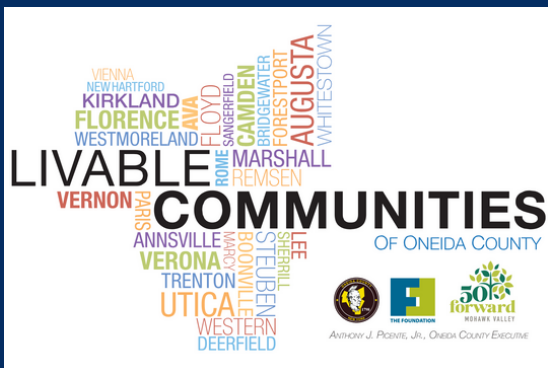




LIVABLE COMMUNITIES
OF ONEIDA COUNTY

Action Plan



2025-2028

Table of Contents

01

Executive
Summary



02

About Livable
Communities

03

Project
History

04

Community
Assessment

05

Our
Approach

06

Action
Items

15

Age-Friendly
Partners

Executive Summary

On behalf of the County of Oneida, I am pleased to present the Livable Communities of Oneida County Action Plan for 2025 through 2028.

Oneida County continues to prioritize age-friendly planning and policies to meet the needs of an evolving population and to support independence and quality of life for residents of all ages. As a proud member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities since 2016, Oneida County remains committed to aligning with the global vision of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities initiative.

Following a comprehensive needs assessment in 2019—including a countywide survey and community focus groups—the County released its first Livable Communities Action Plan in 2021. This plan was shaped through meaningful collaboration among community leaders, government entities, and service organizations.

Over the past five years, our efforts have spanned eight key domains of livability: civic participation and employment; respect and social inclusion; social participation; communication and information; health services and community supports; housing; outdoor spaces and buildings; and transportation.

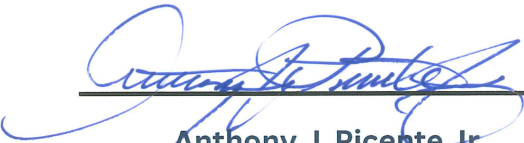
This period of progress has laid the groundwork for the next phase. The 2025–2028 Action Plan builds upon existing programs and successes, while incorporating new goals informed by community feedback and lessons learned.

Our vision is one of continued innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity—ensuring Oneida County remains a welcoming, accessible, and supportive place for people of all ages.

The Livable Communities initiative will continue under the leadership of its three core partners: Oneida County, The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, and 50 Forward Mohawk Valley. Together with a broad coalition of community partners, we are committed to advancing this work over the next three years and beyond.



Photo: oneidacountyny.gov


**Anthony J. Picente Jr.,
County Executive
Oneida County, New York**

Livable Communities of Oneida County

Who We Are

Livable Communities of Oneida County is an initiative of Oneida County, NY; the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties; and 50 Forward Mohawk Valley. We collaborate with community partners and programs throughout the county. We promote age-friendly planning and policies that enable residents of all ages and abilities to lead healthy, active, and engaged lives.

Oneida County, NY, is a recognized member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, an independent affiliate of the World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. New York is the first state to be recognized in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities supports the work of local, regional and state governments as they prepare for the nation's changing demographics. Established in 2012, the Network includes towns, cities, counties and states that have made a commitment to being more livable for people of all ages, and especially older adults.

Our Objective

"A Livable Community is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life."

—AARP.org

The United States is rapidly aging, with 1 in 3 Americans now 50 or older.

In 2023, an estimated 20.3% of Oneida County residents were over 65 years old (United States Census Bureau).

Project History

2016

Oneida County applied for membership to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.



**Age-Friendly Communities
Are Livable for
People of All Ages**
aarp.org/livable

2019

Oneida County was one of five New York counties chosen to be an Age-Friendly Center of Excellence.

This initiative includes livability domains and incorporates Health Across All Policies to better integrate community-based support and services within the health system and across continuum of care.

2021

Livable Communities of Oneida County's Action Plan was completed with input from residents across the county.

Leaders from diverse communities, government bodies, and organizations serving residents across Oneida County were invited to serve on the Steering Committee and Work Groups, developing an extensive survey and focus groups to inform the creation of the plan.

2025

Livable Communities of Oneida County's 2019–2024 Progress Report was completed.

The project's Work Groups and Steering Committee conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the 2021 Action Plan and compiled a 2019–2024 Progress Report to share highlights, data, and key insights gained over five years of working with the plan.

Assessment

The Livable Communities of Oneida County 2025–2028 Action Plan was developed using data and information gathered from the project’s 2019 needs assessment as well as updated and ongoing sources.

2019 Needs Assessment Process

The needs assessment phase included a two-part process: conducting a community survey and convening focus groups. The Steering Committee adapted the AARP Needs Assessment Survey and distributed it countywide, reaching both rural and urban areas. The Project Coordinator led extensive outreach at senior centers, libraries, restaurants, community events, and the local mall, with support from Utica University Occupational Therapy graduate students. Surveys were available online and in print, yielding over 1,700 responses.

Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults 2023

The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults was conducted to gain data-driven insights into both the needs and strengths of Oneida County older adult residents, based on their own perspectives. This report seeks to offer the Oneida County Office of Aging and Continuing Care and other stakeholders a deeper understanding of the supports and services needed to meet the demands of the county’s growing aging population and enhance the quality of life for older adults.

Health and Age Across All Policies report prepared by The Center for Community Partnerships and Policy Solutions, New York Academy of Medicine, July 11, 2024

This report assessed the Health and Age Across All Policies (HAAAP) initiative, which created a learning collaborative involving 16 counties and municipalities in New York, including Oneida County. Supported by the New York Academy of Medicine, the New York Department of State, and the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, the program aimed to promote healthier, more age-friendly communities.

Livable Communities of Oneida County Steering Committee and Work Groups

The project’s Steering Committee and Work Groups contributed input based on their areas of expertise to create the 2025–2028 Action Plan. The Steering Committee includes representatives from Oneida County Departments of Family & Community Services, Planning, Health, and Mental Health, and Office of Aging and Continuing Care; the Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties; 50 Forward Mohawk Valley; and Utica University. The Work Groups for each domain of livability include representatives from government departments, municipalities, and area organizations as well as experts and community members. Newly formed in 2025, the Community Work Group is comprised of older adult residents of Oneida County who provide input and feedback to the initiative,

Approach to the 2025–2028 Action Plan

Key Strategies

- Build upon what was accomplished through the 2021 Action Plan.
- Continue to work on the 2021 Action Plan goals that have not yet been completed after evaluating and considering the best ways to move forward.
- Create new Action Plan goals that respond to updated survey data and insights gained from completed and ongoing projects.
- Respond to the changing economic and demographic shifts predicted to take place over the next three years.
- Identify and promote the wide scope of age-friendly planning and resources in Oneida County.
- Collaborate with an expanded number of organizations and a broader representation of community members.
- Incorporate opportunities to engage the participation of older adult residents of Oneida County in every aspect of planning and implementation of the Action Plan.



Action Items

Livable Communities of Oneida County promotes age-friendly policies and programs that enable residents of all ages and abilities to lead healthy, active, and engaged lives. Our work focuses around **eight domains of livability**.



Civic Participation & Employment

Our vision for Oneida County:

To expand opportunities for older adults to engage in meaningful paid employment and volunteer positions free from age discrimination. We will improve the level of participation for people of all ages and abilities to serve older adults.

The Civic Participation Work Group currently consists of representatives from 50 Forward MV.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Increase volunteer opportunities to engage and benefit older adults	Promote 50 Forward MV Volunteer Center	50 Forward Mohawk Valley - Oneida County OFA - community-based partners
Promote volunteer information packets to employers for pre-retirement employees	- Provide pre-retirement volunteer packets to employers (print and digital materials) - Conduct presentations to employers	50 Forward MV
Promote the benefits of hiring older employees	Create and promote an awareness campaign	50 Forward MV - Social-Communication-Inclusion and Community Work Groups

Communication & Information

Our Vision for Oneida County:

To create communication strategies effective in engaging community residents of all ages, making sure seniors are aware of activities, services, and programs available throughout the county.

The Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, Dunham Public Library, Midtown Utica Community Center, Mohawk Valley Latino Association, New Hartford Public Library, Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care, Oneida County Tourism, Sentinel Media Company, The Center, Utica University, and other experts and community members.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Make information and contact information for services for older adults easy to access by county residents	• Create comprehensive resource directory of links • Develop Livable Communities monthly email newsletter	• Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group • Project Coordinator
Increase knowledge about what events are happening community-wide, including reaching non-English-speaking communities	• Curate a list of community events to include in monthly newsletter • Promote the newsletter to older adult residents • Offer translated versions	• Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group • Project Coordinator
Develop and promote tech education for seniors	• Launch 50 Forward MV tech classes • Identify and promote public library programs	• 50 Forward MV • OC Public Libraries

Respect & Social Inclusion

Our vision for Oneida County:

To increase meaningful and positive engagement by older adults in community life. Needs and preferences of a diversity of older adults heard, considered, and acted upon in planning programs and events. Intergenerational bonds are strengthened.

The Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, Dunham Public Library, Midtown Utica Community Center, Mohawk Valley Latino Association, New Hartford Public Library, Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care, Oneida County Tourism, Sentinel Media Company, The Center, Utica University, and other experts and community members.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Increased positive visibility of older adults in local media through storytelling, resident profiles, and centenarian recognition	Create and implement a 3-year media plan	Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group
Older adults are engaged in public policy and practice	- Promote Community Work Group - OC OFA Forums - NYS Master Plan for Aging invitation for public comment	- Project Coordinator 50 Forward MV - Oneida County OFA - NYS OFA
Develop and implement phase 2 of ageism awareness social media campaign	Create a 3-year plan to coincide with National Ageism Awareness Day	Social-Communication-Inclusion Work Group
Develop an age-friendly business program	- Create plan - Promote plan	- Community Work Group - chambers of commerce

Social Participation

Our Vision for Oneida County:

To provide unique opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to connect and feel welcome. To encourage socialization and strengthen the greater community.

The Social-Communications-Inclusion Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, Dunham Public Library, Midtown Utica Community Center, Mohawk Valley Latino Association, New Hartford Public Library, Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care, Oneida County Tourism, Sentinel Media Company, The Center, Utica University, as well as other experts and community members.

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Promote social participation opportunities to help address social isolation experienced by older adults	- Identify existing opportunities - Create and publicize a directory	- Social-Communication-Inclusion and Community Work Groups - Project Coordinator
Identify barriers preventing older adults from participating in activities offered at senior apartment complexes	Conduct a survey	50 Forward MV - College student interns

Health Services & Community Supports

Our Vision for Oneida County:

To promote, maintain, and restore health by engaging all people and creating an environment to improve community health and quality of life.

The Health Services & Community Supports Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, Center for Family Life and Recovery (CFLR), Emergency Planners in Inclusive Communities (EPIC), Oneida County Department of Mental Health, Oneida County Department of Planning, Oneida County Health Department, Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Expand health and community programs for older adults and residents of all ages and abilities	Identify and track age-friendly projects of the County and other agencies	Health Work Group
Identify and promote services that enable older adults to age in place	Gather information about services and assist in promotion	Health Work Group
Expand and promote preventive classes, workshops, and outreach events to increase health through education	- Conduct outreach through tabling at community events - Offer classes and workshops	- Health Work Group 50 Forward MV

Housing

Our Vision for Oneida County:

To ensure access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing.

The Housing Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, Home Ownership Center, LIFE at RCIL, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Mohawk Valley Housing & Homeless Coalition, and People First.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Develop home repair service or referral program for seniors and people with disabilities	• Gather information about resources already in place • Identify gaps and additional funding sources • Create a network to share information and resources	• Housing Work Group
Develop a wheelchair ramp program for people unable to arrange or afford this themselves	• Gather information about resources already in place • Identify gaps and additional funding sources • Create a network to share information and resources	• Housing Work Group

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Our Vision for Oneida County:

To improve entry points, participation, and navigation to new options and opportunities within neighborhoods, open spaces, and buildings for people of all ages and abilities.

The Outdoor Spaces & Buildings Work Group currently includes representatives from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley, City of Utica, First Circle, Green Utica, Oneida County Department of Planning, and Oneida County Tourism.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Improve access to safe, accessible and welcoming walkways, streets, public buildings, and outdoor spaces for all ages and abilities	• Gather information from Oneida County Planning Dept. and municipalities about age-friendly projects planned	• Outdoor Spaces Work Group • Project Coordinator
Complete a pop-up temporary project with a municipality to test a proposed outdoor project	• Install during July–August • Include QR code to be able to gather survey data	• Outdoor Spaces Work Group • High school or college summer interns

Transportation

Our vision for Oneida County:

To increase transportation options that connect people to social activities, economic opportunities, and medical care. To offer convenient, accessible, low-cost alternatives to driving.

To address transportation issues of older adults in Oneida County, the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Council Transportation Coordination Committee (HOCTC TCC) serves as the Work Group for the Livable Communities of Oneida County initiative.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS	FACILITATORS
Participate in the HOCTC TCC Mobility Coordination Subcommittee where all agencies with shared human services clients meet regularly to identify challenges and develop solutions	- Identify specific action steps that the Livable Communities project/50 Forward MV could assist with stewardship - Advocate for older adult residents	50 Forward MV - HOCTC TCC Mobility Coordination Subcommittee
Update and maintain a “one click-one call” call center to provide transportation information for older adults (based at 50 Forward MV)	- Update website and database with transportation and transportation-related education resources - Outreach to community members and community-based organizations	50 Forward MV in partnership with HOCTC and Oneida County Mobility Manager

We thank these agencies and organizations for their contributions and continued support of the Livable Communities of Oneida County initiative.

50 Forward Mohawk Valley
Associates For Training and Development (A4TD)
Center for Family Life and Recovery (CFLR)
City of Utica
City of Rome
Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties
Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County
Dunham Public Library
Emergency Planners In Inclusive Communities (EPIC)
Empowered Pathways
First Circle
GreenUtica
Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Council (HOCTC)
Home Ownership Center
Johnson Park Center
LIFE at RCIL
Midtown Utica Community Center (MUCC)
Mid-York 2-1-1
Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency
Mohawk Valley Housing & Homeless Coalition
Mohawk Valley Latino Association
Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center
New Hartford Public Library
Oneida County Department of Family and Community Services
Oneida County Department of Mental Health
Oneida County Department of Planning
Oneida County Health Department
Oneida County Office for Aging and Continuing Care
Oneida County System of Care
Oneida County Tourism
People First
Sentinel Media Company
SCORE
The Center
United Way of the Mohawk Valley
Utica Public Library
Utica University
Working Solutions

GET INVOLVED

Livable Communities of

Oneida County

717 Court Street, Utica, Ny 13502

315-917-3317

edouglas@50forwardmv.org

livableoneidacounty.com

Facebook @livableoneidacounty