

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL TO ADDRESS AGING IN MASSACHUSETTS

[EXECUTIVE ORDER 576](#)

It's been five years since the establishment of the [Governor's Council to Address Aging](#). The Council has been a catalyst in moving Massachusetts forward as an age-friendly state and creating a vision for what it means to grow older in the community of one's choice. The work is built on a strong foundation of innovative programs, policies, and services in collaboration with partners and stakeholders from the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors. While much progress has been made, the work to become an age-friendly state endures.

April 12, 2017: Governor Baker signed [Executive Order 576](#) launching the Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts

2017 - Year 1

Created [Blueprint](#) Outlining Vision, Priorities, and Goals

- Conducted listening sessions across the Commonwealth
- Convened expert panels on topics pertinent to aging
- Gathered input, stories, and data from thought leaders and advocates

2018 - Year 2

Released [28 Recommendations](#) and Made a Commitment to Become an Age-Friendly State

- Facilitated workgroups on priority issues, including housing, transportation, caregiving, employment, and innovation and technology
- Joined AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

2019 - 2022 - Years 3-5

Implemented Recommendations and Reported on Progress

- Convened biannually to report on progress, showcase promising practices, and discuss issues or concerns
- Incorporated insights and learnings into [Massachusetts Age-Friendly](#) work

VISION

[Executive Order 576](#): "The Council shall be responsible for advising the Governor on the development of governmental policies, community resources, best practices, and informal supports that will promote healthy aging in the Commonwealth. The Council will formulate a plan to achieve the goal of making Massachusetts the most age-friendly state for people of all ages."

GOALS

The Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts published 28 recommendations that advance four goals, with the overarching principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and innovation and technology as priorities throughout.

1. Improve Economic Security
2. Ensure Access and Affordability of Services
3. Promote Age-Friendly Communities
4. Facilitate Connection and Engagement

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS

- Creating a space for conversations and discussions that involves a variety of sectors, organizations, and interests is critical to success.
- A clear vision drove alignment across a variety of different actors and diverse sectors leading to shared goals of improving what it means to age in Massachusetts.
- Small steps or brief conversations catalyzed a larger movement. As such, discussing perceptions and stereotypes regarding aging and reframing the conversation will have lasting impact.

#1

MA was the first state to be designated as an age-friendly employer

2nd

MA was the 2nd state to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States

200+

Communities in MA are engaged in age- & dementia-friendly work



THE IMPACT

The Governor's Council to Address Aging has impacted older adults, communities, organizations, policies, and systems in a variety of ways. Some impacts are felt in the short-term, while others have contributed to the infrastructure needed for longer-term change.

1

PEOPLE HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO PLAN FOR AND LIVE A 100-YEAR LIFE

- Access to health care, behavioral health, and supportive services has increased with the expansion of programs including the [Medicare Savings Program](#), [Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams \(EMHOTs\)](#), and [Supportive Housing](#).
- People are staying in the workforce longer due to increased opportunities to network, upskill, and work for age-friendly employers.
- Individuals are more likely to identify as caregivers and receive supports with public awareness efforts, support from employers, expansion of services, and new programs including the [Caring for the Caregiver](#) webinar series.

2

COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS HAVE THE TOOLS TO MAKE THE PLACES WE LIVE, WORK, LEARN, AND PLAY MORE AGE- AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY

- Over 200 communities are engaged in age- and dementia-friendly work, including 135 communities designated as [Age-Friendly](#) and 83 signed a [Dementia Friendly Pledge](#). Communities have implemented changes to local policies, programs, services, and the built environment to help older people thrive.
- More employers value older workers and employees who are caregivers, including over 100 employers engaged in programs such as the [AARP Employer Pledge](#), [Certified Age-Friendly Employer \(CAFE\)](#), and [Massachusetts Caregiver Coalition](#).
- Communities are taking steps to address equity and aging, with tools such as the [Healthy Aging for All Guide](#), [LGBT Aging in Massachusetts Online Training](#), and the creation of the [Equity in Aging Committee](#) of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative.

3

AGING IS EMBEDDED ACROSS POLICIES, AND CULTURE HAS SHIFTED TO VIEW AGING AS AN ASSET

- State policies, programs, and funding have embraced age- and dementia-friendly values including [age-friendly design standards for senior housing](#), age- and dementia-friendly criteria in grant programs, and the creation of [Senior Days](#) at the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
- Massachusetts is known as an innovation hub for aging with support from partners, such as [AGENCY](#), [Babson College FutureLab](#), [GE](#), [MassChallenge HealthTech](#), and [MIT AgeLab](#).
- Aging is increasingly viewed as an asset. Point32Health Foundation's investment in [Reframing Aging](#) training across sectors has created shared language and values with regard to what it means to grow older.

While much has been accomplished over the last few years, this work never ends. The Council's 28 recommendations are embedded in the [Age-Friendly Massachusetts Action Plan](#) and will continue to influence the [statewide age- and dementia-friendly movement](#). **For a full look back at the work of the Governor's Council to Address Aging, scan the QR code to the right.**

