

Municipal Services to Keep Seniors in their Homes

HANDS-ON HELP

There are a number of practices and programs that planners in collaboration with municipal service departments can implement to address safety and assistance with seasonal needs around the house. For example:



Implement targeted services such as sidewalk snow removal, grass cutting and trash collection.



Establish heating and cooling centers.

PROPERTY TAX OR OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

- Municipalities, counties or townships can consider a service to assist seniors with the paperwork associated with applying for important tax breaks and other administrative needs.



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Some local communities have implemented general first-aid and other health and safety training.

- Provide specific senior-related training for municipal first responders (firemen, paramedics) or other community volunteers and leaders so that older adults can be quickly assisted in crisis situations.

The toolkit is not intended to have all of the solutions, however we hope that it helps begin conversations within your community to find practical and helpful solutions to a growing segment of your population that contributes so much to your community!

Please access the tool-kit at www.illinoisrealtors.org/Senior-Toolkit

We hope to be part of those discussions and look forward to being a resource for you.



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This toolkit was developed by Illinois REALTORS® with content adapted from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Aging in Place White Paper.

Planning for Senior Housing

in your Municipality



www.illinoisrealtors.org/Senior-Toolkit

WHY IT MATTERS

Planning for the needs of seniors is a key priority and challenge for the region

The country's population of older residents has grown significantly over the past several decades and is projected to continue growing.

A majority of people will reach the age of 65 and over in their lives. All will need a safe and supportable place to live whether they remain in their current home or transition to a new phase in their life's journey.

The Illinois REALTORS® has developed a digital toolkit with ideas and resources which communities can adopt, but which won't substantively increase housing costs or undermine private property rights.



The digital kit will reveal ideas from around the country with common sense solutions.

The tool-kit focuses on best practices

with suggested strategies for senior housing related issues at the municipal level.

Topics include:

1. Land Use and Regulatory Structures
2. Housing Strategies
3. Municipal Services to Keep Seniors in Their Homes

Land Use and Regulatory Structures

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Neighborhood design contributes to age-friendliness. Age-friendly neighborhoods are walkable, accessible to amenities and services and offer housing and transportation choices.

When creating land use and zoning policies, promote flexible zoning with senior focus:

- Consider overlay style concepts
- Incorporate senior residences in downtown areas
- Reduced parking for senior housing

CODES AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- Care should be taken to make sure that multi-family housing meets both the design standards of the Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC)¹ and the Fair Housing Act.²
- Secondly, create codes to incorporate incentive-based universal design principals.
- Incentivize smaller minimum floor areas and lot sizes that foster more compact development.³
- Accommodate diverse living arrangements and work with your local corporate counsel to verify definitions of family are not overly restrictive.



1 <https://www.illinois.gov/cdb/business/codes/pages/illinoisaccessibilitycode.aspx>

2 <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/destech/fairhousing.html>

3 <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/pdf/agingincommunity.pdf>

Housing Strategies

MODIFICATION AND REPAIR

Home modifications and maintenance are fundamental to keeping seniors safe in their homes. Policies and programs must be affordable since the senior or family member may do some work themselves.

When developing a modification or repair programs there are some basics:

- Streamline your permitting and regulatory processes or provide fee waivers.
- Help facilitate a volunteer network through non-profit, educational and faith-based institutions.
- Establish an education and awareness program of available municipal services.
- Maintain a database of qualified and certified trade industry professionals.
- Consider current funding streams reallocated for assistance to low and moderate-income seniors.
- Consider an accessory dwelling unit policy.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SENIOR HOUSING

The demand is there for homes that allow a person to age in place. Diverse strategies should be contemplated. For example:

- Senior housing should be part of both residential and commercial zoning districts and accommodate for both aging in place and practical mixed-use strategies.
- During planning discussions reach out to local trade associations in the real estate and building industry.
- Consider multi-generational, modular or shared-home solutions .

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