



Step 1: Determine community readiness; Create an action team; Identify a leader or co-leaders

After first determining community readiness to embark on a dementia friendly initiative, the next step involves establishing an Action Team. This team should consist of a diverse group of people from the community, including residents, volunteers, municipal employees, and individuals from at least three [community sectors](#).

It is highly encouraged to have people living with dementia and caregivers represented on the action team and in community engagement efforts.

As action teams review the needs of their community, some helpful resources include [the Massachusetts Age- and Dementia Friendly Integration Toolkit](#), as well as [the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report](#) and community profiles, developed by UMass Boston's Gerontology Institute with the support of the Tufts Health Plan Foundation (now Point32 Health Foundation).

When launching a dementia friendly initiative, many communities host kick-off events to promote awareness and visibility of the initiative.

Step 2: Engage with residents

While an action team works to assess community needs and develop a dementia friendly community action plan by engaging residents and stakeholders, it often makes sense to concurrently take some initial steps to help its team and community members understand dementia, and what it means for people who are living with the condition, as well as their loved ones.

There are several ways to raise awareness, for example:

- View sector vignettes from Dementia Friendly America that offer profession-specific guidance
- Organize a health fair with a dementia-services focus
- Convene a dementia friendly night at the local library where a person living with dementia talks about what it would mean to live in a dementia friendly community
- Convene Dementia Friends information sessions that provide well designed, one-hour dementia-sensitivity trainings via Zoom for anyone who is interested.
- Recommend and/or convene trainings for community professionals and caregivers available from the Alzheimer's Association.

Many action teams hold an informational session to inform the general public about the intention of introducing dementia friendly actions. MCOA has templates for invitations, as well as samples created by other communities. Feel free to request materials if they would be helpful to your efforts.

Step 3: Develop an action plan & begin implementation

Step 3 involves developing an action plan and beginning its implementation.

This stage focuses on taking action by:

- Listening to residents, particularly those affected by dementia
- Identifying and reviewing the needs of the community
- Developing an action plan that outlines priorities for the community

Communities often organize focus groups to share information about dementia and gather input from different sectors such as businesses, faith communities, and service providers. The action plan may be incorporated into broader municipal strategies like Master Plans or Age-Friendly Action Plans.

Additionally, support and resources, such as existing action plans from other communities, are available from dementia friendly initiative leaders to help guide the planning and implementation process.

Step 4: Be recognized for your commitment

Many communities take the opportunity to convene a community celebration to honor the completion of their action plan. This serves as a way to engage the broader community and promote ongoing awareness of the community's dementia friendly initiative—and it also keeps momentum strong.

To be recognized for their commitment to implement the steps outlined in the community's action plan, the action team submits the Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFM) Pledge.

Communities can email their signed Pledge to Hayley Wood (hayley@mcoaonline.org) and Maddie Noonan (madeline@mcoaonline.org).

The DFM Pledge requires that communities include names and signatures of the action team leader(s) and at least one municipal leader or elected official. Communities will receive a certificate from MCOA and public recognition for being on their way to becoming a dementia friendly community.

OFFICE ADDRESS:
9 SUMMER ST., SUITE 306,
FRANKLIN, MA 02038

CONTACT: HAYLEY WOOD
EMAIL: HAYLEY@MCOAONLINE.ORG
CONTACT: MADELINE NOONAN
EMAIL: MADELINE@MCOAONLINE.ORG