

AGE-FRIENDLY BROOKLYN TASK FORCE

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**THE
NEW YORK
ACADEMY
OF MEDICINE**

Office of the Brooklyn Borough President

The Center for Healthy Aging
The New York Academy of Medicine

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present this report summarizing the discussions of the Age-friendly Brooklyn Task Force. This endeavor brought together representatives from 30 Brooklyn-based organizations to develop an action plan for implementing recommendations set forth in The New York Academy of Medicine's (NYAM) 2019 report [Age-friendly Brooklyn: Findings and Recommendations](#). These recommendations address key aspects of aging-in-place, including housing, transportation, outdoor spaces, social participation, and health services.

The Age-friendly Brooklyn Task Force, made possible with the support of Mayor Eric Adams during his tenure as Brooklyn Borough President, met virtually three times during 2022. The members analyzed 33 recommendations from the 2019 report and prioritized 10 that would have the widest and most timely impact on Brooklyn's population of 352,000 residents age 65+. This report is intended to serve as a guide for Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso as he and his office work to implement age-friendly changes in the coming years.

At its core, the 2019 Age-friendly Brooklyn report sought to identify and understand inequities in health and quality of life for older adults. This work was put on pause during the early phase of the pandemic, and now we can refocus on this implementation plan that charts a path toward alleviating these inequities. Any efforts to address inequities must consider the vast and complex intersections of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender, religious belief, and disability. Accordingly, we urge all parties involved in the implementation of these generalized recommendations to thoughtfully consider these intersections to ensure the development of truly equitable solutions.

We are grateful to all the individuals who shared their expertise in the development of this strategic plan. Their deep knowledge of Brooklyn and their passion for improving the lives of older adults were integral to this process. We look forward to the continued development of age-friendly concepts that will ensure that Brooklyn remains an ideal place for current and future older adult residents and a model for the rest of New York City.

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to the following organizations who are dedicated advocates for older Brooklynites and shared their expertise as members of the Age-friendly Brooklyn Task Force:

- Age-friendly Central Brooklyn
- Bay Ridge Age-friendly Project
- Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
- Brooklyn Community Foundation
- Brooklyn Public Library
- Brooklyn-wide Interagency Council on Aging (BWICA)
- Catholic Charities POP Development Corporation
- Chinese-American Planning Council
- Citymeals on Wheels
- Fort Greene Council
- Good Neighbors of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill
- Good Neighbors of Park Slope
- GRIOT Circle
- Heights and Hills
- JASA
- League of Women Voters
- LiveOn NY
- Long Term Care Community Coalition
- Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)
- Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership
- NYC Center for Elder Abuse
- NYS Adult Services Association
- Office of the Brooklyn Borough President
- Older Adults Technology Services (OATS)
- The Office of Councilmember Crystal Hudson
- Riseboro Community Partnership
- SAGE
- SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- United Neighborhood Houses



TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- #1. Expand and promote housing options for older adults, including supportive housing, grandparent housing, and home sharing options.
- #2. Ensure safe, clean and well-maintained sidewalks and safe, well-lit intersections in neighborhoods.
- #3. Provide training to MTA bus drivers and rideshare drivers on working with older riders and/or riders with disabilities.
- #4. Expand access to information about news, events, health services and public benefits.
- #5. Increase digital accessibility and literacy for older adults, including an expansion of computer and technology classes.
- #6. Expand language access for mental health services.
- #7. Establish opportunities for private and public partnerships, including “Adopt-An-Older-Adult Center” programs.
- #8. Increase employment opportunities that fit the diverse vocational needs of older adults.
- #9. Increase opportunities and funding for programming at cultural institutions, community Centers and spaces, and faith-based organizations.
- #10. Cultivate and promote opportunities for volunteerism.



#1 HOUSING

Expand and promote housing options for older adults, including supportive housing, grandparent housing, and home sharing options.

ACTION ITEMS

- Create a centralized directory for all Brooklyn housing information for older adults including:
 - * 311's [Housing Options for Seniors](#)
 - * HPD's [Housing Connect](#)
 - * NORCs: Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (view sites on [IMAGE:NYC](#))
- Incentivize real estate developers to promote the construction of affordable housing through the [SARA](#) program.
- Promote the [Home Sharing Program](#) through targeted outreach to older adults and prospective tenants of all ages.
- Increase outreach and support for the [Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption \(SCRIE\)](#) program and utilize [IMAGE:NYC](#) to target high-needs neighborhoods.
- Promote the [NYS Kinship Navigator](#).
- Promote available [housing resources](#) to help older homeowners age in place.



#2 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ensure safe, clean and well-maintained sidewalks and well-lit intersections in neighborhoods.

ACTION ITEMS

- Regulate ambient light from construction sites and permanent lighting so as to ensure the ground is well-lit while also minimizing light pollution during nighttime hours.
- Collaborate with employment organizations to provide staff that can support older adult safety concerns such as snow removal.

PARTNERSHIPS TO CONSIDER

- **Community boards** provide localized input into a wide range of issues within a neighborhood including the built environment. View all [Brooklyn Community Boards](#).
- **Local businesses** have a mutual interest in ensuring the safety, cleanliness, and quality of sidewalks and intersections.
- **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)**, where local stakeholders oversee and fund the maintenance, improvement, and promotion of a commercial district.
- **Accessibility coordinators** in multiple city agencies can provide expert assistance on safety and well-being for older adults.



#3 TRANSPORTATION

Provide training to MTA bus drivers and rideshare drivers on working with older riders and/or riders with disabilities.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Establish contacts** with the community outreach departments of rideshare companies to advocate for improved training.
- **Collaborate with MTA education/training offices and participation on the MTA Advisory** to ensure that ongoing training includes considerations for older riders and/or riders with disabilities.
- Promote existing [TLC accessibility resources](#) and the [MTA Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit](#).

MTA RESOURCES

ACCESSIBILITY:

Accessible stations [map](#) & [list](#)

[MTA Accessibility](#)

[MTA Station Accessibility Projects](#)

[Elevator & Escalator Status Page](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Register for MTA [Newsletter](#)

Email MTA Accessibility: Accessibility@MTAHQ.org



#4 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Expand access to information about news, events, health services, and public benefits.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Place information kiosks** in or near affordable housing buildings, Older Adult Centers, and Adult Day Health Care Centers to provide older adults with relevant and up-to-date information about news, events, health services, economic empowerment programs such as [REES](#) & [CEP](#), and other public benefits.
- **Consult with resident associations** for kiosks in housing sites to determine kiosk placement, format, and relevant content and languages.
- **Prioritize buildings and neighborhoods** with high concentrations of older adults.
- Ensure that kiosks are accessible for people who are visually impaired.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- **Supplement digital communications with non-digital outreach including**, including local newspapers, phone calls, and mail to disseminate key information to individuals who prefer to receive information in these formats.
- **Disseminate up-to-date information** about policy changes, such as the new NYS law that expands Medicaid to undocumented adults age 65+.



#5 DIGITAL EQUITY

Increase digital accessibility and literacy for older adults, including an expansion of computer and technology classes.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Expand the NYC Free Tablet program** to reach additional digitally disconnected older adults in Brooklyn.
- **Include a Wi-Fi enabled media room equipped with computers** in any new or existing affordable senior housing sites.
- **Develop partnerships** to implement digital skills training across the borough. Potential partners include [NYC Aging](#) (formerly DFTA), [Older Adults Technology Services](#) (OATS) from AARP, and the [Brooklyn Public Library](#) (BPL).
- **Create an intergenerational volunteer tech support squad** in partnership with NYC Department of Education and Department of Youth and Community Development.
- **Promote BPL's new initiative** [Technology for All](#).
- **Ensure that all eligible Brooklynites are enrolled** in the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#).
- **Share information** about the [Lifeline Program](#) that provides free cellphone programs for people who are low-income.
- **Ensure that the City Council's Digital Literacy Initiative supports** organizations that cater to older adults.



#6 CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Provide culturally competent mental health services, including language access.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Seek input and technical assistance** from local and national organizations that specialize in underrepresented populations when developing programs or resources, for example:
 - * [Older Adults' Equity Collaborative](#)
 - * [Community Health Worker Network of NYC](#)
- **Continue to promote** existing mental health resources, such as [NYC-Well](#).
- **Provide culturally competent training** to primary care physicians in how to educate patients about mental health.

TOOLS TO UTILIZE

- [IMAGE:NYC's language data](#) can help tailor outreach to the language needs of specific neighborhoods.
- [LINK-NYC](#) kiosks can be a valuable resource for displaying mental health information and can be tailored to the cultural needs of specific neighborhoods.



#7 PARTNERSHIPS

Establish opportunities for private and public partnerships.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Establish an Adopt-an-Older-Adult-Center program** similar to existing models, such as [Adopt-A-Garden](#), to connect Older Adult Centers (OAC) with corporate and local business partners.
 - * Consider [Kaboom](#) as a model for OAC volunteerism.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Corporate and local businesses benefit from the economic participation of older adults within a community and similarly can **sponsor programs** that benefit older adults.
- [The Age-friendly Business Resource Guide](#) provides tips for business owners who want to improve the ways in which they cater to older adults.



#8 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Increase employment opportunities that fit the diverse vocational needs of older adults.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Advertise and publicize existing employment opportunities** for older adults, including:
 - * [NYC Older Adult Employment Opportunities](#)
 - * [Encore](#)
- Develop partnerships with local institutions, including Older Adult Centers, community spaces, parks, schools, and NYCHA housing.
- **Make digital education** opportunities easily available (see Rec. #5).
- **Support older adult entrepreneurs** in the neighborhood.
 - * [New Venture 50+](#)

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Prioritize options that may allow older adults to remain in the workforce:

- * job sharing
- * flextime
- * training/apprenticeships
- * paid internships
- * consulting



#9 ARTS & CULTURE

Increase opportunities and funding for programming at cultural institutions, community centers and spaces, and faith-based organizations.

ACTION ITEMS

Advertise existing programming offered to older adults, for example:

- * [Su-Casa](#) connects artists and arts organizations to Older Adult Centers (OAC) throughout the City
- * [Sing for Your Seniors](#) provides music programming in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and OACs
- * [NYC Parks](#) offers a variety of programs for older adults to keep active, healthy, social and engaged
- * [Brooklyn Community Board 14](#) details a variety of programs and services offered to older adults
- * [The Brooklyn Public Library](#) is a Lifetime Arts Creative Aging partner and a part of the [Culture Pass](#) program
- * [Brooklyn Digital](#) is an arts education initiative geared towards older adults
- * [NYC-ARTS](#) Cultural Guide details 43 different programs for older adults in Brooklyn



VOLUNTEER

#10 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Cultivate and promote opportunities for volunteerism.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Partner with and promote organizations** and programs that encourage older adult volunteers. Examples include:
 - * [League of Women Voters](#)
 - * [Senior Planet](#)
 - * [RSVP](#)
 - * [New York Cares](#)
 - * [NYC Service](#)
 - * [NYC Parks](#)
- **Provide training to interested organizations on best practices** to recognize, utilize, and involve the skills of experienced older adults. Examples of organizations to recruit trainers from include:
 - * [LiveOn NY](#)
 - * [AARP New York](#)
 - * [DFTA](#)

RESOURCES

[Office of the Brooklyn Borough President](#) (718) 802-3700

[Brooklyn Public Library Services for Older Adults](#) (718) 938-2525

[Citymeals on Wheels - Brooklyn](#) (212) 687-1234

[DFTA Aging Connect](#) (212) 244-6469

[LiveOn NY Benefits Outreach & Assistance](#) (212) 398-5045

[Access-A-Ride](#) (877) 337-2017 (including language services support)

[NYC Well](#) (888) 692-9355

[Older Adults Technology Services from AARP](#) (718) 360-1707

[Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption \(SCRIE\)](#) (212) 863-8494

CONTACT

If you have any questions regarding the Age-friendly Brooklyn Task Force, please contact

healthyaging@nyam.org or call 212-822-7207

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) tackles the barriers that prevent every individual from living a healthy life. NYAM generates the knowledge needed to change the systems that prevent people from accessing what they need to be healthy such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food, healthcare and more. Through its high-profile programming for the general public, focused symposia for health professionals, and its base of dedicated Fellows and Members, NYAM engages the minds and hearts of those who also value advancing health equity to maximize health for all. For more information, visit [NYAM.org](https://nyam.org).

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