



Age-Friendly

Broome County

A Community for Everyone

Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan 2020

Broome County
Office for Aging





State of New York
County of Broome Government Offices

Office of the Broome County Executive
Jason T. Garnar, County Executive

Dear Broome County Residents,

We are very excited and proud to have Broome County become an age-friendly community. We envision and strive to come together as a community so that people of all ages can participate in activities that keep them safe and healthy. Broome County is committed to actively work together toward being a great place to live for people of all ages by engaging citizens, professionals, and government in finding creative, workable solutions to community needs.

The extensive age-friendly work started in June 2018 when a letter of intent was submitted to AARP and the World Health Organization. The Broome Age-Friendly Project was initiated shortly after and over the past two years many dedicated people volunteered their time to work tirelessly on this project. Whether helping to develop a community needs assessment, joining workgroups on creating and discussing the Action Plan, or giving valuable feedback in preparation of submitting the final plan, the support the community provided is immeasurable.

Broome County's dedication to the age-friendly process is also demonstrated by applying for and securing competitive funding for startup planning activities for the Broome Age-Friendly Project. Broome County was selected to be one of the few grantees who received this funding from the New York State Office for Aging for the development of the Action Plan

Though the Action Plan includes a special focus on addressing the needs of our growing aging population, suggested community enhancements will have a positive impact on people of all ages. As we continue to implement this Action Plan over the next several years, we believe the changes suggested, both large and small, will improve our community and make it an even better place to live and to reside in as we age. As you read through the plan, we invite you to explore where your skills and expertise can support the implementation of the plan.

Thank you to all who have made this possible and for the community's continued support with this project.

Sincerely,

Jason T Garnar
County Executive

Lisa M Schuhle
Office for Aging Director

Acknowledgments

The Broome Age-Friendly Project Action Plan was developed through an inclusive planning process that engaged people from the community in a variety of ways. We wish to thank everyone who participated in age-friendly events or who provided feedback throughout the process. Special thanks are extended to the following groups and individuals for their substantial contributions:

Workgroup Members

Over the course of 8 months, dozens of community volunteers and professionals provided invaluable contributions in the development of the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan. Members participated in monthly workgroup meetings and conducted research between meetings.

Workgroup Leaders

Stephanie Brewer, Broome County
Planning Department – Outdoor Spaces and
Public Buildings Workgroup

Sharon Exley, Town of Dickinson
Councilwoman – Housing Workgroup

Ben Lainhart, Your Home Public Library
– Information and Communication
Workgroup

Darlene Leonard, Community
Advocate/Volunteer – Respect, Social
Inclusion, Civic Participation, and
Employment Workgroup

Mary McFadden, Broome County Health
Department – Community Supports and
Health Services Workgroup

Chris Rounds, Lyceum – Housing
Workgroup

Bill Wagner, Rural Health Network –
Transportation Workgroup

Student Interns

Cameron Colicchio, Binghamton University,
Master of Public Administration '20

Kendall Igo, Marywood University, Master of
Science, Gerontology '20

Allison Washburn, Binghamton University,
Bachelor of Science, Human Development '19

Alyssa Wei, Binghamton University, Bachelor
of Science, Integrative Neuroscience '20

Stephanie Wright, Binghamton University,
Master of Public Administration '19

Chen Wu, Binghamton University, Master of
Public Administration and Master of Science in
Systems Science '21

Community and Government Partners

Access Ability Design Group	Lourdes/Ascension Hospital
Action for Older Persons	Lyceum, Binghamton University
Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study	Memory Maker Project
Binghamton Tiny Homes Community	Metro Interfaith Housing
Binghamton University	New York State Office of Mental Health
Broome County Office of Mental Health	Northern Broome Cares
Broome County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Office of Congressman Anthony Brindisi
Broome County Department of Public Transportation	Office of Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo
Broome County Executive's Office	Getthere/Rural Health Network of South Central New York
Broome County Health Department	Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Broome County Legislature	Southern Tier Independence Center
Broome County Parks, Recreation, & Youth Services	The SEPP Group
BroomeINCLUDES	Triple Cities Hiking Club
City of Binghamton Dept. of Planning, Housing & Community Development	Town of Dickinson
Emblem Health	Town of Union
Family Violence Prevention Council	UHS Community Health Services
First Ward Action Council	United Way of Broome County
HealtheConnections	Wilson Dental
Levene Gouldin & Thompson, LLP	Your Home Public Library

**Special Thanks to the Older Adult Community
Members Who Supported This Project!**

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Communities make a
commitment to actively
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and government in
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Introduction

Broome County is part of the Southern Tier Region of New York State, located directly north of the border with Pennsylvania. As the largest county in the region, it has approximately 30% of the Southern Tier's population. It is largely rural while also having suburban towns and an urban core. Ample natural resources and numerous parks provide a large variety of outdoor activities for residents to enjoy throughout the year.

While Broome County's main industries are agriculture and farming, the county actively supports entrepreneurship through the Southern Tier Incubator in Binghamton and has long been a leader in sustainability initiatives. Broome County is also home to SUNY Broome Community College and Binghamton University, one of the four university centers in the State University of New York system, which has experienced phenomenal growth in the past decade.

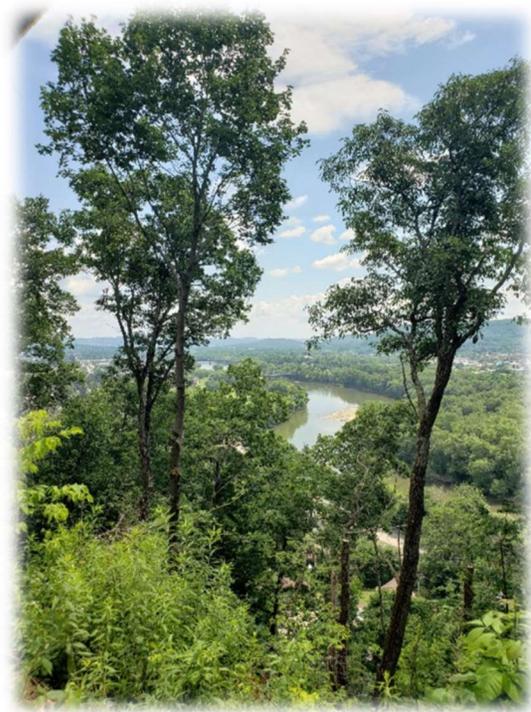


Photo: Chen Wu

Notable Population Trends

Broome County's population grew substantially after World War II but has experienced an overall population decline since 1970, which has held steady in the past decade. The urban centers of Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City lost population while rural and suburban towns gained population, with the Town of Vestal experiencing the largest increase.

Broome County is experiencing tremendous growth in the population of those age 50 and older. The 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Census estimates that 39% of the total Broome County population is age 50 and older. Broome County's 60+ population is currently 25.1% of the total population and is expected to increase to 29% by 2025. There are also more older adults living in Broome County than the state's average, with rural areas experiencing significant increases in the population of older adults.

One significant number to watch is the growth in residents age 85 and older. Up 23% from the year 2000, these residents are the most likely to experience functional decline and need additional services and accessible housing. They are also more likely to have limited retirement assets remaining, and often live close to or below the poverty line.

These demographic changes pose a great opportunity for the region to ensure that as people age or their abilities change, Broome County is able to provide access to the services, amenities, and opportunities that people need. At the same time, changes made for an aging population will ultimately benefit people of all ages.



Broome County, New York Aging Demographics Fact Sheet

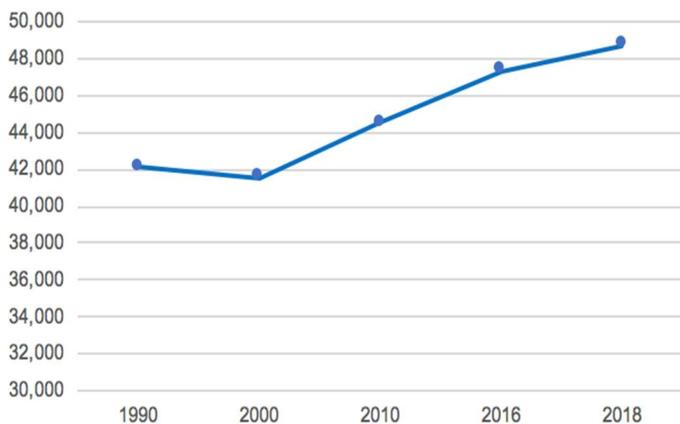


In 1990, Broome County residents age 60+ made up 19.8% of the Broome County population. The 2018 Census data estimates that residents 60+ made up 25.1% of the Broome County population. Between 1990 and 2018 the 60+ Broome County population increased by 15.8%.

Older Adult Profile United State Census Population by Age Group 1990 to 2018

Age Group	1990		2000		2010		2016		2018	
	Residents	% residents								
60 to 64	10,262	4.8%	8,711	4.3%	11,641	5.8%	12,618	6.4%	13,108	6.7%
65 to 74	18,024	8.5%	16,073	8.0%	15,668	7.8%	17,808	9.0%	18,651	9.6%
75 to 84	10,356	4.9%	12,182	6.1%	11,539	5.8%	11,163	5.7%	11,074	5.7%
85+	3,445	1.6%	4,576	2.3%	5,637	2.8%	5,741	2.9%	5,896	3.0%
Total 60+	42,087	19.8%	41,542	20.7%	44,485	22.2%	47,330	24.0%	48,729	25.1%

1. Total 60+ Population Increase From 1990 to 2018



2. Total Age Group Population Change 1990 to 2018

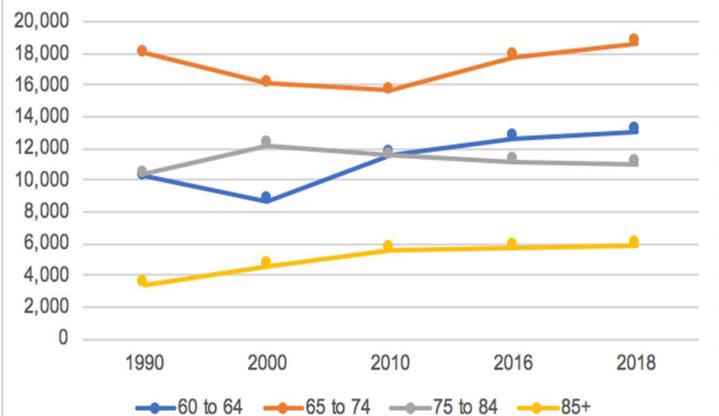


Chart 1: In Broome County, the aging population increased from 42,087 in 1990 to 48,729 in 2018 (15.8% increase).

Chart 2: Four age groups are depicted showing the older population changes in Broome County between 1990 and 2018.

2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Broome County

Household Tenure/Vehicle Availability

Owner: Homes 65+		Renter: Homes 65+		Household Tenure 35.5% of homes in Broome County are owned by the 65+ population. 18.8% of rentals are occupied by the 65+ population.		
Number	18,249	Number	5,115			
% of Homes	35.5%	% of Rental Units	18.8%			
Owner: Homes 65+ Vehicle Availability			Renter: Homes 65+ Vehicle Availability		Vehicle Availability 93.6% of older adult homeowners within Broome County have access to a vehicle. However, 33.9% of older adults who rent reported no access to a vehicle.	
No Vehicle	1,165	6.4%	No Vehicle	1,732		33.9%
1 Vehicle	17,084	93.6%	1 Vehicle	3,383		66.1%

Household Income for 65+

Income Per Year	Total 65+	% pop. 65+	Statistics of % Household Income		
Less than \$10,000	1,204	5.2%	21.2% of individuals 65+ residing in Broome County have a household income of less than \$20,000/year.		
\$10,000 to \$19,999	3,731	16.0%	Employment Status 15% of individuals 65+ (5,344) are in the labor force in Broome County and have the current employment status.		
\$20,000 to \$29,999	3,714	15.9%	Employed	5,098	95.4%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	2,919	12.5%	Unemployed	246	4.6%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	2,570	11.0%	Veterans		
\$50,000 to \$74,999	4,275	18.3%	Total: 11,857 Veterans; 7.6% of pop		
\$75,000 and over	4,951	21.2%	Veterans make up 20.5% of 65+		

Geographic Mobility in past year

Age	Mobility	Number	Geographic Mobility in past year: Per the 2018 Census estimates, 95.7% of Broome County 65+ population remained in their homes. It will, therefore, be essential to provide community services to support aging in place.
65 to 69	Same H	10,092	
70 to 74	Same H	7,747	
75+	Same H	16,242	
65 to 69	Moved	493	
70 to 74	Moved	319	
75+	Moved	728	

What Does It Mean to be Age-Friendly?

In 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the idea that communities need to prepare for the rapid aging of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic, and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. In the United States, AARP created an age-friendly process to address these factors and improve the livability of communities for people of all ages. The 8 Domains of Livability describe the elements which most impact the age-friendliness of communities: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, social participation, work and civic engagement, respect and social inclusion, communication and information, community and health services, and housing.

Extensive age-friendly information can be found on the AARP website:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/>

Broome County's Current Age-Friendly Features

While Broome County recognizes the need to enhance the community through the multi-year Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan, there are many current age-friendly services, programs, and community features which should be recognized. Some highlights include:

- Eight senior centers with programs such as congregate dining, opportunities for health and wellness classes, and more
- Food security programs including food pantries and Meals on Wheels
- Friendly visitor and telephone support programs
- A variety of employment opportunities for older adults
- Volunteer opportunities throughout the community for people of all ages
- Transportation options including a fixed route bus service, BC Country rural transportation service, and Office for Aging Mini-Bus, as well as transportation planning, travel training, and additional services



- Home repair services for seniors
- Senior housing options
- Lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners
- A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) grant-based program serving residents in a rural area of Broome County
- Special discounts for seniors, children, students, and veterans available at a number of entertainment venues
- Accessible public buildings
- Numerous attractive and accessible parks and outdoor spaces
- “Complete Streets” projects such as repaving, creation of designated bike lanes, crosswalk enhancements, and pedestrian control signals

(BEFORE)



(AFTER)



The Broome Age-Friendly Project

Vision

We envision Broome County as a great place to live and a community that encourages healthy, safe, and active aging for people of all ages.

Mission

The Broome Age-Friendly Project is dedicated to supporting and encouraging community programs, new projects and enhancements that allow people of all ages to stay connected, independent, active and healthy.

Goals

- Bring together the community to collaborate on enhancing Broome County as a safe, well-designed place that fosters economic development and makes for healthier residents of all ages.
- Promote age-friendly concepts and practices throughout our community.
- Support existing and initiate new community efforts that improve quality of life for people of all ages.
- Work with community partners to develop and implement the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan.
- Seek funding opportunities to implement the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan.
- Gather information to support funding applications for community projects.

Community Involvement

Throughout the age-friendly process, older adults, community members of all ages, and professionals have been encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways:

- The Office for Aging hosted several large community events to provide information about the Broome Age-Friendly Project and to encourage community participation.
- Nine focus groups were held at seven community locations.
- A community needs survey was distributed to adults age 55+. The survey was available online and paper copies were distributed at over 100 community locations. It was completed by 2,187 older adults, providing valuable feedback about their needs.



- An additional survey was completed by 74 professionals who work with older adults, 53% of whom had served at least 11 years in their respective professions.
- Workgroups consisting of community volunteers, professionals from nonprofit agencies, service organizations, businesses, and government met to review community needs and determine priorities for the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan. The majority of workgroup members were over the age of 50.

- Broad community feedback on the draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan was encouraged through a variety of methods:
 - It was published in the June issue of the *Senior News*, which has a circulation of over 7,000 households per month and is also available online.
 - Print copies of the draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan were available to anyone upon request.
 - The draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan was available on the Office for Aging website and was publicized through Twitter and Facebook.
 - Comments were accepted by email, mail, or phone call to a dedicated age-friendly line.
 - Over 380 professionals and community members received the draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan by email.
- Wherever possible, volunteers age 50 and older will be encouraged to participate in implementation of the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan.



Broome Age-Friendly Workgroups

AARP identified eight key livability domains which contribute to quality of life for older adults as well as residents of all ages. In Broome County, six age-friendly workgroups were formed around these eight livability domains.



Community Support and Health Services

People need accessible and affordable health services and appropriate community supports.

Transportation

A variety of public and private transportation options should be available throughout the entire county. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets.

Housing

Most older adults want to reside in their current home or community and may need modifications to age-in-place. There should be a range of housing options suitable for people of all incomes, ages and life stages.

Communication and Information

Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of digital and traditional communication methods to reach all residents.

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

People need public places to gather – indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.

Respect and Social Inclusion; Social and Civic Participation; Employment

People benefit from being engaged in their community at every stage of life. Communities need a variety of accessible, affordable and fun social activities, intergenerational gatherings, and volunteer and employment opportunities.

Broome Age-Friendly Project Community Needs Assessment

As part of the age-friendly planning process, Office for Aging conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment to explore the needs of the 55+ population in Broome County.

Three strategies were used:

- Age-Friendly Community Needs Survey
- Survey of Broome County Professionals who work with older adults
- Focus Groups

A brief summary of the assessment process and a snapshot of the results will be presented here.



The numbers are clear:

There are currently more New Yorkers age 65 and older than children 13 years and younger.

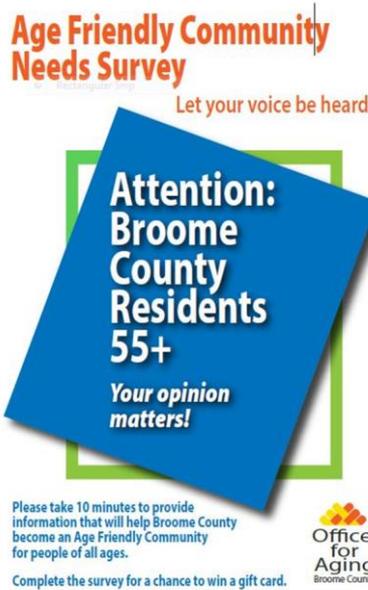
In the US, 10,000 people are turning 60 every day and this trend will continue until the year 2030.

Broome County has higher rates of people 60+ than the state and national figures. According to 2018 Census estimates, 25.1% of the local population is 60+.

For Broome County, the 45+ population accounts for 71% of personal income in our community.

Survey Questions Covered:

- Demographic
- Housing
- Transportation
- Health
- Caregiving
- Financial
- Social



Survey Distribution

- ▶ The survey was distributed between February and December 2019 and was available on paper and online
Binghamton University students volunteered to contact older adults in rural areas over the phone
- ▶ Survey distributed at over 100 community locations such as the following:

Senior Centers	Senior Clubs	Community organizations	Local churches
Senior Housing	Town/Village Halls or Clerk Offices/DMV sites	AARP Tax Locations	Community meal sites/soup kitchens; local diners
Primary Care Sites	Libraries	American Legions	Podiatry Offices

Profile of Survey Respondents

- ▶ **Total Respondents: 2,187**
 - ▶ Paper: 1,145
 - ▶ Online: 923
 - ▶ Phone: 119

- ▶ **Urban: 28.80%; Suburban: 40.37%; Rural: 30.81%**

- ▶ **Average Age of Respondents: 70 years old**

Profile of Survey Respondents: Age, Race, and Income

AGE (n=2058)	55-59	60-65	66-74	75-84	85+
Number of respondents	195	453	712	561	216
% of total survey respondents (2157)	9%	21%	33%	27%	10%

RACE (n=2001)	African American	Asian	Native American	White	Mixed Race	I prefer not to answer	Other
Number of respondents	35	11	21	1842	21	44	27
% of total survey respondents (2157)	2%	1%	1%	92%	1%	2%	1%

INCOME (n=1696)	Under \$19,999	\$20,000-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$59,999	\$60,000+
Number of respondents	465	423	297	511
% of total survey respondents (2157)	27%	25%	18%	30%

Housing Responses

- ▶ How would you rate your community as a place for people to live as they age?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2112)
Excellent	9.71%
Very Good	26.61%
Good	38.73%
Fair	21.07%
Poor	3.88%

- ▶ How confident are you that you will be able to continue living in your current residence for as long as you like?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2134)
Very confident	36.27%
Somewhat confident	44.19%
Not too confident	15.42%
Not confident at all	4.12%

Housing Responses

- ▶ What are some of the reasons you might consider moving from your current home?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2134)
I don't plan on moving	39.51%
No longer able to maintain my home	39.37%
Reduce living costs	20.84%
Better access to transportation services	17.44%
Better climate	17.03%
Better access to community and social activities	14.17%
To be closer to family	11.31%
Better access to hospitals/health services	10.49%
My home has too many stairs and/or no bathroom on the first floor	9.81%
Lower crime/more safety	1.36%

Housing Responses

- ▶ Does your home need any major repairs such as a new roof, heating system or a septic system that could cost \$1,000 or more to fix?
- ▶ Does your home need any small repairs such as installing a railing or replacing a faucet that you are unable to take care of yourself?
- ▶ Top reasons for not getting repairs done: high costs; difficulty finding good contractors; inability to physically do it myself

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2057)
Yes	27.32%
No	59.85%
I don't know	12.83%

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2108)
Yes	27.85%
No	66.65%
I don't know	5.50%

Transportation Responses

- ▶ Have you had trouble with any of the following due to lack of transportation options?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=1931)
I do not have any trouble	86.59%
Attending an event/social function	5.33%
Other (please explain)	5.64%
Difficulty obtaining food	3.52%
Getting to a medical appointment within the county	6.47%
Getting to a medical appointment outside of the county	2.18%

Age Comparison

Accessing medical care within the county was the most commonly experienced issue across all age groups.

Income Comparison

Compared to higher income groups, those with income below \$19,999/year reported the most difficulty with accessing medical care; attending social events and obtaining food due to a lack of transportation options.

Transportation Responses

- ▶ What kind of difficulties do you have in getting the transportation that you need?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=1883)
I do not have difficulties	75.62%
I do not drive	9.35%
Do not want to ask for help or inconvenience others	8.82%
Public transportation is unavailable	6.16%
Public transportation is inconvenient	6.11%
Other (please explain)	6.11%
Physical or other impairments	5.15%
Cannot get to a bus stop	4.25%
No one I can depend on/help unavailable	3.98%
Costs too much	3.45%
Fear of crime	1.17%

Age Comparison

Those in the 85+ group were less likely to drive and to ask others for help with transportation needs.

Income Comparison

Most difficulties with accessing transportation were reported by those with income under \$19,999/year. They were less likely to drive, ask other for help, had physical or other impairments and reported that public transportation was inconvenient.

Health Responses

- ▶ How would you rate your overall physical health?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2110)
Excellent	11.56%
Very good	33.73%
Good	36.48%
Fair	15.59%
Poor	2.65%

Income comparison: Those with lower income were more likely to report fair to poor physical health than those with higher income:

Under \$19,999/year: Fair (28.36%) Poor (4.97%)
 \$20,000-\$39,999/year: Fair (20.23%) Poor (2.76%)
 \$40,000-\$59,999/year: Fair (9.54%) Poor (0.99%)
 \$60,000+/year: Fair (6.36%) Poor (0.77%)

Health Responses

- ▶ Do you see a primary care provider on a regular basis?

Income comparison: Those with lower income were less likely to see their primary care provider on a regular basis.

Under \$19,999/year 9.85% (No)
\$60,000+/year 4.05% (No)

- ▶ If no, what prevents you from getting the care you need?

Other reasons:

- lack of medical providers;
- not pleased with the medical care in this area;
- do not have a need to see a doctor at this time;
- it takes too long to get an appointment

% of total	
Answer Choices	responses (n=2092)
Yes	93.16%
No	6.84%

% of total	
Answer Choices	responses (n=144)
Other (please explain)	52.34%
Cost of medical care (copays, deductible, etc.)	29.91%
Fear/distrust of health care system	18.69%
The wait for an appointment was too long	8.41%
Lack of transportation to a health care facility	7.48%
Too much paperwork	4.67%
Cannot leave my pets/find appropriate pet care	1.87%
Doctor/medical staff do not speak my language	0.93%

Health Responses

- ▶ How would you rate your overall mental or emotional health?

Income comparison: Those with higher income were more likely to report excellent & very good mental health. Those with income under \$19,999 reported fair & poor mental health more than those with higher income.

Under \$19,999: Fair (13.04%)
\$60,000+: Fair (5.47%)

- ▶ Do you feel there are barriers to getting mental health services in the community?

Income comparison: Barriers to mental health services were reported more by respondents with higher income versus those in lower income groups.

Less than \$19,999 Yes (22%) No (78%)
\$60,000+ Yes (40%) No (60%)

% of total	
Answer Choices	responses (n=2073)
Excellent	20.97%
Very good	37.95%
Good	31.00%
Fair	8.97%
Poor	1.11%

% of total	
Answer Choices	responses (n=1794)
Yes	28.82%
No	71.18%

Health Comments

- ▶ Most listed barriers to getting mental health services from 500 comments collected through the survey:
 - Lack of mental health professionals - long wait lists (6+ months on average)
 - Cost of services including lack of insurance coverage and many providers not accepting insurance payments
 - Difficulty navigating available mental health services and finding a starting point for a referral
 - Hours of operation for existing mental health services
 - Stigma associated with mental health issues

Caregiving Responses

- ▶ Do you consider yourself a current or former caregiver?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2001)
Yes	51.43%
No	48.57%

As a current or former caregiver, which of these types of supports would be helpful? (check all that apply)	% of total responses (n=1030)
Information about available resources for caregivers in your community	51.32%
assistance with providing transportation	45.28%
short breaks or respite from your caretaking tasks	44.65%

Financial Responses

- ▶ Were there any times in the last twelve months when you did not have enough money to:

Top 3 financial issues by age groups:

55-59: paying for rent/mortgage/taxes; utility bills; dental care

60-65: paying for dental care; eyeglasses; buying food

66-74: paying for dental care; eyeglasses; rent/mortgage/taxes

75+: paying for dental care; hearing aides; eyeglasses

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=1908)
I have enough money to pay my bills	76.57%
Obtain dental care	12.89%
Obtain eyeglasses	10.53%
Buy food	6.97%
Pay rent, mortgage, or real estate taxes	6.29%
Pay utility bills	5.87%
Other	5.77%
Obtain a hearing aid	5.56%
Fill a prescription for medicine	4.82%
Pay for health insurance premiums	3.04%
Obtain needed medical care	2.67%

Social Responses

- ▶ Sometimes, do you feel you are socially isolated?

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=2004)
Yes	27.84%
No	72.16%

- ▶ If yes, what prevents you from doing more social activities you would enjoy?

Income and age comparison:

Highest % of social isolation reported in the under \$19,999 group and in the 60-65 age group

Answer Choices	% of total responses (n=558)
I cannot physically do activities I would enjoy	37.78%
I have a hard time finding activities that interest	32.33%
I do not have enough money	31.20%

Other Survey Comments

Question: Is there anything else you would like to share?

621 comments were collected. Most frequently mentioned issues/needs:

- ▶ **Housing & Repairs:**
 - housing for middle income seniors
 - one level housing options & town houses
 - home repairs (roofs, modifications etc.)
 - lack of reliable and affordable contractors (especially in rural areas)
 - Aging in Place organizations in our communities - cooperative groups to help each other as we get older
- ▶ **Transportation:**
 - improved transportation options including rural areas
 - park and ride to help access downtown area
 - more information on transportation options
 - bus stops & shelters need to be protected from elements
- ▶ **Community Improvements:**
 - Walkable community with accessible public green spaces with easy access to outdoor cafes, shopping, sitting areas
 - Bike trails

Survey Comments

- ▶ **Financial:**
 - Help paying for hearing aids, glasses and dental expenses, prescriptions
- ▶ **Caregivers:**
 - Need more paid caregivers to help us age in place
- ▶ **Community Improvements:**
 - Walkable community with accessible public green spaces with easy access to outdoor cafes, shopping, sitting areas
 - Bike trails
- ▶ **Social Activities:**
 - more activities for younger seniors: yoga classes, low impact exercise options at senior centers, walking clubs, dance/dinner
 - Meet & Greet Activities for younger active seniors
 - need more multi-generational programs - kids at senior centers; seniors in schools
 - classes on how to use iPhones

Survey Of Broome County Professionals Serving Older Adults

- ▶ Survey monkey online link shared widely with professionals in Broome County
- ▶ 74 respondents - 53% had at least 11 years in their respective profession
- ▶ Area of human services:
 - *Case management (39.19%)
 - *Mental health (22.97%),
 - *Other (22.97%) - Arts, Meals on Wheels, Education, For Profit Sector, Social Daycare, Emergency Services, Volunteer, Advocacy,
 - *Information & Assistance (22.97%),
 - *Healthcare (21.62%),
 - *Housing (20.27%),
 - *Home Health Care (18.92%)
 - *Transportation (16.22%)

Top Categories of Need	Need specifics
Transportation (64.38%)	rural isolation due to lack of adequate transportation options; door to door transportation; affordable and convenient transportation
Financial (57.53%)	Inability to pay for services when over the income threshold to qualify for assistance; lack of resources to remain in their homes when over the limit for Medicaid; lack of planning to prepare for financial expenses related to aging
Housing (52.05%)	access to safe, affordable and clean housing; long wait lists for subsidized senior housing; most affordable housing located in areas with high crime rates
Mental health (45.21%)	lack of mental health providers; long waitlists for mental health services; limited respite options for caregivers & grandparents raising grandchildren; increased social isolation issues
Physical health (34.25%)	lack of available home care options and aides to help seniors age in the community limited geriatric health care options for both primary and acute care needs
Caregiving (24.66%)	Lack of relatives/friends to help limited respite options to those who care for someone including lack of home care aides and affordable home care services

Focus Groups Data

- ▶ 9 focus groups: Broome West, First Ward & Northern Broome Senior Centers; Broome County Library; George F Johnson Library; Binghamton University Lyceum; UHS Stay Healthy Center

- ▶ Top unmet needs discussed in Focus Groups:

Transportation: lack of rural to urban and rural to rural transportation; door to door transportation; bus schedule difficult to follow; limited bus shelters for those wanting to utilize public transportation

Housing/Home Repairs: current housing doesn't support aging in place (stairs; no bathroom on first floor); difficulty finding reliable contractors; shortage of one-story homes; limited middle income housing options for seniors; lack of grants to help repair homes

Services/Communication & Information: better communication about services and events in the community; issues with rural internet & cell service; limited primary care options in rural areas; limited or nonexistent EMS services in rural areas

Caregiving: lack of home care aides and respite options especially in rural areas; overnight and weekend care; finding reliable help

The full 2019 Community Needs Survey Report can be found on the Broome County Office for Aging website or by calling 607-778-2411

<http://www.gobroomecounty.com/senior/Age-FriendlyCommunityInformation>

History of the Broome Age-Friendly Project

In July of 2018, the Office for Aging (OFA) applied to AARP on behalf of Broome County to become an age-friendly community. The first step after applying was to learn more about the needs of older adults in Broome County. To do this, the Office for Aging held several large community events, hearings, and focus groups, and distributed a community survey to assess the needs and preferences of residents age 55 and older.

How the Draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan was Developed

From the fall of 2019 to the summer of 2020, six age-friendly workgroups met to review data and other relevant information about community strengths and needs. Several expert speakers provided input to the various workgroups, and members were tasked with one main goal: to define priority areas for community improvements to be included in the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan. In the summer of 2020, the Office for Aging obtained community feedback on the draft Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan and the plan was revised. The final version of the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan in this report will be reviewed and updated every year.

While the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan includes extensive goals for improving Broome County, there are many additional goals which could not be included but may be part of future efforts. It is also worth noting that, in light of the 2019-2020 global pandemic, the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan will be modified based on new protocols and safety measures in the community



What's Next?

Office for Aging, supported in part by a grant from the New York State Office for Aging, will coordinate implementation of the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan. Ultimately, the project will succeed with the participation of residents and professionals from every sector of our community. Community enhancements supported or initiated as part of the Broome Age-Friendly Project will evolve to reflect the changing needs of the community.



Age-Friendly Broome County

A Community for Everyone

ACTION PLAN

Domain #1: Information and Communication

GOAL: Promote age-friendly practices throughout Broome County and the use of age-friendly communication.

Objective 1: Utilize communication strategies to promote age-friendly practices in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- Research best practices on the use of promotional items and possible sources of funding for a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of age-friendly approaches to all aspects of public life to improve livability. Consider creation of a video to promote age-friendly practices or age-friendly promotional materials such as bags, pens, etc. which would visually communicate the message, such as looking at the world through an age-friendly “lens.”

AARP describes how utilizing an age-friendly “lens” can impact community planning and the use of age-friendly design standards.

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html>

Objective 2: Promote age-friendly communication practices such as readability and utilizing both technology-based and traditional communication methods.

Action Steps:

- Research best practices for age-friendly, visually-impaired friendly, and hearing-impaired friendly written, oral, and online communication.

- Create a printed and online fact sheet of best practices for age-friendly communication which includes both traditional communication options, online communication practices, and verbal communication.
- Distribute fact sheet to businesses, nonprofits, community organizations, Broome County government departments, and municipalities to encourage age-friendly communication practices.
- Explore hosting a forum or other public event to promote age-friendly communication practices.

Objective 1 and 2:

Action Step: Explore developing a volunteer speaker’s bureau which would promote age-friendly practices and age-friendly communication in Broome County.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Age-Friendly Implementation Volunteers, Possible Grant Funders for promotional materials, Office for Aging, additional community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Enhance education about existing community programs, services, and events among professionals and the public.

Objective 1: Promote the Elder Services Guide available in print and online and local referral platforms, including but not limited to NY Connects and 211, for up-to-date information about community programs, services, and events.

Action Steps:

- Publicize the “Broome County Elder Services Guide” through the *Senior News* and Press & Sun-Bulletin ads.
- Promote local referral platforms for individualized information and referrals through networking meetings and speaking opportunities and through distribution of brochures.

Objective 2: Create an online and printed community calendar of events.

Action Steps:

- OFA will look at how to reach those without access to or comfort with technology for communicating information about current events. The *Senior News* can be

better utilized to communicate community events; however, it can never take the place of a dedicated community calendar through an app or website due to space limitations and print deadlines.

- Identify volunteers or a lead agency to either enhance existing printed community guides or create a new printed guide specific to social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- OFA will follow up with Broome County IT on the current status of the Ba-Bing app contract with Broome County and determine if this will effectively serve as a central digital resource for community events such as library offerings, theater, local business programs and events, fairs, government-sponsored events, senior center events and programs, etc.
- If the app does not come to fruition or if it does not meet community needs, OFA will evaluate whether there is a viable alternative.

Objective 3: Create a guide of important local information for older adults such as service providers, healthcare, senior centers, government, and libraries.

Action Steps:

- Research information particular to the needs of older adults to be included in a new guide.
- Design guide according to age-friendly communication standards such as readability.

Objective 4: Improve communication among community groups and agencies.

Action Steps:

- Create a directory of all of the groups in Broome County which provide opportunities for inter-agency communication and resource sharing, including event scheduling.
* Existing groups include VAST, Broome County Community Network Meeting, Building Better Futures for Broome, Broome County Nonprofit Alliance
- Share the list of existing groups with Broome County social, service, mission-driven, and civic groups and government departments. Encourage participation in order to improve communication.
- If it is determined that a gap exists in this area, explore creating a quarterly in-person or online meeting or listserv.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Lead agency TBD, Support from OFA and Other Community Partners to be determined, United Way, Broome County IT, Ba-Bing

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Work towards increased internet access and education around technology in Broome County.

Objective 1: Advocate for increased availability of affordable internet access.

Action Steps:

- Identify current sources of affordable internet including free Wi-Fi hotspots and libraries which loan out hotspots. Publicize this information in the *Senior News*.
- Explore ways to provide affordable or free internet access in various parts of Broome County such as public-private partnerships and municipal Wi-Fi.
- Advocate for the importance of affordable internet access programs with local and state government as well as internet service providers.

Objective 2: Advocate for increased internet coverage in rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Identify rural areas without current internet coverage.
- Learn more about current efforts to increase rural internet coverage: examples include Governor Cuomo's statewide efforts, Congressman Brindisi's work in this area, and planned changes by local service providers.
- Explore the USA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program which may be used to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas, www.usda.gov/reconnect.
- Advocate for new 5G internet structure vs. older 4G options due to long-term cost savings and additional benefits.

Objective 3: Promote the availability of technology classes.

Action Steps:

- Research currently available technology classes in Broome County and create a directory.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have turned to technology for ways to stay connected and learn up-to-date information. Classes are needed to provide information on these tools such as Zoom, NextDoor, and utilizing online and government news alerts.
- Advocate for additional classes where gaps are identified based on type of classes or geographic area served.
- Publicize available technology classes through the *Senior News*, Facebook, Senior Centers, inter-agency meetings, etc.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Age-Friendly Implementation Volunteers, Internet Service Providers, State and Local Government, other community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

Domain #2: Community Supports and Health Services

GOAL: Support age-friendly changes to the local health care system and affordable, accessible health care which minimizes health disparities and provides better health outcomes.

Objective 1: Explore plans that local hospitals and primary care centers have for age-friendly changes to their physical facilities and service delivery, including dementia-capable care and age-friendly emergency rooms.

Action Steps:

- Research current efforts and future age-friendly health plans by UHS, Lourdes/Ascension, Guthrie, the new Binghamton University Ford Center for Geriatric Excellence, Endwell Family Physicians, and other interested partners. A description of what it means to be an Age-Friendly Health System is provided through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement: the 4Ms Framework are “What Matters, Medication, Mentation, Mobility.”
<http://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Age-Friendly-Health-Systems/Pages/default.aspx>
- As needed, work with area hospitals to improve the age-friendliness of emergency rooms in Broome County. Best practices are identified by the Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation Program, such as enhancements in the physical environment, providing standardized approaches to address common geriatric issues, and ensuring optimal transitions of care from one setting to another. www.acep.org/geda/.
- Identify local health care system efforts to provide dementia friendly care as described by Dementia Friendly America’s “Dementia Friendly Community Metrics” for clinical providers (e.g. staff training in dementia care, adapting programs to include caregivers, and responsive plans of care).
www.dfamerica.org.
- Encourage participation by local health care providers in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Age-Friendly Health System, implementation of dementia friendly care, and age-friendly/geriatric emergency room changes, as appropriate.

Objective 2: Advocate for increased local delivery of primary and urgent care in rural areas, including mobile health services.

Action Steps:

- Identify current local primary and urgent care options in rural areas to learn about specific gaps in geographic coverage.
- Advocate for expanded rural healthcare options with local healthcare providers.
- Explore utilizing community locations as settings for the delivery of periodic wellness services such as blood pressure and diabetes checks, flu shot clinics, etc.
- Work to expand the coverage of mobile healthcare vans working in underserved areas.

Objective 3: Increase access to transportation for medical care from rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Coordinate with and support the age-friendly Transportation Workgroup which is working on rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban transportation access.
- Explore how Northern Broome CARES rural transportation efforts can be expanded to other rural areas.
- Encourage use of the Getthere mobility management program, a current provider of rural transportation planning and access to transportation through the Connection to Care program and the volunteer driver program.
www.gettherescny.org/getthere-programs.
- BC Country provides reservation-based rural-to-urban transportation in Broome County. Explore how this can be expanded, especially to meet the need for medical transportation.

Objective 4: Explore increased use of tele-health services, including access to technology, internet and technology training.

Action Steps:

- Identify and promote current tele-health services available in Broome County, including those which were recently implemented or expanded due to the global pandemic.
- Research New York State regulations regarding tele-health, including the 2014 tele-health parity law and 2019 expansion of Medicaid tele-health:
https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf, and New York State tele practice guidance,

https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speded.pdf.

- With local providers, explore tele-health privacy and security issues and access, including technology, internet and technology training.
- Determine if a pilot project to provide technology, internet and technology training is needed and feasible to expand current efforts. Reach out to grant funders if needed.

Objective 5: Work with local health systems and community partners to improve public health literacy, access to resources, and advocate for improved coordination of multiple health services.

Action Steps:

- Determine feasible ways to improve health literacy: the ability to obtain, read, understand and use healthcare information in order to make appropriate health decisions and follow treatment instructions. The CDC has a “National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy,”
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/planact/cdcplan.html>
- Promote the Office for Aging and Binghamton University initiative for tele-health education at senior centers in Broome County.
- Explore and promote local efforts to assist consumers in obtaining healthcare-related resources such as the lowest cost prescription drugs and appropriate Medicare supplement options. For example, Action for Older Persons is the local contracted provider for the Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) which provides education on health care options and Medicare counseling.
- With local healthcare providers, explore ways to improve coordination of multiple health services, including bundling of appointments for those living in rural areas but needing to travel to the urban core for healthcare.
- Promote the integration of substance use treatment into other systems of care such as mental health treatment for older adults.
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Growing-Older-Providing-Integrated-Care-for-An-Aging-Population/SMA16-4982>
Additional information is available at the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center, www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center

Implementation:

Possible Partners: UHS, Lourdes/Ascension, Guthrie, Endwell Family Physicians, Binghamton University Ford Center for Geriatric Excellence, Binghamton

University Nursing and Pharmacy Schools, Action for Older Persons, Office for Aging, other community partners to be determined
Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Improve access to affordable, timely, and convenient mental health and substance use disorder services and activities that promote mental wellness.

Objective 1: Advocate for increased funding for affordable mental health and substance use disorder services.

Action Steps:

- Office for Aging will work with community partners, academic experts, and government agencies to identify specific community needs.
 - * A research study to identify the impact of physical distancing on social isolation among rural older adults and to develop a social isolation community assessment tool was initiated by Binghamton University and Broome County Office for Aging in May of 2020 due to the global pandemic: “Assessment of the Impact of Physical Distancing on the Social Isolation in Rural Upstate New York in the Context of Age-Friendly Communities.” This study may inform needs related to mental health in rural older adults.
- Identified needs and gaps in current services will be brought to local and state leaders through ongoing advocacy efforts.

Objective 2: Educate the public about available mental health and substance use disorder services.

Action Steps:

- Promote awareness of mental health care options which can be accessed immediately or that provide emergency services. NY Connects, the OFA Elder Services Guide and BroomeINCLUDES can provide this information to the public on an ongoing basis. Explore funding needs for a public education campaign.
- As of May 2020, UHS Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, Family and Children’s Society, Lourdes Center for Mental Health, the Greater Binghamton Community Treatment and Recovery Center, and the Addiction Center of Broome County are all accepting new patients with no wait time and are also offering tele-health sessions. It will be important to continually provide updated information on availability through local referral platforms, including but not limited to, BroomeINCLUDES, NY Connects, and 211.

- Promote awareness of available in-home supports such as RSVP’s “Good Morning Broome” service and MHA’s Sunshine Wellness Center “warm” line, among others that can be accessed by phone.
- Promote a phone app and website being developed by BroomeINCLUDES which will use Google maps to display mental health and substance use disorder services by geographic area.
- Identify geriatric mental health counselors and other mental health counselors who can do home visits. Ensure this information is available to NY Connects staff who make referrals.

Objective 3: Explore increased use of tele-mental health services, including access to technology, internet and technology training.

Action Steps:

- Identify current tele-mental health services available in Broome County, including those which were recently implemented due to the global pandemic.
- Research New York State regulations regarding tele-mental health, including the 2014 tele-health parity law and 2019 expansion of Medicaid telehealth: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf, and New York State tele practice guidance, https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf.
- With local providers, explore privacy and security issues related to tele-mental health and the feasibility of tele-mental health expansion including technology, internet and technology training issues.
- Determine if a pilot project to provide technology, internet and technology training is needed and feasible to expand current services and reach out to local grant funders.

Objective 4: Provide older adults with activities to promote mental health.

Action Steps:

- Research existing sources of educational materials about activities which promote mental health, available for distribution at no-cost or low-cost.
- Work with partners such as BroomeINCLUDES, the Broome County Mental Health Department, the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier, Binghamton University, and others in creating a local public education campaign about the behaviors and activities which promote mental health.
- Broome County Senior Centers, Lyceum, and other organizations will continue to provide older adults with socialization, learning opportunities, and physical activity options which contribute to mental health. These opportunities may

become part of a “How to Retire” workshop through the Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, and Employment Workgroup.

Objective 5: Explore how mental health and substance use screenings are or can be integrated into local primary care.

Action Steps:

- Research best practices for mental health and substance use screenings.
- Identify which primary health care providers are engaged in regular mental health and substance use screenings. Encourage providers to integrate mental health and substance use screenings into primary care where this is not currently in practice.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Mental Health Department, Broome County’s Dual Recover Coordinator, BroomeINCLUDES, Binghamton Psychiatric Center, UHS CPEP: Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program, New York State Office of Mental Health, Family & Children’s Society Elder Program, Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier’s Sunshine Wellness Center, RSVP’s “Good Morning Broome” Services, Broome-Tioga WorkForce, Office for Aging, additional community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Improve the social determinants of health for Broome County older adults and rural residents.

Objective 1: Promote NY Connects as a source for up-to-date information about community programs and services.

Action Steps:

- Continue to publicize NY Connects through articles in the *Senior News*, ads in the Press & Sun-Bulletin, and through speaking engagements by Office for Aging staff.
- Ensure that agencies and healthcare providers are informed about how NY Connects can assist their clients in obtaining clear and accessible information about services.
- Continue to provide brochures about NY Connects to agencies, healthcare providers and at a variety of community locations.
- Feature NY Connects on digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and promote the NY Connects searchable, self-service online Resource Directory.

Objective 2: Improve transportation access to basic services (grocery, pharmacy, banking, health care) and community supports which address the social determinants of health (food pantries, congregate meal sites, public benefit assistance, chronic disease management classes, exercise, social and civic opportunities, faith communities).

Action Steps:

- A current project working to improve rural transportation and access to basic services and community supports is Northern Broome CARES, the NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) grant-funded project through Rural Health Network. Explore how lessons learned from this project and services implemented in the Towns of Lisle and Triangle can be applied to other geographic areas of Broome County.
<https://rhnsenry.org/programs/northern-broome-cares/>
- Work with the Age-Friendly Transportation Workgroup on their efforts to expand transportation options.

Objective 3: Increase access to community supports and services at geographically convenient locations such as food pantries, senior centers, community centers, libraries, and churches and increase mobile resources able to make home delivery.

Action Steps:

- Research current services and community supports being delivered within rural communities and identify any gaps in types of services available or communities which are not being served regularly.
- Work with local agencies to increase the services and community supports being offered to older adults and rural residents in their communities or through home delivery. An example would be to deliver food pantry items to those who are homebound.

Objective 4: Explore creating a “Village” or other volunteer-based model in one part of Broome County as a pilot program to address people’s needs as they age-in-place. This objective is shared with the Housing Workgroup.

Action Steps:

- Research the “Village” model of grassroots neighbor-to-neighbor support and similar programs and create a list of required features and benefits of each model.
<https://www.vtvnetwork.org/>
- Explore the feasibility of these options for the Broome County community and identify a lead agency to pilot the program.

- Identify funding needs and apply for grants to cover pilot program.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Rural Health Network: Northern Broome Cares, Broome County Council of Churches, Food Bank of the Southern Tier, other community agencies

Time Frame: TBD

GOAL: Work to increase the availability of home health aides and trained medical personnel working in Broome County.

Objective 1: Advocate for expanded Medicaid and non-Medicaid subsidized in-home services due to current unreasonable long wait periods.

Action Steps:

- OFA will maintain an unmet needs list for clients currently waiting to be served by the Expanded In-Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP).
- OFA will advocate for the need for expanded in-home services with New York State Office for Aging and New York Department of Health.

Objective 2: Advocate for higher wages for paid in-home aides to improve hiring and retention of workers.

Action Steps:

- OFA will work with WorkForce New York to explore local wage rates and policy changes that could support increased wages.
- OFA will advocate for higher wages for aides working in the Expanded In-Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP) and other programs supported by New York State Office for Aging.

Objective 3: Explore workforce development changes to promote job opportunities and training for in-home aides in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- OFA will contact SUNY Broome and WorkForce New York to explore providing remote in-home aide training. The use of the internet or no-cost use of cable subchannels may be options for widespread dissemination of training opportunities.

- OFA will contact SUNY Broome and WorkForce New York to explore ways that tuition discounts could be obtained for aides who agree to work in Broome County for 3-5 years.
- OFA will contact WorkForce New York to explore current efforts and future plans to promote job opportunities for in-home aides.

Objective 4: Advocate for changes to support increased retention of trained medical personnel in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- OFA will contact Binghamton University to learn about current efforts to attract and retain graduating nurses, social workers, and pharmacists in Broome County.
- Explore ways that tuition discounts could be provided for nurses, pharmacists, and social workers receiving their education in Broome County.
- Explore providing student loan forgiveness for trained medical personnel who agree to remain in Broome County for 3-5 years after graduation.
- OFA will contact SUNY Broome to learn about current efforts to attract and retain allied health professionals.

Objective 5: Advocate for transportation support and/or subsidies for in-home aides due to transportation issues preventing service to some clients, especially in rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Explore how vanpool or Rural Health Network’s Transportation to Employment program can assist with this issue and whether there are current capacity issues in serving those who need employment transportation support.
- Work to ensure that in-home care providers know about transportation options available to their staff.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Home Care Coalition, Broome County Department of Social Services, Caregivers/Homemakers, Interim Healthcare, Stafkings, Susquehanna Home Care, United Methodist Home Care, Home Instead, WorkForce NY, BOCES, SUNY Broome, Rural Health Network: Northern Broome Cares, NYSOFA, Office for Aging, and other community partners to be determined

Time Frame: TBD

Domain #3: Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, and Employment

GOAL: Educate the community about the benefits of inclusiveness and how to engage with individuals with special needs.

Objective 1: Facilitate community-based programming that promotes broad community interaction and integration.

Action Steps:

- Working with knowledgeable provider agencies, create a list of best practices for creating inclusive events and programs and disseminate the list throughout Broome County.
- Work with community agencies to create programming which is sensitive to the needs of all participants.

Objective 2: Promote the benefits of inclusiveness through an educational campaign for businesses, government offices, nonprofit agencies, and service and cultural groups.

Action Step:

- Explore offering trainings or workshops about the benefits of inclusiveness, building understanding and respect, and breaking down barriers when interacting with individuals with special needs.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities), Achieve, Community Options, STIC (Southern Tier Independence Center), MHA (Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier), AVRE (Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment, Inc.), HCA (Helping Celebrate Abilities), plus other yet to be determined partners

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Enhance education about existing community resources, social and cultural opportunities, and events.

Objective 1: Promote existing sources of community information through digital, TV/radio, social media, print, and public speaking.

Action Steps:

- Publicize the “Broome County Elder Services Guide” through traditional media such as the *Senior News* Press & Sun-Bulletin ads, press releases as well as through digital outlets and social media.
- Promote Broome County Office for Aging’s NY Connects service for individualized information and referrals through networking meetings and public outreach events.

Objective 2: Provide printed information about social and cultural opportunities and events to the public.

Action Steps:

- OFA will look at how to better utilize existing printed sources of community events, such as the *Senior News*, however, it has space limitations and print deadlines.
- Identify volunteers or a lead agency to either enhance existing printed community guides or create a new printed guide specific to social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- Research a comprehensive list of social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- Promote enhanced guide or new guide throughout Broome County.

Objective 3: Ensure that there will be a printed and digital Community Calendar of Events.

Action Steps:

- OFA will follow up with Broome County IT on the current status of the Ba-Bing app contract with Broome County and determine if this will effectively serve as a central digital resource for community events such as library offerings, theater, local business programs and events, cultural opportunities, fairs, government-sponsored events, senior center events and programs, etc.
- If the app does not come to fruition or if it does not meet community needs, OFA will evaluate whether there is a viable alternative.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Age-Friendly Volunteers, Broome County IT, B-Bing, Office for Aging, and community partners

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Increase intergenerational opportunities.

Objective 1: Enhance outdoor spaces to better facilitate intergenerational interaction.

Action Steps:

- Identify outdoor spaces and types of equipment which could facilitate intergenerational interaction.
- Identify possible funding sources for equipment purchase and apply for grants or sponsorships.

Objective 2: Develop intergenerational programs such as a “Senior to Senior” intergenerational event which will bring together high school seniors and older adults to enjoy a shared evening of dinner and dancing.

Action Steps:

- Identify possible community partners interested in and capable of facilitating intergenerational programming.
- Conduct meetings to identify feasible programming ideas.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate the success of programs.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Broome County Parks & Recreation, Community Partners TBD, Binghamton University, Johnson City Schools, Sarah Jane Church, Johnson City Senior Center, and other community partners

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Improve awareness within Broome County of retirement opportunities related to lifelong education, physical activity, volunteering, employment, and civic engagement.

Objective 1: Offer a How-to-Retire Workshop or series of workshops.

Action Steps:

- Identify a lead agency to facilitate an existing workshop which can be used locally (such as Aging Mastery Program through NCOA) or create a new workshop.
- If needed, funding or sponsorship will be sought.
- At the end of the workshop, participants will be asked for feedback through an exit survey and this will be used to determine if the workshops were successful and if content needs to be adjusted for future workshops

Objective 2: Publicize OFA’s information and assistance services to address individual questions about lifelong education, physical activity, volunteering, employment, and civic engagement.

Action Steps:

- Run a series of articles in the *Senior News* about the ways that OFA’s information and assistance service can assist by topic.
- Include information about OFA’s information and assistance services in a printed guide of community resources.
- At OFA staff presentations to other agencies, include information about the ways Action for Older Persons (AOP) can assist with health insurance counseling, long-term care planning, and Advanced Planning for End of Life (APEL) and OFA’s information and assistance services can help with other retirement information.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Age-Friendly Volunteers, Lead Agency for Workshops TBD (for example, SUNY Broome, BOCES, Broome-Tioga Workforce NY), and other community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

Domain #4: Transportation

GOAL: Increase rural transportation options for older adults in Broome County.

Objective 1: Improve existing rural-to-urban transportation services and explore additional options to better meet the needs of older adults.

Action Steps:

- Work with Rural Health Network and Broome County Department of Public Transportation to identify and define the current rural-to-urban transportation needs in the community.
- Engage in planning to address identified needs. This would involve looking at the existing services provided by BC Transit and the Northern Broome Cares NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) project and working in partnership to define how existing services could be expanded.
- Seek innovative and cost-efficient solutions to increase and improve the existing rural-to-urban service provided by BC Transit by engaging community partners in

the planning process. Community partners include, but are not limited to, Getthere mobility management and Faith in Action Volunteers.

- Engage with transportation providers and community partners on development of a “feeder” or “first mile, last mile” system to address access to rural-to-urban transportation.

Objective 2: Improve rural-to-rural transportation for basic services like groceries and pharmacy.

Action Steps:

- Rural Health Network’s Northern Broome Cares NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) project will continue to provide rural-to-rural transportation in the Whitney Point and Lisle communities. This includes a weekly taxi service and a volunteer driver program.
- Office for Aging, Rural Health Network, and BC Transit will work together to find ways to address rural-to-rural transportation needs, including exploring the feasibility of expanding current rural-to-rural transportation options to communities outside of Whitney Point and Lisle.
- Rural Health Network will seek Federal Transit Administration funds for volunteer driver mileage reimbursement.
- Additional volunteer drivers will be sought through recruitment efforts such as Public Service Announcements and working with local churches.

Objective 1) and 2)

Action Step:

- Office for Aging will provide letters of support for transportation grant applications and advocate for rural transportation funding at the state level as an “unmet need” in Broome County.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Broome County Department of Public Transportation, Rural Health Network, plus other community partners

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Enhance transportation hours so people can attend social opportunities, public events, and worship services.

Objective 1: Explore the feasibility of service enhancement options such as offering the OFA Mini-Bus on Saturdays and Sundays on a rotation basis.

Action Step:

- Office for Aging will look at the feasibility of different options, determine the costs involved, and explore funding for expanded services.

Objective 2: Educate Rural Health Network's Getthere clients about Saturday and Sunday transportation options.

Action Step:

- Getthere will continue to educate clients about weekend service options.

Objective 3: Increase the number of clients served through Rural Health Network's Getthere volunteer driver program.

Action Steps:

- Recruit and train additional volunteers through Public Service Announcements and working with local churches.
- Seek FTA funds for volunteer mileage reimbursement.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Rural Health Network, BMTS (Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study), other community partners

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Educate the public about the purpose and proper use of age-friendly street enhancements such as pedestrian crosswalks and rapid flashing beacons in order to increase compliance and improve safety.

Objective: Air Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on television and social media.

Action Steps:

- Work with the NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Committee on education and public outreach tools including videos and other materials.
- Explore possible use of existing PSAs.
- Work with the Broome County Sheriff on pedestrian safety enforcement exercises.

- Work with the Broome County Traffic Safety Committee on creation of additional local PSAs as needed.
- Create topical social media posts for the Facebook and Twitter accounts of government departments and community partners including Office for Aging, Broome County Department of Public Transportation, and Rural Health Network.
- Contact local TV stations to obtain monthly free airtime for PSAs.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: BMTS, Broome County Health Department Traffic Safety Committee, Office for Aging, other community partners to be determined
Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Obtain additional bus shelters and seating for the fixed route bus system.

Objective 1: Install 30 new bus shelters.

Action Steps:

- BC Transit received funding to install 30 shelters in 2019-2020.
- BC Transit is determining the location of the new shelters through identifying high volume areas and those with unpredictable wait times.

Objective 2: Add additional seating at other bus stops.

Action Steps:

- Seek additional local funding for seats through business sponsorships and donations from local service or nonprofit organizations (such as Rotary Clubs and Sertoma).
- Add this goal to the Broome County Coordinated Transportation Plan.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Department of Public Transportation, Broome County Sheriff's Office, other partners to be determined
Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Improve public education about transportation options and transportation planning assistance.

Objective: Educate the public about available transportation and transportation coordination services.

Action Steps:

- Continue to promote transportation services, trip planning assistance, and travel training through the Getthere mobility management program.
- Promote how BC Country assists residents in scheduling their appointments around bus availability to avoid long wait times.
- Publicize the OFA Mini-Bus as a transportation option for older adults.
- Publicize how new technology can assist with route planning and identifying transportation options: the Getthere Trip Planner and Broome County Public Transportation Department.
- Promote local rideshare and carpool options such as the Getthere mobility management program's rideshare program and BMTS/NYS DOT's new web-based rideshare/carpool program (geared to employment commuting).

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Department of Public Transportation, Rural Health Network, BMTS, Office for Aging, other community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

GOAL: Coordinate transportation planning and create a mechanism for continuous evaluation of Broome County transportation needs.

Objective: Utilize existing collaborative efforts such as Getthere and the BMTS Advisory Council for transportation planning and evaluation.

Action Steps:

- Encourage transportation partners to attend meetings.
- Discuss emerging challenges, opportunities, and plans.
- Find or create a mechanism to continuously evaluate transportation needs.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Department of Public Transportation, Rural Health Network, BMTS Advisory Council, Office for Aging, other community partners

Time Frame: Medium-term (3 months to 1 year)

Domain #5: Housing

GOAL: Improve the availability of housing and the variety of housing options for low, middle-income, and rural older adults in Broome County.

Objective: Increase housing availability and the variety of housing options for low, middle-income, and rural older adults in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- Office for Aging will continue to educate the public about existing and new low, middle-income, and rural housing options in Broome County.
- Expand the current Office for Aging “Senior Apartment Housing Guide” available on the Broome County website and distributed through NY Connects information and assistance line. Additional entries will include rental housing for middle-income older adults with rental rates between \$875 and \$2,000 per month.
<http://www.gobroomecounty.com/sites/default/files/dept/senior/OFA%20Resource%20Center/Senior%20Apartment%20Housing%20Guide%20August%202019.pdf>
- Identify currently underserved geographic areas and advocate with local and state entities for funding for low, middle-income, and rural housing in Broome County.
- Explore the development of low, middle-income, and rural housing in Broome County with nonprofit and for-profit housing developers.
- Office for Aging will support housing developers through providing OFA data and Age-Friendly Housing Workgroup recommendations.
- Explore current networking and coordination efforts among housing developers, such as housing networking meetings, and determine if additional coordination is needed to successfully work towards increasing housing availability.
- Research innovative and feasible housing solutions. Some examples under consideration by the Housing Workgroup include accessory dwelling units, shared housing among seniors, seniors co-living with students, tiny homes, and developing affordable housing on vacant property provided by a land trust.
- Work with community partners to implement innovative housing options.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Age-Friendly Implementation Volunteers, Non-Profit Housing Providers such as First Ward Action Council, Metro Interfaith Housing Management, The S.E.P.P. Group, Belmont Management Company, Preservation Management Inc., CDS Housing, and others, For-Profit Housing Developers, Broome County Land Bank, Broome Community Land Trust, other community partners, YWCA, Southern Tier Independence Center Housing Committee, Broome County Department of Planning & Economic Development, Binghamton Housing Authority

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Improve the availability of home repair and modification options for Broome County older adults.

Objective: Support and advocate for community agencies to obtain more funding to help seniors repair and modify their homes and explore additional home repair/modification resources, including utilizing trade schools and affordable private pay options.

Action Steps:

- Identify gaps in current programs by geographic service area or types of home repair/modifications covered by available programs. A good starting place for this is OFA's guide, "Weatherization and Home Repair Programs" as well as information obtained by the Housing Workgroup.
- Work closely with community partners who provide home repair/modification to explore existing challenges and potential solutions.
- Continuously advocate with local and state entities to communicate the need for home repair and modification funding to improve existing housing stock which supports seniors who wish to remain in their homes and communities.
- Provide letters of support and data from the Office for Aging Community Needs Survey to community agencies when they apply for funding to help seniors repair and modify their homes.
- Explore utilizing trade schools for home repairs and modifications.
- Research efforts to educate homeowners about home maintenance, modifications, and hiring contractors. Possible resources include AARP's "Here to Stay: Home Upkeep for All" program, "The AARP Home Fit Guide," and the Southern Tier Home Builders Association. Provide these resources to Office for Aging clients and publicize through the *Senior News*, if appropriate.

AARP's Here to Stay: Home Upkeep for All program and toolkit:

<https://heretostay.aarpfoundation.org/>

The AARP Home Fit Guide:

https://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/articles/families/HousingOptions/200590_HomeFit_rev011108.pdf

Southern Tier Home Builders Association: <https://sthbra.com/>

- Explore the development of a list of common home repairs with local cost estimates where possible (e.g. range of costs for discrete projects like installing bathroom grab bars, not for projects with great variables like roof work).
- Explore ways to assist homeowners in connecting with vetted contractors and those who offer a discount to seniors. Two possible resources are the Broome County Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development and the Southern Tier Home Builders & Remodelers Association.
- Office for Aging will continue to educate the public about contractor scams through articles in the *Senior News*.
- Identify innovations which may assist older adults to successfully age-in-place such as home technology modifications and internet-based home monitoring options.
- The age-friendly housing implementation group and/or Office for Aging will communicate with community agencies to determine whether additional funding was obtained to provide home repairs and modifications for older adults or if services were expanded to additional geographic areas in Broome County.
- The age-friendly housing implementation group and/or Office for Aging will share any new, newly identified, expanded home repair and modification options, and in-home technology advances with the public through the printed and online “Weatherization and Home Repair Programs” guide as well as through articles in the *Senior News*, as appropriate. The current “Weatherization and Home Repair Programs” guide is located online at, <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/sites/default/files/dept/senior/OFA%20Resource%20Center/GUIDE%20to%20Weatherization%20%20Home%20Repair%20January%202019.pdf>

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Age-Friendly Implementation Volunteers, Community and Government agencies including First Ward Action Council, Southern Tier Home Builders & Remodelers Association, Habitat for Humanity, Tioga Opportunities, City of Binghamton Housing Division (Homeownership Academy, HOME Rehabilitation Program), BOCES and other trade schools in the Southern Tier, NYSERDA, Broome County Health Department’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Faith In Action through the Broome County Council of Churches, USDA Rural Development, The Impact Project, Office for Aging, other community partners to be determined

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Increase age-friendly zoning regulations in Broome County and promote age-friendly features in new housing.

Objective: Advocate for changes or variances to local zoning regulations to allow for age-friendly housing alternatives such as shared housing and accessory dwelling units.

Action Steps:

- Create a list of age-friendly zoning changes, such as allowing for accessory dwelling units and shared housing, that would enhance the housing options available in Broome County.
- Research and develop an inventory of current zoning regulations related to age-friendly housing options by geographic area. Several state-level resources to explore are the New York State Bar Municipal Law Section and the New York State Uniform Fire Code.
- Identify current local regulations which might inadvertently impact older adults' housing options.
- Determine a strategic approach for encouraging municipalities to allow for age-friendly zoning. One strategy would be to target zoning changes in larger municipalities which would then encourage changes in smaller municipalities.
- Reach out to local planners, municipal planning boards, municipal attorneys, and law departments to discuss the need for and benefits of zoning for age-friendly housing options and obtain support for zoning changes as needed.
- Educate the public about local zoning and housing options. Consider development of a guide.

Objective: Work with community partners to educate housing developers about the benefits of incorporating age-friendly features in their developments.

Action Steps:

- Create a list of age-friendly housing features which would be most beneficial for new developments as well as the relative cost of incorporating these features at the development phase. AARP has a number of publications which provide examples of age-friendly housing in communities, <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2016/where-we-live-communities-for-all-ages.html>.
- Research and create a list of current age-friendly residential and commercial properties as models of age-friendly development.
- Work with the Broome County Planning Department on sharing a list of age-friendly housing features with town/village planning boards and other planners in Broome County. Encourage them to utilize the age-friendly housing features list

during the comments stage of new developments and to provide it to all housing developers, especially those focused on creating housing for older adults.

Objective 1 and 2:

Action Step:

- Explore creation and implementation of a continuing education program in Broome County related to age-friendly housing options, features and zoning.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Office for Aging, Age-Friendly Implementation Volunteers, Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development, local law firms which focus on housing issues, other community partners to be determined
Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

Domain #6: Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

GOAL: Improve the safety and public enjoyment of facilities, outdoor spaces, and programs across all of Broome County.

Objective 1: Integrate age-friendly features into County facilities and outdoor spaces.

Action Steps:

- Compile a list of Age-Friendly Best Practices that can be integrated into County projects.
- As capital upgrades are made to County facilities, encourage Facilities and Department of Public Works to utilize Universal Design Best Practices.
- The Department of Public Works will complete the Broome County ADA Transition Plan. An ADA Transition Plan provides a self-assessment of the accessibility of the County's infrastructure. Typically, the focus is on sidewalks, ramps, and parking. It also identifies barriers to accessibility and prioritizes improvements to be made.
- Encourage County facilities to address needs identified in the Age-Friendly Communities Broome County Facilities Self-Assessment Tool completed in January to March of 2020.
- Support the Broome County Planning Department's efforts to develop a facilities master plan.
- Determine if there is a need for more age-friendly benches with back and armrests at County facilities.

- Office for Aging will pursue funding for intergenerational playground equipment for Otsiningo Park, which will be the first intergenerational playground equipment in Broome County Parks.
- Ensure that all County facilities have adequate signage for visitors.
- Provide more pedestrian and bicycle amenities at County facilities including bike racks and pedestrian crossings.

Objective 2: Enhance age-friendly programming at the County.

Action Steps:

- Increase programming accessibility by working with BC Transit to determine the feasibility of offering periodic excursion buses to County parks and events.
- Identify opportunities for matinee shows at the Forum and the Arena.
- Work with community groups to organize intergenerational activities. Examples include mural projects at the Broome County Library, parks, and senior centers. Intergenerational programming is also an objective of the Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Engagement and Employment Workgroup.
- Work with the Binghamton Metropolitan Transit Study to develop Bicycle Safe Routes for their Bicycle Plan.
- Where feasible, establish a community garden program at senior centers and Willow Point.

Objective 3: Promote age-friendly concepts for utilization by local Broome County municipalities when improving their outdoor spaces and public buildings.

Action Steps:

- Share the list of Age-Friendly Best Practices with Broome County municipalities and encourage utilization when capital upgrades are made.
- The Planning Department will host a municipal training about age-friendly best practices.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Broome County Departments and County Facilities, VINES, YMCA/YWCA, BT BOCES, Nursing Homes, Rotary Clubs, Discovery Center, BMTS, Broome County Municipalities, local parks, and other various agencies

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

GOAL: Improve public knowledge of Broome County facilities and programs.

Objective: Publicize information about facilities, activities, and discount programs throughout Broome County.

Action Steps:

- Explore utilizing community volunteers as guest speakers at the senior centers and to community organizations to educate the public and encourage use of County assets.
- Identify ways to cross-promote County facilities between departments.
- Publicize activities and event discount programs available to older adults in the *Senior News* and encourage other local publications and agencies to spread the word.

Implementation:

Possible Partners: Community partners and businesses

Time Frame: Long-term (1-5 years or longer)

In Conclusion

Thank you for reviewing this exciting project we are preparing to undertake as a community. We encourage agencies, businesses and community members to join us and assist with the implementation of this plan.

This is both the final step in the planning process and the first step in implementation. Starting in the fall of 2020 and over the next three to four years, we will be looking for interested parties to help carry out this ambitious plan.

If you would like your business or agency to be added as a participating partner, please contact us. We also invite those who helped develop this plan and any new community members to join us in implementing the plan for **Broome County to become an Age-Friendly Community.**

To Learn More and Find Ways to Get Involved

Contact the Broome County Office for Aging

Call – 607-778-2411

Email – OFA@BroomeCounty.US

Mail – P.O. Box 1766, Binghamton, NY 13902

Stay informed about the Broome Age-Friendly Project:

www.gobroomecounty.com/senior/Age-FriendlyCommunityInformation

Online resources about livable communities and AARP's network of Age-Friendly states and communities:

www.AARP.org/Livable

Appendix - Sources

The plans and reports referenced below reflect some of the sources used by the six age-friendly workgroups to determine community strengths and needs in development of the Broome Age-Friendly Action Plan:

AARP's "Here to Stay: Home Upkeep for All"

AARP's Livability Index

AARP's "Roadmap to Livability Collection"

AARP's "Where We Live: Communities for All Ages"

American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-Year Data Profile

Broome County Age-Friendly Community Report: Results of the 2019 Survey of Older Adults

Broome County 2020 Comprehensive Plan: Building Our Future

Broome County Health Department Community Health Assessment 2019-2024

Complete Streets Policy 2016, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan 2018, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study

Getthere Broome County 2017 Progress Report, Mobility Management of South Central New York

Looking Forward 2040: The Greater Binghamton Transportation Plan, The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (2015)

New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act 2010

New York State Complete Streets Act 2011

New York State Executive Order 190: Incorporating Health Across All Policies into State Agency Activities

New York State Prevention Agenda 2019- 2024

Office for Aging Plan for Services 2020-2024

World Health Organization's Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

