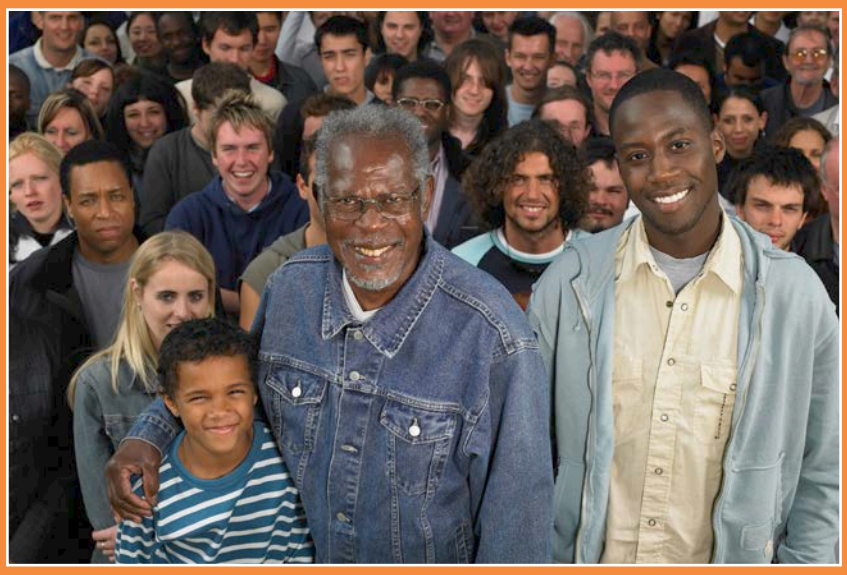
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

THE MOVEMENT TO CREATE GREAT PLACES TO GROW UP AND GROW OLD IN AMERICA



AN INTRODUCTION FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDERS

Created for **Community AGEnda**,
A program of Grantmakers In Aging,
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GIA Grantmakers In Aging | Pfizer The Pfizer Foundation

ABOUT COMMUNITY AGENDA

Community AGEnda: Improving America for All Ages is an initiative of Grantmakers In Aging and is funded by the Pfizer Foundation. It seeks to enhance and accelerate age-friendly development work in communities across America. Launched in 2012, Community AGEnda has awarded grants to local groups in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, and the greater Kansas City area to support their efforts to become great places to grow up and grow old. The project also hopes to inspire similar age-friendly work across the country through convening, promotional activities, and the collection and development of planning, assessment, and strategy tools and other practical resources, including an online searchable database of age-friendly projects in the United States. For more information, please visit GIAging.org/CommunityAGEnda.

ABOUT GRANTMAKERS IN AGING

Grantmakers In Aging is an inclusive and responsive membership organization that is a national catalyst for philanthropy, with a common dedication to improving the experience of aging. GIA members have a shared recognition that a society that is better for older adults is a society that is better for people of all ages. For more information, please visit GIAging.org.

ABOUT THE PFIZER FOUNDATION

The Pfizer Foundation is a charitable organization established by Pfizer Inc. Its mission is to promote access to quality health care, to nurture innovation, and to support the community involvement of Pfizer colleagues. The Pfizer Foundation provides funding and resources to local and international organizations that expand and improve global health strategies. In 2012, the Foundation provided over $23 million in grants and employee matching gifts to non-governmental organizations around the world. For more information please visit Pfizer.com.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

What makes a community successful? One important measure is how well it meets the needs of its citizens in all stages of their lives. Is it safe? Affordable? Walkable? Healthy? Inclusive? Is it a great place to grow up *and* grow old? In short, is it "age-friendly?" In many communities large and small across America and around the globe, the answer is still no.

This is unfortunate because, from Athens, Georgia to Athens, Greece, individuals are living longer and the world's population is getting older, quickly and permanently. This longevity is a wonderful, hopeful phenomenon with many positive ramifications. At the same time, it poses a challenge to cities, towns, and neighborhoods, many of which are still unprepared to serve — or benefit from — the fast-growing number of older citizens.

The good news is that communities still have time to seize the dynamic opportunity that an aging population can present. In fact, many thought leaders now believe that the communities that fare best in the 21st century will be those that both tackle the challenges and embrace the positive possibilities that an aging population creates.

The burgeoning movement to create age-friendly communities offers an ideal framework for this effort.

"We need to think in a completely different way about this new generation of older adults," says Ruth Finkelstein, ScD, Senior Vice President for Policy and Planning at The New York Academy of Medicine and director of Age-Friendly New York City. "We tend to treat aging as though it were a disease, rather than a stage of life. We need to work with civic leaders to help them understand the many opportunities that arise from the aging of the population."

Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) has developed this publication as part of Community AGEnda: Improving America for All Ages, an initiative funded by the Pfizer Foundation (see "Community AGEnda: Improving America for All ages," page 4). The document's purpose is to introduce private philanthropies and local, state, and federal funders to this

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COMMUNITY AGENDA: IMPROVING AMERICA FOR ALL AGES

Grantmakers In Aging (GIA), an affinity group for philanthropies concerned with improving the experience of aging in America, launched Community AGEnda: Improving America for All Ages in 2012, with support from the Pfizer Foundation. Its goal: to support communities in their efforts to become great places to grow up and grow old. In its first year, Community AGEnda made grants to five communities already committed to age-friendly development, to help them accelerate and expand their work.

"The aging of America's population is one of the most important trends of the 21st century, with tremendous implications for our health, our economy, and our quality of life," says Caroline Roan, President of the Pfizer Foundation. "We believe, through the work of Community AGEnda, we can advance the important national conversation about aging and help our communities take tangible steps to prepare for these huge demographic changes."

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Community AGEnda has supported communities in Maricopa County, Arizona; Miami-Dade County, Florida; four communities in Clayton County and DeKalb County, Georgia; the greater Kansas City area; and three communities in the state of Indiana. Projects range from improving transit options for older people to encouraging the hiring of older workers to creating a Lifetime Community District using zoning and regulation incentives.

Finally, Community AGEnda recognizes that in any social movement, a strong start is good, but staying power is better. In the relatively brief life of the age-friendly communities movement, foundation and local government funders have been essential, while the federal government has played a rather limited role. To improve sustainability, more focus is needed on planning, funding diversification, and long-term partnerships. Community AGEnda, which has required each of its partner sites to raise matching funds, is looking for ways to promote these kinds of efforts for the long haul. As the project lead, GIA will continue to look for ways to bring new private and public funders to the table.

"Supporting age-friendly development is a natural role for local philanthropies because of their unique knowledge of their own regions," says John Feather, PhD, CEO of Grantmakers In Aging. "Grantmakers can play an important role by bringing diverse groups together and pinpointing the needs and the strengths of their community."

We hope you will join us in this important work and either start or sustain efforts near you to make your community a better place to grow up and grow old.

new, transformative way of thinking about aging and community development. In it, we survey the current state of the age-friendly community movement, showcase notable examples, and demonstrate how urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities can get started or advance their work. A searchable database of age-friendly programs across America, a curated collection of implementation tools, and other resources are also available at GIAging.org/CommunityAGEnda for any funder, planner, nonprofit, government agency, or citizen seeking to work toward a more age-friendly future.

WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

Each age-friendly community is unique and the work of building one can take many different forms. Sometimes it is a regional development process trying to make sense of a growing older population through planning, zoning, and infrastructure improvements. At other times, it can be a more discrete effort to organize aging services more effectively, transform a particular neighborhood or housing unit, or devote attention to a distinct sub-population of older adults in a community.

Age-friendly community initiatives can include any of the following:

- Municipal and regional planning, with an emphasis on community and older adult input;
- Housing and other building design, particularly affordable, adaptive/accessible housing and multi-generational options;
- Social services, including meal delivery, adult day programs, and caregiver support, with a focus on meeting the changing needs of the frail, disabled, and homebound older people;
- Transportation projects, including increased public transit and free or reduced-cost taxis and other rides, and promoting walkability and accessibility;
- Health promotion, including community activities to enhance wellness and greater access to health, mental health, and home health care;
- Civic engagement efforts, including intergenerational initiatives and opportunities for meaningful volunteering and paid work that benefit older people and people of all ages; and
- Efforts to promote access to information, including an effective communication system reaching community residents of all ages and focusing on oral and printed communication accessible to older people.

Age-friendly initiatives provide social services, including meal delivery, adult day programs, and caregiver support, with a focus on meeting the changing needs of the frail, disabled, and homebound older people.

What these diverse efforts share is an expressed desire to create places that support older adults and their families better, and enable older people to remain active, contributing members of their communities. Directly or indirectly, these projects address an enduring question: how do we create places that truly meet the needs and aspirations of all of their residents? As we consider the largest generation of older people in our country's history, making our communities more age-friendly must become a more central goal.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

WHO GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Like most philanthropy, most age-friendly services are local, but the movement itself is global. Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has provided key leadership with its Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC). In 2006, WHO brought together 33 cities in 22 countries to help determine the key elements that support active and healthy aging, then laid out its guidelines in *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*. Today, any city or community may apply to join the WHO network.

"We need to reinvent the way we think about aging itself," says John Beard, PhD, director of WHO's Department of Ageing and Life Course. "This means keeping people healthy for as long as possible and giving them the opportunity to do the things they want and that society needs."

The WHO Network does not set standards or benchmarks for performance but requires participating communities to commit to a five-year process that looks for ongoing improvement of age-friendliness through planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Around the world, WHO-linked programs vary widely, from Finland, which recently committed to a country-wide age-friendly effort aimed at creating, "a Finland that will be ageing both socially and economically in a sustainable way and that will be fair for all generations," to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the United Kingdom, where Wellbeing For Life Newcastle is helping a former industrial city find new opportunities and capitalize on its older population, to the Réseau Francophone Ville Amie des Ainés (Francophone Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities), which brings together French-speaking municipalities from across two continents dedicated to exchanging good practices, experiences, and information to promote cities and communities that are friendly to seniors.

Several U.S. communities have joined as well. These include New York City (see "Age-Friendly in Action: Age-Friendly New York City," page 20); Chicago, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Des Moines, Iowa; Portland, Oregon; Bowling Green, Kentucky; Los Altos, California; the Town of Los Altos Hills, California; Roseville, California; Macon-Bibb County, Georgia; Austin, Texas; Wichita, Kansas; Chemung County, New York; and Brookline, Massachusetts.

AGE-FRIENDLY CONNECTIONS TO OTHER DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENTS

In aiming to make communities better for people of all ages, the age-friendly movement echoes the goals of numerous other development models, many of them launched to push back against the isolating, car-dominated suburban landscape of the 1950s and 1960s. These include the New Urbanism, which promotes walkable neighborhoods; Sustainable Communities, focusing on sustainable energy use, housing, transportation, education, health, and job creation; Complete Streets, which seeks to make streets safe and accessible for drivers, walkers, bicyclists, and wheelchair users; and Walkable Communities, designed "around the human foot, truly the only template that can lead to sustainability and future community prosperity."

All these approaches share many elements and produce benefits that generally accrue to most, if not all, members of a community. One thing that distinguishes age-friendly development is its mandate to ensure that the needs of older adults are specifically included and respected.

WHY CREATE AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

In the context of these broader development currents, what's the unique value proposition for this work? How are age-friendly communities better positioned in an aging world? We can count the ways.

First, older adults have a wealth of experience and skills to contribute — a unique source of social capital that communities are wise to tap.

Second, most older adults live largely healthy, active lives. By promoting health, wellness, and engagement, age-friendly communities can support older adults in avoiding ill health, disability, and other limitations often associated with aging. This in turn supports older adults in remaining more independent and engaged, with needs that are less costly for themselves, for their families, and for society. In a fast-aging world with tight public finances, both outcomes are potential game-changers.

As Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of The World Health Organization (WHO), has said, "the societies that adapt to this changing demographic can reap a sizeable 'longevity dividend,' and will have a competitive advantage over those that do not."

Third, there is a powerful yearning to "age in place." Public opinion surveys from AARP and others show that more than eight out of 10 older people would like to stay in their own homes, or at least their own communities, for as long as possible. Frailty and far-flung families make aging in place more difficult; age-friendly development helps communities craft practical solutions to make it more viable.

Finally, many of the changes that work for older people, such as walkable streets, accessible housing, better community health, and more volunteerism, benefit people of all ages. Such work should be regarded as a "multi-win" proposition for communities.

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Successfully tackling any large societal issue requires meaningful involvement from many key stakeholders, representing interests across the lifespan. Building an age-friendly community is no exception. Nonprofit organizations, social service agencies, urban planners, community groups, and older and younger adults themselves must all be represented and heard.

And because they demand innovation, collaboration, and the ability to convene a diverse range of participants, age-friendly community initiatives present a natural leadership opportunity for funders.

"You really don't have to view yourself as an aging funder to get involved," says Anneka Norgren, Executive Director of the Pfizer Foundation. "This work cuts across many different issues, and the diverse public-private partnerships that can result present tremendous value."

Public funders are important as well, and interest is growing in the government sector: a 2012 poll by *Governing* magazine of senior state and local leaders — a key stakeholder group — found that 80 percent were personally supportive of efforts to create livable communities.

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AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

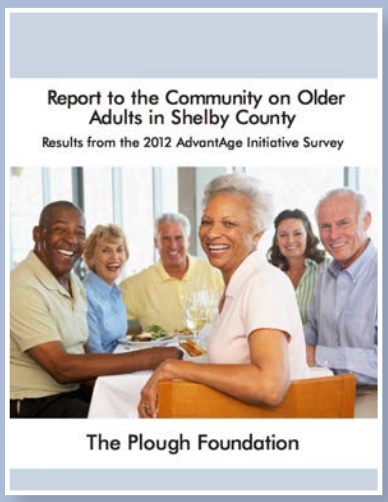
THE ADVANTAGE INITIATIVE

An age-friendly initiative should be tailored to the unique needs of its community, and one way to guarantee a good match is to begin by deliberately investigating those needs. The AdvantAge Initiative survey and process, developed in 1999 by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York's Center for Home Care Policy and Research, is a proven tool for collecting this sort of information.

The core feature of the AdvantAge Initiative is a comprehensive telephone (and more lately, online) survey of local older adults measuring a community's elder-friendliness in four domains and 33 related indicators. Since 2002, the program has been used in more than 50 communities, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Archstone Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, and the John A. Hartford Foundation, as well as a variety of local funders.

"You have to figure out where your community is first," says Mia Oberlink, Senior Research Associate at the VNSNY. "This approach allows people to make decisions that are based on data and to prioritize issues, which can be hard to do."

A nationwide version of the survey was conducted in 2003. It has also been conducted in small towns, city neighborhoods, counties, as well as statewide in Indiana as part of the Communities for a Lifetime initiative. This work helped foster and provided a foundation for new work in three Indiana communities (Bloomington, Huntington and the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood of Indianapolis), which today are also part of Community AGEnda.



"We are lucky to have so many older adults with significant experience in our communities," says Mayor Greg Stanton of Phoenix, Arizona, a Community AGEnda site. "My goal is to help them remain in their homes and continue to bridge the generational gap through learning experiences and more accessible relationships with our youth."

"A lot of leadership is coming from municipalities and mayors these days, rather than just the traditional aging network, and that has made a big difference," says Phil Stafford, PhD, Director of the Center on Aging and Community at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University, and a Community AGEnda leader.

STATE OF THE AGE-FRIENDLY MOVEMENT

So what are we learning about this dynamic and diverse set of cities, towns, and villages that are remaking themselves to better serve older adults and people of all ages? A review of the more than 200 sites identified in our initial research on the movement reveals a number of themes.

NETWORKS ACROSS AMERICA

First, there is incredible dynamism in places around the country. A wide variety of age-friendly initiatives are underway in a majority of American states and the District of Columbia. Some of these sites are participating in one or more of a handful of major networks (see "Age-friendly Community Networks," page 11) that have emerged to provide communities with resources, funding, and technical assistance to guide development. All of these networks are active in multiple locations. New sites seem to be emerging each month.

EARLY DAYS, BUT BUILDING MOMENTUM

In some places, age-friendly initiatives are well-developed and comprehensive. Despite this promising activity, however, most experts agree that the widespread effort to create age-friendly communities is still in its youth. A few programs have been up and running for 20 years or more (for example, see "Age-Friendly in Action: Naturally-Occurring Retirement Communities—Supportive Service Program (NORC-SSP)," page 15) but most comprehensive, integrated age-friendly programs, where they exist at all, are just getting started.

Still, there seems to be a palpable momentum afoot. "I think more people are beginning to understand the connection between where we live and how we live," says Phil Stafford, PhD, Director of the Center on Aging and Community at Indiana University and an advisor to the Community AGEnda grant in Indiana. "I see the movement really picking up steam, in part because of the aging of the Baby Boomers, many of whom are activists, realistic about their own aging, and beginning to look at aging as a community issue, rather than just as a personal challenge."

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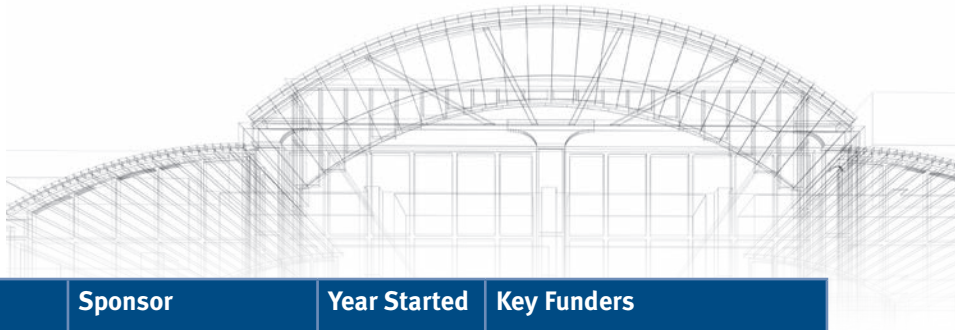

Age-friendly Community Networks

Network	U.S. Locations	Sponsor	Year Started	Key Funders
AARP Livable Communities	Multiple communities across U.S.	AARP		AARP, and a variety of local funders
The AdvantAge Initiative	Multiple communities across U.S.	Visiting Nurse Service of New York's Center for Home Care Policy and Research	1999	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Archstone Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and a variety of local funders
Community AGEnda	Arizona, Indiana, Georgia, Miami-Dade, Kansas City	Grantmakers In Aging	2012	Pfizer Foundation, plus local matching grants
Communities for All Ages (CFAA)	23 communities in 8 states	The Intergenerational Center at Temple University in Philadelphia	2002	Arizona Community Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation, local and state funding
Community Innovations for Aging in Place (CIAIP)	14 communities in 13 states	U.S. Administration on Aging	2009	Federal Funding (the Older Americans Act of 2006)
NORC/JFNA's National Aging in Place Initiative	45 communities in 26 states	Jewish Federations of North America	2001	The Jewish Federations of North America, local foundations, local funding
Partners for Livable Communities: Aging in Place Initiative	12 communities in 10 states (Jumpstart Grants) 5 cities or counties (City Leaders Institute)	Partners for Livable Communities	1989	MetLife Foundation, AARP, local funders
Robert Wood Johnson Community Partnerships for Older Adults	14 communities across U.S.	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	2002	RWJ, local foundations, cities, states
Village to Village Network	Active in nearly every state in the U.S.	NCB Capital Impact, Beacon Hill Village	2001	Local funders and philanthropies, membership fees
WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities	New York City; Chicago; Philadelphia; Des Moines; Portland, OR; Bowling Green, KY; Los Altos, CA; Roseville, CA; Brookline, MA; Roseville, CA; Macon-Bibb County, GA; Washington, DC; Austin, TX; Wichita, KS; Chemung County, NY	World Health Organization	2006	Numerous local foundations, plus state and local government support
AARP/WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities	Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York State, Texas, Oregon and D.C.	AARP	2012	Numerous local foundations, plus state and local government support

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

AARP has used its national reach, including many of its state offices, to create a network working to build Livable Communities: Great Places for All Ages. "One of our big concerns is that people want to stay in their homes as they age but communities just aren't prepared for them to do that," says Amy Silverstein Levner, Manager of Home and Family at AARP. "AARP wants to serve as a hub for information resources and as a convener, to reach all the folks who are influencers and can make change happen in their local communities, whether they are AARP members, citizen activists, or public officials."

Priorities for the AARP Livable Communities initiative include supporting legislative, planning, and community-based work on transportation, Complete Streets initiatives that allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel streets safely and comfortably, adequate sidewalks and benches to encourage walking, and universal design to support aging in place through modifications such as first floor living and step-free showers.

In 2012, AARP also became a U.S. affiliate of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (see "Age-Friendly in Action: WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities," page 6) and began supporting communities in seven states (Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and Oregon) and the District of Columbia in their efforts to join the WHO network and become more age-friendly. While communities can join the WHO network on their own, and New York City and Portland, Oregon did so before the AARP program formally launched, joining through AARP offers additional support, resources, contacts, and organization. In 2013, AARP anticipates their participation with the WHO will rise to at least 20 communities in 15 states.

A NEED FOR GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

For those already on their way, one key question is sustainability, in particular whether a given community has the capacity to advance age-friendly development on an ongoing basis, says Carol Kratz, Program Director at Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust in Phoenix, Arizona. "As a funder, we can feel an idea is great, but sustaining it over time requires someone on the ground who has the connections with key players in the community. Connection with local government can be particularly important because aging in place raises a host of issues, from transportation to housing to neighborhood services, which just aren't things a social service agency can do by itself."

Other experts agree that more government support would both boost sustainability and help promote a focus on social justice. Writing in the

journal *Ageing International* (2012 37:25-38), Andrew Scharlach, PhD, of the School of Social Welfare at the University of California Berkeley and an authority on The Village model (see "Age-Friendly in Action: The Village Movement," page 16), questions "the sustainability of current efforts, their availability to less-resourced individuals and communities, and the long-term ability of communities to make the infrastructure changes required to meet the needs of an aging society without an increased government role."

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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GREATER CONNECTION

Coordination and collective learning are helpful but are still not the norm. Local community leaders running age-friendly initiatives are often focused on achieving success at home but may not yet be considering or benefitting from the experience of their peers in their state, their region, the rest of the country, or the rest of the world.

To promote connection and improve access to resources, Community AGEnda has developed a searchable database that tracks the many age-friendly initiatives underway across the United States, as well as a curated compilation of tools, resources, and contacts to assist and advance age-friendly projects.

AGE-FRIENDLY IMPLEMENTATION: AS DIVERSE AS AMERICA

One thing that is striking when reviewing the work in the field is its rich diversity. While there are certain commonalities (see below, "Some Common Elements"), when it comes to implementation, programs vary greatly. Some of the larger, nationally based efforts are oriented toward broad community transformation, but most sites are focused on an array of more discrete objectives, such as:

- Linking health and social services (which can be quite disjointed) to serve older adults better;
- Revitalizing aging network services that no longer meet the needs of today's older adults, or that have been affected by federal and state budget cuts;
- Improving one aspect of a community, such as transportation, recreation, arts, or healthcare;
- Meeting the needs of a single racial or ethnic population of elders;
- Taking a place-based approach by focusing efforts in a discrete neighborhood with a large population of older people;
- Enhancing a single housing or public site to demonstrate what age-friendly "looks like," perhaps as a springboard to a more comprehensive effort.

"This work is very dependent on the particular needs and issues of the community and its government structures, says Ruth Finkelstein of Age-Friendly New York and the New York Academy of Medicine. "Particular issues arise from differences in population, in challenges from the social and built environments, in the needs and desires of various stakeholders. There's real specificity, even from neighborhood to neighborhood. As a result, I think there are concepts and general principles that can be exported, but processes and strategies for how to be successful need to be quite individualized."

SOME COMMON ELEMENTS

For all their differences, however, the country's more substantial and comprehensive age-friendly efforts have some common elements. For example:

- Most have followed similar steps in launching their programs, typically starting with an assessment of the needs and aspirations of older adults in their community. Teams have conducted telephone surveys, focus groups, interviews, and/or hosted summits, and even, in some cases, proprietary market research.
- Most sites have followed their research with a strong visioning and planning effort, in which various community partners have come together to establish clear priorities and boundaries for the project and agree on what success will look like. From there, as noted above, the work diverges quite broadly, focusing on a whole range of topics or issues of particular interest to the community or city.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

NATURALLY-OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM (NORC-SSP)

In 1985, a large group of residents of a New York City co-operative apartment building called Penn South were getting older, and many were struggling, often turning up at the local hospital with preventable health emergencies. The NORC Program model —Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities — was born in response, with funding from the UJA Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

"What we saw in New York was an early warning sign for the rest of country," says Fredda Vladeck, Director of the Aging in Place Initiative of the United Hospital Fund and the founding director of the NORC at Penn South. "NORCs are one way to approach the larger issue we all need to be asking, namely, how do we retrofit communities to support the population we find in them?"

NORCs work onsite with clusters of older residents who wish to remain in their homes as they age, providing a combination of social work, health services, community-building, and volunteer and recreational activities. These can include adult day care, transportation, meals, financial and legal advice, mental health counseling, trips, and get-togethers.

Starting in 1995, New York State passed the first legislation to fund NORC programs; New York City followed suit a few years later. Today there are 52 publicly funded NORC programs in the state. Nationally, the Jewish Federations of North America expanded its effort, launching an Aging in Place Initiative and securing federal earmarks to support 45 communities in 26 states between 2002 and 2008.

A key benefit, residents and experts agree, is the emphasis the NORC model places on helping people stay connected. As 96-year-old Ida Seltzer, a resident in a St. Louis NORC, put it in a 2009 US News story, "Sometimes I get depressed and feel like giving up," she says, "but the NORC ... makes me feel more like a person and keeps me in touch with other people."

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

THE VILLAGE MOVEMENT

The Village to Village Network (VtVN) is the largest and fastest-growing of all the age-friendly development networks. The network itself is national (and international, with members in Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands) but each Village is a separate non-profit focusing on the needs and preferences of its local members, so that, as Judy Willett, National Director of the Village to Village Network jokes, "if you've seen one Village, you've seen one Village."

Villages are membership-based, created and governed by older adults, and offer their members a network of services that support "aging in community," such as transportation and home repairs delivered by both paid providers and volunteers; social, cultural, and educational programs; health and wellness activities; and member-to-member volunteer support. In fact, remaining active and engaged by volunteering is a popular aspect of membership and 51 percent of members volunteer within their Village. Villages also offer vetted and discounted service providers for anything and everything its members want and need. While most Villages require individual members to pay a fee to join (anywhere from $50 to $950 per year, but generally around $500), about two-thirds of Villages offer discounts or subsidies to low-income seniors.

"The main driver of the success of the Village model is its people power," says Andrew Scharlach, PhD, of the School of Social Welfare at the University of California Berkeley and a scholar of the Village model. "It taps into the desire of individuals to make a difference and to create something that can help themselves and people similar to them."

Almost all Villages belong to the Village to Village Network (although they are not required to), which launched in 2012 as the "go-to" hub for the Village movement. VtVN offers technical assistance and a wide array of member benefits including webinars, peer discussion forums, document sharing, and the Village BetterBuys program, which offers discounts on national background checks, insurance, educational opportunities, and more.

Notable Villages around the country include the Capitol Hill Village in Washington. DC, which, as a "volunteer-first" Village, fulfills 80 percent of member requests for help with a volunteer, and offers financial assistance to low-income members. In Newton, Massachusetts, Newton at Home is helping reduce hospital readmissions with a program that assists very frail older people returning home from the hospital. A group of Villages in California began receiving support in 2011 from the Archstone Foundation's *Creating Aging Friendly Communities through the Expansion of Villages* initiative, which seeks to document the variety of Village models being developed, including a Village in San Francisco developing "neighborhood circles" to promote care coordination, a Santa Barbara Village partnering with the local public housing authority, and a Village in Avenidas/Palo Alto working on patient preparedness to help improve medication adherence and lower health care costs, says Candace Baldwin, Director of Strategy for Aging and Community at NCB Capital Impact, partner in the VtV Network.

- National or local foundation funding has been at the heart of most age-friendly programs. That said, several are sustained by state or local government funding sources. Some use a combination of private and public funding streams, which may ultimately be an important sustainability strategy. The federal government has funded only two major age-friendly development projects. The Community Innovations for Aging in Place Initiative (CIAIP) was administered by the Administration on Aging from 2006 to 2012. Many of these projects continue their work today with other funding streams. The NORC program, run by the Jewish Federation of North America, received federal earmarks to build its network of 40+ sites between 2002 and 2008 (see "Age-Friendly in Action: Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities," page 15).
- Most of the current programs focus predominantly on the needs of older adults while identifying benefits for other generations. In contrast, fewer (and particularly those in the Communities for All Ages network) pursue projects that deliberately benefit both young and old (see "Age-Friendly in Action: Communities for All Ages," page 19). Sites in the Village to Village network also develop community associations that create multi-generational social capital and involve teen and younger adult volunteers to provide services for older adults.

Most age-friendly efforts, in launching their programs, typically started with an assessment of the needs and aspirations of older adults in their community.

LOOKING AHEAD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

With age-friendly projects developing across the country, what should private and public funders interested in this work pay attention to? What is crucial to creating an even stronger, more robust movement? As the field matures, several issues merit consideration.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the world of public-facing programs, a name often provides both an initial introduction and an ongoing point of reference. In this decentralized field, however, names of unrelated programs are sometimes confusingly repetitive (e.g., Lifelong Communities or Livable Communities, or the multiple but unconnected Aging in Place Initiatives). This can sometimes impede a clear sense of how various sites are related (or are not) and how the key networks overlap (or don't).

Nomenclature issues are compounded by the fact that several programs have, over time, collaborated with numerous different funders and identified with a variety of umbrella organizations. This creative, flexible, even opportunistic approach to sustainability should be applauded but can make it more difficult for observers to distinguish and keep track of individual projects.

For those older adults relying on very limited incomes, even small unintended shifts in their environments can have disproportionate impact.

ATTENDING TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Maintaining an awareness of social justice is also a concern. Age-friendly development need not necessarily mean dislocation, gentrification, or ignoring the needs of the less fortunate, but it may generate benefits that accrue largely to those in higher socio-economic brackets. For those older adults relying on very limited incomes, even small unintended shifts in their environments can have disproportionate impact. When implementing programs that ask older adults to pay for benefits or memberships, or when designing housing or infrastructure changes, all planners, funders, and governments should try to be mindful of an equitable distribution of benefits and avoid pricing out or passing over the people who may need the most help.

RATING AGE-FRIENDLY AMERICA

Measuring relative levels of age-friendliness can be difficult because of limited and varying metrics, but a recent ranking from the Milken Institute Best Cities for Successful Aging makes a notable attempt. It measures and ranks the performance of 359 U.S. metropolitan areas in promoting and enabling successful aging, examining 78 factors that most affect seniors' quality of life including health care, crime rates, weather, economic and job conditions, housing, transportation, and social engagement. The Index includes two sets of overall rankings: one for the 100 most populous metropolitan areas and another for the next 259 medium and smaller cities.

Another approach is to rate progress against a set of objectives, but in a given place over time, rather than in comparison to other places. The World Health Organization (WHO) is pilot testing a set of such indicators now. The Advantage Initiative also helps communities identify and track their progress against a set of 33 indicators of elder-friendliness. And a recent report from the Stanford Center on Longevity and the MetLife Mature Market Institute, *Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place*, sets out measures that can be assessed using information readily available to funders and local governments.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION: COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

Not all age-friendly programs approach their work from an aging-specific vantage point. Instead, Communities for All Ages (CFAA) emphasizes the universal benefits of work that is "intentionally intergenerational – friendly for all ages," in the words of Nancy Henkin, PhD, Executive Director of CFAA's sponsor, The Intergenerational Center at Temple University in Philadelphia.

CFAA seeks to help communities address critical issues from a multi-generational perspective and promote the well-being of all age groups, "strengthening communities for today's elders and tomorrow's." Funded by national, community, and family foundations, Communities for All Ages (CFAA) focuses on fostering cross-sector alliances, building leadership and connection among residents of all ages, and developing policies and practices that address issues from a life span perspective. By building upon the strengths of all generations and helping diverse organizations move beyond their silos, the 20 CFAA sites across the country have demonstrated positive outcomes related to health, safety, and education as well as increased trust across ages, races, and cultures. The city of Phoenix, Arizona, one of Community AGEnda's five original sites, initially piloted CFAA in 2003 with support from the Arizona Community Foundation, which now supports a CFAA statewide network.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

AGE-FRIENDLY NEW YORK CITY

Several U.S. communities have joined the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities since it was established in 2006 (see "Age-Friendly in Action: WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities," page 6) but arguably the most prominent is New York City. Age-Friendly NYC: Enhancing Our City's Livability for Older New Yorkers fulfills a promise made by Mayor Michael Bloomberg in his 2008 State of the City address and is based on 59 initiatives to promote active aging in four areas: community and civic participation; housing; public spaces and transportation; and health and social services.

Age-Friendly NYC is a public-private partnership between The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), the Mayor's Office, and the New York City Council. Signature work has been done in the Aging Improvement Districts, designed and staffed by NYAM. Aging Improvement Districts were started by City Council members in East Harlem and the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and by the Coalition to Improve Bedford Stuyvesant (CIBS) in Brooklyn. Initiatives include increasing seating for older adults inside and outside, especially in locations where people wait in line; improving access to laundry in public housing; reserving special hours for older adults at the Thomas Jefferson Park swimming pool (so successful that it was expanded to 14 different pools in the following year); enhancing safety and access to the intersection of 125th St. and Lexington Avenue; and helping neighborhood museums, restaurants and libraries improve access and programming for older adult residents.

Based on feedback from residents, New York is also focusing on creating opportunities for older adults to stay connected. "We found social participation to be the single most important dimension for older New Yorkers," says Ruth Finkelstein, ScD, Senior Vice President for Policy and Planning at The New York Academy of Medicine and director of Age-Friendly New York City. "Being able to live in a neighborhood where you know people, where people know you, and where places outside of your home include you is the key characteristic of an age-friendly city—everything else flows from that."

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Both sustainability and efficacy can be bolstered by broadening the range of partners involved in an age-friendly initiative. By finding common ground with advocates in the disability, transportation, and health promotion fields, age-friendly development projects have been able to diversify funding, improve political impact, and avoid duplication of effort. For example, federal law requires communities to file implementation plans to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In Indiana, advocates have found that resulting transit, housing, and accessibility plans can dovetail significantly with age-friendly infrastructure goals.

THINKING GLOBALLY

Finally, growing interest in the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities points to the potential of adding an international point of reference, and the number of U.S. cities joining the WHO network is expanding quickly (see "Age-Friendly in Action: WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities," page 6). "There is considerable value in having a connection to a global network," says Chris Gray, Senior Director for Global Institutions, Corporate Responsibility at Pfizer. "Some U.S. cities may have more in common with Frankfurt than they do with Boston, so having a broader network of best practices and these examples can help city governments and others determine milestones and measure progress."

Based on feedback from residents, New York is also focusing on creating opportunities for older adults to stay connected.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT: A CALL TO ACTION

There is exciting work happening all across America to create more places that are age-friendly. Still, there is much to be done, and we all have a role to play.

NATIONAL FUNDERS

Major philanthropies have been an important engine for innovation in this field, launching a variety of networks and supporting hopeful initiatives in sites around the country. Looking ahead, these large grantmakers could take on a variety of critically needed efforts including:

- Identifying federal, state, and local policies that are instrumental to sustaining age-friendly initiatives;
- Conducting and promoting research on what is working, and why;
- Building consensus on terminology and critical outcomes;
- Forging further connections with local funders;
- Infusing a concern for low-income, marginalized and ethnically diverse older people in existing and new age-friendly communities.

Local grantmakers can play a key role in educating their communities about the need for an age-friendly lens to improve infrastructure and services.

LOCAL FUNDERS

Local grantmakers have also been instrumental in many efforts to date. Looking ahead, they can play a key role in educating their communities about the need for an age-friendly lens to improve infrastructure and services. They can build local interest in this work among elected officials and serve as a neutral convener to bring together stakeholders, not only in the aging services network, but throughout government and the community.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

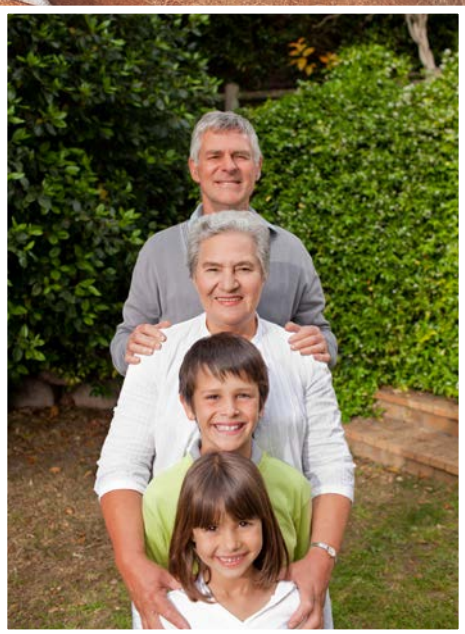
PARTNERS FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVE

"If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to help an older person age in place," says Bob McNulty, President and CEO of Partners for Livable Communities. In fact, McNulty believes that communities' efforts to make their communities "ageless" are a litmus test of their overall commitment to livability for all.

Over the past decade, Partners' Aging in Place Initiative has helped communities retrofit their services, infrastructure, and attitudes to help older adults age in their homes and neighborhoods. Their methods include demonstration programs, forums, surveys, and publications. Partners has also pursued its goals through collaborations with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), the International City and County Management Association (ICMA), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) and with major funding support from MetLife Foundation, AARP, and a number of local communities.

Beginning in 2012, through its MetLife City Leaders Institute, Partners began helping teams of local leaders identify and tackle a single issue that is, by design, narrow enough to allow progress within eighteen months, building a sense of confidence and success. Participating cities have included Phoenix, Miami, and Kansas City, all of which are also Community AGEnda sites.

Partners also offers fee-based technical assistance to communities that want to accelerate their progress toward livability using strategic planning and dialogue. "We believe that the key to these conversations is seeing older adults as assets to a community – to its labor force, its civic and cultural life, its entrepreneurial and political life," says McNulty. "From there, we help community foundations, aging services organizations, and others build bridges in their communities, so that tapping the resource that older people represent can be a win-win for everyone."



Private developers can respond to market needs related to older consumers and serve as critical partners in age-friendly communities.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ELECTED OFFICIALS; CITY, REGIONAL, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNERS

This is a diverse group with a variety of potential contributions. Mayors, county executives, councilpersons, aldermen, community board members, and other elected officials are critical to educating communities about age-friendly issues. They can lead and direct their governments toward new ways of investing local resources in improved, age-friendly communities.

Planners (the local government officials responsible for helping communities think about growth and revitalization) are in the business of creating a positive and productive vision of their community's future and can engage a variety of local stakeholders. They can set out the community plans, zoning, transportation, and other regulations that will ensure that, when new infrastructure projects are considered, the needs of older people are included as well.

AGING SERVICES NETWORK

With the direct responsibility for providing services to older people, the 29,000 groups around the country that make up the aging network are on the front lines of social service delivery. Their role ahead is to

think broadly, to engage partners throughout the community, and to ensure that their expertise informs new service and infrastructure investments so they benefit older people and people of all ages.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE/PRIVATE DEVELOPERS

These non- and for-profit groups are central players in the creation of new housing, public spaces, and commercial real estate, as well as the retro-fitting of existing spaces and structures. These groups can respond to market needs related to older consumers and serve as critical partners in age-friendly communities. In particular, they can ensure that all aspects of the built environment conform to universal design principles and create maximum accessibility for citizens of all ages and all functional abilities.

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

State and federal governments have had modest roles in the age-friendly movement to date, though notable exceptions do exist. For instance, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority is expending $1.06 million in three designated Lifetime Communities and reaching out to other state units with funding as well. In the future, government entities should consider creating greater flexibility in funding streams and service regulations to enable creative and cost-effective resource use. These innovations can provide important pathways toward sustaining local efforts and transforming infrastructure and services to meet the needs of an older 21st century population.

AGE-FRIENDLY IN ACTION

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR OLDER ADULTS

To be effective in supporting their older adults, communities must actively listen to a wide range of voices. This emphasis on diversifying and developing local leadership to craft uniquely local solutions was the central focus of Community Partnerships for Older Adults (CPFOA).

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation invested $28 million in planning grants to communities across the country, followed by implementation grants to 16 communities. CPFOA placed a high priority on improving options for vulnerable older adults who need assistance over the long term. The communities involved were Ann Arbor, Michigan; Boston, Massachusetts; Broome County, New York; Culpepper, Virginia; El Paso, Texas; Houston, Texas; San Francisco, California; Fremont, California; Jacksonville, Florida; La Grange, Illinois; Manchester, New Hampshire; Maui, Hawaii; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Port Angeles, Washington; Waynesville, North Carolina; and Atlanta, Georgia, where the work begun with CPFOA continues today with support from Community AGEnda. The last CPFOA grants were completed in 2010.

“The intent of the program was not simply to expand existing services for older adults,” says Professor Elise Bolda of the University of Southern Maine, formerly the National Program Director for CPFOA. “It was about seeking creative ways to break down silos, bring everyone to the table, and build on the assets already present within the community to identify and meet those needs in new and creative ways.”

In upstate New York, the CPFOA Broome County Partnership did just that with its initiative, Men Making Meals. With a number of depressed, recently widowed men in the community, the traditional response might have been to deliver meals to them, or begin visits from home health aides. Instead, this highly popular eight week cooking class both equipped the men to provide for themselves and, as importantly, created an opportunity to serve others, get involved in the community, and enjoy one another’s company.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The energy and leadership of community residents are animating forces behind many successful age-friendly initiatives. Local groups of concerned citizens coming together to address communal concerns are part of a rich, uniquely American tradition. At the same time, it will always be incumbent on the elected, civic, and business leaders noted above to engage community residents in age-friendly initiatives, respond to them, and, when needed, ensure their voices are heard. In fact, some age-friendly approaches like the Village model will provide important future opportunities for community members to continue to take the lead in driving meaningful change.

At Grantmakers In Aging and Community AGEnda, we look forward to doing what we can to support the large and growing number of efforts to transform communities and improve the experience of aging all across the lifespan.

Local groups of concerned citizens coming together to address communal concerns are part of a rich, uniquely American tradition.

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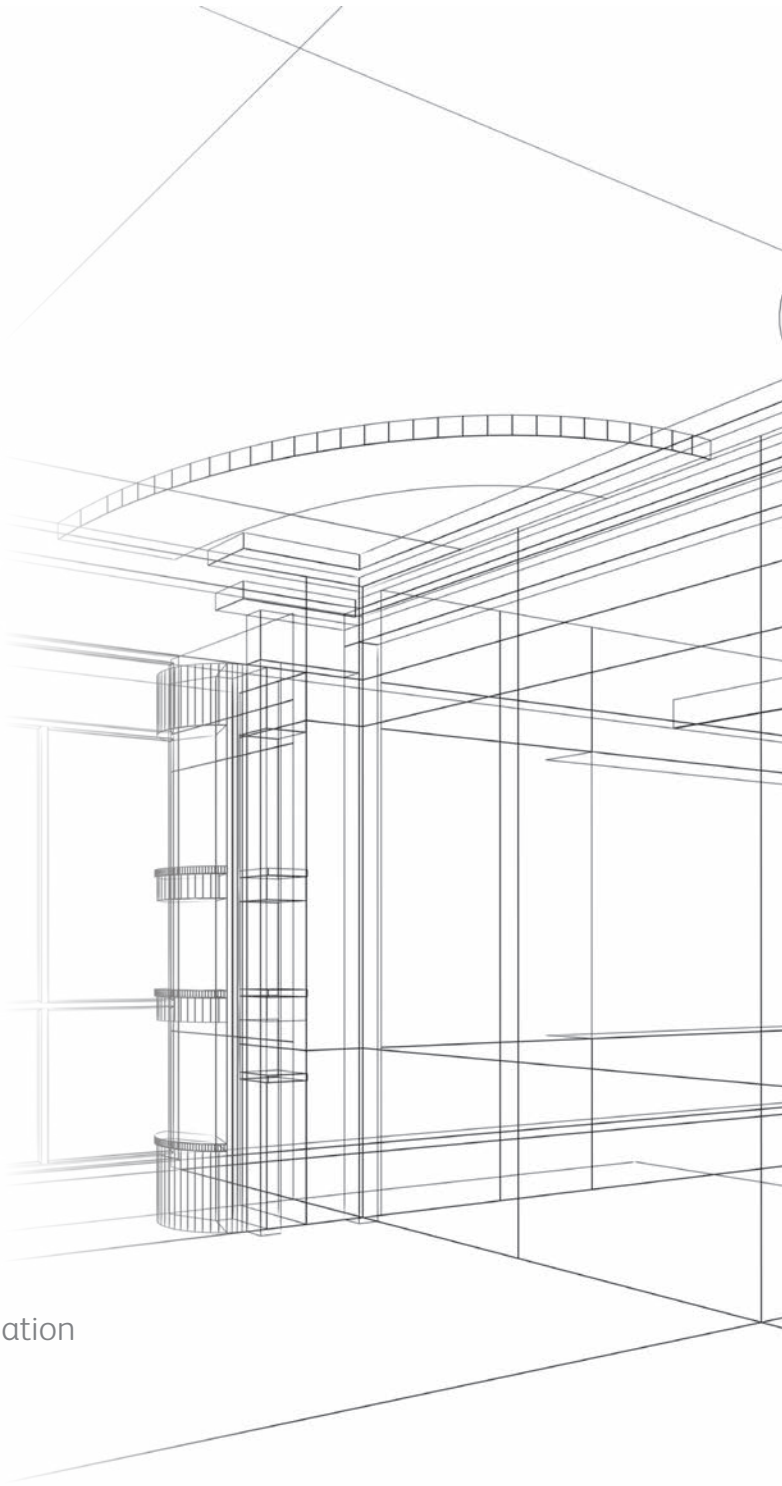

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