

Proposed Vision Statement

A community where we, people of all ages and abilities, are engaged, valued and afforded equitable opportunities to thrive as we age.

Current Mission Statement

To promote a livable, caring community for East Hampton’s older adults.

Proposed Mission Statement

To provide resources and services to help East Hampton citizens thrive as they grow older and to combat ageism by changing the way we talk about aging.

2023-2024 Strategic Goals

1. Empower older adults to live in the community setting of their choice.
2. Protect our older adults from isolation, neglect, abuse and exploitation.
3. Reframe the community’s perceptions and attitudes toward aging and older adults.
4. Deepen relationships within East Hampton town government, local organizations and area Commissions on Aging to increase knowledge, effectiveness and capacity for collective action.
5. Maintain continuous and meaningful communication with the East Hampton community, focusing on older adults and caregivers. Become the “go to” source for the community.
6. Exploit the Internet for resources, information, activities and legislation relating to older adults. Share information where useful and appropriate.

Goal 1: Empower older adults to live in the community setting of their choice.

In 1948, the U.S. signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), recognizing adequate housing as a component of the human right to an adequate standard of living. Critical to many facets of life, including physical and mental health, safe, stable and affordable housing is necessary to achieving many other human rights, including security and safety.

⇒ **Objective: Support development of affordable and accessible housing in East Hampton.**

Strategies

- Advocate for increasing the amount of affordable housing in East Hampton with Council through information sharing, solution presentation and testimony
- Illustrate the hidden increasing need for accessible and affordable housing, as indicated by “I don’t need it yet” survey responses to needing housing changes
- Monitor trends in older adult housing and identify opportunities to apply locally
- Explore funding sources for new construction of affordable and accessible housing

⇒ **Objective: Support older East Hampton homeowners who want to remain in their homes.**

Strategies

- Create annual/semi-annual events where local volunteers perform maintenance or modification chores for/with older homeowners
- Work with local groups, (e.g., Eagle Scout program) to provide help to older homeowners
- Develop and maintain a Needs Registry that can be fulfilled by court-appointed public service requests
- Work with East Hampton High School to develop work-study or credited volunteer programs for older homeowner yard and garden maintenance
- Work with Vinal Technical High School in Middletown to develop programs with various trades to provide services to older homeowners
- Organize a local “Encore” program where retired trade/craftspeople provide services to older homeowners at reduced cost
- Organize a program encouraging local trade/craftspeople to volunteer their time for short-term, targeted jobs (e.g., changing a light fixture, tightening a stair banister, changing door locks)

⇒ **Objective: Ensure the safety of older adults as they move about the community.**

Strategies

- Advocate for sidewalks and extended street-crossing time
- Work with existing transportation entities to increase efficiency, refine scheduling and broaden reach
- Identify alternative efficient, reasonably priced transportation options

⇒ **Goal 1: Measures**

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Goal 2: Protect our older adults from isolation, neglect, abuse and exploitation.

Elder abuse is defined as any action or inaction that causes harm to an older adult and occurs in a relationship of trust.

⇒ **Objective: Educate the East Hampton community to recognize signs that an older adult is being abused and what they can do about it.**

Strategies

- Identify resources to educate the community on recognizing the signs of abuse and reporting it; if none exist, develop them
- Require employees and volunteers working with our older adults to familiarize themselves with the State of Connecticut’s elder abuse protocols
- Create an intergenerational volunteer program among regularly check on East Hampton older adults living in non-communal settings (See Big Brothers/Big Sisters suggestion under Goal 3)
- Link the State of Connecticut’s Protective Services for the Elderly Program to the East Hampton website

⇒ **Goal 2: Measures**

- Run two educational programs for the public regarding elder abuse over the next two years
- Have in place a required educational program for employees and volunteers by 1st quarter 2024
- Accomplish weekly visits on twenty older adults living in non-communal settings by year end, 2023 adding forty more in 2024

Goal 3: “Reframe” the community’s perceptions and attitudes toward aging and older adults, including among older adults themselves.

Reframing counters ageism by changing the way we talk about aging. It is a long-term social change endeavor to improve the public’s understanding of what aging means and ensure supportive policies and programs. Equally important, reframing can change the way older adults perceive themselves by widening the focus from “elderly needs” to include community needs older adults can fill.

⇒ Objective: Develop opportunities for East Hampton’s older adults to play an active role in the community.**Strategies**

- Work with East Hampton HS to develop programs where older adults can share their expertise with students
- Identify or develop mentoring programs
- Identify and promote current intergenerational programs
- Create, maintain and promote an Opportunities Registry where older adult skills can be matched with interested people
- Create a Big Brother/Big Sister-type program where older adults are matched with older adults who are isolated through health or mobility issues

⇒ Objective: Change the way we communicate about aging.**Strategies**

- Rename the Senior Center
- Introduce/use terminology that is inclusive and age-inclusive in all written and verbal communications
- Educate the community to the destructiveness of ageism and how they can contribute to ending it
- Monitor the E4 Center and the National Council on Aging for reframing activity updates, Best Practices and progress

⇒ Goal 3: Measures

- Senior Center name changed by 3rd quarter 2023
- Dedicate two RiverEast articles to reframing in 2023/2024
- All communications are age-inclusive

Goal 4: Deepen relationships within East Hampton town government, local organizations and area Commissions on Aging to increase knowledge, effectiveness and capacity for collective action.

The activities of most, if not all, of East Hampton boards and commissions impact our oldest adults. Currently, the operations of each appear to be siloed. The COA should take a leadership position in encouraging fuller cross-knowledge and integration.

Local churches and service organizations have built-in reach that should be leveraged for advocating and educating a community.

In addition, the collaboration between area Commissions on Aging enhance each other's capacity through sharing their goals and respective expertise and goals.

⇒ **Objective: Understand what the East Hampton boards and commissions do and how they may impact older adults.**

Strategies

- Continue commission/department head meetings. Ensure participants fully communicate back to their boards
- Assign a COA member to each commission/board to keep abreast of current and proposed actions and assess the potential impact on our older adults; achieve by reviewing minutes and occasional meeting attendance
- Develop a basic response and potential scenarios to questionable or negative-impact activities
- Identify collaborative opportunities when designing COA programs and projects

⇒ **Objective: Develop opportunities for area and out-of-area COAs to build networks, cooperate and collaborate.**

Strategies

- Invite other Commissions on Aging to tell their story at our meetings
- Establish common ground, and potentially a framework, for collaboration
- Identify collaborative opportunities when designing COA programs and projects
- Consider a joint social event to provide a relaxed environment to facilitate relationship building

⇒ **Objective: Reach out to local churches and service organizations to tell our story**

Strategies

- Prepare/present a basic presentation with issue-specific modules
- Prepare/present a presentation celebrating our accomplishments and looking forward

⇒ **Goal 4: Measures**

- Invite two area COAs to speak at regular COA meetings in 2023 and four in 2024
- Collaborate on at least one project per year with an area COA
- Present our basic presentation to at least two church or service organization in 2023
- Present the looking forward presentation to four churches or service organization in 2024

Goal 5: Inaugurate effective and meaningful communication with the East Hampton community, focusing on older adults and caregivers. Become the “go to” source for the community.

Good communication fosters an informed and motivated community. It is an opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and helps us connect to others. Judicial print and digital media utilization as well as in-person events can establish East Hampton COA as a “subject matter expert” on older adults.

⇒ **Objective: Identify communication preferences among East Hampton older adults.**

Strategies

- Acquire or develop a database of East Hampton older adult addresses, phone numbers and emails
- Develop a communication/response vehicle to determine what kind of information each adult is interested in knowing about and how best to communicate with them
- Segment the database according to interest and means to communicate

⇒ **Objective: Leverage local media to share information and educate.**

Strategies

- Write a monthly column for RiverEast; more often if issues require more communication
- Identify other print and digital media opportunities
- Consider starting an East Hampton COA blog
- Set up a “news board” in the Senior Center focusing on issues

⇒ **Objective: Develop additional outlets/methods to educate and share information with East Hampton and surrounding towns.**

Strategies

- Sponsor a health event, collaborating with area Commissions on Aging
- Sponsor a family care-giver event to share information and resources
- Consider sharing knowledge through presentations at local churches and service organizations

⇒ **Goal 5: Measures**

- Older adult data base completed by end of 2nd quarter 2023
- Communicate directly with all East Hampton older adults during 3rd quarter
- Nine RiverEast columns in 2023; twelve in 2024
- Consistent use of two other media outlets by year end 2023
- Accomplish at least one event per year

Goal 6: Exploit the Internet for resources, information, activities and legislation relating to older adults. Share information where useful and appropriate.

The plethora of information brought to us courtesy of the Internet makes it unnecessary to “reinvent the wheel” regarding older adults. It affords us the opportunity to learn about and monitor activities and opportunities we’ve not heard about or, perhaps, even imagined. In addition, the Internet allows us to network with far-flung individuals and organizations who share our focus.

⇒ **Objective: Discover Best Practices and innovations, identify trends, track activities of organizations focused on older adults.**

Strategies

- Routinely comb the internet for older adult-related subject matter; bookmark sites to follow
- Identify innovative and forward-thinking organizations; reach out as appropriate
- Read meeting minutes as needed for detailed information
- Identify activities we might want to pursue (e.g., AARP Livable Communities)

⇒ **Objective: Monitor current and pending legislative activity on all levels.**

Strategies

- Routinely monitor government sites for pending legislation
- Refine knowledge of current and historical legislation
- Reach out to State of Connecticut and Federal sources for information
- Identify congresspeople who sit on committees dealing with aging; generate awareness of their voting records
- Consider an advocacy role

⇒ **Objective: Identify potential funding sources to support COA projects and programs.**

⇒ **Goal 6: Measures**

- Nine RiverEast columns in 2023; twelve in 2024
- Consistent use of two other media outlets by year end 2023
- Accomplish at least one event per year
- Achieve subject-matter expertise in older adult legislation