Determining Goals

After completing the needs assessment process, the steering committee will know what older residents perceive as the strengths of the community for aging in place. Knowing the key age friendly features of your community is the first step to writing goals for your age friendly initiative.

The needs assessment will also give you some ideas for aspects of the community that can be changed to make life a little easier for older residents.

1. Make a list of the things that older residents need and want to age safely in your community and remain actively engaged. For example, did older residents say they needed more information about local activities and resources? Is there a need for more housing options? Are people concerned about transportation or doing simple home maintenance chores? If your age-friendly initiative is focused on one issue, such as transportation, the gaps you identified may be more specific. For example, is there a need for transportation to the senior center? Did people need access to shopping in a nearby town? Was the most frequently mentioned need for transportation to medical appointments? The information you gained from the needs assessment will inform the goals you set for your age-friendly initiative—no matter how broad or specific the initiative.

2. Before you set goals, take a few minutes to think about the preferences people have about how changes are made in the community. For example, do people want a standard route bus service or would they rather get a ride from a neighbor? If food security is an issue, was there a preference for congregate meals or did people want home delivered meals? Were people in a small, rural community comfortable using the local food pantry or did they prefer the relative anonymity of using a food pantry in a larger town nearby?

3. In addition to considering the preferences of older adults, it is important to think about community capacity and values. Is the community a place where there is a lot of neighbor-helping-neighbor? Is "Yankee independence" a strong value? Is frugality considered a virtue?

4. Within each broad category of need, try to identify an opportunity for a low-cost or no-cost solution that will be easy to implement, that reflects older adult

preferences and community values. Not every category will have an opportunity for quick success but most will have a way that you can start to address a challenge. Use these as short term goals for your age-friendly initiative. The best short term goals are ones that will make an immediate difference in the lives of older adults living in your community. Short term goals give you the opportunity to make a big impact and to gather more support in the community for your initiative. Examples of short-term goals may include things like start to distribute an activity and resource calendar, preparing a guide to local transportation options, or partnering with your Area Agency on Aging to offer evidence-based fall prevention programs.

5. Even short-term goals require actions steps—objectives to guide your way to success. After you have agreed to a goal, work on a series of manageable action steps that will direct your path to the goal.

6. Identify some medium-term objectives for your age-friendly (things to complete in 2-3 years). These may be activities that will require collaborations or partnership with other community based organizations or need additional funding to pursue. Examples of medium-term goals may include things like adding an accessible entrance to the senior center or starting a door-to-door volunteer driver program.

7. Identify some long term goals for your age-friendly initiative (3 years+). Long term goals may require time for planning and funding. Examples of long term goals may include adding benches along a favorite local walking path or building a community center.

8. Your goals, as well as the outcomes from your goals, need to be shared with: key decision makers, possible funders, participants in your age-friendly initiative, and with the general community.

This tool may help you to set short-term, medium, and long-term goals and to set objectives to meet those goals.

Area of Need Identified in Community Needs Assessment: _____

	Steps to Reach Goal (Objectives)	Who needs to be involved? (Community Partners)	Committee member responsible
Short-Term Goal: Target Date: _____			
Medium-Term Goal: Target Date: _____			
Long-Term Goal: Target Date: _____			