

# Age-Friendly Baltimore County

*Action Plan 2021-2023*



**AGE FRIENDLY  
BALTIMORE COUNTY**  
*A Livable Community For All Ages*



**“Our goal is for  
Baltimore County to  
be a place where all  
residents feel welcome  
and can take comfort in  
knowing their needs  
are being met.”**

**– John Olszewski, Jr.,  
Baltimore County Executive**

## Message from the County Executive



Dear Baltimore County,

In August of 2019, Baltimore County embarked on a County-wide initiative to make our County a more livable one for residents of all ages and abilities. The County signed a formal agreement and joined the World Health Organization and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Now, in partnership with over 500 other Age-Friendly municipalities in the United States, this plan serves as a roadmap and lays out the next steps in becoming an Age-Friendly Baltimore County.

We know that our aging population, along with those residents with disabilities, continues to comprise an increasing percent of the county's total population. We need to consider how to best serve all of our communities in the County. When a community is designed to thrive, we all reap the benefits of having opportunities to age well and enjoy a good quality of life. We want to ensure that our communities' residents remain active in their neighborhoods, live independently and have sufficient and easy access to services, amenities and opportunities for community engagement.

As a result of our outreach, Age-Friendly Baltimore County heard from nearly 2,000 residents who responded to our survey and countless others who shared with us their concerns and challenges at Town Halls, our BCDA's Power of Age Expo, focus groups, listening sessions and numerous presentations and facilitated discussions. We shared this information with our Age-Friendly Baltimore County workgroups on Housing, Transportation, and Community and Health Services and Supports, who in turn developed goals and strategies to address the issues that are outlined in this action plan.

This roadmap is a result of the collaboration among many organizations, agencies and individuals who have and will continue to offer their subject matter expertise and valuable time and energy towards making our County one where residents of all ages and abilities can work, play, and live, enjoying a good quality of life.

Thank you to all our Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners for contributing to this plan and call to action. Please join us in continuing this important work and being part of this initiative that will make Baltimore County a community that is a livable County for all ages, abilities, cultures and backgrounds.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Olszewski, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*John "Johnny O" Olszewski, Jr.*

# Message from the Director, Baltimore County Department of Aging



Dear Baltimore County,

It has been my pleasure to have the Department of Aging lead the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative and jointly commit with the County Executive in ensuring our County is one that is livable for all ages, cultures and backgrounds, and where people can live their best lives.

The County Executive recognizes the importance of ensuring we are prepared for the increase in our older adult population in ways that will also benefit those persons with disabilities, families, care partners and other individuals who are seeking such things as affordable housing, access to parks and green spaces, accessible buildings and reliable public transit.

The Age-Friendly Baltimore County work has been an inclusive planning process, and I am pleased this work has opened the door to new partnerships and enhanced existing ones. We have made great plans for future collaboration in making our County the best livable and Age-Friendly County in Maryland.

On behalf of the County Executive and all of our many partners and contributors, it is my pleasure to share this Age-Friendly Baltimore County Action Plan with you. I hope you will join us in our continued Age-Friendly Baltimore County work as we begin to implement our activities and identify new goals and strategies as we move through the next three years of this five-year process.

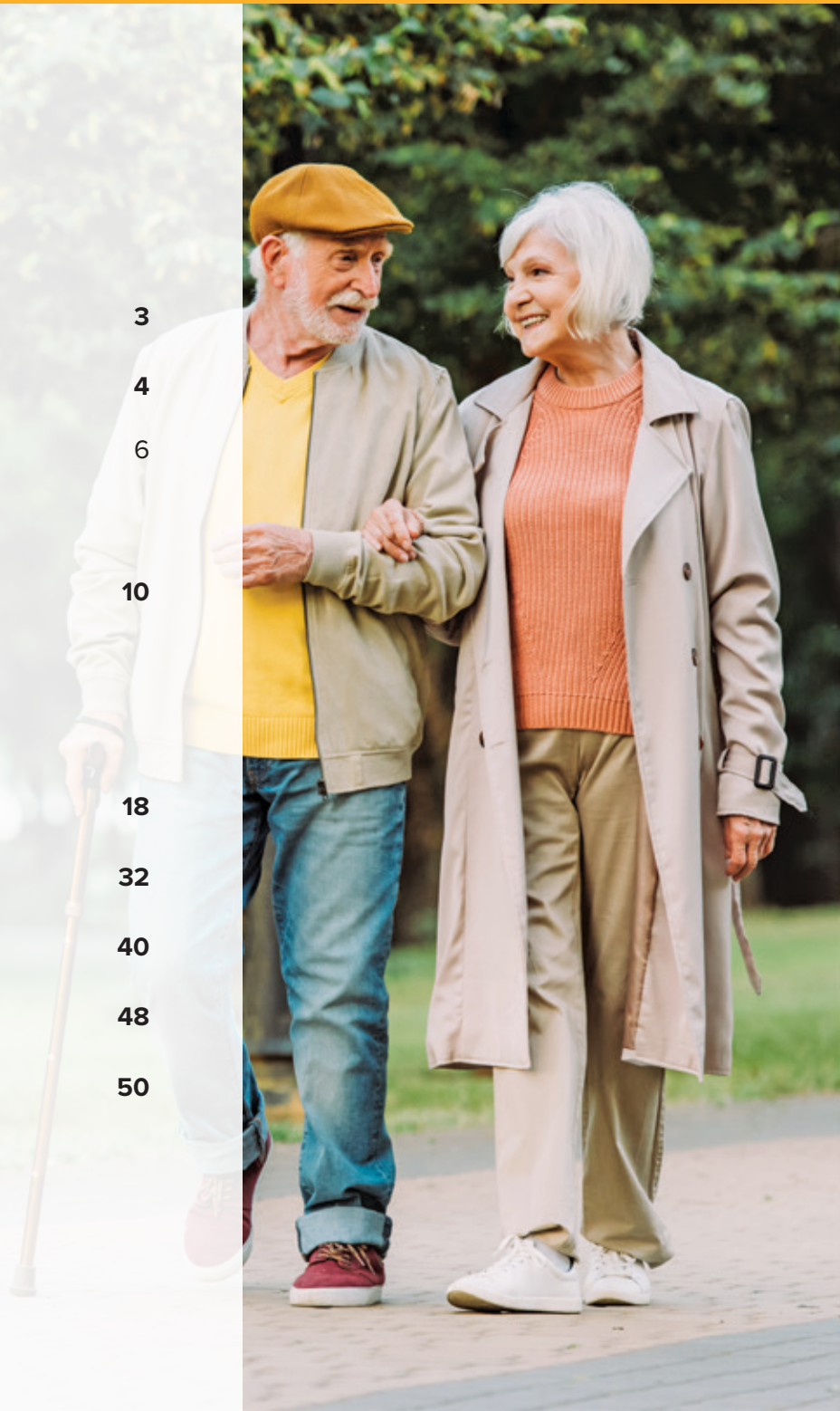
Thank you to so many individuals and partners who put in countless hours of their time and shared expertise. I look forward to the next phase of our work together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Riley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Riley

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# Acknowledgments

The Project Leader for the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative is the Baltimore County Department of Aging. The Age-Friendly Baltimore County planning process is an inclusive process that engaged people throughout the community to contribute to this action plan, and develop and implement our goals. We would like to thank the many organizations, individuals and volunteers who have worked over the past two years and will continue to work on this initiative for their contributions. For a full list of contributors, please see Appendix B.

# Introduction

The goal of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative is to make Baltimore County one of the most livable communities in our state.

The lead agency and convener for the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative is the Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) who, in collaboration with the County Executive, launched the initiative in August 2019.

## What does it mean to be Age-Friendly?

An Age-Friendly, livable community is one that is safe and secure, has affordable and accessible housing and transportation options, offers supportive community features and services, and promotes the physical and psychological well-being of residents of all ages and abilities. It is a place where people can live their entire lives, if they so desire, and where they feel welcome, connected, valued, and engaged. The goal of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative is to make Baltimore County one of the best livable communities in our state.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities is the United States affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program. It is an international effort which launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for rapid population aging and the parallel trend of urbanization. In the United States, there are currently 563 Age-Friendly communities and municipalities. In Maryland, there are six Age-Friendly communities – Baltimore County, Montgomery County, Howard County, and the cities of Hyattsville, Frederick and College Park.

The lead agency and convener for the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative is the Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) who, in collaboration with the County Executive, launched the initiative in August 2019. The launch event was graciously hosted by one of the initiative's partners, Towson University, and attended by more than 100 representatives from community and health, environmental, housing and transportation organizations and agencies.



# 25%

of County Residents are 60+



## 847,000

County residents

## 3<sup>rd</sup>

largest jurisdiction in Maryland

## 100,000

foreign-born residents

## 29

communities

## 20,000

businesses

The County's population has increased by nearly **100,000**.



2000

2010

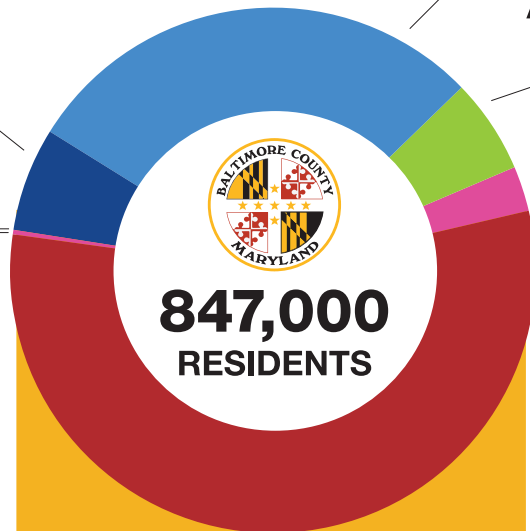
2020

Baltimore County ranks **4<sup>th</sup>** highest per capita income in Maryland

**6.3%**  
Asian

**0.1%**  
Native American

**0.4%**  
American Indian and Alaska Native



**29.7%**  
African American

**5.7%**  
Hispanic/Latino

**2.6%**  
Two or more races

**56.6%**  
Caucasian

Source: Census Bureau



## Snapshot of Baltimore County

In the past decade, population growth in Baltimore County was largely attributable to increases in the minority populations, with a decrease in the total White population of the County. Among minorities, the Black or African American population increased by approximately 50,000 people, and now represents nearly one third of the County's total population. The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations grew by approximately 12,000, accounting for 6.31% of the County's total population. The Hispanic/Latino population grew by 15,225 people.

Foreign-born populations have continued to increase in the County, as the State and nation continue to attract immigrants from all over the world. Based on U.S. Census data, the number of foreign-born County residents grew from more than 82,000 in 2010 to close to 105,000 in 2019.

Based on 2019 Census data, the largest proportion of the County's population with a disability are individuals age 75 or over (46.8%), an increase from 2010, when that age group represented 30.93% of the County's population who reported having a disability.

According to the U.S. Administration for Community Living, in 2019 there were 54.1 million people age 65 and older, an increase from 39.6 million in 2010. This segment of the U.S. population is projected to reach 80.8 million by 2040. In Baltimore County, we will see similar rapid growth of the 65 and older population. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, County residents age 65 and older comprised approximately 15% of the County's population. By 2025, almost 1 in 5 County residents (19.9%) will be age 65 and older.

Maryland legalized same-sex marriage in 2012. In its 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment requires all states to grant same-sex marriages and recognize same-sex marriages granted in other states. Despite these significant changes in state and U.S. law, there has been no data collected on same-sex married couples. It is worth noting, however, that the 2020 Census asked respondents about their relationship to the person with whom they share their home, and included "opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse," "same-sex husband/wife/spouse," "opposite-sex unmarried partner" and "same-sex unmarried partner" as options, while in previous Census surveys, the options were "husband", "wife" or "unmarried partner". Data on same-sex cohabiting couples when made available from the 2020 Census, however, will only provide a partial snapshot of the country's LGBTQ community, as many individuals do not live with a same-sex partner.

# Our Process

**“The Baltimore County Age-Friendly workgroup members met tirelessly to develop the goals and strategies for this action plan. Even during the height of the pandemic, they never missed a beat and continued their work virtually. I could not have asked for a more committed and passionate group of community leaders to work with in planning to make our County an Age-Friendly, Livable Community.”**

**– Donna Neuworth,  
Age-Friendly Baltimore County Coordinator**

## The Launch and The Process

The attendees at the launch event listened as Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski, Jr., AARP Maryland State Director Hank Greenberg and Director of the Baltimore County Department of Aging Laura Riley shared their visions for an Age-Friendly Baltimore County. Donna DeLeno Neuworth, the Age-Friendly Baltimore County Coordinator delivered a presentation on what other Age-Friendly communities have accomplished and what is possible for Baltimore County. A call to action resulted in the formation of the workgroups that began meeting in the fall of 2019 and into 2021.

The Age-Friendly process is designed as a five-year process. In Baltimore County, we are now presenting our action plan, and will spend at least the next two years implementing and refining as many of the goals and strategies developed by our workgroups as possible.

There are eight domains that AARP, based on the WHO's work, suggests that Age-Friendly communities consider addressing:

- Accessibility and Mobility
- Communication and Information
- Community Support and Health Services
- Employment and Civic Participation
- Housing
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Social Participation, Respect, and Inclusion
- Transportation



## Community Participation and Planning

Using existing data from a variety of sources including AARP's Livable Community Index, it was evident that our Age-Friendly work on accessible and available **transportation**, affordable and accessible **housing**, and enhanced **community health and supportive services** were key opportune places to start.

We also solicited and collected additional feedback from County residents through a variety of ways, completing those efforts in September 2020. These efforts included:

- The Age-Friendly Baltimore County Survey available in both English and Spanish, available online and in print, and completed by more than 2,000 Baltimore County residents;
- Three public listening sessions with over 80 participants - the County's Homelessness Roundtable, and two sessions with Interfaith leaders from across the County;
- Discussion groups and interviews with stakeholders from the African-American, LatinX, LGBTQ, men's communities and Veterans;
- An Age-Friendly Baltimore County traveling comment board, where members of the public could post comments specific to each of the eight domains was made available at the 2019 Power of Age Expo, other public events hosted by BCDA, and County Executive Town Halls;
- Roundtable discussions and meetings to gather comments from volunteer-led entities took place at with the Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities and the Baltimore County Commission on Aging; and,
- Over 15 presentations were delivered to various audiences throughout the County to gather input and extend partnerships for the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative.

We convened three workgroups, comprised of individuals from various non-profit and government agencies, that focused on these three sectors. After more than a year of meetings in person and then virtually, in response to limitations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hard work of our partners came to fruition as they identified and prioritized their goals, activities and recommendations for what we need to make Baltimore County Age-Friendly.

In addition, several members of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County Advisory Committee participated in facilitated strategic planning sessions which helped the members to examine the initiative's strengths and weaknesses, and to implement the strategies best that support the identified goals in this action plan.



## BUILDING AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY IN BALTIMORE COUNTY





**OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS**



**TRANSPORTATION**



**HOUSING**



**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**



**RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**



**COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**



**EMPLOYMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION**



**COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES**

**BCDA**  
BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING

[www.baltimorecountymd.gov/aging](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/aging)





## Moving Forward

The next phase of the Age-Friendly process is to implement the strategies outlined in this action plan. The details of the goals and strategies developed for this action plan are all available in Appendix A. We will also begin to work to address two other domains that our residents told us were important for a more livable, vibrant County: “Outdoor Spaces and Buildings”, and “Communications and Information”. We will continue to address all domains that share cross-cutting issues and strategies.

Another area that will be addressed in the near future is the design of an Age-Friendly Business-Friendly plan for Baltimore County. An Age-Friendly business is one that offers safe and secure environments, services and trained staff who serve customers of all ages and abilities. Businesses that use Age-Friendly best practices attract customers of all ages and abilities and recognize the spending power of a large segment of the population. Enhanced customer experience, services, environments, products, communications and marketing strategies are some of the criteria that will constitute an Age-Friendly business in Baltimore County.

In partnership with Age-Friendly Baltimore County, Towson University Occupational Therapy students and faculty will be planning and designing an Age-Friendly Business-Friendly plan beginning in Towson, the County seat. The students will solicit feedback from businesses and work closely with the local Chamber of Commerce in Towson in finding creative ways to support local businesses while ensuring their environments are business-friendly.

## Key Findings

From the data and input gathered from County residents, service providers and others through our outreach efforts, our analysis highlighted several areas that created the basis of the work of three workgroups, our Age-Friendly Advisory Committee, but is preparing us for our next areas of focus.



### Access

Respondents shared that physically accessible public spaces such as County parks are important to them, as are well-maintained pedestrian crossings and bike paths. However, many stated they cannot access the parks via public transportation and would like to see more parks and green spaces in their communities. The majority of respondents (84% in the survey) indicated that ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility is a desirable amenity.

Accessibility, as expressed by respondents and workgroup members, should also be inclusive and ensure County residents have accessible and available translation services with materials in various languages and that are culturally appropriate. Taking health literacy and reading levels into account, for example, are important components of being a livable, inclusive County.

County residents also indicated that their homes are not fully accessible. Many indicated they would likely age in place if they had access to affordable home repair services. Respondents expressed the need for reliable assistance to support home chores such as snow shoveling and lawn maintenance.

Additionally, discussion group and survey participants stated accessibility features within the County parks and more green space would help to make the County a more livable community. The Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative plans to convene a workgroup around these issues under the newly formed Outdoor Spaces & Buildings domain.



### Transportation

Accessible transportation was a major concern among almost all respondents. Lack of connectivity between buses and light rail from east to the west parts of the County, understanding how to read the schedules, complaints about the timeliness of public transit, and safety were the major concerns addressed. However, the majority of survey and discussion group respondents reported that their primary mode of travel was their car.

While respondents said CountyRide provides timely service and is an affordable option, they also shared the challenge of making an appointment. Appointments must be arranged weeks in advance, and CountyRide services are limited to the weekdays only. Respondents were critical of the Maryland Transit Authority's (MTA) paratransit services - Mobility - stating long, unanticipated waiting times for pickups and then returns from destinations.



## **Communication and Information**

Respondents in some discussion groups reported a lack of awareness of services, opportunities, and community events and activities, which suggests a need to tailor communication strategies to different age and cultural groups. Raising awareness of the diversity across Baltimore County could support understanding the complex needs of different neighborhoods and different populations. One example was expressed by the LGBTQ community discussion group participants

who would like to have more health care and supportive services and social participation activities located in the County rather than having to rely on going to Baltimore City for these things.

The Baltimore County Age-Friendly initiative is planning to convene a new workgroup for the domain Communication and Information in the fall of 2021. This workgroup will create a plan to expand and/or create new methods of communications to reach various communities in order to share County resources and Age-Friendly Baltimore County partnering organizations.



## **Mental, Trauma-related and Behavioral Health Services**

Participants from listening sessions with faith-based organizations, providers of mental, behavioral and trauma-based providers and other discussion group participants have all strongly agreed there are inadequate services made available in the County. Increased services are needed for assistance with addiction, mental or behavioral health services to meet the growing demand. Faith-based leaders, for

example, said they are not equipped to manage the abundance of issues that are affecting their congregations, including drug abuse and overdoses, severe mental illness of children and adults, marriage problems, raising a child or caregiving for a loved one with a disability. Others commented that insurance coverage is very limited for counseling and therapy, particularly Medicare and Medicaid. Yet despite the demand, there still exists a stigma for seeking help and services.





### **Health Care and Supportive Services**

Overall, the vast majority (83%) of survey respondents indicated conveniently located health and social services is a “very important” or “extremely important” community amenity. Other groups and stakeholders overall were pleased that the County is home to several high-ranking hospitals and health care institutions. Participants and stakeholders did express the need to incorporate equity and inclusion principles among health care providers when treating patients. Additionally, the need for more primary care sites in certain parts of the County was identified.

The need for more supportive services and information for care partners ranked high among stakeholders and other participants, particularly for those caring for an adult child with a disability or for persons with dementia. The need for funding and respite care for all types of caregivers was a primary concern among the workgroup members, many of whom are service providers to these populations.



### **Affordable Housing and Supportive Services**

The majority of respondents identified the lack of affordable housing and availability of affordable home modifications to help people age in place and repair services as issues in all neighborhoods. Creating opportunities to improve the County’s housing inventory and new developments that are accessible for people with disabilities is a top priority identified by the housing workgroup.

The need for supportive and health care services at home to help people age in place also ranked high in the survey and it was also expressed by workgroup members and senior housing officials. For example, a non-profit senior housing executive who serves on the housing workgroup said the residents in the buildings are “aging out”, not because their apartments or the building is inaccessible, but rather because they cannot find adequate and appropriate in-home supportive care and in-home health care services.

# Community and Health Services and Supports

The Age-Friendly Baltimore County Community and Health Services workgroup's identification and prioritization of issues is with the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment's priorities.

The Community and Health Needs Assessment final report represented the culmination of work completed by the Baltimore County Health Department and several local health hospital systems. They identified physical health, mental and behavioral health and health disparities as their top categories of challenges that need to be addressed by the County Health and Human Services Department and local health care providers. Planning to address health disparities, improve access to services for underserved communities and the need to gather more data to help identify where there are gaps in services are the focus of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County's work for this action plan as well as the Community and Health Needs Assessment.

## Health Disparities

Health disparities and poor outcomes exist across many different sub-groups and geographies in Baltimore County. While each of these disparities and outcomes is unique, they must be understood and addressed at their root in order to improve the overall health of County residents in the years ahead and support the overall necessity to maintain inclusivity and equitability in Baltimore County.

The Community Health Needs Assessment 2021 was challenged to provide a needs assessment across racial and ethnic minority groups using survey tools and recruitment for various representative focus groups. However, future assessments should be expanded to include residents who are disabled along with deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Additionally, as addressed in this action plan, more data is needed from both patients and providers of substance disorder services.

## Access to Health Care Providers and Services

Survey respondents, focus groups and providers from underserved communities stated public County transportation as a significant barrier to care. While the County Department of Health and Human Services offers subsidized transportation to some recipients with finite resources, the availability is limited. Additionally, some health providers offer shuttles and other transportation options for those who qualify but services are limited. Services for those patients who need point-to-point transportation require more support. As part of the Age-Friendly Baltimore work, St. Agnes Healthcare will be the lead in the action plan to find ways to replicate and expand their patient transportation program. The hospital's "Trusted Ride Chaperone" program utilizes volunteers and staff providing an escort door-to-door for older adults with medical appointments on their campus.

Another barrier to access to care is the lack of providers. Some areas of the County are 'primary care deserts.' Age-Friendly and the County Health Department are hoping to identify a provider in at least one targeted area of the County in this action plan. The lack of mental health providers, particularly those who accept Medicare for their services, has also been reported as inadequate.

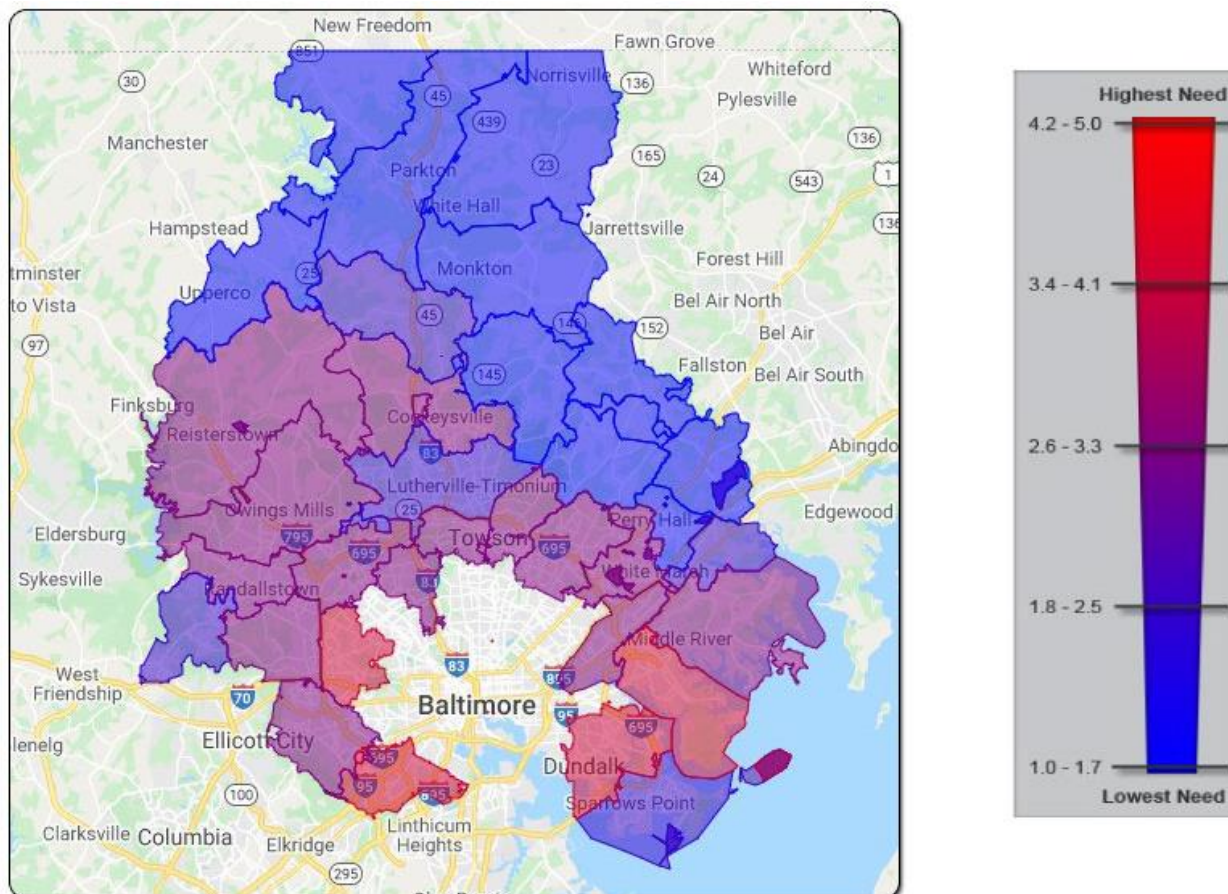


## Mental, Trauma-related and Behavioral Health Services

The Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners and workgroups identified mental and behavioral health as one of their top priorities that needed to be addressed. The need for more mental and behavioral health services, and supports and assistance for those residents impacted by trauma, were already identified as the top priority pre-COVID. During the height of COVID-19, providers and consumers confirmed the dire necessity of services in the County. The Community Health Needs Assessment also stated Mental Health, including dementia and depression, as well as access to psychiatric and/or behavioral health services, was identified as a high need area based on new and existing data.

Mental health problems place a heavy burden on the healthcare system, especially when people in crisis use emergency departments instead of other sources of care. That is particularly valid when other sources of mental health support are not easily accessible as noted in communities of color or areas of economic disadvantages status within Baltimore County.

### Community Need Index



Source: Dignity Health and Truven Health Analytics, Community Need Index. Data accessed December 2020.

## Dementia, Alzheimer’s Disease and Care Partners

As Baltimore County’s population ages, certain neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s and dementia become more common. According to Maryland State Health Insurance program, the hospitalization rate due to Alzheimer’s or other dementia disorders in Baltimore County is eight percent greater than Maryland’s benchmark (515.5 hospitalizations per 100,000 population), which places a greater burden upon our health care providers and systems.

In Maryland and the U.S., other data is revealing how the County and governments need to be better prepared for this demographic. In Maryland, the number of people 65 years and older with Alzheimer’s in 2020 was 110,000, but a projected increase of 18.2% is anticipated by 2025 (130,000). The cost for caring for those with Alzheimer’s is noteworthy. There are more than six million Americans who are living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias in the U.S. bringing the cost to \$355 billion in 2021. It is estimated to increase to more than \$1.1 trillion dollars by mid-century. Over eleven million Americans provide unpaid care for people with Alzheimer’s and other brain related disorders due to dementia.



# MARYLAND

## ALZHEIMER’S STATISTICS



### PREVALENCE

**65+** NUMBER OF PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OLDER WITH ALZHEIMER’S

Year	TOTAL	ESTIMATED % CHANGE
2020	110,000	<b>18.2%</b>
2025	130,000	

More than **6 million Americans** are living with Alzheimer’s. The cost of caring for those with Alzheimer’s and other dementias is estimated to total **\$355 billion** in 2021, increasing to more than **\$1.1 trillion** (in today’s dollars) by mid-century. Dementia caregivers today are providing **20% more care** than in 2009.



## Dementia-Friendly Baltimore County

In response to the overwhelming need to support people with dementia and their care partners, the Baltimore County Department of Aging has embarked upon a Dementia-Friendly Baltimore County initiative. The overall goals of this initiative are to increase awareness, create and support innovative programming and provide resources that help support persons living with dementia, memory challenges, Alzheimer's and their care partners, so that they can continue to create and experience meaningful lives.



Dementia Friendly Baltimore County has joined the Dementia Friendly America national network and is working closely with Age-Friendly Baltimore County to align their efforts, ensuring that persons of all ages, cultures, abilities and interests can access the resources they need to create the life they choose. With this “Better Together” approach, supported by both AARP and Dementia Friendly America, Dementia Friendly Baltimore County invites individuals from all sectors to join in these vibrant efforts to make all domains of living both age and dementia friendly.

## Substance Use Disorders

Substance use disorders, including drug and alcohol abuse, were indicated as one of the most important health problems affecting Baltimore County by 28 percent of community survey respondents in the Community Health Needs Assessment. Further, 61 percent of key community health leaders selected substance use disorders as one of the top three need areas, with 30 percent of key community health leaders indicating an inadequate number of substance use treatment providers to meet the community's needs.

In 2018, more than 300 people died from fatal overdoses in Baltimore County, the vast majority related to opioids. The County has consistently had the second highest number of overdose deaths in the state. Many more experienced nonfatal overdoses with profound consequences for their own health, families and their local communities.

In response to the opioid epidemic in the County, the County Executive has taken a number of important steps to decrease the number of overdose deaths. In May of 2019, a workgroup was formed and tasked in soliciting public comment and developing a report with immediate actionable items. The report includes recommendations to address stigma, prevention, treatment, recovery, family support, criminal justice and harm reduction. One of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners - Mental Health Association of Maryland - is a member of this County workgroup and a liaison to the Age-Friendly Community and Health Services and Supports workgroup.

## Prevention, Health and Wellness

Wellness of a community includes the provision of resources that support physical activity, defeat social isolation and provide easy access to routine and preventive mental, medical and dental care, regardless of ability to pay, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. We know that there are gaps in the ease with which these services are available in Baltimore County from the focus groups and Age-Friendly Baltimore County survey.

The pandemic has challenged Baltimore County with its significant segment of older adult residents. Many are living in long term care facilities or in semi-rural settings as well as its sizable high risk segment of residents of color. Equity in COVID-19 vaccination availability has been a focus of Baltimore County as well as significant attention to food pantries and social isolation during the pandemic.

Telehealth will prove to be particularly important in order to improve access for mental health support. This technology will also play a critical role in the management of chronic care particularly among the older adult population as well as the prevention of social isolation. The Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) is currently working with the State of Maryland to support older adults by improving their access and knowledge of computers/technology. By doing so, older adults will have telehealth access. A notable partnership with the University of Maryland Extension matched computer-tech savvy volunteers/students with older adults in need of computer training.

***“We are committed to ensuring that Baltimore County residents of all ages lead healthy, safe, and productive lives. Effectively coordinating services, addressing health equity barriers, and providing supports for caregivers are just some of the ways we are working to achieve that goal.”***

**-Laura Culbertson, MSN, RN, Chief, Office of Quality Improvement,  
Baltimore County Health and Human Services**

After reviewing the data, which included focus and discussion groups, stakeholder interviews and surveys, the Age-Friendly Baltimore County Community and Health Services and Supports Workgroup identified and prioritized the following strategies for this action planning cycle:

## STRATEGY 1

### Encourage inclusion and equity principles among health care providers in the County

#### 1a Review all materials, documents and AFBC plans for adherence to DEI and Health Literacy Guidelines.

##### Targets

Completion of review for all Baltimore County materials, documents and AFBC plans to assure usage of inclusive language and graphics on all County materials.

##### Partners

- Lead – Communications and Information Domain Workgroup Members
- Baltimore County Age-Friendly staff and Community and Health sub-workgroup members

*Needed Resources include staff time, a centralized area for material review and guidelines.*

#### 1b Encourage other providers to join the Age-Friendly Health Systems that incorporate health literacy and the principles of patient-centered outcomes

##### Targets

Increase in number of older adults reached and engaged in evidence based programs like the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. Further, there will be a growth in the number of providers registered.

##### Partners

- Lead – Johns Hopkins Bayview
- Baltimore County Departments of Health and Human Services and Aging, University of Maryland Age Friendly Health Care, hospitals and physicians identified by hospital partners.

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources.*





## STRATEGY II

### Increase coordination of services across health setting continuum

#### 2a Identify resources and mapping for services for adults focused on oral health, home visiting, mental health, and dementia with emphasis on LGBTQ+ communities

##### Targets

Development of new programming targeting the LGBTQ+ community. Further, where gaps in access to services are identified, there will be new navigation resources created to link individuals.

##### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Adult Evaluation and Review
- Baltimore County Department of Aging (all programs), the Mental Health Association of Maryland, Chase Brexton, the IMAGE Center, the Dental Association, the United Way and AARP Maryland



*Needed Resources include staff time, language translators, memorandums and contracts with universities and colleges.*

#### 2b Develop Middle River 21220 primary care site and identify a hospital to offer primary care services

##### Targets

Growth in number of individuals residing in the 21220 area being associated with a primary care medical office.

##### Partners

- Lead – AFBC to determine lead
- Local physician groups, federally qualified health centers and hospitals

*Needed Resources include staff time, research on similar programs operating, volunteer recruitment and outreach to philanthropic organizations and foundations for funding.*

2c

### Replicate, promote and support volunteer programs that support older adults with their transportation needs

#### Targets

Creation of a pilot transportation program in a designated area modeled after successful program in operation.

#### Partners

- Lead – St. Agnes Healthcare
- Baltimore County Departments of Health and Human Services, Aging and Transportation, AARP Age-Friendly partners with similar programs

*Needed Resources include staff time, research on similar programs currently operating, volunteer recruitment and management, and interest by philanthropic organizations and foundations.*

## STRATEGY III

### Improve utilization and access to care through telehealth

3a

### Coordinate and promote technology training resources for older adults and persons with disabilities and collaborate with the County's Digital Divide Workgroup

#### Targets

Increase in connections and training by older adults and persons with disabilities digitally due to the creation of a promotional plan addressing training, access and marketing on social media.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Aging
- Baltimore County Age-Friendly partners, other agencies and nonprofits that offer technology training



*Needed Resources include staff time and partnership building.*

## STRATEGY IV

# Identify gaps in services and increase access to mental, trauma-related and behavioral health services for County residents

### 4a Review existing surveys and data to identify gaps in mental, trauma-related and behavioral health services for County residents

#### Targets

Completion of review of all collected data and information.

#### Partners

- Lead – University partner to be identified for a course project
- Baltimore County Department of Aging and Community and Health Workgroup members

*Needed Resources include task coordinator between University and BCAF members, usage of 311 and MAP to collect data and establishment of a data collection database.*

### 4b Compile and publicize behavioral health and trauma-related resources

#### Targets

Growth in public knowledge about County resources available to address behavior health and trauma.

#### Partners

- Lead – Core Service Agency Support
- All AFBC partners and CMU and Info Workgroups

*Needed Resources include staff time, usage of the Community Resources Directory produced by BCDA and a current list of behavioral health resources.*



## 4c Serve on, liaise and participate on the County's Opioid Response Working Group

### Targets

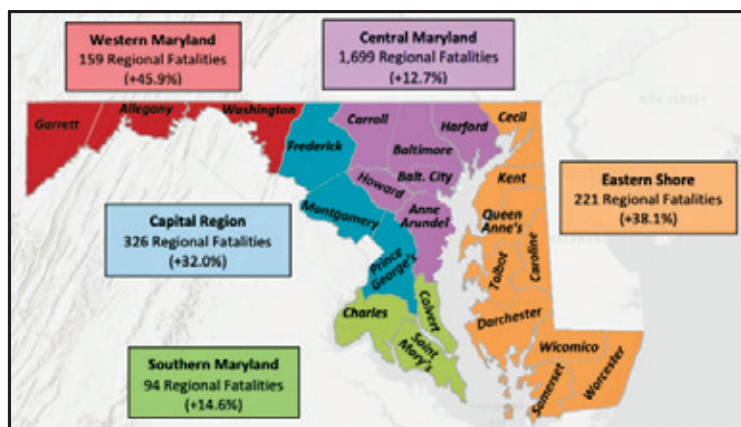
Growth in public requests for materials and assistance via community partners and BCPL for the Opioid Response Working Group campaign. Further, workgroup members will assist with the implementation of the de-stigmatization campaign and other recommendations to the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative.

### Partners

- Lead – CHS Workgroup partner, Mental Health Association of Maryland
- Community and Health workgroup members

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources as well as a liaison between the Community and Health Services Workgroup and the Response Working Group.*

Figure 5. Percent Change in Opioid-Related Intoxication Deaths by Region 2019 vs. 2020\*



## 4d Explore collaborating with Medstar and a University in developing a directory and building a knowledge of community resources for preventative care

### Targets

Development of a resource directory for preventative care through a collaboration with a hospital and a university.

### Partners

- Lead – Possible student health project in collaboration with MedStar
- Community health organizations and County hospitals

*Needed Resources include staff time, resources and a memorandum with a University and a hospital for oversight.*

## STRATEGY V

# Expand social participation opportunities that address isolation, preventative health and provide support for individuals and their care partners

### 5a Promote County Senior Centers and resources

#### Targets

Growth in senior center membership registrations in the County for programs addressing socialization, wellness and resources for older adults. Further, there will be an emphasis on the creation of outreach materials in different languages.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Aging
- Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners and the Communications and Information Workgroup members

*Needed Resources include staff time, translation services and the development of “community ambassadors.”*



### 5b Plan for developing a dynamic website for the County’s Health and Human Services Department using best practices model websites

#### Targets

Creation of a website for the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services that employs the best practices identified through research.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services
- Baltimore County Office of Information and Technology as well as the Age-Friendly Baltimore County CHS Workgroup members

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources with a focus on coordination between County Departments.*

## STRATEGY VI

# Increase consumer knowledge on legal, financial, end of life and disability planning

### 6a Identify available resources relating to legal, financial planning, end of life and disability issues

#### Targets

Increase in interest for financial, end-of-life and disability planning materials and webinar participation.

#### Partners

- Lead – Law school students to be identified or a combo of pro bono work and students in-kind
- Maryland Bar Elder Law section, Disability and Employment Section, Disability Rights Maryland, MD Volunteer Lawyers Services, Social Security Administration, Attorney General's Office, Mental Health Association of Maryland, Baltimore County Guardianship Program and Ombudsman and AARP Maryland

*Needed Resources include staff time, the development of printed resources, webinars, online resources and educational tool kits.*



### 6b Identify existing visitability guidelines and specifications and distribute to targeted audiences

#### Targets

Growth in number of partners promoting County visitability ordinance as evidenced by increased number of material requests.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Housing and Community Development
- Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup members

*Needed Resources include staff meeting time for coordination of information across partners and County agencies.*



***“The work and efforts that went into this Action Plan was immeasurably diverse and inclusive, bringing together people representative of all sectors of Baltimore County – County government, public service, private sector, and individual County residents – who have forged relationships that will continue well beyond the life of this Plan.***

***Even though we won’t see all of its realizations for another 2-3 years, we have already succeeded.”***

**-Dayna Brown, MSW, Deputy Director, Baltimore County Department of Aging**



# Housing

An Age-Friendly county is one where housing meets the needs of the residents across the lifespan, and takes into consideration affordability, accessibility and development proposals that protect and enhance our green spaces and surrounding environments. The County has faced significant challenges in the past with offering affordable and accessible housing, but has made great strides in recent years to address this.



## **Voluntary Compliance Agreement and Affordable Housing**

The Baltimore County branch of the NAACP, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., and three individuals filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in November 2011 alleging that Baltimore County developed housing only in areas with high concentrations of racial minorities and high levels of poverty. They also claimed the County provided affordable rental housing only for older adults and not for families with children. A Conciliation/Voluntary Compliance Agreement was reached in 2019. The agreement requires the County to commit at least \$3 million in County funds annually for ten years to create no fewer than 1,000 affordable housing units.

In response, and as part of the consent decree, County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. and the County Council successfully passed legislation in 2019 that prohibits discrimination based on a renter's source of income. The Home Act will open up more parts of the county to low-income renters who use federal housing vouchers, commonly referred to as Section 8. Currently, nearly 60% of Baltimore County's 5,600 voucher holders live in just seven zip codes on the county's east and west sides. Enabling people to move to high-opportunity communities decreases unemployment and crime, as well as increases the quality of education for children who otherwise would not be able to attend high-performing public schools.

To help ensure the County continues its work towards meeting this goal in the coming years, the Baltimore County Affordable Housing Workgroup will review progress to date, examine ongoing challenges, and develop actionable recommendations to further support and incentivize the creation of affordable housing units.

In concert with the County's Affordable Housing Workgroup, the Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup will reach out to developers and host meetings and discussions to solicit their feedback regarding the challenges they face in making the County's housing stock accessible and affordable. These exchanges will also provide an opportunity to present to them other Age-Friendly projects that have worked well in other municipalities and ideas for possible innovative solutions.

***“The Age Friendly initiative has identified strategies to create accessible, affordable and multi-generational housing throughout Baltimore County.”***

**-Peter Gutwald, Director,  
Baltimore County Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections**



## **Multigenerational Housing, Social Respect and Inclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted what we already suspected – social isolation among older adults and people with disabilities is becoming a public health issue. Recent studies found that social isolation significantly increased a person’s risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. Studies have also shown that social isolation is associated with about a 50 percent increased risk of dementia.

The Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup plans to explore and advocate for creative and flexible housing options that offer social components, including co-housing, home sharing opportunities between different generations, accessible dwelling units (ADU) and more. Several Age-Friendly communities in the U.S. that have successfully designed intergenerational, affordable and accessible housing will serve as models for Baltimore County.

Visitability is another way to allow for more social interaction as well as ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Visitability refers to single-family or owner-occupied housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by people who are physically challenged using stairs or who use wheelchairs or walkers. Visitability is similar to Universal Design in general intention, but is more focused in scope, more specific in parameters, and more explicitly grounded in a social reform intent. Surrounding counties have Visitability ordinances and laws in place. The Age-Friendly Baltimore County Workgroup recommends Baltimore County adopt similar measures.



## **Seniors and Home Repair - a Successful Age-Friendly Collaboration**

Our stakeholders, County residents and survey respondents expressed a strong need for home repair that is trustworthy and affordable. As part of the Age-Friendly Baltimore County initiative, with the Baltimore County Department of Aging, four Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners to include

Rebuilding Together Baltimore, Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc., known as CHAI, Civic Works, and the Dundalk Renaissance, Inc., secured funds from the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation. Adding to the Weinberg Foundation funds, additional funding was received from The Wesley, Inc., to all serve Baltimore County homeowners over the age of 65 in need of home repairs or safety modifications. These services will enable older adults to age safely in their homes.

Through the Baltimore County Age-Friendly Upgrades for Seniors (BCAUSE) program, eligible individuals will first be connected with a Baltimore County Department of Aging Community Outreach Specialist to have their home screened for fall risks and safety hazards. Further, a general needs assessment will be completed for other wrap-around services, including home-delivered meals, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Medicaid and other supports. One hundred homes are expected to be served in the first year of the program.

After reviewing the data from focus and discussion groups, stakeholder interviews and surveys, the Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup identified and prioritized the following strategies for this action planning cycle:

## STRATEGY VII

### Create opportunities to improve the County's housing stock and new developments so they are accessible for people with disabilities

#### **7a** Promote and incentivize new and re-development projects incorporating Uniform Accessible Federal Standards design principles

##### **Targets**

Increase in number of development projects that consider the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards design principles when planning. Further, the County will track the number of projects that implement those standards during construction.

##### **Partners**

- Lead – Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- Regional housing developers, Maryland Building Industry Association, The Maryland Chapter/American Society of Landscape Architects, the Maryland Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Disability Rights Maryland

***Needed Resources** include acquisition of Community Development Block grants, accessibility grants or County funding.*

#### **7b** Assess outdoors by creating commercial/ residential sidewalks and walking paths; add highlights to the ground level surface with both color and texture changes

##### **Targets**

Development of design manuals for the County Development process to distribute to encourage the consideration of these outdoor concepts.

##### **Partners**

- Lead – Baltimore County Housing and Community Development Department
- Baltimore County Departments of Planning and Permits and Inspections, Disability Rights Maryland, American Society of Landscape Architects, Building Industry Association and the American Society of Civil Engineers

***Needed Resources** include acquisition of Community Development Block grants, accessibility grants or County funding.*

**7c** Develop a sustained marketing campaign that demonstrates the County’s commitment to accessibility in housing that includes outreach methods that are culturally sensitive and supports English as a second language

**Targets**

Creation of digital and other materials as well as tracking the dissemination of materials and site visits.

**Partners**

- Lead – Baltimore County Housing and Community Development Department
- Baltimore County Office of Communications, Age-Friendly Communications Workgroup, the IMAGE Center, WearaCASA, faith based organizations and the Baltimore County Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workgroup

*Needed Resources include acquisition of Community Development Block grants, accessibility grants or County funding.*

**7d** Identify methods to enhance the retrofitting of existing homes that allow for aging in place

**Targets**

Development of a marketing plan to encourage older adults to retrofit their home and a process for the County to support these efforts.

**Partners**

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Housing and Community Development
- BCAUSE Senior Home Repair, the IMAGE Center, Baltimore County Department of Aging, Office of Permits and Inspections, and the Commission on Disabilities, Disability Rights Maryland and the Maryland Building Industry Association

*Needed Resources include acquisition of Community Development Block grants, accessibility grants or County funding.*



- 7e** Advocate legislatively through County departments (Planning, Housing, Aging, Health, PAI, Commission on Disabilities) to County Council to create Visitability statute modeled after Oregon’s Revised Statutes ORS 456.510 (<https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/456.510>)

**Targets**

Introduction of County legislation to create a County visitability statute will be addressed through the formal process of research on the Oregon statute, County Council hearings and discussion.

**Partners**

- Lead – Baltimore County Housing and Community Development Department
- Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities, the IMAGE Center, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Realtors, Leading Age and AARP Maryland

*Needed Resources include staff time to research the best practices on Visitability and strategies for implementation.*

STRATEGY VIII

**Enhance and create opportunities that promote interaction between different age groups within communities**

- 8a** Investigate the opportunities that exist and can be developed for the creation of multi-generational communities

**Targets**

Completion of market study on multigenerational communities including a list of existing developments that offer best practices to our area.

**Partners**

- Lead – Identify University to assign students to this project as coursework
- Multigenerational housing consultants, Age Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup, Baltimore County Departments of Aging and Community and Housing, faith based organizations, AARP/Age-Friendly communities intergenerational communities and NeighborSpace

*Needed Resources include staff time, funding and resources.*

8b

**Investigate the opportunities that exist and can be developed for multi-generational interactions in existing neighborhoods**

**Targets**

Development of a list of potential opportunities to create intergenerational engagement sites and a downloadable template for individuals to use.

**Partners**

- Lead – Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup/ St. Ambrose
- Baltimore County Public Schools, Public Libraries, Recreation and Parks, Arts organizations, NeighborSpace, Age-Friendly partners, multi-generational housing consultants, community associations, housing management companies and home owner associations

*Needed Resources include time and resources from our Age-Friendly Housing Workgroup partners.*



8c

**Research and promote home-sharing options for both intergenerational living arrangements and for residents 50+, as a strategy to enable older adults to remain in their neighborhoods**

**Targets**

Growth in homesharing arrangements as reported by organizations and industry in the County.

**Partners**

- Lead – St. Ambrose and Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup; potentially University involvement
- Baltimore County Departments of Aging and County Communications, faith based communities, colleges and universities, Leading Age and AARP Maryland

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources.*



STRATEGY IX

## Enhance and expand a variety of affordable housing options

### Coordinate virtual presentation to investors/developers interested in building/developing in Baltimore County

#### Targets

Growth in number of developers offering affordable housing. The process will begin with the development of the digital platform for the presentation.

#### Partners

- Lead – Age Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup/Affordable Housing Sub-Workgroup
- Baltimore County Department of Housing and Community Development

**Needed Resources** include list of investors/developers contact information for outreach.

### Conduct a survey for investors/developers (as a follow up to the presentation) to gauge interest, challenges to affordable housing development and retrofitting in the County

#### Targets

Achievement of a 50% survey completion rate of investors/developers and other engaged entities participating in the digital presentation on affordable housing options.

#### Partners

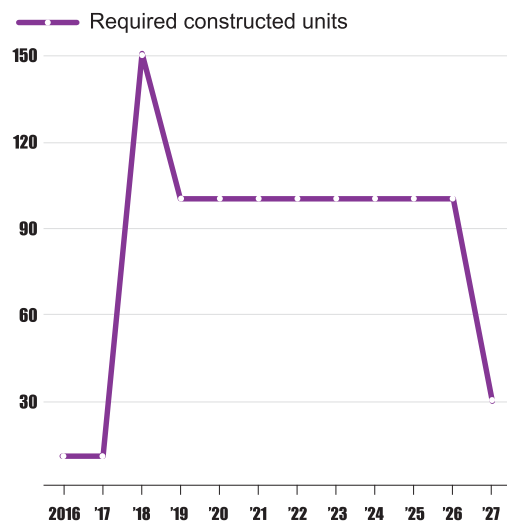
- Lead – Age Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup/Affordable Housing Sub-Workgroup
- Baltimore County Advisory Committee, Baltimore County Housing and Community Development and the Age-Friendly Communications and Information Workgroup

**Needed Resources** include list of interested investors/developers as evidence by expressed interest and a list of developers who have a history of development in the County.

### Affordable housing requirements

In 2016, Baltimore County struck an agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to spend taxpayer dollars to entice developers to build 1,000 affordable housing units by 2027. The number of units required by HUD each year increases significantly in 2018.

SOURCE: Department of Housing and Urban Development  
BALTIMORE SUN GRAPHIC



# Transportation

A robust transportation system that is user-friendly for residents of all ages and abilities is a key component to an Age-Friendly community. Baltimore County is part of the larger Central Transit System that also includes Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Harford County and Howard County. Baltimore County has recently undertaken a planning process with the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration. The resulting five-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) frames the County's goals and objectives around transportation and mobility for the next five years, and lays out a course of action to address current unmet and future needs.





## Paratransit

Available paratransit owned and operated by Baltimore County is CountyRide. CountyRide provides specialized transportation services to Baltimore County residents aged 60 or older, persons with disabilities ages 18 to 59, and rural residents of all ages. Destinations include medical appointments, shopping and other general-purpose trips. All services are operated on a demand-response basis through which customers need to schedule their trips. Mobility is the other paratransit option and is owned and operated by the Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA).

To relieve some of the burden from CountyRide for high-demand requests for riders who require the use of lifts and space for mobility devices, the County has been conducting a pilot with Uber. The goal of this pilot is to determine if CountyRide riders who do not need a lift or space for mobility devices can use Uber rides instead.



## Local Transit

The Towson Circulator, or The Loop, is a free, new service that will begin in Fall 2021 and is wheelchair accessible. The Loop is a fleet of 12 shuttles that will traverse two routes (Purple Loop and Orange Loop) within the central business district of Towson and will operate 6 a.m. to midnight on weekdays and 10 a.m. to midnight on Saturdays. Future Loop routes in other areas of the county are included as part of the Transit Development Plan.

Additionally, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, an Age-Friendly Baltimore County partner, will be the lead agency in creating a public education campaign to encourage more residents to take public transit. They will also assist the County in developing a travel training program for people with disabilities and individuals new to using public transit.



## Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

The Baltimore County Fire and Police Departments respond to more than 400 pedestrian accidents or fatalities each year.

- Eighty percent of pedestrian accidents in Baltimore County involve pedestrian error.
- Sixty percent of pedestrians killed in Baltimore County are adults over age 40.
- Every day someone is hurt or killed crossing the street in Baltimore County.

The Baltimore County Strategic Highway Plan’s mission and vision is to reach zero traffic fatalities using the Toward Zero Deaths methodology which reduces fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2030. The plan’s analysis includes a thorough review of speeding, distracted and impaired driving, and pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries in the County. While the goals of the plan are related to reducing fatalities, the focus is really on reducing injuries because preventing an injury prevents it from becoming a fatality.

The County is also currently undergoing a Bike-Ped Master Plan. Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners are assisting with outreach efforts for public comment. The end goal of the Bike-Ped Master Plan is a document that galvanizes a vision for bicycle and pedestrian mobility in a clear and concise workplan for transportation investments over the next five years.

## Transit Development Plan

The County, as part of their Transit Development Plan, underwent an extensive assessment of their current services. This did not differ too much from the Age-Friendly Baltimore County assessments. Desired service improvements included improved shorter waiting times, connectivity with first mile and last mile transit, and on-demand services similar to Uber or Lyft. Factors that would encourage use of public transit included increased safety, greater access to employment locations and more flexible scheduling.

Proposed service improvements in the near term include the expansion of CountyRide services to include weekends and evenings, a circulator service in Owings Mills, Microtransit available in five locations across the County and the creation of “Community Connectors” in eight areas of the County, including major employment areas. The County has proposed short-term (one to two years), mid-term (three to four years) and long-term (five years and beyond) goals to implement these expansions and new modes of transit.

***“Baltimore County’s Department of Public Works provides a plethora of services for transit users including CountyRide’s On-Demand services for the elderly and disabled and Uber Dashboard which supplements the service. Also, coming this fall will be a two route service in the Towson area that will circulate every 15-20 minutes called the Towson Loop. Within our Five-Year Transit Development plan we anticipate growing our transit system as well as further cooperation with MTA to implement new service and bus stops throughout the County.”***

**-Samuel Snead, Head Transportation Planner,  
Bureau of Transportation,  
Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation**

## STRATEGY X

# Increase pedestrian safety in the County

### 10a Advocate for the expansion of the qualifying criteria for the County's traffic calming proposals

#### Targets

Measurement of the increase in number of traffic calming requests. In preparation for this action, interested agencies and organizations will monitor the progress through monthly updates and sharing before the expansion would seek approval from the County Council.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Transportation Bureau
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Maryland Department of Highway Safety, Maryland Department of Disability and the Maryland Department of Transportation

*Needed Resources include data for qualifying rate of applicants and staff time by the Department of Aging to liaise with agencies.*



### 10b Promote the County's traffic calming program (after criteria expansion is approved)

#### Targets

Growth in number of social media, email and telephone requests for information/applications.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Aging and the County Communications Department
- Age-Friendly partners; specifically the Age-Friendly Community and Information Workgroup members

*Needed Resources include funding for pedestrian safety, staff time to liaise between agencies to disseminate promotional materials.*

## 10c Assist with outreach for public input into the County Bike-Pedestrian Master Plan

### Targets

Growth in number of individuals providing input for the County Bike-Pedestrian Master Plan.

### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Aging
- Age-Friendly Baltimore County partners

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources.*



## STRATEGY XI

### Expand existing paratransit to meet the demand and identify alternative options beyond CountyRide for riders with disabilities

## 11a Identify best practices in other municipalities that serve persons with disabilities who need accessible transit

### Targets

Compilation of best practices from other municipalities will be completed as well as local bi-monthly reports to monitor our process.

### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Transportation Planning Unit
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Maryland Department of Disabilities and the Maryland Department of Transportation

*Needed Resources include staff time from County, State and other partnering organizations to research and compile as well as funding for changes.*

## 11b Evaluate the success of the existing Uber Dashboard Pilot Program

### Targets

Completion of the evaluation of Uber Program usage as well as data from CountyRide and Mobility to demonstrate the demand has decreased.

### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Department of Aging
- Baltimore County Transportation Bureau

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources for data collection.*

## 11c Increase # of vehicles with lifts for mobility devices

### Targets

Growth in paratransit vehicles with lifts available in the County. This will be accomplished in conjunction with applying for grant or other funding sources from the State, Federal or local governments.

### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Transportation Planning Unit
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the IMAGE Center, local, state and federal transportation allies and partners, Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc., Catholic Charities, Action in Maturity and faith based organizations

*Needed Resources include partner staff and resources.*



## STRATEGY XII

# Increase connectivity transit options between the east and west parts of the County

### 12a Explore/study possible solutions to providing public, accessible transit options that will connect the east and west parts of the County

#### Targets

Completion of exploration phase of the programs which will culminate with the data collected from the pilot currently in place. Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan resulted in corridor studies.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore County Transportation Bureau
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transportation Authority, Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan



*Needed Resources include staff time and resources, funding sources to conduct any feasibility studies.*

### 12b Encourage a pilot for an East-West transit line

#### Targets

Increased ridership and connectivity for residents throughout the County.

#### Partners

- Lead – Maryland Department of Transportation
- Baltimore County Transportation Bureau, Baltimore City Department of Transportation

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources.*

## STRATEGY XIII

# Create materials and a public education campaign to encourage more people to ride public transit

### 13a Create a “beginner’s guide to riding public transit in Baltimore County”

#### Targets

Development of an educational guide for individuals to better navigate the transit system. Further, the effectiveness of the guide will be evaluated by monitoring the number of hits on social media and links as well as number of display materials being used and posted by Age-Friendly community partners.

#### Partners

- Lead – Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Baltimore County Public Library, Aging and County Communications, Central Maryland Transit Alliance and the Maryland Department of Disabilities

*Needed Resources include staff time and resources to develop guide, to distribute items and to promote materials.*



# Organizational Structure of the Plan

This Age-Friendly Baltimore County Action Plan follows the World Health Organization's and AARP Livable Communities' established eight domains, but with some modifications. The workgroups identified many of the findings and possible strategies related to multiple domains and shared cross-cutting issues and strategies. As a result, the action plan is organized by the icons located on the next page that are placed next to each activity to indicate which domain(s) it mostly addresses. While the planning process that resulted in this Action Plan focused more on transportation, housing and community and health services, additional planning, as mentioned above, is underway for "Outdoor Spaces and Buildings", "Communications and Information", and the implementation of an "Age-Friendly Business-Friendly Baltimore County" program that will commence in the fall of 2021.



## Domain Icons Key



**Accessibility  
and Mobility**



**Communication  
and Information**



**Community Support  
and Health Services**



**Employment and  
Civic Participation**



**Housing**



**Outdoor Spaces  
and Buildings**













**Social Participation  
Respect, and Inclusion**













**Transportation**

# Appendix A:

## Community and Health Services and Supports

STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	DOMAIN	YEARS TILL COMPLETE		
1. Assure inclusion and equity principles among health care providers	1a Review all materials, documents and AFBC plans for adherence to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Best Practices and Health Literacy Guidelines	  	'21	'22	'23
	1b Encourage other providers to join the Age-Friendly Health Systems that incorporate health literacy and principles and patient-centered outcomes		'21	'22	'23
2. Increase coordination of services across health setting continuum	2a Identify resources and mapping for services for adults that focus on: oral health, home visiting, mental health, dementia with emphasis on LGBTQ communities	   	'21	'22	'23
	2b Develop Middle River 21220 primary care site and identify hospital to offer primary care services		'21	'22	'23
	2c Replicate, promote and support volunteer programs that support older adults with their transportation needs		'21	'22	'23
3. Improve utilization and access to care through telehealth	3a Coordinate and promote technology training resources for older adults and persons with disabilities and collaborate with the County's Digital Divide Workgroup	  	'21	'22	'23

## Community and Health Services and Supports

STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	DOMAIN	YEARS TILL COMPLETE		
<b>4. Identify gaps in services and increase access to mental, trauma-related and behavioral health services for County Residents</b>	<b>4a</b> Review existing surveys and data to identify gaps in mental, trauma-related and behavioral health services for County residents	  	'21	'22	'23
	<b>4b</b> Compile and publicize Behavioral health and trauma-related resources		'21	'22	'23
	<b>4c</b> Serve on, liaise and participate on the County's Opioid Response Working Group		'21	'22	'23
	<b>4d</b> Explore collaborating with Medstar and a University in developing a directory and building a knowledge of community resources for preventative care		'21	'22	'23
<b>5. Expand social participation opportunities that address isolation, preventative health and provide support for individuals and their care partners</b>	<b>5a</b> Promote Senior Centers and County Resources	  	'21	'22	'23
	<b>5b</b> Create a dynamic website for the County's Health and Human Services Department using best practices model websites (e.g. Healthy Montgomery County)		'21	'22	'23
<b>6. Increase consumer knowledge on legal, financial and disability planning</b>  <b>Support and advocate for visitability concepts and practices</b>	<b>6a</b> Identify available resources relating to legal, financial planning, end of life and disability issues	   	'21	'22	'23
	<b>6b</b> Identify existing visitability guidelines and specifications and distribute to targeted audiences		'21	'22	'23










# Housing

STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	DOMAIN	YEARS TILL COMPLETE
<b>7. Create opportunities to improve the County’s housing stock and new developments so they are accessible for people with disabilities</b>	<b>7a</b> Promote and incentivize new and re-development projects incorporating Uniform Accessible Federal Standards design principles		'21 '22 '23
	<b>7b</b> Assess outdoor by creating commercial/residential sidewalks and walking paths; add highlights to the ground level surface with both color and texture changes		'21 '22 '23
	<b>7c</b> Develop a sustained marketing campaign that demonstrates the County’s commitment to accessibility in housing that includes outreach methods that are culturally sensitive and English as a second language		'21 '22 '23
	<b>7d</b> Identify methods to enhance the retrofitting of existing homes that allow for aging in place		'21 '22 '23
	<b>7e</b> Advocate legislatively through County departments (Planning, Housing, Aging, Health, PAI, Commission on Disabilities) to County Council to create Visitability statute modeled after Oregon’s Revised Statutes ORS 456.510 ( <a href="https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/456.510">https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/456.510</a> )		'21 '22 '23

# Housing

STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	DOMAIN	YEARS TILL COMPLETE		
<b>8. Enhance and create opportunities that promote interaction between different age groups within communities</b>	<b>8a</b> Investigate the opportunities that exist and can be developed for the creation of multi-generational communities	  	'21	'22	'23
	<b>8b</b> Investigate the opportunities that exist and can be developed for multi-generational interactions in existing neighborhoods		'21	'22	'23
	<b>8c</b> Research and promote home-sharing options for both intergenerational living arrangements and for residents 50+, as a strategy to enable older adults to remain in their neighborhoods		'21	'22	'23
<b>9. Enhance and expand a variety of affordable housing options</b>	<b>9a</b> Coordinate virtual presentation to investors/developers interested in building/developing in Baltimore County	 	'21	'22	'23
	<b>9b</b> Conduct a survey for investors/developers (as a follow up to the presentation) to gauge interest, challenges to affordable housing development and retrofitting in the County		'21	'22	'23

# Transportation

STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	DOMAIN	YEARS TILL COMPLETE		
<b>10. Increase pedestrian safety in the County</b>	<b>10a</b> Advocate for the expansion of the qualifying criteria for County’s traffic calming proposals	  	'21	'22	'23
	<b>10b</b> Promote the County’s traffic calming program (after criteria expansion is approved)		'21	'22	'23
	<b>10c</b> Assist with outreach for public input into the County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan		'21	'22	'23
<b>11. Expand existing paratransit to meet the demand and identify alternative options beyond CountyRide for riders with disabilities</b>	<b>11a</b> Identify best practices in other municipalities that serve persons with disabilities who need accessible transit	 	'21	'22	'23
	<b>11b</b> Evaluate the success of the existing Uber Dashboard Pilot Program		'21	'22	'23
	<b>11c</b> Increase # of vehicles with lifts for mobility devices		'21	'22	'23
<b>12. Increase connectivity transit options between the east and west parts of the County</b>	<b>12a</b> Explore/study possible solutions to providing public, accessible transit options that will connect the east and west parts of the County		'21	'22	'23
	<b>12b</b> Encourage a pilot for East-West transit line		'21	'22	'23
<b>13. Create materials and a public education campaign to encourage more people to ride public transit</b>	<b>13a</b> Create a “beginner’s guide to riding public transit in Baltimore County”	  	'21	'22	'23

## Appendix B: Acknowledgments

- Mary Aquino, Esq., Senior Attorney, Maryland Legal Aid
- Regina Aris, Assistant Director of Transportation Planning, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), Transportation Division
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Baltimore County Commission on Aging  
 Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities  
 Baltimore County Department of Aging  
 Baltimore County Homeless Roundtable  
 Baltimore County Interfaith Coalition  
 Baltimore County Veterans  
 Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Brotherhood  
 CASA of Maryland  
 Chase Brexton Health Services  
 Community College of Baltimore County  
 Mount Olive Baptist Church  
 Northeast Towson Improvement Association, Inc.

*\*Special Thanks to the Baltimore County Department of Aging Communications Team.*

## Appendix C: References

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2. *Age-Friendly Baltimore County Survey Analysis*, Mary W. Carter, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Health Sciences, Towson University, April 2020
3. *Baltimore County Transit Development Plan*  
Prepared by KFH Group, December 2020
4. *Baltimore County Enterprise Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022*
5. *Baltimore County Demographic Data*  
Provided and prepared by Kui Zhao, AICP, MCP, MA, Demographer & Senior Planner, Baltimore County Department of Planning
6. *Community Health Needs Assessment 2021*  
Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services
7. *Housing Priority Survey and Analysis*  
Tiffany Nicolette, Co-Chair, Age-Friendly Baltimore County Housing Workgroup and Vice President of Housing and Services, Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc., 2020

## Presentations

1. *Strategies for Creating Housing Opportunities*  
Dan McCarthy, Executive Director, Episcopal Housing Corporation, April 2020
2. *District of Columbia Age-Friendly Multigenerational Housing*  
J. Mark Dunham, Principal, Novum Strategies, 2019
3. *Age-Friendly Business Designations Research*  
Julia Boretsky, Elise Fellner & Angela Schroeck, Occupational Therapy, MS '21, Towson University, 2020 (Under Faculty Supervision of Marlene Riley, OTR)
4. *Baltimore County Fair Housing and Voluntary Consent Decree*  
Pete Gutwald, Director, Baltimore County Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections, January 2020

5. *Accessible Housing for People with Disabilities: Existing Requirements and Strategies for Creating Opportunity in Baltimore County*  
Diane Dressler, Maryland Department of Disabilities/Community Life Resources, Partnership for Affordable Housing, 2020
6. *A Diversified Age-Friendly Baltimore County*  
Troy Williams, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Ra'Mona Brown Carter, Human Relations & Diversity Specialist, Baltimore County Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 2020
7. *AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities*  
Bill Armbruster, Senior Advisor, AARP Livable Communities, 2020
8. *Age-Friendly Baltimore County Strategic Planning Findings*  
Laura Culbertson, Chief, Office of Quality Improvement, Baltimore County Health and Human Services, and Co-Chair, Age-Friendly Baltimore County Community and Health Services Workgroup, 2021
9. *Children's Service and Evidence based treatment models*  
Don Schlimm, Program Administrator, Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services, February, 2020
10. *Maryland Access Point (Aging & Disability Resource Center) and United Way 211*  
Quinton Askew, President and CEO, 211 Maryland, June 2020
11. *Age-Friendly Success in Other States: Transportation, Housing and Community and Health Services*  
Donna DeLeno Neuworth, Baltimore County Department of Aging, Age-Friendly Coordinator, 2020
12. *Baltimore County Age-Friendly Survey Findings*  
Jacob J. Bustad, PhD, Towson University, Department of Kinesiology, June and July 2020
13. *Baltimore County COVID-19 Collaboration*  
Elizabeth Sachs, Director of Government Reform and Strategic Initiatives, Baltimore County Government, 2020
14. *Where we Were, Where we Are Now and Where we are Headed*  
Marlene Riley, OTR, Age-Friendly Baltimore County Community and Health Services Workgroup member and Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy, Towson University, June 2020



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