Program: Northeast Minnesota Community--World Health Organization Livability Outcomes

Evaluation Focus: Planning and implementation

Situation Statement: Greater Minnesota rural communities are experiencing a growing 65+ population from now until 2050 while facing ongoing barriers to aging well—rural realities of distance, transportation challenges, financial constraints, outdated built environments, housing challenges, internet and connectivity barriers, and variable healthcare access.

Creating a local coalition addresses the community needs and opportunities presented by the shift in aging demographics.

Our first-year entails convening leadership and stakeholder groups, conducting a community needs assessment (or building off existing assessments) and developing an action and evaluation plan based on the assessment results. Actions are structured under 8 Livability Domains. Communities can choose to focus on one or more of these domains in their action plan. Concurrent work may already be happening in one or more of these domains. In our example, walkability and housing initiatives are in progress.

The Logic Model outlines potential strategies and outcomes that may result from forming a coalition.

World Health Org Livability Domains	Community Strategies	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Outdoor spaces and buildings	Conduct Community Walkability Study		-Access to walkable places during winter months	Modern elders feel safe in their community Modern elders are	Community strategies that delay or prevent disability
Transportation and Mobility	Prioritize active and sustainable mobility as preferred modes of travel		-Walkable access to vital services improved—schools, government offices, high density housing, food, bus stops, parks	Modern elders have access to recreational opportunities during day hours	Community strategies that advance quality of life goals in our communities:
Housing	Champion Housing Needs Analysis recommendations		-Address demand for market rate and affordable active adult and independent senior housing	Modern elders have access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing and transportation	-having purpose -maintaining personal agency -socially engaging and connecting
Social Participation	Create more socially inclusive places and spaces ideally co-		-Increase in # of 65+ population enrolled in	Modern elders are active, vital	with others -participating in activities
Respect and social inclusion	located with existing and planned programs		activity programs	contributors to the economic, civic and social life of the community	-belonging

World Health Org	Strategies	Outputs	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Livability Domains			Outcomes	Outcomes	Outcomes
Work and civic engagement	Increase content and number of programs and activities offered during day hours through Libraries, Community Education, Park and Rec Depts, Senior Centers, and local and regional fitness centers		-Modern elders serve as stakeholders on community committees	Modern elders experience an increase in engagement, participation, and recreation with community programs	
Communications and information	Maintain viability of local Digital Connection Committees to facilitate implementation of DEED Digital Opportunity Plan Recommendations		-Digital Connection Committees submitted planning documents to DEED (2023)	Modern elders know what services and activities are available and have access to information by means preferred (e.g., online, in print, in person)	
Community and health services	Encourage local hospitals, Assisted Living, and Long-term Care facilities to implement Age-Friendly health system goals—What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility			Modern elders receive appropriate support if community 65+ individuals can no longer look after themselves Modern elders have access to timely health services	

Beliefs and Assumptions: Northeast Minnesota communities have historically focused on recruitment and retention of families with children, focusing on long-term economic survivability. However, one in three community residents are 60+. When adding in the 50+ populaiton, the demographic increases to 40%. The 50+ households account for 50 cents on every dollar spent, and by 2050, this will grow to 62 cents on every dollar.

Additionally, aging is not well understood, with a common misconception that our aging population is an economic burden, contributing little to society. Therefore, well-intentioned prevailing strategies with a focus on children and younger adults only no longer addresses the breadth of aging for increasing longevity and its accompanying economic sustainability for our communities.

Additional Resources:

Aging in MN Fact Sheet

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