



## Age-Friendly Kansas

### Advisory Committee

#### Meeting #4: Age-Friendly Community and Neighborhood Development

Nov. 21, 2024

1:00 pm -2:15 pm

## MEETING NOTES

### Action Items

- Age-Friendly Kansas (AFK) Advisory committee members: Please select working groups through the link below. Please submit feedback before December's meeting.
- [Qualtrics Survey for Working Group Sign-Up](#)

### Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Slide Decks
- Draft Domains and Strategy Themes from AFK advisory committee application (see below)

### Resources and Topics Mentioned with Links:

#### [AFK Landing Page](#)

Access the Age-Friendly Kansas initiative resources and updates.

#### [The Planner's Playbook](#)

A resource for advancing health equity through planning practices.

#### [Long-Range Planning for Health, Equity & Prosperity](#)

A primer for local governments to integrate equity into long-term planning.

#### [CDC Social Vulnerability Index](#)

Explore community-level data on social vulnerability to guide planning and resources.

#### [Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program \(FHLB\)](#)

[Salina received a \$999,999 grant from this program.]

#### [Kansas State Public Transportation Website](#)

Discover transportation resources and services across Kansas

#### [USDA Housing Preservation Grants \(Currently Closed\)](#)



Provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair or rehabilitation of housing owned or occupied by low- and very-low-income rural citizens. Contact [KS Rural Development State or Regional Offices](#) for more information about current and future grant cycles.

#### **Agenda:**

1:00 PM – Welcome and Introductions

1:05 PM – **Presentation:** Using Planning Resources to Advance Age-Friendly Goals - Shaunequa Owusu, Chief Strategy Officer; Tina Ansong, Senior Planner, ChangeLab Solutions

1:20 PM – **Presentation:** Age-Friendly Community Development Initiatives - Lisse Regehr, President and CEO, Thrive Allen County

1:40 PM – **Discussion:** Integrating Age-Friendly Considerations in Current and Future Community and Neighborhood Development

2:15 PM – Adjourn

#### **Meeting Attendees**

Below are advisory and steering committee members that attended the meeting. Title and organization were gathered from survey responses where registered members self-identified. If this information is not correct, please email [euridge@khi.org](mailto:euridge@khi.org) for correction.

#### **Age-Friendly Kansas Advisory and Steering Committee Members:**

- Adrienne Byrne, Health Director, Sedgwick County Health Dept
- Dagmar Birgit Jung Lemke, Program Manager, KDHE
- Chrisy Khatib, Deputy Director, Adult Protective Services
- Emilie Rains, Executive Director, Bluestem PACE
- Erin Martinez, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Kansas State University
- James Stowe, President and CEO, Center for Practical Bioethics
- Jamie Gideon, Kansas Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer's Association
- Jared Holroyd, Executive Director, Kansas Pharmacists Association
- Jean Wilms, Individual
- Julie Sergeant, Deputy Bureau Director, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Karen Wilson, Executive Director, Northeast Kansas Area Agency on Aging
- Linda Johnson, Board Member, Leavenworth
- Lona Kelly, Director, Harvey County Dept. on Aging
- Lorna Jarrett, Owner, Pneuma Pilates and Wellness
- Michelle Coats, Director of Mobility Management, North Central Kansas Coordinated Transit District
- Stephanie Sherode, Financial Navigation Program Manager, Masonic Cancer Alliance
- Tamara Neff, DPT, Pilates Performance and Rehab
- Tim Wholf, Director, Johnson County Department of Aging and Human Services
- Tina Robinson, MDT Coordinator, Office of Attorney General Kris W. Kobach



- Travis Rickford, Executive Director, LiveWell Northwest Kansas
- Tyra Quintin, ADRD Program Manager, KDHE
- Paul Schuster, Individual
- Michelle Niedens, Director, Cognitive Care Network
- Tyra Quintin, KDHE

KHI Staff: Emma Uridge, Kari Bruffett, Lyndsey Burkhart

## **LOOKING AHEAD: UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Next Meeting: December 19, 2024, Structuring Workgroup Meetings – Finalizing Topics and Frameworks.

Presenter(s): Representatives from Age-Friendly Kansas Steering Committee and invited speakers.

### **PRESENTATION SUMMARY: EMMA URIDGE, ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

The December meeting will focus on finalizing the structure and operations of the initiative’s workgroups, which aim to drive the development and implementation of targeted strategies for age-friendly communities across Kansas.

**Workgroup Topics:** Attendees will collaborate to narrow down key topics for workgroups, ensuring alignment with priority areas such as housing, health equity, and community development.

**Meeting Frameworks:** Discussions will explore optimal meeting frequencies, resources required, and structural support for effective workgroup function.

**Leadership Opportunities:** Participants are encouraged to consider leading or chairing a workgroup to maintain focus and organization as the initiative progresses into 2025.

### **PRESENTATION SUMMARY: SHAUNEEQUA OWUSU, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER AND TINA ANSONG, SENIOR PLANNER, CHANGELAB SOLUTIONS: ADVANCING HEALTHY AGING AND EQUITY THROUGH PLANNING AND POLICY**

#### **Overview of ChangeLab Solutions**

Shauneequa Owusu, Chief Strategy Officer, introduced ChangeLab Solutions and its mission to promote healthy communities for all through equitable laws and policies. She emphasized the organization’s interdisciplinary approach, combining expertise in law, urban planning, and public health to address systemic inequities. ChangeLab Solutions collaborates with local governments, community organizations, and institutions to advance equity through legal and policy changes.

#### **Health Equity Framework**

Owusu introduced ChangeLab’s five drivers of health equity, a framework based on evidence addressing the root causes of health disparities. The framework focuses on reshaping laws and



policies to ensure the equitable distribution of healthy environments, economic resources, and opportunities, offering actionable strategies for systemic change.

### **Domains of Livability and Planning's Role**

Tina Ansong, Senior Planner, discussed the "domains of livability," including housing, transportation, public spaces, and health services, which directly impact healthy aging and the ability to age in place. She highlighted how urban planning decisions—such as zoning, budget allocations, and urban design—affect these domains and influence community well-being.

### **Addressing Inequities in Planning**

Ansong explained the types of inequities in planning processes:

- **Distributional Inequities:** Unequal allocation of resources like parks and sidewalks.
- **Procedural Inequities:** Limited inclusivity and transparency in decision-making.
- **Structural Inequities:** Insufficient government capacity to operationalize equity.

She emphasized the importance of inclusive engagement and long-term partnerships with community-based organizations to dismantle these inequities.

### **Key Resources from ChangeLab Solutions**

Ansong highlighted resources available to support equitable community planning:

- **Planner's Playbook:** Guides inclusive engagement and partnership building.
- **Planning Primer:** Offers tools for using place-based analysis to address health inequities.
- **Rural Prosperity Guide:** Focuses on economic development and health equity in rural communities, addressing issues like healthcare shortages and broadband access.
- **Policy Primer for Housing Equity:** Provides strategies for addressing homelessness and promoting aging in place.

### **Case Studies in Healthy Aging**

- **Mississippi:** ChangeLab Solutions worked with the state health department to align healthy aging strategies with equity goals using public health frameworks.
- **Virginia:** Focused on identifying root causes of inequities and rebuilding trust through community engagement and partnership building.

### **Tools for Community Engagement**

Ansong discussed how community-based organizations enhance inclusivity and cultural relevance in engagement processes. She stressed compensating community leaders and ensuring communication is accessible and understandable for diverse populations.

### **Discussion of Intersectionality**

Ansong highlighted the importance of addressing intersectionality, acknowledging that older adults often face overlapping barriers due to multiple identities (e.g., race, income level). She encouraged finding allies across causes to build coalitions for equitable change.



## DISCUSSION AND Q&A SUMMARY

### Policymaker Awareness of Aging and Equity Needs

**Question:** Do policymakers and decision-makers in rural states have awareness of older populations' needs, particularly in terms of equity?

**Response:** Tina Ansong noted that rural policymakers are generally aware of aging populations' needs. However, addressing intersectional identities—such as older adults who are renters, non-English speakers, or face other unique barriers—remains a significant challenge. Building awareness of these interconnected identities is essential for advancing equity and creating inclusive policies.

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### Statewide Approach to Age-Friendly Planning

**Question:** What specific guidance can be given for developing a statewide age-friendly plan, given the localized nature of many decisions?

**Response:** Shauneequa Owusu emphasized the importance of a flexible and innovative approach within the six domains of livability framework.

Key recommendations included:

**Leveraging existing strengths** and initiatives that have shown success across different agencies.

**Fostering interagency collaboration** to better align resources and strategies.

**Identifying gaps** in services or planning as opportunities for innovation and growth.

**Utilizing financial mechanisms** such as the Community Reinvestment Act and new market tax credits to fund age-friendly initiatives.

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### Expanding Stakeholder Engagement

**Comment:** Advisory members stressed the importance of engaging non-traditional stakeholders, such as financial institutions and employers outside the aging sector, to achieve broader community development goals.

**Response:** Shauneequa Owusu highlighted the importance of identifying and involving allies from diverse sectors. These stakeholders, even if not traditionally associated with aging issues, are crucial to advancing age-friendly outcomes and fostering community-wide collaboration.

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### Intersectionality and Inclusive Advocacy

**Comment:** Emma Uridge emphasized the need to address intersectionality by engaging stakeholders who may not immediately see their role within the age-friendly ecosystem.

**Response:** Tina and Shauneequa agreed, underscoring that addressing overlapping challenges



requires intentional partnerships. Engaging diverse stakeholders and aligning efforts across sectors is vital to crafting inclusive solutions that benefit all community members.

## **PRESENTATION SUMMARY: LISSE REGEHR, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THRIVE ALLEN COUNTY**

### **Overview of Thrive Allen County:**

Lisse Regehr, President and CEO of Thrive Allen County, detailed the organization's mission to improve the holistic health of individuals and the community. Thrive was founded in 2007 in response to the declining population, health outcomes and economic vitality in Allen County. It later expanded to include economic development in 2013, aligning with its vision of making Allen County the healthiest rural community in Kansas. Thrive's approach emphasizes whole-person, whole-community health, incorporating physical, fiscal, emotional and social well-being.

### **Key Initiatives**

#### **Built Environment and Community Trails:**

Thrive has prioritized creating an environment where people feel safe and encouraged to be active. Notable efforts include:

- **South Wind Rail Trail:** Connecting Iola and Humboldt, this six-and-a-half-mile trail provides a safe space for recreation and fosters community interaction, with events like weekly bike rides for residents of all ages.
- **Trail Expansion:** Thrive has developed more than 60 miles of trails and routes since 2008, creating opportunities for outdoor activity for all community members, including older generations.
- **Accessibility:** Programs such as pedicabs ensure that individuals with mobility challenges can enjoy the trails, demonstrating Thrive's commitment to inclusivity.

#### **Post-Flood Adaptation and Community Redevelopment:**

- After a devastating flood in 2007 destroyed over 100 homes, Thrive repurposed FEMA-restricted areas into functional spaces, such as community gardens.
- Raised garden beds made from recycled sugar containers were highlighted as a unique and resourceful solution, earning recognition from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

#### **Transportation Solutions:**



- **Allen Regional Transit (ART):** Thrive piloted and launched ART, now a nonprofit transit system that provides safety net rides for healthcare, groceries, and other essential services within a two-hour radius. The program supports aging in place and ensures access for seniors and residents without transportation.
- **Impact:** ART has grown to include eight vehicles, including accessible buses, allowing residents to remain in Allen County without relocating for services.

### **Housing Development and Preservation:**

1. Thrive collaborates with developers to convert unused buildings into mixed-use housing, including options for seniors and low-income families.
2. **USDA Housing Preservation Grants:** Thrive utilizes these grants to fund critical repairs for low-income residents, helping seniors maintain safe and livable homes.

### **Care Coordination and Health Access:**

- **Thrive CARES:** This program reduced Allen County's uninsured rate from 21% to 9% by assisting residents with Medicare, Medicaid, disability applications, and other essential services.
- **Televida Program:** Thrive combats social isolation by providing seniors with tablets and hotspots, enabling participation in virtual activities like book clubs and exercise classes.

### **Community Conversations:**

Thrive hosts annual community conversations in each community to understand residents' needs and priorities. Youth conversations, led by interns, have expanded engagement to younger populations.

- **Community-Centric Approach:** Regular engagement through community conversations ensures initiatives are informed by and tailored to residents' voices, particularly older adults and underserved groups.
- **Results:** Efforts driven by these conversations include projects like the VA clinic, which took over a decade to secure, reflecting Thrive's long-term commitment to community-driven change.

## **DISCUSSION AND Q&A SUMMARY**

### **Community Health Workers (CHWs)**

**Question:** Do Thrive Allen County's CHWs work directly under Thrive, or are they part of a broader network?

**Response:** Lisse explained that Thrive Allen County employs care coordinators who are also trained as CHWs. Additionally, Thrive administers a CMS Navigator Grant, partnering with seven organizations statewide to train navigators as CHWs. This ensures comprehensive services, including Medicare and Medicaid assistance, to position these organizations as trusted resources.



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### **Transportation Program Development and Funding**

**Question:** What was the initial funding source for Thrive Allen County’s transportation program, and how was it sustained?

**Response:** The program began with a pilot grant from the National Center for Mobility Management, which funded coalition-building and technical assistance. Thrive later secured an implementation grant for vehicle rental and expanded the program using a KDOT grant. When the county withdrew support, Thrive assumed full responsibility, eventually transitioning the service into an independent nonprofit.

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### **Public Transportation Fees**

**Question:** Are transportation services provided by Thrive Allen County free, or is there a fee?

**Response:** Initially, the service was free, but small fees were introduced for sustainability:

\$30 for round trips to cities like Kansas City or Wichita (four-hour round trip).

\$1.50 to \$2.00 for local rides.

For those unable to pay, accommodations are made. Thrive also partners with the Area Agency on Aging, offering free rides for individuals 55 and older.

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### **Addressing Local Match Requirements for KDOT Funding**

**Question:** How does Thrive manage the local match requirements for state transportation grants?

**Response:** Thrive combines Medicaid reimbursements for access-to-care rides with private grants to meet funding requirements. The program also relies on donations and partnerships, such as with the Patterson Family Foundation, to sustain operations.

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### **Collaboration with Rural Communities**

**Question:** Does Thrive Allen County work with other rural Kansas communities to implement best practices?

**Response:** Yes, through Thrive Kansas, the organization provides technical assistance and advocates for rural needs. Lisse Regehr emphasized their commitment to empowering rural communities by offering resources, strategic guidance, and access to funding opportunities.

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### **Sustainability and Federal Support**





**Comment:** Several participants discussed the challenges of local match funding and the need for additional appropriations.

**Response:** Thrive advocates for increasing Kansas Legislature appropriations to expand public transportation services statewide. Despite current funding constraints, Thrive adapts by leveraging federal programs and securing private grants to ensure program sustainability.

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### **Expanding Statewide Impact**

**Question:** What is the difference between Thrive Allen County and Thrive Kansas?

**Response:** Thrive Allen County focuses on community development within Allen County, while Thrive Kansas supports statewide rural development and policy advocacy. Thrive Kansas seeks to draw federal funds into Kansas and distribute them to rural areas, emphasizing collaborative partnerships and leveraging resources effectively.

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### **Closing Reflections**

**Comment:** Participants discussed the importance of inclusive strategies and stakeholder engagement.

**Response:** Lisse highlighted Thrive's ongoing efforts to engage diverse community members through initiatives like bilingual care coordination, youth engagement, and tailored programs for isolated populations, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to community development.

## **REVIEW – DRAFT AFK STRATEGIES FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Members received high-level strategies from the AFK advisory committee application. The following strategies were proposed by advisory committee members and will be revisited during working groups. These strategies are not final and can be expanded on, combined or removed depending on the group's consensus.

### **HOUSING**

1. **Develop More Age-Friendly, High-Quality Housing Options:** More age-friendly, high-quality housing options for low-income individuals. Develop affordable housing initiatives and work together to increase the availability of affordable, accessible, and high-quality housing options for low-income seniors.
2. **Implement Aging-in-Place Infrastructure Enhancements:** Expanding access in the areas of affordable housing, dependable/available/affordable transportation, education/assistance in developing an 'aging-in-place' plan of action to be implemented



upon need and strengthening community awareness and support for aging services will better support aging Kansans.

3. **Promote Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Expand access in the areas of affordable housing and supportive services, ensuring seniors can maintain or obtain housing that is safe, comfortable, and supportive.
4. **Enhance Accessibility and Affordability of Housing:** More support needed in the rural areas, more of an infrastructure needs to be created throughout the state, and then the development of communication within the infrastructure. Enhance accessibility and affordability of housing, ensuring that older adults have access to safe, comfortable, and supportive living environments.

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1. **Create Neighborhood Partnerships:** Establish programs to partner with neighborhoods, including neighborhood-to-neighborhood and community-to-community challenges with defined benchmarks and data dashboards.
2. **Maintain Walking Trails with Adequate Lighting:** Ensure walking trails are well-maintained and have additional lighting.
3. **Strengthen Community Relationships Among Seniors:** Focus on building and sustaining community relationships between seniors and the broader community.