

Themes –

At its recent Advisory Council meeting (2/14/18), MHAC asked attendees to address and discuss three questions to aid in the state’s planning process as part of the Massachusetts Age-Friendly State designation.

- How can the statewide planning process be additive and complimentary to all the existing work going on across Massachusetts?
- How should the state engage consumers in an ongoing way in this process? How can the Advisory Council play a role?
- What questions do Advisory Council members think the state needs to answer during the planning process?

From these questions and ensuing discussion, the following themes emerged:

1) Inventory of Age-Friendly Activity: To bring together organizations and initiatives, and break down “silos” of work, there needs to be a way the state can list and track Age-Friendly Activity.

- MHAC’s website was identified as a possible source for this work on a statewide level, but emerging regional “Learning Communities” we identified as a way to track regional and local work.
- This would help statewide and local initiatives connect, but also serve as a resource for consumers.
- This would help identify stakeholders that need to be involved or provide input to the process.
- Inventory should be categorized by Age-Friendly Domain, or broader categories (Built Environment, Social Environment, Community and Health Services).
- This would help identify “what’s working” and programs that can be scaled and replicated.
- Find out what’s underfunded
- Find out programs that can be revamped, refreshed or phased out.

2) How this designation is communicated and marketed will be vital to success.

- MHAC and state need to have a common plan with common messages and terms to articulate the value to older adults (and people of all ages), communities (cities, towns and regions) and sectors.
- This plan will be important for sharing short and long term visions and what success looks like.
- Creating toolkits for consumer engagement, and for organizations to engage their constituents/members.
- MHAC/State needs to ask – what does Age-Friendly mean to you?
- MHAC/State needs a mechanism to provide regular updates throughout the process.
- Share best practices
- Learn from national and global community, and share our success and lessons

3) Empowering stakeholder groups to share ownership of being an Age-Friendly State

- Initiative needs to focus on access, equity and inclusivity – allowing groups to engage their consumers and constituents with a shared template/toolkit to conduct listening sessions and provide feedback into a shared system.
- Finding new groups to engage – schools and intergenerational activity as an example.

- Strengthen regional collaboratives

Raw Notes – from sticky-note exercise

How can the statewide planning process be additive and complimentary to all the existing work going on across Massachusetts?

- Create a listserv to connect organizations and stakeholders
- Need an inventory of all existing work
- Lead with racial equity – as stated by MAPC – This critical issue requires an intentional focus, as well as an internal organizational process to “make it real.”
- State should broadly distribute regular updates throughout the planning process to educate and engage more people/organizations
- Filter inventory of activities through 8 domains, 3 themes – on state and regional levels.
- Categorize themes/areas to simplify structure
- Need a simple way to track all of the ongoing initiatives that is not so piecemeal.
- Who are the key stakeholders in the statewide planning process?
- Focus resources on publicizing/scaling existing initiatives that are strong and have potential for expansion.
- Sector/function-based learning committee
- Funding important efforts that are underfunded
- Need key contacts of where work is being done – those individuals can act as liaisons.
- How to ensure inclusivity – that all voices are heard. Consider different languages.

How should the state engage consumers in an ongoing way in this process? How can the Advisory Council play a role?

- The MHAC Advisory Council needs to keep growing – create regional councils.
- Postcards distributed to schools to help families have conversations about needs of older family members – postage included so they can be mailed in, or with web link address (or connect at school).
- Communities of practice for Advisory Council members
- Training for Advisory Council members on outreach
- Education campaign on why aging matters – Answer the question “Why does this matter to me” for different audiences.
- Logic model or Theory of Action for consumer outreach and engagement
- Create toolkits from MHAC/State on how to engage consumers that Advisory Council members could use to hold listening sessions.
- MHAC as a vehicle to disseminate map from state
- Advisory Council bigger than MHAC
- Identify champions to listen to needs of elders
- Look at the Silver Legislature and how they can get a role/be champions
- Engage school students – writing/poster contests
- Tap into where consumers are – faith communities, COAs, community action agencies, etc

- Offer resources for communities (not just symbolic). \$ for programs.
- Encourage collaborative work
- Identify champions
- Tap into or create communities of practice – or align
- Have students in schools interview family member or neighbor – What does he/she see as an elder? What does he/she need?
- Create ***ONE*** communications plan
- What does “Age-Friendly” mean to consumers?
- Ensure Advisory Council members share the same message and not have their own message.
- Work with COAs – encourage COAs to do more intergenerational activity.
- Create go-to place or campaign to publicize MA as an Age-Friendly State – Value Statement
- Identify common challenges that could benefit from leadership and insights from thought leaders – EXAMPLE: host a webinar series on how individual participating AF/DF initiatives can assess/improve their equity and inclusion.

What questions do Advisory Council members think the state needs to answer during the planning process?

- How can what we do be part of the bigger vision of the state?
- How can we create a short and longer term vision
- How can we articulate value for all?
- How can we be an example for the nation?
- Can we create a 30-year plan – then back it out in increments of 5 years, then 1 year?
- What are other ways the state can help communities understand the benefits of being age-friendly?
- How can the state incentivize local communities to act?
- How to engage COAs/senior centers and communicate the value this adds to them and their work? Blogs? One website to share info.
- What is the state’s value add to the work of individual communities?
- How will federal policies impact this? How do we remain flexible in our response?
- Require communities to plan for their aging population, similar to housing production plan/OSRD plan and etc.
- How do we engage young people in this process and the Age-Friendly movement to prepare them professionally and personally? How can we connect generations?
- How can the Mass Senior Games serve as a resource to MHAC to assist them in achieving this mission? Can we ask athletes to volunteer?