

AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 10/15/2020

Time: 1:00 pm

Facilitator: Kim Henry and Lucky Sohi

In Attendance

Kim Henry

Terri Hansen

Scott Ripley

Lucky Sohi

Stuart Rosenthal

Jill Kamenetz

Kelly Kessler

Kathleen Krintz – Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved

September Minutes are approved

First: Stuart Rosenthal

Second: Jill Kamenetz

New Business:

Terri told the group that a standardized format has been developed for recommendations for the action plan. From a time management standpoint, we want to have recommendations from each workgroup available to the Steering Committee January/February, then in March/April sent back to workgroups for changes or clarification. County Administration will review in May. Needs to be finalized by June to submit to AARP.

- Kim asked Terri if AARP reviews plans and makes suggestions or do they accept what is submitted?
 - Terri's understanding is that AARP accepts the submitted plan as is. Asked Stuart since he was involved in the DC Age-Friendly process, did AARP submit anything back.
 - Stuart believes that AARP gives some kind of guidance if they would like some corrections or changes.
 - Kim asked what happens after that step in terms of implementation in Howard County.
 - Terri stated then the real work begins. We will be looking for individuals in the community, groups and organizations, or whomever this group has identified to be work on the action steps and start implementing them. There will be opportunities for awareness campaigns to bring people out (when it safe to do so) and people what can we do. Hopefully by next summer we will be able to do some of those things. In November/early December Terri will get some additional information through focus groups, make connections through existing groups, and be able to speak to groups and/or individuals who did not participate in the Survey.
 - Terri went over the action plan form. Recommendations should follow with a rationale. Every initiative needs to have a rationale. This is the meat of why and where we intend to go.

- Kim asked if we can refer back to another's jurisdictions plan? Such as the ambassador program which was presented in a finding from another plan or do we just adopt as our own.
- Terri stated we would modify it but give credit (modeled after jurisdictions' plan).
- Kim said the group should begin distilling the things we have been talking about into a list of potential action items.

Kim mentioned a document Stuart shared about reaching adults 55+ more effectively through print. Jena Crawley, Administrator of Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) had also seen the document that Stuart shared with the group and thought it could be adapted into an Action Item for Howard County to provide community guidelines for age-friendly publications. Good print guidelines are effective across the board no matter your age.

- Stuart was the chair of the communications committee for the DC Age-Friendly initiative. Our group talked about ways to improve things. Made a recommendation because we come across this all the time. People submit ads for various products that come the internet and computers. What works nicely on a computer may not work in print and also not for seniors. Thought it was important to lay all this out from my experience and others. Open to additions or other adjustments this group wants to make.
 - Kim mentioned there are some that relate to ADA that would need to be added to the document. Believes the group can add to the guide to not only make it for 55+ but also ADA compliant.
 - Kelly stated that the guide is a practical user-friendly tool for all organizations to use as a best practice in communication.
 - Jill stated that it would need to be tweaked to include for Power Point or whatever we are using.
 - Stuart suggested there should be another set of guidelines for online tips. Need to add guidelines for websites for easy reading and ADA compliance.
 - Kim stated that once you start using the guidelines, they become second nature. Believes the document Stuart gave as is a great action item that community groups could use as effectively as Howard County Government.
 - Stuart said in every DC Age-Friendly meeting there were representatives of every department of the Government along with representatives of the Academics from universities and hospitals in the area. The guidelines were distributed to all those groups to use in everything they do.
 - Jill mentioned that disability language is constantly changing.
 - Kelly said we should consider gender identification too - thinking about pronouns to be more inclusive of our LGBTQ community.
 - Kim mentioned we haven't dealt with the cultural consideration - especially the language barrier.
 - Jill stated this is another piece to having the technology to cue you about the things you need to do.
 - Stuart said there was a separate DC initiative called Age-Friendly Business initiatives which encourages area business to look at what made them not Age-Friendly and how to change.
 - Terri asked if we are looking to expand and similarly have guidelines for the web.
 - Kim reply that yes, and that it may just be a section within the current guidelines which address considerations for email, web, etc.
 - Terri suggested that we should identify what those are:
 - ✓ Websites
 - ✓ Email

- ✓ Promotional Material such as Advertisements/Menus, etc.
 - ✓ Presentations
- Jill mentioned what Mae had said at the last meeting about phone trees which are done at churches for communication.
 - Lucky mentioned that there are other Senior Centers and Organizations across the country that utilize phone trees. And some have even done events that are just audio (people can call in).
 - Jill mentioned she is doing the friendly connections (phone a senior program) Talked with Office on Aging in Philadelphia which has a phone system which people opt in to get updates on different programs each week and where to get more information.
 - Kim stated that Howard County used to have a program called Notify me Howard County whereby residents could register to get messages from the County by text.
 - Kelly mentioned that constant contact has text communication features. Possibly seeing if they have robo calling.
 - Kim asked Kelly if the Health Department has done any robo calling.
 - Kelly said the Health Department has used constant contact. She thinks it was also done when they were going to be spraying for mosquitos but not sure which department.
 - Terri wants everyone to keep in mind there is no one right answer. Messages can go out in written form and/or via phone. There was a program in Anne Arundel County's Health Department Mental Health section (many years ago) with a number you could call 24/7 to get pre-recorded messages which was well done. There was also a printed document that you could pick up at different locations.
- Kelly suggests the communications team invite other departments/organizations to co—host their events on Facebook to help spread the word.
- Kim mentioned that the Office on Aging of Independence Showcase will be held Friday, October 23 from 9 am to 2pm.
- Terri stated that the entire showcase is recorded apart from the entertainment. All the information will be on the website, making our pages more interesting and interactive.
- Kim said this brings up creating a network of community communicators, which could be an action item. This information sharing will help get the word out. It's amazing how effective these grassroots approaches can be.
- Jill thinks it has something to do with the aging in terms of there are so many different generations. The reality is there are a lot of people who need things.
- Terri stated that when you refer to 50+ you are talking about 4 to 5 generations of people, with varying educational and social economic levels. We must offer options on multiple levels to communicate with all. Cognitive levels communicate differently; there are also diversity issues depending on whether English is their first language.
- Jill said we are constantly figuring out how to connect with people and identify differences.
- Kim stated we will not solve all communication issues at once, and that internal communication is just as important as external communication.
- Terri said we need to start educating ourselves, businesses, etc.

Homework Assignments:

For the next meeting go over the concepts and see if there are any further recommendations

Next Meeting: November 19, 2020 – 1:00pm via Webex