



Minnesota's Multisector Blueprint for Aging 2026 Progress Report

AGE FRIENDLY
minnesota

Our Progress

Minnesotans Forging a New Path Together

The release of the Multisector Blueprint for Aging in late 2024 was a major accomplishment. However, the next phase of work awaited on the other side: implementation. How do we bring this expansive, ambitious plan to life?

We had a strong foundation – building on longstanding partnerships as well many newer relationships established through the Blueprint development process. People were inspired and ready to roll up their sleeves, but also uncertain about how exactly it would move forward.

Any pioneering initiative takes time to get established. Throughout 2025 and the first half of 2026, Age-Friendly Minnesota (AFMN) undertook implementation through three major tactic areas: Blueprint Action Teams, Age-Friendly Minnesota grants, and Regional Exchanges. This Progress Report describes how each of these implementation activities contributed to advancing Blueprint goals.

Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council, I am pleased to present the 2026 Progress Report on Minnesota's [Multisector Blueprint for Aging \(PDF\)](#). This reflects the collective work of hundreds of Minnesotans committed to creating a more age-inclusive future for our state.

We invite you to celebrate this progress, and to join us in advancing a more inclusive, equitable, and age-friendly Minnesota.

In community,

Sherrie Pugh
Chair, Age-Friendly
Minnesota Council



Header photo

Regional Exchange attendees share input during the Blueprint Pulse Check.
Source: University of Saint Thomas



Blueprint Action Teams

Walking the “Multisector” Talk

Over the course of 2025, Age-Friendly Minnesota and our partners launched nine Action Teams – cross-sector groups of individuals from across the state coming together in an unprecedented way to tackle Blueprint priorities.

Action Teams held virtual monthly meetings to focus on priority tactics in their respective areas, and also came together for an in-person workshop hosted by AFMN. The Teams worked together over the course of 12-18 months to develop detailed recommendations for how to move the work forward. AFMN thanks the many Minnesotans who participate on Action Teams for contributing their time, energy, and expertise.



Action Teams gathered at a day-long workshop to discuss recommendations.



9 Action Teams
launched in 2025

- Affordable Housing
- Multimodal Transportation
- Integrated and Coordinated Care
- Equitable Opportunities for Physical and Mental Health and Well-Being
- Long-Term Care
- Integrated Emergency Response Systems
- Meeting Basic Needs and Beyond
- Digital Engagement
- Vital Contributors to the Workforce



WHAT'S NEXT?

- Action Teams will deliver their final recommendations to the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council in late summer 2026. The Council will then determine next steps for implementing the recommendations.
- AFMN anticipates launching a second cohort of Action Teams in fall 2026.

80+ unique
organizations
represented



Including:

- State agencies
- Nonprofit service providers
- Healthcare systems
- Community members
- Regional development commissions
- Counties
- Universities
- Area agencies on aging
- Advocacy organizations
- Foundations
- Representatives of age-friendly communities

100+ Action Team
members regularly
participated

Each brought subject matter expertise or lived experience to the process from every region of the state.

They represented the public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors.



LEARN MORE

More information about Action Teams is available at the [Age-Friendly Minnesota website](#).

Regional Exchanges 2025

Collaborating for Stronger Communities

Age-Friendly Minnesota and its partners across the state co-hosted six Regional Exchanges in fall 2025. This was AFMN's second annual set of in-person gatherings, all designed to connect with Minnesotans on the ground and to ensure the Blueprint remains anchored in community voices.

More than 330 cross-sector attendees gathered to learn and share about age-friendly work happening in each region and the state, and to explore opportunities ahead. They included representatives from healthcare systems, foundations, counties, regional development agencies, state agencies, Chambers of Commerce, libraries, and other fields and organizations, as well as community members.

Regional Exchange sites across Minnesota



Each Exchange featured the following:

Age-Friendly Showcase

- Twenty-five [AFMN grantees](#), along with a few additional organizations, highlighted the broad range of efforts that are helping to advance the goals of Minnesota's [Multisector Blueprint for Aging](#).

Panel Discussions with Elected Officials and Regional Leaders

- Cross-sector panel discussions focused on aging from panelists' distinct vantage point. A total of twenty panelists included legislators, county commissioners, city administrators, and representatives from state agencies, healthcare systems, foundations, and more.
- Several themes emerged from the discussions, including: the need for greater collaboration; the importance of personal stories when engaging with decision-makers; presenting age-friendly as a way to advance existing goals; understanding what can be done within existing parameters; and the importance of finding a champion within an institution.

Pulse Check: What We Heard from the Community

- Attendees engaged in "Pulse Check" conversations to discuss: *For all Minnesotans to live well as we age in community, what are some potential realistic solutions? What progress has been made on key issues and gaps?*
- A critical piece of the Exchange, the Pulse Checks created an opportunity for reflection and discussion. Attendees generated important ideas related to housing, transportation, built environment, service access, social connection and more. Pulse Check findings have been widely shared and are being integrated into future work.



WHAT'S NEXT?

AFMN and our partners are planning this year's Regional Exchanges, scheduled for October 27 and 28, 2026 at five sites across the state.

LEARN MORE

Visit the [Regional Exchange page](#) of the AFMN website to find summaries of each 2025 Regional Exchange, along with a Statewide Summary, as well as more information about the 2026 events.

Age-Friendly Minnesota Grants

Investing in Our Future

Age-Friendly Minnesota is proud to have invested approximately \$7 million in 148 Community and Technical Grants since 2023. This innovative grant program, created with support from the Minnesota legislature, is one of the first such efforts in the country. Projects align with at least one of the Blueprint's four domains, and grantees range from rural counties to universities to small, culturally-based organizations.

These funds supported a wide range of projects to advance work in each Blueprint domain, including the examples below.



Source: Family Service Rochester

Family Service Rochester led walk and park audits to assess design of public spaces.

GRANTS SUPPORTED EFFORTS TO:



Domain 1 Connected Communities

- Create a regional **housing** plan in rural Minnesota
- Purchase an accessible van to provide rides in a **transportation** desert
- Help a community college better engage older residents and build **social connections**



Domain 2 Emergency Preparedness, Individual Rights and Safety

- Boost older adults' access to **legal services** through expanded use of legal kiosks and the Legal Risk Detector
- Better include older adults in county **emergency preparedness** efforts
- Improve **safety** for older adults experiencing domestic violence



Domain 3 Optimized Health and Longevity

- Create a **healthy aging** framework for Hmong elders
- Bring **healthy food** and **social connection** opportunities through construction of accessible garden features in a Tribal community garden
- Improve access to **affordable medications** by collecting surplus medications from healthcare facilities and pharmacies and distribute them to Minnesotans who need them



Domain 4 Vital Contributors to the Workforce

- Conduct community engagement and research to develop policy recommendations to improve **economic security** for Latine elders and caregivers
- Train employers on use of the "returnship" toolkit that helps older adults reentering the **workforce**

WHAT'S NEXT?

While additional grant funds may not be available, AFMN continues to leverage grantees' work by helping to promote promising models that have emerged through the projects, make connections between new organizations and sectors, and raise the profile and promise of age-friendly practices across the state.

LEARN MORE

Visit [AFMN's Grants webpage](#) to learn more about the grants program as well as individual grantees.

Looking Forward

As we celebrate our first 18 months of Blueprint implementation, progress is clear. Our collective work on the Blueprint is shifting entrenched attitudes about aging, investing in community-level efforts, and building new, coordinated networks of people and organizations capable of driving major change.

With this continued energy and momentum, and wisdom gained from the work so far, Age-Friendly Minnesota is prepared to accelerate our progress in the year ahead. We hope you will join us!

THANK YOU to our Age-Friendly Minnesota Council, Blueprint Action Team members, grantees, and the many partners and community members who continue to engage in and contribute to this work.

For more information or to get involved:

 **Visit us online at**
mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn

 **Email us at**
MN.DHS.AgeFriendlyMN@state.mn.us



Source: Age-Friendly Minnesota

Regional Exchange attendees in Park Rapids discuss a grant project.