



# Aging Your Way Toolkit

Everything you need to start age-friendly conversations and projects in your community!



## Welcome to the Aging Your Way Toolkit!

The AYW Workshop is an energetic, creative, and fun way to catalyze age-friendly initiatives that transform neighborhoods and make life better for people of all ages. This toolkit was developed to share key principles and strategies that can be easily adapted for starting an age-friendly movement in your neighborhood or community. We're using the metaphor of preparing, serving, and enjoying a meal together, and of the recipes you can rely on to help make your vision for an age-friendly community a reality. Read on to prepare your feast of talents. **Let's get started!**

*Cover Photo: Bike Pittsburgh*

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# Introduction

## **The Aging Your Way Workshop: A Recipe for Fostering Age-Friendly Communities**

The Aging Your Way Workshop is an intergenerational “community lab” that engages and empowers older adults to be co-creators of their own destiny. The program is flexible, allowing for conversations that can be led by community development leaders, residents, or government officials. It manifests as an intergenerational “think tank” and incubator of creative projects that bring age-friendly communities to life.

The Aging Your Way (AYW) Workshop was designed by Lively Pittsburgh in partnership with Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership on Aging (SWPPA), and with support from Dezudio, a Pittsburgh-based research and design studio. This highly interactive workshop was inspired by and adapted from a similar initiative developed by Senior Services of King County in Seattle, Washington.

Taking an asset-based, resident-centered approach, the AYW Workshop identifies the needs, strengths, talents, and interests of community residents and stakeholders. By aligning community strengths with professional resources, the process opens up pathways for innovative, age-friendly projects to take root and come to life. The AYW Workshop is designed to strengthen community connections and, with great energy and innovation, link the needs and gifts of older adults with the vitality and interests of younger generations.

Throughout 2015–2016, more than 90 residents participated in seven AYW Workshops in urban and suburban areas across the Greater Pittsburgh region. These workshops sparked conversations and creative project ideas that uplifted neighborhoods with exciting age-friendly initiatives and infused communities with greater intergenerational sensitivity and vibrancy.

## **What is the Aging Your Way Workshop?**

The Aging Your Way Workshop is a five-hour, experiential “community lab” that engages and empowers older adults to be creators of their own destinies through: envisioning key ingredients of an age-friendly community that best supports them as they grow older brainstorming concrete projects to bring age-friendly communities to life, and forming teams to actualize projects that move communities closer to the vision of intergenerational health and vibrancy.

The AYW Workshop is an energetic, creative, and fun way to catalyze age-friendly initiatives that transform neighborhoods and make life better for people of all ages. This AYW toolkit was developed to share key principles and strategies that can be easily adapted for starting an age-friendly movement in your neighborhood or community. Here's how...

# Getting Started



## **Convening the Chefs and Consulting the Recipe**

What you're about to create with your Aging Your Way Workshop is a potential feast of talents. Ideally, you'll be bringing together a diverse group of people with a wide array of gifts, skills, ideas, and concerns who care about your community and are motivated to make it more accessible, welcoming, and “livable” for people of all ages.

To host a feast of talents, you'll need a dream team of energized cooks in the community kitchen!

### **Convening the Chefs**

Imagine your community dream team—people who, like yourself, feel impassioned about bringing an age-friendly community to life right where you live, and who can commit time, energy, and talent to making the Aging Your Way Workshop happen. Ideally, your organizing team will include

representation from the people that you hope to serve: residents of all ages and abilities, community influencers with strong networks, and people who have workshop facilitation experience.

Organizing teams for Aging Your Way Workshops to date have included: public health officials, social workers, community organizers, senior center administrators, design professionals, local government officials, and nonprofit community development staff, as well as moms, dads and grandparents.

### **Consulting the Recipe**

The Aging Your Way Workshop is a feast of talents, creativity, inspiration, and fun resulting in creative new ways to make your community more accessible, welcoming, and livable for all. Importantly, it is an asset-based community development (ABCD) building upon residents' existing skills and the community's existing resources.

## **What is the recipe for a successful AYW Workshop?**

1. Collect a diverse group of people who are inspired to make your community more age-friendly.
2. Bring these folks together in a space that's warm and welcoming, open and inviting, accessible and spacious.
3. Add guided activities, conversations, and reflections designed to spark creative thinking and novel project ideas.
4. Provide good food and drink to keep everyone well nourished throughout.
5. Stir the pot by getting people out of their chairs and interacting with each other in new ways.
6. Harvest the ideas generated and let them simmer in the warmth of the cooks' collective attention in the open air of the community kitchen!

The sample agenda on the next page will give you a sense of the length and activities in a typical Aging Your Way Workshop.

## Sample Agenda

- 9:00–9:30 Registration & Breakfast
- 9:30–9:45 Welcome and Introductory Remarks
- 9:45–10:05 Time Travel Exercise
- 10:05–10:25 Creating Our Future: Head, Heart, and Hand
- 10:25–10:35 Ideas on Aging Collage
- 10:35–11:05 From Ideas to Action
- 11:05–11:15 Market of Ideas
- 11:15–11:45 Project Workshop
- 11:45–12:15 Keep it Moving
- 12:15–1:00 Lunch & Networking
- 1:00 Closing Remarks

Check an event, activity, group, project, service, or anything else that you think will improve quality of life for aging residents in our community.

**Project Name**  
Sponsored Senior Center  
See photos below

**Current or Anticipated Impact**  
Aging residents

**The Big Idea**  
A community-based center for seniors, including a library, a computer lab, a social room, and a dining room.

Check an event, activity, group, project, service, or anything else that you think will improve quality of life for aging residents in our community.

**Project Name**  
Senior Center

**Current or Anticipated Impact**  
Senior citizens

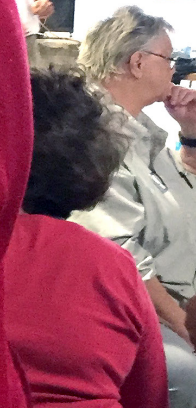
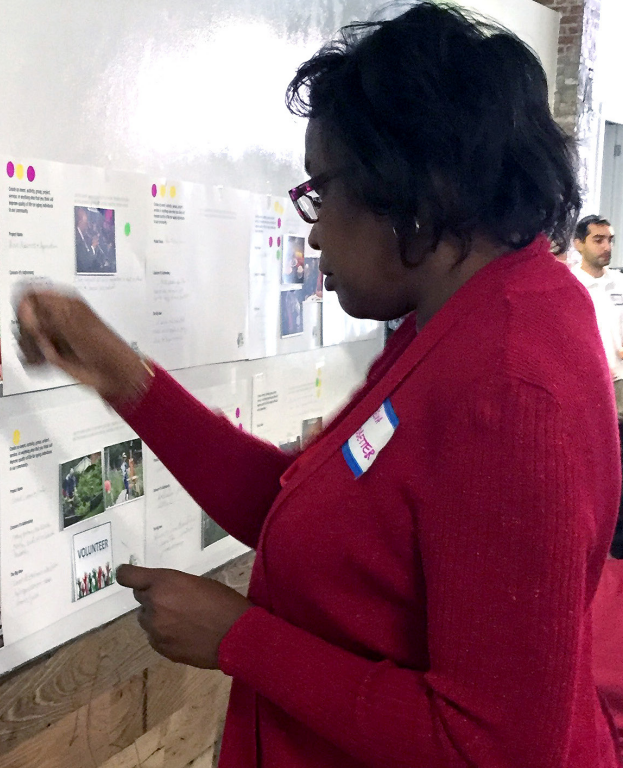
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A community-based center for seniors, including a library, a computer lab, a social room, and a dining room.

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**Project Name**  
Senior Center

**Current or Anticipated Impact**  
Senior citizens

**The Big Idea**  
A community-based center for seniors, including a library, a computer lab, a social room, and a dining room.



# Planning Your Meal

## Inviting the Guests

Engaging potential participants is the most vital ingredient to the success of your Aging Your Way Workshop. Ideally, your participants will include community leaders, entrepreneurs, business owners, caregivers, stakeholders, older adults, and any and all community members interested in helping your neighborhood or region become more age-friendly.



To build relationships with people, you have to hit the streets!  
We call this the Ground Game. It begins with:

- meeting people where they live, work, shop, eat, receive services, and enjoy activities with others
- instigating conversations on age-friendly themes
- asking open-ended questions (e.g. “What is important to you about the future of your neighborhood?”)

- listening carefully to the responses (e.g. people's interests, ideas, challenges, and concerns)
- getting introductions to people who should be a part of the conversation
- building your list of contacts with email and phone numbers
- repeating the above steps again and again in order to cultivate and grow relationships with your potential participants

Here's a description of the initial Ground Game from one member of an Aging Your Way Organizing Team:

“To start the Ground Game, I dove into the community! I walked the streets, talked with business owners and their clientele, ate at local diners, had a beer at the local pub, drank coffee at the coffee shop, hung out at the library, attended community events, and dropped in on local officials. At each venue, I started conversations.



I asked questions and elicited stories to get a real feel for the needs, desires, aspirations, and inspirations of people in the neighborhood for an age-friendly community. I talked with people about the ethos and intentions of the Aging Your Way Workshop. I got to know people and people got to know me. We grew our connections in meeting one another face-to-face. Together, we evoked stories of personal and communal challenges and triumphs, and we began to inspire and incubate visions of how the community could be more accessible and livable for all.”

**What to do after the initial Ground Game?** Re-visit the places you’ve been and the people you’ve met. Talk with them more about the workshop and encourage them to attend. Hand out flyers, encourage people to post the event on their windows, on social media, and on their calendars.

Don’t be shy about asking people to help spread the word!

Then, spend more time in the neighborhood! Here's where you'll want to deepen the connections you've made. From the AYW organizer referenced above:

“I went back to the neighborhood and got more personally connected there. I got a haircut at the local barbershop, and hung out for an afternoon at the coffee shop talking to people I'd met the week before. This helped me get more familiar with people in the community, and they with me, and with Aging Your Way.”

**ACTION**

During the Ground Game you'll also want to:

- send out announcements and broadcast flyers via social media
- engage your age-friendly partners to help spread the word via their websites, social media feeds, and email lists
- send out a press release to local media outlets





- send a reminder announcement and invitation to your local elected officials
- send an e-blast to everyone you've met and everyone who you haven't met who you think might be interested (or know of someone who would be interested) in attending and/or promoting the workshop
- send welcome and orientation emails to people who have signed up for the event

A few days before the workshop is an important time to visit the neighborhood to remind people of the event, to encourage them to attend, to generate excitement, and to get a final count of participants. It's also a good time to check in to make sure folks have what they need to be able to attend and participate (e.g. directions, transportation, childcare, eldercare). You'll want to do whatever you can to remove barriers and to make the workshop accessible for all.

Finally, plan to revisit the neighborhood after the workshop to follow up with people who were there, and to let others know how it went. This is another way to keep the good Aging your Way vibrations alive and well, and to build on the momentum you've generated through the Aging Your Way Workshop.

A communications kit including sample press release, outreach flyers, social media posts, pre-event email can be downloaded at [www.LivelyPittsburgh.com](http://www.LivelyPittsburgh.com).

## Gathering the Ingredients

### The People

Key to the success of your Aging Your Way Workshop are people: who you **convene** as your organizing team, who you **invite** to participate, who you **employ** as the event facilitating team, and who you **engage** as sponsors and partners.

 **ACTION**

We've considered the organizers and guests. Let's look now at identifying your facilitators, partners, and sponsors.

### *The Facilitation Team*

- Master of Ceremonies (1):** Someone to introduce the age-friendly concept, provide a local context, and keep the day moving.
- Activity Facilitators (1–2):** People to guide the interactive activities during the workshop.
- Table Ambassadors (4):** Volunteers to help lead conversations at each table and keep groups focused on the outcome of activities.
- Process Shepherds (1–2):** Volunteers to help with the logistics of setting up the space (for dialogue, and for refreshments), AV equipment, welcome and sign in of participants.

- **Photographer and Videographer (1):** Someone to capture the images and feedback from participants in order to communicate the impact to those who could not attend.
- **Creative Facilitator (1):** A visual or movement-based artist who can help to creatively capture, interpret, and magnify ideas and emerging themes generated in the workshops (e.g. Pittsburgh-based Attack Theatre).
- **Additional Volunteers:**
  - Help with set up and clean up, and registration.
  - Assist people with special needs and answer questions.
  - Prepare and serve food and drinks.
  - Help facilitate table discussions and fruitful participation.
  - Participate in dance and movement activities.
  - Distribute evaluation forms and post event follow up.



### *Community Partners*

Engaging community partners is the secret sauce that makes Aging Your Way Workshops both vibrant and fruitful! Key community partners can include:

- **Project Management Team** to lead the design, engagement, recruitment, and implementation (e.g. Lively Pittsburgh).
- **Conveners** to bring people together regionally or locally for collaboration and collective impact (eg: SWPPA and Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh).
- **Community-Based Organizations** to provide services to residents and businesses, such as non-profits, community development organizations, libraries, community centers, senior centers
- **Elected Officials** to represent the district and advocate for resources and policies which address the needs of all residents

- **Food & Beverage Partner** to provide breakfast and/or lunch to help the group ‘break bread’ together, ideally from the community and donated or at a discount (e.g. Zeke’s Coffee, Giant Eagle Market District)
- **Local Restaurants and Business Owners** to post flyers, spread the message via word of mouth, and potentially attend the event as stakeholders

### *Sponsors*

Aging Your Way Workshops can be low cost to you or your organization. One way to accomplish this is through doing some old-fashioned fundraising for your event. Everyone can relate to the question, “What do you want your community to look like as you grow older?” If you are a non-profit, or have a partner or fiscal sponsor, donations may be tax deductible.

## The Venue

You'll want a venue that's warm, welcoming, open, and easily identifiable and accessible for all. Ideally, you'll identify a community partner or stakeholder who's not only willing to donate space for the event, but who also becomes an ally and participant in your age-friendly initiative. Past venues have included community centers, libraries, and creative hubs. (e.g. Repair the World, the Union Project, Penn Hills Garden Center, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Shaler Library)

Be sure your venue is outfitted with:

- ADA accessible entrances and bathrooms
- Ample tables and chairs that can accommodate 20–30 people
- A flexible room layout that can be easily adapted to make space for creative engagement and movement activities



- A good sound system for music and facilitation (if needed)
- Video projector, speakers, and screen or blank wall for presentation
- WiFi
- Wall space to post community project canvases

## **Refreshments**

It's important that your participants and team feel well fed and nourished throughout the day. AYW Workshops provide light bites, coffee, and tea in the morning, a more robust meal at lunchtime, and light snacks and drinks that are available throughout the day.

Again, be sure to check with local restaurant owners or businesses who are willing to donate products or gift cards.

 **ACTION**

Here's a sample AYW shopping list:

### **Food and Drinks**

- Coffee, tea, milk, cream, sugar
- Soft drinks, water, sparkling water
- Light breakfast (fruit, yogurt, muffins, bagels, cream cheese)
- Catered Lunch
- Plates, cups, utensils, napkins, serving utensils, tablecloths

### **Facilitator Supplies**

- Nametags
- Sign-In Sheets
- Evaluation Form (see sample in addendum)
- Markers, pens, scissors, and tape
- Post It Note Pads (various colors, small)
- Colored Dot Stickers (for voting, cut into 3 per sheet)

- Workshop Agenda
- Facilitator Agenda (detailed)
- Project Theme Postcards (1 deck per table)
- Project Development Canvas (1 per attendee)
- Project Action Plan Worksheet (6 copies)
- Facilitator Note Sheet
- Evaluation Form

## **Music**

There's nothing like a great soundtrack to enliven the atmosphere when volunteers are setting up and cleaning up, and when participants are arriving, eating lunch, taking breaks, celebrating, and departing.

Facilitation Kit including print materials such as sign in sheets, project theme postcards, development canvas, action plan worksheet, and evaluation forms can be downloaded at [www.LivelyPittsburgh.com](http://www.LivelyPittsburgh.com).

# **Welcoming Your Guests**



## **The Aging Your Way Workshop: Ready...Set...**

### **Room Set Up**

Room set up will change during the course of the workshop. To start, you'll want a registration table at the entrance, food and drink tables to the side, and chairs in a circle in the middle of the room. (Again, it's great to have music playing as people arrive and settle in!)

You'll also want tables and chairs set up in the room for break-out sessions. Ideally, each table can accommodate 4–8 people.

### **Engagement**

Warm engagement infuses the atmosphere with welcoming energy right from the start. You'll want all hands on deck to welcome people, help them register and settle in, answer questions, introduce participants to the team and to each other, and spark lively conversations.

## **...Go!**

Your Emcee can start things off with a rousing welcome, introduction, and orientation. Then, you're on your way! Here's a detailed sample agenda and exciting menu of possibilities for the day:



**Aging Your Way  
Pittsburgh Agenda**

East End, September 26, 2015  
Repair the World  
6022 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA

**9:00–9:30 Registration & Breakfast**

- Sign in sheet, name tags, agendas
- Bagels, cream cheese, coffee, tea, water

## 9:30–9:45 **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

- The Age Friendly Movement Introduction and Aging Your Way
- Icebreaker
  - Story
  - Introduce yourself to others at your table: Share your name and what others tell you you're good at.

## 9:45–10:05 Time Travel Exercise

- We're going to spend some time traveling into the future
- Please close your eyes
- Imagine the age at which you would consider yourself to be old and tell that number to yourself. Remember it.
- Now visualize your life at that age (5 min)
  - Where do you live? Do you work or volunteer?
  - What does your typical day look like? How do you get around? Are you still driving, by carpool, some other transportation service?
  - What makes you happy? What do you do with your friends? What do you do for fun?
  - How does technology impact your life?

### 9:45–10:05 **Time Travel Exercise** *(continued)*

- Open your eyes & share thoughts with your group (5 min)
  - What will your life be like?
  - What kind of challenges or barriers do you imagine?
  - What are the things you'd like to be doing?
- We're going to get into the time machine again
  - Close your eyes and visualize the age at which you considered yourself to be old. Add 10 years to this number.
- Now visualize your life at this age (5 min)
  - Where do you live? Do you work or volunteer?
  - What does your typical day look like? How do you get around? Are you still driving, or by some other form of transportation?
  - What makes you happy? What do you do with your friends?  
What do you do for fun?
  - How does technology impact your life?

- Open your eyes & share thoughts with your group (5 min)
  - What will your life be like at this later age?
  - What kind of challenges or barriers do you imagine?
  - What are the things would you like to be doing?
- Group Share
  - From table to table: What was shared in your group?

### 10:05–10:25 **Creating Our Future: Head, Heart, and Hand**

- Powerpoint presentation
- Asset-Based Community Development
  - Building upon strengths, interests, and needs of community members
  - National and local case studies
  - One example tied to Community Project Canvas





### 10:25–10:35 **Ideas on Aging Collage**

- In the center of each table, there is a stack of cards
- Some have pictures of things, some indicate feelings, and some are blank
- Take some time to look through these cards and take the 1 or 2 pictures that best represent your biggest hope or biggest concern
- Fix them to the poster at your table
- Table Facilitators: refer to the guide for Ideas Collage questions to ask
- Group sharing: Each group describes their collage. Why did you pick the pictures you did?

## 10:35–11:05 **From Ideas to Action**

- So far we've visualized our future, heard examples of others making projects happen, and shared our thoughts on aging
- Now it's time to have some fun in your group and to ask “What's possible?”
  - What project or idea would you like to see in your community to address your concerns?
  - The project or idea could be an activity, a group, an event, a project, or a service
  - Use the Project Idea Posters to capture your ideas
  - Aim for 3 or more ideas
  - Table Facilitators: Post completed Project Idea Posters on the Wall

### 11:05–11:15 **Market of Ideas**

- Use stickers on your table to vote for the 5 projects you are most interested to see happen
- After voting take a short break
- The Organizing Team takes top 3–5 project posters to tables for discussion in the Project Workshop

## 11:15–11:45 **Project Workshop**

- Everyone stays standing after the break
- Now we're going to share a little about the projects that received the most votes
  - Keep in mind which one you are most interested in
- Read title and description of each project
- Ask: Who came up with this idea? Why is it a good idea?
  - We're going to spend the last part of the Aging Your Way Workshop thinking about how to get these projects started
  - Join the table of the idea you were most interested in
  - You'll find a worksheet that will help you think through how to put your idea into action
  - Action Team contact sheet
- Table Facilitators: refer to **Project Workshop Guide** for questions to ask

### 11:45–12:15 **Keep it Moving**

(Lindsay Kaine, Michele de la Reza of Attack Theatre)

- Creative expression of projects and themes

### 12:15–1:00 **Lunch & Networking**

Table Facilitators: refer to guide for Post-Workshop questions to ask

### 1:00 **Closing Remarks**

Facilitation Kit including detailed question prompts, guided explorations, and slideshow presentation can be downloaded at [www.LivelyPittsburgh.com](http://www.LivelyPittsburgh.com)

# Sharing the Good Food

## **Developing Community Projects**

Each Aging Your Way Workshop results in unique and creative ideas based upon the personal gifts of attendees and the needs of the community. For example, over the course of seven Aging Your Way workshops, Lively Pittsburgh identified 39 resident-led projects. The list below represents a sample of projects from the initial workshops that any neighborhood can implement to become more age-friendly and improve the quality of life for all people and abilities.

The projects are listed under the World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability, shown on the following pages.

## **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:**

- Community Walkability and Citizen Data Project (pathVu)
- The Crossings (pedestrian safety flash mob)

## **Transportation:**

- Campaign to Make Public Transit More Friendly and Fun
- Water Transport

## **Housing:**

- Universal Co-Housing
- Affordable Senior Living

## **Social Participation:**

- Robotic Assisted Intergenerational Art/Music Workshop
- Travel or Music Awareness and Appreciation Clubs



### **Respect and Inclusion:**

- Robotic Assisted Intergenerational Art/Music Workshop
- Travel or Music Awareness and Appreciation Clubs

### **Civic Participation and Employment:**

- Make It Work! (older adults educating employers)
- Outdoor Volunteering (community gardens, outreach)

### **Communication and Information:**

- Connect Your Block (neighborhood awareness map)
- Intergenerational Techno Teach-In Info Wisdom Exchange

### **Community Support and Health Services:**

- Wellness in the Park, Produce and Prevention
- Community Health Angels

**ACTION**

Provide ongoing support to project leaders by helping to:

- develop their plans
- connect them with other interested people and organizations
- identify resources, such as information and financial support
- share their successes through your communication channels



**That Satisfied Feeling**

When building an Age-Friendly movement with your community, the journey is just as important as the eventual projects that you support. Following the Aging Your Way Toolkit will help you to meet new people, generate new ideas, and strengthen relationships to carry the work forward in interesting and unexpected ways. Of course, the Age-Friendly impact of the projects you support will also be a great outcome of your efforts!

Just as important is to continue celebrating the work of your community members and sharing the progress that they make. Each small success contributes to the momentum necessary to spark an Age-Friendly movement. With persistence, creative thinking, and the willingness to have some fun, you'll grow these project recipes into a vibrant buffet of community-led, Age-Friendly initiatives. Congratulations!



 **ACTION**

In closing, the Lively Pittsburgh team shares their core ingredients for inspiring people to actively engage

- Creative Co-design:** Include artists and the people you wish to serve in your project planning and implementation.
- Element of Surprise:** Untether people from familiar patterns by including unexpected elements.
- Serious Fun:** Instill positivity, build on assets, and create confidence to balance the serious nature of age-related challenges
- Celebrate and Document:** Create multimedia content to inspire others long after the project is completed.
- Community Capacity:** Provide space and onramps for others to do the work by sharing resources, connections, and coordinating advocacy and action.

Visit [swppa.org/agefriendly](https://swppa.org/agefriendly)  
to learn more and find ways to  
get involved!



**SWPPA** | Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Partnership for Aging