

Innovations in Aging Collaborative

- The Innovations in Aging Collaborative (IIAC) was formed in 2009 by Barbara Yalich and BJ Scott, with the belief that our community had great potential to improve the ways in which we support our aging population.
- Our early initiatives focused on building a local dialogue around aging at a series of summits.
- We heard genuine appreciation for existing resources, but we also started to identify specific community needs in areas where we as a community fell short.
- We began to see a place for ourselves in enhancing older residents' quality of life, and we moved forward to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in December 2012.
- We structured ourselves as a catalytic organization that identifies innovative solutions and then partners with local organizations for initiative implementation.
- Using the Age-Friendly framework (which was still fairly new), we were able to publish the comprehensive "Aging in the Pikes Peak Region" report by Dr. Tucker Hart Adams in 2015. The report presented quantitative evidence of the need to strengthen local systems that would empower us to age on our own terms.

Aging in the Pikes Peak Region

According to the report, *Aging in the Pikes Peak Region*, by Dr. Tucker Hart Adams, the population of older adults age 65+ in our community is projected to grow by 179% by the year 2040. In that same period, the population of residents 85+ is projected to grow by 337%. This report by Innovations in Aging Collaborative (IIAC) inspired our community to launch the Age Friendly Colorado Springs initiative.



Age Friendly Colorado Springs

Age Friendly is a program of AARP and the World Health Organization. A "livable community" is defined as a community that 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. In a livable community, people of all ages can go for a walk, safely cross the street, ride a bike, get around without a car, live comfortably, work or volunteer, enjoy public places, socialize, spend time outdoors, be entertained, go shopping, buy healthy food, find the services they need, and make their city, town, or neighborhood a lifelong home. Across the nation,

individuals make connections and commitments to homes, friendships, community organizations, and local social ties within their community and want to age in place.



Innovations in Aging Collaborative, along with Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers, launched the Age Friendly initiative in 2016. This grassroots, community-driven plan focuses on actionable goals to help make our community a remarkable place to age for people of all ages, abilities, and mobilities. Among these were specific goals associated with specific social determinants of health, such as advocacy for accessible and affordable transportation and housing, increasing opportunities for social engagement and civic participation, and equitable access to technology. We know that Age Friendly serves as an organizing structure for making community improvements. We are age friendly because of the hard work, energy, and efforts made by multi-disciplinary experts across the community! This is something to be proud of! Our age friendly work cuts across age – from 8 to 80 and everywhere in between, across socio-economic status and neighborhood boundaries, across all types of abilities and mobilities, and helps support our local and state government in efforts to make Colorado Springs the best place to grow older in the country!



What does this mean? For us, our first five years of progress are a powerful "proof-of-concept" that sets us up well to continue to grow as an organization and community. It means that we value ourselves, we value our neighbors, and we value the livability of our beautiful city. We have a common goal in mind – a livable community, where people of all ages, abilities and mobilities may thrive.

Key Takeaways

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Age Friendly fosters partnerships among community groups and local stakeholders

Age Friendly enables changes that benefit people of all ages

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Age Friendly serves as an organizing structure for making community improvements.

