and produce a series of educational video segments focused on addressing loneliness and isolation among BIPOC and transgender LGBTQ older adults. This project will increase awareness and access to video content among LGBTQ older adults, particularly in underserved communities.

Wright County Historical Society Buffalo

This project enables the Wright County Historical Society to improve the handicapped accessibility for their main doors & accessible bathroom for their multiuse and multigenerational public building.

Grantees in Domain 2: Emergency Preparedness, Individual Rights and Safety

Community Mediation Minnesota Minneapolis

Funding will increase access to and awareness of the seven statewide Community Dispute Resolution Programs, increasing utilization of services in the areas of Elder Law and Justice, creating systemic change for individuals and families. The goal is to further integrate mediation and restorative practices in the areas of guardianship and conservatorship; caregiving of an aging parent and independent living; grandparent relationships and visitation; family disputes; and probate court.

Legal Aid Service of Northeast Minnesota Duluth

This project includes improving the legal kiosks placement and accessibility in the service area. Legal Kiosks help people find legal information, apply for legal aid services, connect with their attorney, and attend remote hearings. These kiosks will be located at easy-to-access locations frequented by older Minnesotans, such as senior living buildings and community centers.

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota Saint Paul

Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota will host a series of events for rural LGBTQ+ older adults in Beltrami, Itasca, and St. Louis counties. The events will bring together older adults, other members of the LGBTQ+ community, supportive organizations, and organizations that serve older adults, such as retirement homes. Events will build resilience for rural LGBTQ+ older adults through shared information about informal and formal supports, including education on Health Care Directives and Health Care Agents.

Rivers of Hope Monticello

Rivers of Hope will equip medical providers, senior centers, and volunteers in Wright and Sherburne Counties with the knowledge and tools to identify and respond to domestic violence affecting older adults. This project will raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by older survivors, particularly in rural areas, and promote access to safety, justice, and support. Customized training, resource distribution, and free consultation services will empower providers to recognize abuse, respond effectively, and connect survivors with needed resources, ensuring their rights and safety are prioritized.

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Saint Paul

The goal of this project is to complete upgrades and roll out the Legal Risk Detector for use across the state. The Legal Risk Detector is a web-based legal health "check-up" tool designed for use by eldercare professionals. By combining high-tech with high-touch human support, the Legal Risk Detector enables medical personnel, social workers, other allied professionals and caregivers to screen elderly individuals, including the homebound, for legal needs and refer them to legal services.

St. Louis County Duluth

St. Louis County will focus on bringing emergency preparedness and response within the older population to the forefront. This project will foster a collaboration with the County's Emergency Preparedness team to best assess how to work with communities and integrate older adults into response plans. This project will help ensure that communities are esteemed and protected as they age.

Grantees in Domain 3: Optimized Health and Longevity

Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization St. Cloud

The grant funds will be used to conduct a series of listening sessions with older adults and their caregivers, design a program around their needs, and conduct an outreach campaign to promote the program to increase older adult and caretaker health and longevity in Faribault, MN.

Centro Tyrone Guzman Minneapolis

These funds will be used to make environmental changes to the building to create a more inclusive and accessible space for elders to engage in culturally appropriate educational, health, and social activities, including: (1) adding automatic door openers to the entrance and bathrooms, as well as a safety film on the glass panel at the entry; and (2) converting two existing offices into age-friendly, Montessori-inspired spaces be used for future elders programming.

East Side Neighborhood Services Minneapolis

This project focuses on integrating youth career readiness training and older adult programming to optimize the health of and increase social supports for older adults while promoting intergenerational engagement. It will expose youth to healthcare and dementia care careers and increases awareness about healthcare directives for older adults.

Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities Shoreview

This funding will be used to develop faith community nurses and evidence-based program leaders in underserved communities including low-income, communities of color, LGBTQIA, and others. Specifically, this includes identifying under-served communities; Preparing registered nurses to intentionally care for the mind, body, and spirit; and providing nurses the opportunity to learn about and become leaders in evidence-based programs to facilitate in their own communities.

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Cloquet

This project will increase mobility and improve cognitive health for the Brookston community by installing a high tunnel and providing accessible raised garden beds. All ages will benefit from the easier access to community gardening and to fresh produce through the year.

Giving Voice Initiative Minneapolis

Funding will be used to strategically engage rural and underserved populations in a pilot initiative building the framework for the launch new dementia-friendly choruses. These choruses will provide a much-needed respite for care partners and create a strong sense of community and connectedness for older adults.

Kaleidoscope-Kawm Thiab Siv, LLC Oakdale

This project will enhance the health and longevity in Minnesota's aging Hmong community. Activities include hosting a conference to present a culturally responsive Healthy Aging Framework to agencies and organizations serving the Hmong community and gathering feedback through a listening session for implementation planning. Feedback will be used to create a comprehensive plan that raises awareness and promotes adoption of the framework's practices.

Living at Home Block Nurse Program Inc. Saint Paul

Funds will be used to support the Living at Home Network members and provide ongoing technical and analytical support. This includes develop training materials that support ongoing use of a new volunteer database, host virtual training and user group sessions, and work with member organizations to tell the stories of their impact through data.

Lmnop, LLC Saint Paul

The "And So We Grow... Sowing Seeds to End Ageism" program brings storybooks to young children that feature positive images of older characters along with engaging. This grant will be used for broad outreach and dissemination of the program and to secure at least 10 sites for implementation to create a network of organizations and entities serving children.

Minnesota Medication Repository Minneapolis

The Minnesota Medication Repository collects surplus medications from healthcare facilities, pharmacies, and individuals and redistributes them to needy Minnesotans. This project funds a consultant to expand donor partnerships and establish partnerships with pharmacies that serve underserved populations, particularly older adults in priority groups.

Grantees in Domain 4: Economic Security and Vitality

Age Well at Home Minneapolis

Create an educational tool to teach Person Centered Trauma Informed (PCTI) approach to working with BIPOC and other older homeowners who have experienced significant trauma. This tool will be used to better serve traumatized older adults in historically neglected neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Another aspect will be to train greater Minnesota partner housing agencies in the PCTI approach so they can be more effective in helping older homeowners age in place longer.

Hispanic Advocacy & Community Empowerment through Research Saint Paul

Grant funds will support the Spanish/English bilingual Age-Friendly Economic Security and Vitality Project which includes conducting a needs assessment, policy literature review, focus groups and interviews. Participants will include Latine older adults and caregivers in the urban, suburban, and rural counties of Ramsey, Hennepin, Nobles, and Rice, where 80% of Minnesota's Latine community resides.

Northspan Group, Inc Duluth

The goal of this project is to create a comprehensive training program for businesses and organizations to implement "returnships," which are structured job opportunities designed for older adults reentering the workforce. The program will support age-friendly workplace practices, helping both employers and returning professionals by addressing skill gaps, offering mentorship, and creating smoother transitions back to work. The project will focus on communities in Northern and Northeastern Minnesota.

Veteran Resource & Enrichment Center, Inc St. Cloud

This funding allows the Veteran Resource & Enrichment Center to become an accessible facility for all military families and the community. By restructuring space to meet growing accessibility needs of Veterans and their families and caregivers, this project will improve their quality of life and ability to actively participate, reducing self-isolation and alcohol and substance use.

Grantees with projects spanning multiple domains

Advance Thief River Thief River Falls

Conduct a comprehensive planning process to create a housing plan for residents ages 55 and older that addresses health, accessibility, and social needs. The plan will prioritize features that support active lifestyles, accessible design elements that reduce fall risks, and amenities that encourage regular physical activity. The plan process will include focus groups and community forums to ensure that area older adults and their families can voice their preferences and aspirations.

Asian American Business Resilience Network Minneapolis

Project CONNECT empowers Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) older adults with essential digital skills through a supportive, intergenerational approach led by trained bicultural/bilingual youth. This program provides both digital literacy and emergency preparedness skills, equipping seniors to confidently engage with today's technology, and increase social connectedness.