

AGE-FRIENDLY

Buncombe County, NC 2022 Progress Report

MEMBER OF THE NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES SINCE 2017



Age-Friendly Buncombe is a “big tent”, bringing together community collaborations, committees, and working groups all of whom are committed to ensuring that: Older Adults in Buncombe County are Safe, Well, and Engaged in their Community.



Buncombe County 2017 Resolution:

In a 2017 resolution recommending that Buncombe County join the Network of Age-Friendly Communities, the County Commissioners called upon all our citizens, business leaders, elected and staff government officials, philanthropists, educators, civic groups, and advocacy and service organizations, to:

1. recognize that older adults constitute a valuable human resource; and,
2. engage older adults in all aspects of community and civic life.

Looking to the Future of Age-Friendly Buncombe County

Committee made the decision to align the Aging Plan and the Age-Friendly Plan into one document. Following that decision, the committee worked to align the Age-Friendly Action Plan with the Buncombe County Strategic Plan. The pages that follow are a snapshot of accomplishments and alignments of actions with these plans.

As we look to the future, we are excited to be welcoming an Age-Friendly Coordinator as a full-time employee with Buncombe County. We have also launched our new logo (noted at the top) and are envisioning our next phases of Age-Friendly Buncombe County. On the next page is a quick overview of future objectives:

- Expand on our monthly blog posts and recruitment efforts of age-friendly members.
- Develop an Age-Friendly Business program.
- Ensure representation of older adult voices at tables where decisions are being made.
- Expand our partnerships and grow our outreach into communities.
- Solidify the plan for the Active Aging Center including finalizing owner, operator, and location.
- And much, much more!

While we are excited about the future and all that is in store, we want to take a moment to acknowledge the work for Alison “Ali” Climo. Ali has served as the Buncombe County Age-Friendly Coordinator since 2016. Her guidance, vision, and leadership have moved us from a place of vision to action. It is through her efforts and support that much of the work that you see on these pages has been completed. She has helped the community care about aging and has assisted Buncombe County in embracing the concept and goals of Age-Friendly. We will miss her and are grateful for the groundwork she has laid for the next phase.



Domain: Housing

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

Increase availability of affordable, accessible housing options for older adults.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

- Protect older residents' ability to age in place.
- Implement land use strategies that encourage affordable housing near transportation and jobs.

Affiliated Working Group:

[Housing Options for Aging in Place \(HOAP\)](#)

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Housing Options for Aging in Place Working Group (HOAP) worked with Asheville Design Center and national ADU expert Kol Peterson to highlight the needs, challenges and development opportunities for Accessory Dwellings (ADUs). Click to watch the [Virtual Tour](#) and visit the [webpage](#).
- As an outcome of their participation on the HOAP Working Group, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity initiated a new [Aging in Place affordable home-ownership program](#) for adults age 55+.
- PBS North Carolina's weekly program, ncIMPACT, featured Buncombe County's Housing Options for Aging in Place Working Group on their March 11, 2022 episode on [Aging in Place](#).

Domain: Transportation

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

Increase older adults' access to transportation options.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

Increase access to public transportation, including public transit and para-transit services.

Affiliated Working Group:

[Community Transportation Advisory Group](#)

Highlights and Accomplishments:

[Asheville City Transit](#) Bus Drivers, Trainers, Supervisors, & Dispatchers were trained in dementia friendly service and communication (2021).





Domain: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Affiliated Working Group:

Active Aging Center Steering Committee

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Asheville Street Tweaks implemented a 3-day “tactical urbanism” project in West Asheville (see photo, left). The project was designed to improve neighborhood and pedestrian safety through the addition of a traffic circle and visual street art (May 2021).
- Land of Sky Regional Council received a 2020 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for Age-friendly Buncombe County (October 2020).

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

Ensure safe and accessible public and other outdoor spaces and buildings. (Specifically: Provide age- and dementia friendly features in public spaces, such as greenways, benches, playgrounds, and restrooms.)

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

Expand and maintain cultural and recreational assets.

Domain: Social Participation, Civic Engagement and Employment

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

- Promote older adult engagement (e.g., employment, lifelong learning and civic engagement).
- Promote older adults’ financial wellbeing.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

- Protect older residents’ ability to age in place
Increase total employment in region’s targeted industries.
- Increase median household income to North Carolina’s benchmark.

Affiliated Working Groups:

- Social Bridging Project
- Experienced Workforce Initiative

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- In 2021 the Experienced Workforce Initiative grew to include the Digital Literacy Network to provide technology navigators for those under the digital divide.
- Experienced Workforce Initiative of WNC was featured in NC Works Commission’s Spotlight on Local Workforce Innovations (March 2021).



Domain: Respect and Inclusion

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

Improve older adults’ access to services and supports. Specifically: Ensure aging services demonstrate respect, equity and inclusion of all older adults, regardless of any protected status.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

- Ensure that policies and practices eliminate barriers to allow for equitable opportunity.

Affiliated Working Groups:

- Asheville/Buncombe Black Elders Engagement Project
- Blue Ridge Pride Generation Plus
- Dementia Friendly WNC

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Asheville/Buncombe Black Elders Engagement Project produces a monthly calendar of opportunities that promote engagement and wellbeing for members of the Black community.
- Asheville Art Museum offered monthly “Connections” virtual and small group/in-person docent-led tours for adults with memory loss and their care partners.
- Buncombe County allocated Aging Services funding to Blue Ridge Pride’s Generation Plus to support education, advocacy and celebration of LBGT older adults.

Age-Friendly Buncombe Community Partners

AARP Foundation
AARP Mountain Region NC
AB Technical Community College
Area Agency on Aging at the Land of Sky Regional Council Asheville
Area Chamber of Commerce
Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
Asheville Art Museum
Asheville Bike & Pedestrian Task Force
Asheville Community and Economic Development
Asheville on Bikes
Asheville Parks and Recreation
Asheville Police Department
Asheville Realty Group
Asheville Regional Transit Coalition
Asheville Transit Committee
Avery Health Education and Consulting
Better Business Bureau
Biltmore Farms
Blue Ridge Audubon Society
Blue Ridge Bike Club
Blue Ridge Pride
Buncombe County Affordable Housing Services Program
Buncombe County Clerks's Office
Buncombe County Community Engagement
Buncombe County District Attorney's Office
Buncombe County Family Justice Center
Buncombe County Parks and Recreation
Buncombe County Public Library System
Buncombe County Sheriff's Office
Buncombe Health and Human Services
Connect Buncombe
Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.
DayStay Adult Day
Digital Literacy Network
Energy Savers Network
Family Caregiver Support Program
Givens Affordable Communities
Hands-On Asheville Buncombe County
Holistic Elder Services
Institute for Preventive Healthcare and Advocacy
Jewish Family Services of WNC
Just Economics (Better Busses Together)
Land of Sky Regional Council
Land of the Sky Association of Volunteer Administrators
Legal Aid of NC Senior Law Project
Leslie Apple, Edward Jones Financial Advisor
Linda Giltz, Community Planner, Facilitator, Project Manager MAHEC
Center for Healthy Aging
MANNA Food Bank
Meals on Wheels
MemoryCare
Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
Mountain Care
Mountain Housing Opportunities
Mountain Mobility
Multi-Modal Transportation Commission
NCCARE360
NC Center for Healthy Aging
NC Dept. of Justice Western District
NC Works Asheville Center
No Place Like Home WNC, PLLC
NovusWay Ministries
OLLI at UNC-Asheville
OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling Services
Our Voice
P.A.C.E. (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly)
Pisgah Legal Services
Premier Home Health Care
Project CARE (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty)
R. L. Mace Universal Design Institute
RN Patient Advocacy of NC
SkyHeart Consulting, LLC
Small Business Administration
Smoky Mountain Home Inspections, Inc.
Terri Z. March, MPH
The Urban News
UNC Center for Health & Wellness
United Way of Asheville Buncombe County
VA Medical Center
Van Winkle Law Firm
Vaya Health
Volunteers of America Carolinas
Web Tech Czar
WNC Broadband Project
WNC Fall Prevention Coalition
YMCA of WNC
YMI Cultural Center
YWCA of Asheville

Domain: Health and Community Services

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

- Improve older adults' health and wellbeing
Support caregiver wellbeing.
- Support older adults' financial wellbeing.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

- Protect older residents' ability to age in place.
- Increase median household income to North Carolina's benchmark.

Affiliated Working Groups:

- [Buncombe Aging Services Alliance](#)
- Communities for Older Adult Health
- [Family Caregiver Advisory Committee](#)

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- "Harnessing Tech to Connect", a collaboration between the Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging's Family Caregiver Program and Project C.A.R.E, Four Seasons Compassion for Life, and AARP Mountain Region, is a caregiver webinar series that received a [2021 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations \(NADO\)](#).
- Experienced Workforce Initiative's most frequently viewed videos on its [YouTube channel](#) are "[Video Conferencing for the 50+ Worker](#)" and "[Successful Virtual Interview for Job Seekers and Hiring Managers](#)".



Domain: Information and Communication

Age-Friendly Action Plan:

- Increase older adults' access to services and supports (including technology and broadband).
- Increase community awareness of physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Buncombe County Strategic Plan:

- Ensure funding, talent, and partnerships that enable high quality delivery of services and information.

Affiliated Working Groups:

- [Elder Justice Coalition](#)
- [Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee](#)
- [WNC Broadband Project](#)
- [WNC Falls Prevention Coalition](#)

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Every year the Buncombe County Elder Justice Coalition holds in-person and virtual events for [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#).
- Buncombe County Elder Justice Coalition is part of the [North Carolina Elder Protection Network](#).