

Age-Friendly CHELMSFORD

A Livable
Community For All Ages



In May 2021, the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee (AFCIC) was formed to address the goals and accomplish the actions in the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Action Plan that was approved by the Town and subsequently by AARP. The Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee is chaired by Debi Siriani and Fred Brusseau. Subcommittees (or domains) are led by the following committee members: Connie Donahue (Housing), John Bowles (Transportation), Jen Melanson (Community Supports and Health Services), Steve Callaghan (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings), Debi Siriani (Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion), Lisa Marrone (Civic Engagement and Employment), Lesley Kimball (Communication and Information). Police Chief Colin Spence (also an AFCIC member) and the Chelmsford Police Department had several age-friendly accomplishments across multiple domains in FY2025.

As a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, Chelmsford assessed its age-friendliness across seven domains of livability. During FY2025, these domains were very successful in making Chelmsford even more Age-Friendly.

The vision of the Age Friendly Initiative in Chelmsford is to inspire efforts for community improvements and innovations that promote healthy aging for residents of all ages and abilities. The success of this initiative is dependent on the involvement of a dedicated and passionate group of Town officials, Town staff, residents and stakeholders that proactively continue to spearhead our age-friendly effort. These individuals actively collaborate with each other, civic, businesses, and non-profit organizations as well as state and local government officials to heighten awareness of the Town's age-friendly movement and implementation of the accomplishments outlined in this report—all to spur sustained positive change for the Town of Chelmsford.

AFCIC domain accomplishments during FY2025 are listed as follows:

Housing

Improvements/updates at three Senior housing locations were completed with a total rehabilitation at a fourth site in progress

Availability of affordable housing was increased and 51 units of affordable housing stock were preserved/improved

To address the shortage of availability of local affordable housing, Chelmsford will continue to work diligently to obtain the needed finances and land whenever related funding opportunities are presented.

Transportation



ChelmsfordRIDE, launched in May of 2023, continued to provide low-cost rides for adults (18+) anywhere in Chelmsford and to/from medical appointments in Lowell, Tewksbury, Billerica, Carlisle, Westford, Tyngsboro, Lahey Clinic, Emerson Hospital, and the Bedford V.A. Clinic. The program operated from 2-6pm, Monday-Friday, in order to extend the services of the Council on Aging transportation program. ChelmsfordRIDE was able to accommodate mobility devices such as canes, walkers, and light, manual wheelchairs. ChelmsfordRIDE saw increased usage in FY2025. Utilizing a fully-electric vehicle (provided by the Town), volunteer drivers gave a total of **380** rides to 14 different types of destinations in FY2025. Volunteer drivers who were eligible received up to a \$1,500 rebate from their property taxes in exchange for volunteer hours with ChelmsfordRIDE. Unfortunately, due to funding shortfalls, the ChelmsfordRide service was suspended in March 2025.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



The AFCIC continued to work with the Chelmsford Department of Public Works (DPW) to improve/renovate/install playgrounds, exercise areas, sidewalks and ramps at Friendship Park, Varney, Harrington, Parker and Center School to help maintain and improve their status of ADA Compliance.

The new “pocket park” at the intersection of Worthen Street and North Road continued to be enjoyed by many.

Two outdoor fitness areas continue to be used by the public. One, at Roberts Field, has 4 stations of age-friendly exercise equipment along with a 1/3-mile walking trail. The other, just outside Chelmsford Center on Rt110, is by the softball field.

Through the partnership with Boy Scout Troop 75, the Friends of the Senior Center, and the Open Space Stewardship Committee, 8 additional raised bed garden beds were installed in front of the Senior Center. These now make 20 raised beds for Chelmsford seniors and volunteers to garden, allowing accessibility and ease of use and fresh produce for older adults who may not have space to do so where they currently are living.

Inter-departmental collaboration was enhanced between the DPW and Police Department for increased safety mechanisms at playgrounds.

Community Supports & Health Services

Volunteers with “Grow-a-Row” and “Gardens for Good” continued to grow, maintain, harvest and deliver fresh produce to the food insecure at several Town locations, including the Chelmsford Food Pantry, Table of Plenty, and the Chelmsford Housing Authority. In FY2025, the value of delivered produce was estimated to be approximately \$10,000. at no cost to recipients.

The Chelmsford Police Department (CPD) conducted banking crime seminars at several Senior Housing complexes

Communication & Information



An enhanced community outreach program continued with an Age-Friendly Chelmsford webpage (<https://www.chelmsfordma.gov/agefriendly>), an Age-Friendly Chelmsford Telemedia (CTM) show (<https://www.chelmsfordtv.org/episodes/age-friendly-chelmsford-premiere-episode/>), and an information kiosk on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

The Chelmsford Public Library continued its seasonal use of a mobile pop-up library - a specially equipped vehicle that provides library services weekly at various Town locations

An AARP-funded Trails and Tails project continued. This project has been an intergenerational effort bringing mini-libraries to the community

The Library continued its digital literacy and techworks programs and initiated a monthly “Learning & Retirement” series.

Social Participation, Respect & Inclusion



A new sensory garden, installed at the Senior Center in FY24, continued to be enjoyed by both visitors to the Center and residents who live in the area.

The Senior Center continued to host a monthly Veterans breakfast that is open to all veterans.

An LGBTQ & Friends social group continues to be hosted twice monthly at the Senior Center, and a Lesbian Queer Women Meetup was added in Fy25.

The “Know Your Neighbor” project was started. Its objective is to foster stronger community bonds by encouraging residents to connect with each other. Know Your Neighbor Socials were offered all over town including at the Senior Center, the Library, the Center for the Arts, and in collaboration with the Police Department, Board of Health, Table of Plenty, and the Friends of the Senior Center, Inc.

In partnership with the DEI Committee, the Senior Center offered the following programs in FY25:

Black History Month African Style Drumming Workshop

“Beyond the Headlines and Stereotypes: Get to Know your Asian American Neighbors”.

A 4-week series:

Cambodian Americans

Chinese Americans

Indian Americans

Filipino Americans

Other workshops and classes at the Senior Center in FY24 focusing on Social Participation, Respect & Inclusion included Paint & Sober Sip, Women’s Role in the Military, Dance Caliente, Inca Civilization, Free Massage for Caregivers, Speaker Series for Caregivers, LGBTIA+ Legal Tools, and Student Tech Help for Seniors

Civic Engagement & Employment



A partnership was continued with MassHire to provide age-friendly job fairs which have been very successful and are now annual events.

The Chelmsford Police Department (CPD) continues to offer bracelets for their Safety Net Program. These bracelets allow the CPD to locate, in a timely manner, at-risk individuals who have wandered off, helping to avoid injury to the individual. There are currently over 14 people in the program.

An Age-Strong Job Fair was conducted at Chelmsford Town Hall. This event was successful and deemed important as an annual event.

