



Pennsylvania
Department of Aging

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Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, Department of Aging Announce New Initiative to Make the Commonwealth Friendlier, More Welcoming for Older Adults

McKeesport, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis joined **Department of Aging Secretary Jason Kavulich** and local leaders today to kick off the first in a series of events across the Commonwealth to highlight efforts to develop age-friendly communities – all with the goal of encouraging more cities, towns and neighborhoods in the Commonwealth to ensure older Pennsylvanians have the services and support they need to thrive at every stage of life.

“Older adults in Allegheny County and here in my hometown of McKeesport are the backbone of our communities. They are our family, friends, and neighbors who have made great contributions in our lives that benefit all of us,” said **Lt. Gov. Davis**. “The organizers of age-friendly communities here in southwest Pennsylvania are making a positive impact, and I applaud their work and dedication as we welcome new faces to the table to expand these initiatives.”

Age-friendly communities are good places for everyone to grow up and age. Key factors for creating an age-friendly environment for all ages include reliable access to transportation, housing, outdoor spaces, health services, social and civic participation, and community information. Age-friendly cities and towns bring together a range of stakeholders within the community with different areas of expertise to develop guidelines and plans that improve life for older adults and often use these factors to guide their planning.

The approach empowers local leaders to improve the experiences and lives of older adults and people of all ages. As Pennsylvanians age, where they live should match their needs and value the contributions they have made throughout their lives. Following the World Health Organization’s movement to formalize a global network of age-friendly communities in 2010, AARP brought the concept to the United States in 2012. There are about 700 communities in the country, including 10 in Pennsylvania.

“Pennsylvania’s aging population provides us with an opportunity to transform communities across the Commonwealth into Age-friendly environments. As our older adult population continues to grow, *Aging Our Way, PA* keeps us focused on the changing needs of older adults as they move through different stages of life. We also look to great partners like those here in southwest PA that are leading the charge in

creating age-friendly communities for all,” said **Secretary Kavulich**. “The Department is excited to have Lieutenant Governor Davis joining us and we are grateful for his efforts to highlight the great work being done to develop age-friendly communities here in southwest PA, and for the Shapiro Administration’s leadership in making older adults a priority.”

Last year, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Secretary Kavulich announced the publication of [*Aging Our Way, PA*](#). One of the plan’s objectives is to develop age-friendly communities. Since its publication, a workgroup of leaders from age-friendly communities have collaborated with the Commonwealth and AARP to create a plan to expand the age-friendly initiative across Pennsylvania.

“For over a decade, AARP been committed to helping communities become great places to live for people of all ages,” said **Bill Johnston-Walsh, AARP Pennsylvania State Director**. “This is what we call ‘livable communities’ as whatever our age, we all want the same things: safe, affordable housing and transportation options, good health for ourselves and our loved ones, opportunities to learn, support for our families, a connection to our neighbors, and a government that is responsive to our needs. We are excited to work with other invested stakeholders to move the livable communities movement forward throughout the Commonwealth.”

Today’s event showcased Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh and Southwest PA Partnership for Aging along with their coalition partners who have been leading the region to create communities that meet the changing needs of neighbors at every stage of their lives. The event also featured presentations on what an age-friendly community looks like, the successes of these communities, and what it all means for Pennsylvania.

"The age-friendly movement is about choosing to see the potential in ourselves, each other and our communities. This is our opportunity to innovate and come together as neighbors – across generations and sectors – to advance age inclusion. A state that's more accessible and welcoming is better for older people – and better for everyone," said **Laura Poskin, executive director, Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh**.

Pennsylvania is the fifth oldest state in the nation by population. One in four Pennsylvanians is over the age of 60, and that number will rise to one in three by 2030. Pennsylvanians interested in reviewing *Aging Our Way, PA* and the plan’s development can visit the [Department of Aging’s website](#).