
News Releases

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IU Center Partners with Indiana Grantmakers Alliance to Help Make Communities ‘Age-Friendly’

[Indiana University Media Relations Press Release](#) (November 15, 2012)

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – Indiana University’s Center on Aging and Community and the Indiana Grantmakers Alliance have been awarded a \$150,000 contract to help Indiana communities prepare for the massive growth of the older adult population.

The project is part of a \$1.3 million national initiative called Community AGEnda: Improving America for All Ages. Supported by Pfizer Foundation and [Grantmakers in Aging](#), a national association of funders, the national effort is helping nonprofits in five U.S. regions accelerate local efforts to make towns and cities “age-friendly” – that is, great places to grow up and grow old.

In Indiana, Huntington and Indianapolis will receive consultation and support to enhance the growth of “naturally occurring retirement communities” where local planning efforts incorporate an age-friendly perspective, inclusive of all ability levels. Also, community leaders and policymakers in Bloomington will explore developing incentives to encourage age-friendly neighborhood development.

“I am excited for our progressive community to be chosen and involved in the innovative age-friendly cities initiative grant,” said Huntington Mayor Brooks Fetters. “We are looking forward to working with Pathfinder Services Inc., the Huntington Community Foundation and other local organizations as well as Indiana University’s Center on Aging and Community to further study how our downtown can become more vital and inviting, especially for our seniors.”

Matching funds have been secured for the projects from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and the Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities. Additional requests for foundation funding are pending.

“Research tells us that most people want to grow old in the places that matter most to them, around family and community,” said John Feather, CEO of Grantmakers In Aging. “But that’s only going to be possible if all of us -- regional planners, elected officials, citizen groups, philanthropies, industry and others -- start thinking and taking action now to put age-friendly ideas into practice. Supporting age-friendly development is a natural role for local philanthropies because of their unique knowledge of the people and particular needs of their own regions.”

America is getting older fast. Today, 40 million people in the United States are age 65 and older, and this number is projected to more than double to 89 million by 2050. Yet most cities, towns, and regions are not preparing to take advantage of the opportunities -- and meet the challenges -- presented by a growing number of older adults.

“The aging of America’s population is one of the most important trends of the 21st Century, with tremendous implications for our future, our health, our economy and our quality of life,” said Caroline Roan, president of the Pfizer Foundation. “By partnering with Grantmakers in Aging, we believe we can promote health and wellness, advance the important national conversation around aging, and help our communities take tangible steps to prepare for these huge demographic changes.”

A national-local collaboration

Community AGEnda is providing a total of \$750,000 in funding to five communities or regions, and will use an additional \$550,000 to assess and support the local efforts and inspire similar work across the country. This work includes promotional activities and the development of planning, assessment, and strategy tools and other practical resources, including an online searchable database describing the growing number of age-friendly projects in the United States.

For more information on Community AGEnda in Indiana, contact Phil Stafford at 812-855-6508 or e-mail staffor@indiana.edu. Additional projects are taking place in the areas of Atlanta, Miami-Dade County, Kansas City and Phoenix.

What is an Age-friendly Community?

Nationwide efforts to make communities age-friendly take various forms. Often they involve physical environments -- from safe outdoor spaces and accessible public transportation to affordable, well-designed housing. Other age-friendly initiatives tackle social needs: creating engaging cultural and outdoor activities, public services, and volunteering options. Each community will focus on their own local challenges.

About the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

The [Center on Aging and Community](#) is part of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities. The Indiana Institute works to increase community capacity in disability through academic instruction, research, dissemination and training, and technical assistance.

The Indiana Institute receives support from the [Office of the Vice Provost for Research](#) at IU Bloomington, which is dedicated to supporting ongoing faculty research and creative activity, developing new multidisciplinary initiatives and maximizing the potential of faculty to accomplish path-breaking work.

About Indiana Grantmakers Alliance

[Indiana Grantmakers Alliance](#) is a nonprofit membership association serving the state’s community, corporate, family, independent, operating, private and public foundations, as well as corporate giving programs. Members hold 14.7 billion in assets and award 700 million in grants each year.