

MIAMI-DADE AGE-FRIENDLY PARKS

TOOLKIT

AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE
Miami-Dade County



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Please visit www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/ParksToolkit to access the Virtual Appendix materials which include:

- *Community Leisure Interests Survey Report*
- *Wayfinding and Signage Plan*
- *Evaluating Park Accessibility*
- *Miami-Dade Pilot Project Examples*
- *Comprehensive Park Program Schedule*
- *Walk for Life Resource Guide*
- *Sample Park Program Marketing Material*
- *Age Friendly Park Policy Checklist*
- *Age Friendly Park Program Policy Checklist*
- *South Florida Parks Coalition Charter*

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative



With the world's rapidly growing, aging population, it is expected that, soon, older adults (65+) will outnumber children under the age 5.¹ This fact is not different in the United States, where between the years 2000 and 2050, the number of older adults is expected to increase by 135%.² In addition to the rise in the number of older adults, life-expectancy is also higher. According to the Social Security Administration, out of all older adults currently at the age of 65, 25% will live past the age of 90, and 10% will live past the age of 95.³

In an effort to prepare to accommodate this aging population, the World Health Organization initiated the Global Age-Friendly Cities project, giving rise to age-friendly initiatives in several cities around the world, including here in the United States, and it is now happening in Miami-Dade County. With approximately half a million people ages 60+, Miami-Dade County has the largest number of older adult residents in Florida, and this number is expected to nearly double in the next 25 years.⁴ How well Miami-Dade responds to the aging phenomenon will depend on how well we prepare our communities to do so.

The Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative (AFI) began as a result of another initiative of the Health Foundation of South Florida, the Healthy Aging Regional Collaborative (HARC), which has enabled more than 38,000 older adults to age strong through participation in evidence-based programs since 2008. The implementation of various HARC programs yielded its success through the established partnership with Miami-Dade County. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces embraced the offering of programs that had been proven to support healthy aging, and have been a vital partner in the Miami-Dade AFI since its inception.

The Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative’s first three years have been made possible by Grantmakers In Aging’s (GIA) Community Agenda: Improving America for All Ages, with funds from the Pfizer Foundation. This initiative is a partnership between several agencies in Miami-Dade County; our lead agencies include AARP, Alliance for Aging, Health Foundation of South Florida, Miami-Dade County, United Way, and Urban Health Partnerships.

“Research tells us that most people want to grow old in the places that matter most to them, around family and community,” said John Feather, PhD, CEO of Grantmakers In Aging. “But that’s only going to be possible if all of us — regional planners, elected officials, citizen groups, philanthropies, industry and others — start thinking and taking action now to put age-friendly ideas into practice. Supporting age-friendly development is a natural role for local philanthropies because of their unique knowledge of the people and particular needs of their own regions.”

The Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative has set its initial focus on three of the eight domains identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be important to the quality of life of older adults. These are outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing. Parks are part of the outdoor spaces and buildings domain, and can be a great tool in helping older adults live active and healthy lifestyles.

The Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System Master Plan

The Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System Master Plan serves as a policy document and long-term vision plan to guide future park development and stewardship. The vision for the Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System is to create a new, interconnected framework for growth, one that results in a more livable, sustainable community. Consisting of existing and proposed parks, public spaces, natural and cultural places, greenways, trails and streets, the framework will form the foundation or “bone structure” of the County to accommodate growth, while also improving the quality of life for residents. The new framework will encourage the revitalization of neighborhoods; allow for the orderly redevelopment of existing land uses in response to changing markets and demographics; and ensure greater environmental protection. It will also improve the social fabric of the County, providing equitable access to parks and open spaces, and providing more opportunities for residents to meet, socialize, and connect with one another.²⁸ The Master Plan should be used as the guiding principles to any improvements implemented in a Miami-Dade park, including the age-friendly initiatives presented in this Toolkit.

Characteristics of Age-Friendly Communities

Most seniors desire to live independently and live in their homes for as long as possible.⁵ However, many communities lack the necessary components to allow older adults to live independently long-term. In an effort to address the needs of the fast-growing aging population, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified eight domains that, together, affect the quality of life of older adults. The domains are interconnected and together impact the health and quality of life of older adults.

Overview of characteristics of age-friendly communities:



Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Outdoor spaces, buildings, and parks should be clean, have enjoyable natural surroundings and green spaces, provide proper pedestrian infrastructure, including even and unobstructed sidewalks, and plenty of crosswalks. These are places where community members can interact, engage with one another, and be physically active, and are important backbones of the environment in which we live.



Domain 2: Transportation

The ability to easily access transport is vital to independent living; transportation is one of the most important components of active aging. The availability of different options of affordable public transportation for all older adults is essential and affects all other aspects of livability.



Domain 3: Housing

Housing is another factor that affects the quality of life older adults will have. The availability of multiple affordable housing options located close to services and facilities is an important characteristic of an age-friendly community.



Domain 4: Social Participation

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities, in the community and with the family, allows older adults to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to maintaining a good quality of life.



Domain 5: Respect & Social Inclusion

Respectful and inclusive public and commercial services and products adapted to seniors' needs and preferences are also important. Additionally, older adults should be recognized as important contributors to the community and be included as full partners in community decision-making that affects them.



Domain 6: Civic Participation & Employment

Age-friendly communities have multiple employment and volunteer opportunities that are tailored to the needs and interests of older adults, allowing them to remain active and socially connected, fostering health, good sense of well-being and overall quality of life.



Domain 7: Communication & Information

Effective communication is also an important feature of age-friendly communities, both by providing information to older adults about how they may be able to access resources and by helping the community understand the value and needs of older adults in the community.



Domain 8: Community Support & Health Services

Vital to maintaining health and independence of older adults is the availability of accessible health and support services. Among these are: services for promoting, maintaining and restoring health; residential care facilities; social services for older adults; and home care services that include health services, personal care, and housekeeping.

About this Toolkit

In order to support local application of similar strategies, this Toolkit, containing practical tools and resources, including examples from Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces of the attributes and components that have been adopted, was developed. The toolkit has been designed to provide a general understanding of the different components of an age-friendly park, as well as their importance. In addition, the Toolkit contains a step-by-step guide through the process of creating age-friendly parks locally by identifying the necessary policies to implement the changes throughout the existing local parks.

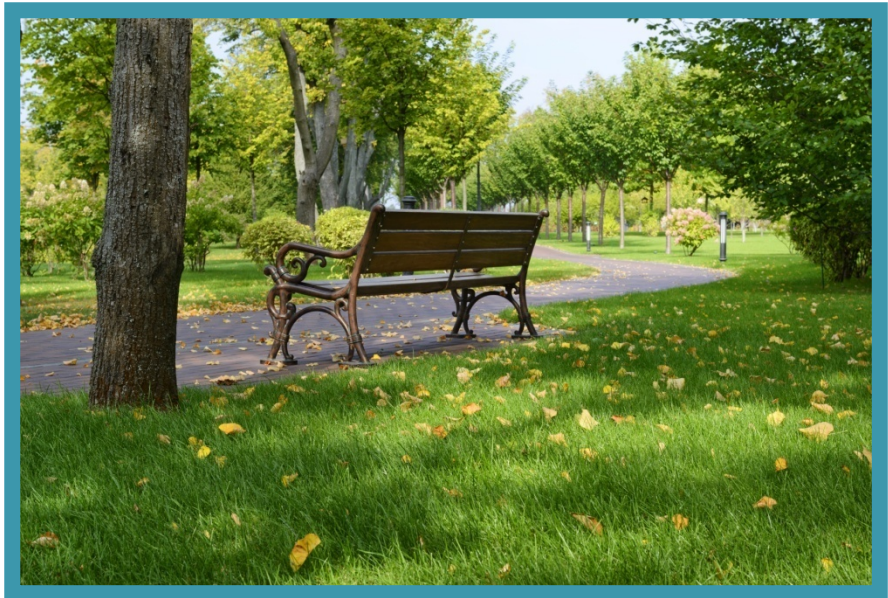
Finally, an Age-Friendly Park Standards system, which was designed to guide the evaluation of local parks and to assist in determining the priority areas for change, is also included in the Toolkit. Age-friendly parks are parks for everyone, and this Toolkit can provide the tools necessary to make significant strides towards achieving a high-quality, age-friendly park. Please share any comments and usage of the Toolkit with us at www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org.



OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS OVERVIEW

Characteristics that Contribute to Age-Friendliness ⁶

This level of growth in the older adult population highlights the need for community leaders to work together to promote outdoor environments and public buildings that foster active living, health, and engagement for people of all ages and abilities. The way the outside environment, public buildings and spaces are designed has a major impact on the level of mobility and independence an older adult has, which in turn determines the quality of life and ability to age in place. The WHO has identified key Outdoor Spaces and Buildings characteristics that contribute to age-friendliness. These are:



Pleasant and Clean Environment

Age-friendly communities have public areas that are clean and pleasant, including well-maintained pavements free of obstructions and a sufficient number of rest areas and public toilets. In addition, an environment that is peaceful and quiet, free of disturbing noise levels, is also important to the well-being of older adults.

Adequate Pedestrian Infrastructure

The ability to safely walk to different places in the community is vital to independent living. The availability of wide enough sidewalks, multiple pedestrian crossings that are tailored to meet the needs of individuals with different levels and types of disability and complete with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues, and adequate crossing times are all important features for the safety of people of all ages and abilities, especially older adults.

A Safe Environment

Perceived neighborhood safety is strongly connected to older adults' mobility and independent living. A safe outdoor environment is promoted by ample amounts of street lighting and police patrols. Additionally, cycle paths should be separate from pedestrian walkways, so older adults can feel safe walking around the neighborhood without fear of getting hit.

Age-Friendly Buildings

Age-friendly buildings are accessible to all people, including individuals with different levels of disability. Important features include accessible elevators, wide doorways to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers, ramps, railings, and non-slip floors.

Older Customer Accessibility & Assistance

Age-friendly communities have businesses and services that are in close proximity and accessible within walking distance. Also important is the availability of special customer service for older adults, including service counters for older people and seating areas in locations requiring longer wait times.

Parks and Green Spaces

Neighborhood parks and green spaces are essential to active living. It brings many health, economic, and community engagement benefits. It is important to note that creating age-friendly parks is beneficial not only to the health of older adults; an age-friendly park is friendly for people of all ages and abilities, and can play a significant role in addressing the current public health concern with the raising rates of obesity and chronic diseases.



Obesity and chronic diseases due to inactivity are among the leading causes of preventable deaths in the United States.⁷ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 78 million of U.S. adults and about 12 million of children and adolescents ages 2-19 years old are obese, which leads to an estimated annual medical cost of over \$147 billion.^{8,9} Data on Miami-Dade County shows that approximately 67.4% of adults are either overweight or obese, and about 13% of high-school students are obese.¹⁰ Creating communities that foster active living is vital to address this growing problem. The availability of parks in the neighborhood has been shown to increase physical activity levels and health.¹⁰ Research shows that individuals who are regular park users are more likely to reach the recommended levels of physical activity than those who are not.¹³ Parks and green spaces also support physical activity among older adults, and have shown promising improvements in health outcomes, including improved mental health and overall well-being.^{11, 12} In addition to health benefits, neighborhood parks and green spaces bring economic development by enhancing property values, attracting homebuyers, including retirees, and increasing municipal revenue. Social engagement is yet another benefit of having widespread age-friendly parks and green spaces in the community, which in turn creates a greater sense of safety in neighborhoods by promoting social connection and support among residents. An active, engaged community is a healthy community.

ACCESS TO PARKS



Adequate access to parks is just as important as creating age-friendly parks. Although walking is the most common form of physical activity observed in older adults, as they age, activity levels decline, and by the age of 75, over half of older adults are physically inactive.¹⁴ In order to promote continued physical activity in older adults, communities need age-friendly access to parks that meet the needs of the aging population. The Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department aims to provide routes that are safe, comfortable, and enjoyable to older adults walking to their neighborhood parks. As part of the Age-Friendly Initiative, a Park Access Improvement Plan was initiated to improve access to the parks and within the parks.¹⁵ Additionally, a set of criteria was established to provide a safe and comfortable means for pedestrians to access parks, which include criteria for both getting to the park and while inside the park. The criteria are:

Criteria: Getting to the Park ¹⁵



Distance

A study conducted by the Federal Transit Administration concluded that Americans will, on average, walk approximately ten minutes to their destination. Based on this data, the primary criterion is distance and is defined as a **short eight to ten minute walk, which is about a quarter of a mile of walkable service area.**



Sidewalks

The **availability of sidewalks on both sides of the street** is vital to safe mobility, not only to older adults, but to pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Age/Pedestrian-friendly sidewalk infrastructure must have continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street without any incomplete sections. Additionally, a safe sidewalk network must be even, free of obstructions, and have ramps for accessibility to ensure that all types of pedestrians can safely reach their destination, including those requiring a walker or wheelchair.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Adequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure **includes marked and signaled crosswalks with curb extension and proper lighting, refuge islands and medians, bike lanes or shared roadway markings.** In other words, an age-friendly community has Complete Streets defined as: "safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel by automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit, regardless of age and ability."¹⁶



Greenway Trail Connections

Although not all parks are connected to greenways, **wherever possible, it is important to establish a connection between parks and greenway trails.** Miami-Dade County has an extensive network of greenway trails that can provide a means for residents who do not live in close proximity to parks to use the trails to reach a park through a recreational facility.



Public Transit

Parks **should be accessible via the public transit network with sitting and bus stops placed on strategic locations close to park entrances.** This is a key factor, necessary to ensure that older adults and other pedestrians who are not able to walk to a local park because of lack of physical ability or park distance have access to parks.

Criteria: Within the Park ¹⁵



Pathway Infrastructure

Pavement throughout the park must be well-maintained, free from obstructions, and reserved for pedestrians. Pavements, walkways, and trails should also be wide enough and have dropped curbs to road level to accommodate individuals who require the use of wheelchairs or walkers. **Where practical, bicycle paths and trails should be separate from walkways and other pedestrian areas.** This ensures that older adults and other pedestrians comfortably enjoy parks without the fear of getting hit by a cyclist.



Public Restrooms

Clean and well-maintained outdoor or indoor public restrooms should be available in sufficient numbers and easily accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Also, take into consideration the function of the park to determine if a restroom is appropriate.

Criteria that Applies to Both ¹⁵



Wayfinding

Adequate signage should be placed at all areas, including inside and outside buildings, and throughout the neighborhood and parks. In 2009, the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department initiated a Wayfinding and Signage Plan to provide information on present location and how to reach the desired destination within neighborhoods. This guidance gives a level of comfort to pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users and visitors who are not familiar with the neighborhood, and is especially important to older adults who might avoid walking around the neighborhood due to fear of getting lost.



Rest Areas

Due to decreased levels of physical activity that come with aging, older adults experience different levels of tolerance to walk or stand for long periods of time. In order to accommodate the needs of people of all ages and abilities, **rest areas must be available throughout the neighborhood.** The ability to take a moment to rest when needed provides older adults with the reassurance that they can comfortably enjoy walks within the neighborhood, including to local parks.



Shade

Shade trees and landscaping are especially important in South Florida, due to the high temperatures that can be a barrier to pedestrian mobility. To promote active living, all sidewalks and pedestrian areas should be shaded.



Safety

Safety around the neighborhood or within parks is a major concern, not only to older adults but to everyone. **A safe outdoor environment is promoted by ample amounts of street lighting and police patrols. Additionally, outdoor safety can be promoted by good signage and community education.**

Steps to Evaluating Park Accessibility

These steps will help determine if a park meets the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department's Park Access Criteria:

1. Select a park.
2. Determine the walkable ¼-mile service area around the park. The service area should not include obstacles a pedestrian would encounter when walking, but reflect the walkable portions of the neighborhood.
3. Create a base map of the park which identifies elements within the vicinity of the park:
 - Park boundary
 - Street networks
 - Public transit bus stop or rail stations
 - Schools
 - Libraries
 - Bike lanes and greenway trails
4. Evaluate base map using the Park Access Criteria to establish the existing conditions and a preliminary identification of opportunities and constraints for improving pedestrian accessibility to the park. The evaluation should include:
 - Identification of existing sidewalks
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Access points into the park
 - Shade trees
 - Crosswalks
 - Intersections
5. Organize meetings with appropriate stakeholders, such as Park Managers, to gain their input on observations and recommendations.
6. Perform an audit of park and surrounding area to evaluate additional items not recognized on a map, such as deteriorated sidewalk pavement or lack of ADA curb ramps.
7. Conduct an in-depth analysis to determine detail recommendations for improving accessibility to the park. Potential recommendations could include:
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Bike lanes
 - Installation of sidewalks
 - Connection to improve access to park (such as greenway trail connections)
 - Installation of rest areas
8. Create an access improvement recommendations map for the park.



Information on how the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department evaluated park accessibility can be found in the **Virtual Appendix** of this toolkit.

The base map, evaluation, analysis, and recommendation maps should be used to coordinate with stakeholders and the community. A strategic prioritization and implementation plan should be developed to identify projects that will be executed to improve accessibility to the park. Recommendations should be categories; either by short-term/long-term improvements or internal/partnership action items.



Other Resources

- **Complete Streets:** www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets
- **Walkability:** www.walkscore.com
- **FDOT Multimodal Level of Service Tool:** www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/systems/programs/sm/los/
- **Crash Data:** <https://s4.geoplan.ufl.edu/>
- **Tree Canopy Field Tool:** <http://phytosphere.com/treeord/ccep.htm>
- **Corridor Connectivity:** <http://transportation.ky.gov/Congestion-Toolbox/Pages/connectivity.aspx>

PARKS PROGRAMMING

Tailoring Park Programs to Older Adults



Despite substantial evidence on the health benefits physical activity brings to older adults, inactivity continues to be a contributing factor to health status. As the least active age group, it is important to understand the barriers that prevent older adults from engaging in regular physical activity, which may include psychosocial and built environment factors. Some psychosocial factors that may hinder or motivate program participation include levels of social support and self-efficacy (perceived capacity/ability). Park programs should foster social support and strengthen self-confidence and motivation.¹⁷ Improvements to the built environment, such as pedestrian infrastructure throughout the neighborhood and parks, should be made in order to create a supportive and age-friendly environment.

Combined, the built environment and psychosocial factors interact and influence physical activity; it is crucial to keep both in mind when creating interventions and park programs.¹⁷ Park programming is vital to continued park use as declines in park use have been observed in parks with reduced programming due to budget cuts, regardless of whether or not the park was new or facilities were renovated.¹⁸ This suggests that a multifaceted approach is needed when tailoring park programs to older adults to ensure that both facility use and health benefits are optimized. Older adults have shown preference for morning exercise, group exercise classes are among older adults' preferred type of physical activity programs, and walking is the most common form of exercise used by them.^{19, 20} In addition, ballroom and other dance classes, meditation, yoga, and tai chi are among the activities that attract older adults to parks.²⁰

Recreation Program Plan ¹⁵

Recreation programming in Miami-Dade County has traditionally been developed on a countywide basis and prescriptive as to the service provided. With the drafting of the Recreation Program Plan, it became clear that the County was too large and diverse to deliver recreation programs and services universally with a one-size-fits-all approach. As such, the Department moved to a Neighborhood-Based Planning approach in order to better identify the needs of neighborhood residents through a systematic method of research and community involvement.

As a result, the department has begun the process of creating new traditions and relationships with residents at the neighborhood level by involving them in events and activities that help improve the quality of life, while strengthening the profile of the Department in the community.

The Recreation Program Plan serves to define program content and to improve service delivery to meet the wants, needs, and expectations of the community. The implementation of the Plan creates a more organized and consistent basis for decision-making, which will result in a system of parks, facilities, and programs that are sustainable, seamless, equitable and accessible to all residents of Miami-Dade County. The Recreation Program Plan goals emerged through a transparent assessment process and provide the Department with a model for making both short-term and long-term planning decisions. They are the pillars that support planning decisions.

Goals are:

- **Ensure Quality Recreation Programs Responsive to Community Needs**
- **Create Healthy Communities**
- **Ensure the Equitable Provision of Program Opportunities**
- **Ensure Financial Sustainability for Program Delivery**
- **Foster Environmental and Cultural Stewardship**

Overview of Existing Programs ¹⁵

Walk for Life

Walk for Life is a self-directed walking program that is open to anyone of any age. Given the diversity of Miami-Dade County and the many benefits that walking can produce, there are a number of factors important to designing, implementing and, more importantly, sustaining a Walk for Life program.

Strategies that should be considered in developing and sustaining a Walk for Life program include:

- **Open/self-directed program**
- **Effective leadership**
- **Participant recognition/reward**
- **Leader guided walks (identify a group leader – help establish a club)**



A Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department sample program schedule is available in the **Virtual Appendix** of this Toolkit.



A Walk for Life Resources Guide can be found in the **Virtual Appendix** of this Toolkit.

Initially, most walking programs tend to attract keen walkers, but as time goes, the social element of walking attracts and retains more people. People walk for many reasons; they walk for pleasure, they walk to experience the outdoors, to socialize with friends or to mitigate the effects of a health condition. Whatever the case, people walk more often than any other type of fitness activity.

EnhanceFitness

You can recognize an EnhanceFitness class by the relaxed atmosphere and the laughter in the room. A full hour of fun, dynamic cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and stretching make EnhanceFitness the premier fitness choice for older adults. A minimum program consists of three one-hour sessions per week and lasts for sixteen (16) weeks, but the fitness regimen is designed to be ongoing. Based on solid research and tested at over 100 sites around the country, EnhanceFitness focuses on stretching, flexibility, balance, low-impact aerobics, and strength-training exercises. This is everything that health professionals say we need to maintain health and function as we grow older, with lots of opportunities to make new friends and acquaintances

In a typical class, here's what a participant will experience:

- **Ten (10) to twenty-five (25) people close to your own level of fitness**
- **A certified instructor with training in bringing out the physical best from older adults**
- **A five (5) minute warm-up to get the blood flowing to your muscles**
- **A twenty (20) minute aerobics workout**
- **A five (5) minute cool-down**
- **A twenty (20) minute strength training workout with soft ankle and wrist weights**
- **A ten (10) minute stretch to keep your muscles flexible**
- **Balance exercises throughout the class**

Matter of Balance

Matter of Balance is a comprehensive program specifically designed to reduce fear of falling, stop the fear of falling cycle, and increase activity levels among community-dwelling older adults (physical inactivity is cited as a significant risk for falls and fall-related injuries in older adults).

The program is designed for small groups of older adults living independently in community settings or senior housing. A trained coach conducts the classes using an extensively detailed training manual and two instruction videos. The program focuses on practical coping strategies to reduce both the fear of falling and the risk of falling. A variety of activities address physical, social, and cognitive factors that affect the fear of falling.

Sessions are scheduled two (2) per week for four (4) weeks and each session lasts for two (2) hours. Early sessions focus on changing attitudes and self-efficacy before attempting changes in actual behavior. Later sessions introduce exercises to improve balance and strength.

Strategies to reduce the fear of falling include:

- **Promoting a view of falls and fear of falling as controllable;**
- **Setting realistic goals for increasing activity;**
- **Changing the environment to reduce fall risk factors; and**
- **Promoting exercise to increase strength and balance.**

Chronic Disease Self-Management

Workshops are six (6) weekly, 2-½-hour sessions held at a nearby recreation center. Developed at Stanford University, the workshop has been offered at hundreds of locations throughout the United States and is now offered in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties.

It helps participants with ongoing health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, anxiety, heart disease, and others to:

- **Find better ways of dealing with pain and fatigue**
- **Discover easy exercises to help improve or maintain strength and energy**
- **Learn the appropriate use of medications**
- **Improve nutrition**
- **Talk effectively with family, friends, and health professionals**
- **Understand new treatment choices**
- **Feel better about life**

Health and Wellness Workshops/Lectures

The Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department is working with its partners to develop health and wellness workshops to address the community or neighborhood interests and needs. Visit their website at <http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/> for the most up-to-date information on these workshops. Again, this is a commitment that is aligned with the vision and mission of the Department. This provides programming drilled down to the neighborhood and helps to build on the efforts of the Department to provide relevant programming and services at that level.

Marketing

Because Miami-Dade County is so diverse, marketing strategies and materials should be tailored to the needs of each community. The goal of marketing is to use the most effective promotional activities and associated materials to reach and sustain older adult programs.¹⁵ Data suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in physical activity if they have active friends and family. Having active friends helps encourage and support physical activity participation.²⁰ An effective way to advertise park features and programs is having events at the park. Park events including sports competitions and other attractions have shown the strongest association with increased use of parks and programs.²¹ In order to determine the best approach to use in your community, it is important to find local partnerships and collaborations in the community that can assist in spreading the word about the programs and services available at the parks. They also can provide insights on how to reach out to target populations effectively.

Some marketing ideas include but are not limited to:



Sample Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces marketing documents are available in the **Virtual Appendix** of this Toolkit.

Brochures

Creating a brochure providing information on available programs and schedules is a good way to promote a park's programming. Some of the locations to distribute the brochures to might include:

- **Local non-profit organizations:** most of these organizations are constantly engaged with community members and can be great allies in spreading the word of new programs available.
- **Local doctor's offices:** physical activity is recommended by doctors; however, many patients find it difficult to start. Providing doctors with brochures about programs can assist doctors in going beyond a simple recommendation, because providing resources available in the community may reduce some of the barriers that prevent older adults from engaging in physical activity.
- **Local medical centers such as Leon Medical Center and CAC:** these medical centers are committed to their patients' activeness and health, and some even have their own fitness centers. Older adults' programming at parks offers patients additional options to stay active and healthy.

Use Social Marketing Strategies

The **VERB™ It's what you do** Campaign was an initiative by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designed to increase physical activity. Although this particular campaign was targeted towards teens, it provides valuable social marketing strategies through multicultural approaches and joint partnership efforts to reach the target audiences to create awareness and promote physical activity.²² This effective strategy can be used to promote parks' older adult programming, as well as increase overall park use.

Host Intergenerational Events

The **#NewWaytoMove** initiative is an example of an intergenerational event that involves fun physical activities for kids and older adults to enjoy together. This initiative, launched this past August 1, 2015 across the nation, was started by the U.S. Surgeon General and the YMCA. The week long event had over 200 different activities, including dance, swimming, and activities in which older adults had the opportunity to teach children different activities like pickle ball. As stated above, people are more likely to engage in physical activity if they have friends and/or family who are physically active.²⁰ By hosting a monthly intergenerational event at your community park, you have the opportunity to market the different activities you have to offer not only to older adults, but for the entire family. In addition to promoting parks programming, you also have the opportunity to increase general park attendance, since families are more likely to return to a park that offers activities for the entire family, especially in Miami-Dade County, where many households are composed of multigenerational families. Below, you can find more information on this initiative, as well as a video of one of the events.

Ciclovias

Ciclovía events, also called open streets, are an event in which pre-determined portions of streets are temporarily closed for traffic and opened for the community, where people from all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses can partake in free recreational activities such as walking, biking, and rollerblading. This is a great example of a free community event that has been shown to promote physical activity and health, increase social capital, as well as generate positive impact on local businesses.²³ Ciclovias can also be used to promote park activities. This can be achieved by conducting Ciclovía events on streets surrounding the park of choice and including live music and fun activities for the entire family, where the park's features and programming can be showcased to the community. More information on how to implement Ciclovias in your community can be found in the appendix section of this Toolkit.

Other Resources

- **Miami-Dade Active Adult Programs:** www.miamidade.gov/parks/active-adults.asp
- **Silver Sneakers:** www.silversneakers.com
- **Community Based Programs:** www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/community-based_physical_activity_programs_for_older_adults.pdf
- **Creating Programs:**
www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Godbey-Mowen-Research-Paper.pdf
- **#NewWaytoMove:** <http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/blog/post/u-s-surgeon-general-vivek-murthy-and-ymca-inspire-the-young-and-young-at-heart-to-find-a-newway2move.aspx>
- **#NewWaytoMove event video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgVsp4yBQpw>
- **VERB Campaign:** <http://www.cdc.gov/YouthCampaign/>

PARKS POLICY

Advocating for Age-Friendly Parks



Creating age-friendly parks can be challenging and requires community leaders to come together, engaging in policy and advocacy to achieve the necessary changes. Because access to parks involves many factors, it is important to engage stakeholders from multiple sectors to work in collaboration to determine priorities and develop strategies to achieve a common goal. The Miami-Dade County Age-Friendly Initiative Action Plan was designed with an innovative approach, using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework to guide the collaboration among the partner organizations. This framework is based on the use of a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support organization.²⁴ This disciplined way of thinking is an effective strategy that can be used to take action towards environmental and policy changes. The collaboration between community members, organizations, local public health advocates and community leaders, including at the policy level, is an important step toward sustainable change.

Chula Vista, located in San Diego, is an example of a city, with demographics and challenges similar to those found in Miami-Dade County, that achieved significant park improvements through the support of multiple stakeholders; these included Community Health Workers (CHW), youth, community organizations, church leadership, and elected officials.²⁵ During the process, CHWs and youth advocates were trained to conduct

environmental and park audits, which allowed them to identify the environmental factors that inhibit park use in their community and determine areas for improvement, as well as how the community can contribute to the solution. Other contributing factors included meetings with community partners and organizations to assess progress challenges and next steps, greater participation from the community in City Council meetings, and support from city staff and City Council representatives, which were crucial in the efforts of advocating for environmental changes and increased access to parks.²⁵

Similar strategies can be used in local communities. Due to the uniqueness and diversity of each community within Miami-Dade County, it is important to select stakeholders and leaders who understand the needs of the area and are invested in creating meaningful changes in the community and sustain them over time.

Overview of Miami-Dade County Age-Friendly Initiative Policies ¹⁷

As a result of the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department's efforts through the Age Friendly Initiative, specific policies were developed and adopted into the Miami-Dade County Park Structure and Landscape Pattern Book, known as "Pattern Book". The Pattern Book aims to enhance park aesthetics and ensure that the public can safely and securely enjoy recreational opportunities, and for the County to cost-effectively extend the useful life of existing facilities.

Additionally, the Pattern Book includes a very comprehensive set of design standards for improvements to existing parks planned for updates and for new park facilities. While the design standards are appropriate for people of all ages and abilities, it has been determined that there is a specific need for an emphasis on age-friendly design and programming to be incorporated into planning efforts.

The policy highlights the twelve (12) pilot park sites, and where feasible, future capital projects will utilize the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department's (MDPR) Age-Friendly Parks Checklist, which is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities Guide and Checklist.⁶ In addition, the LEED certification for New Construction and Major Renovations Project will also be used.

Recreation and Open Space Element (R.O.S.E.) Policies

Level of Service:

The existing Level of Service (LOS) in the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) for parks and open space is measured by acreage. It does not take into account the specific recreation and open space needs of communities in the urban, suburban, rural and natural areas; nor does it account for equitable access to recreation, open spaces, natural and cultural resources. In order to address this issue, in 2009 MDPR proposed text changes to the Recreation and Open Space Element, calling for the development of new criteria to supplement the LOS for parks and recreational open spaces that are based on access and neighborhood needs. The intent of the new standards, along with the other recommended policies in the recently adopted text amendment, is to create a park system that facilitates the development of more sustainable and livable communities. The complete R.O.S.E policies documents and policy statements for the Age-Friendly Parks Policy



Information on the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department Policies can be found in the **Virtual Appendix** section of this Toolkit.

and Checklist and Age-Friendly Older Adults Program Policy and Checklist can be found in the [Appendix](#) section of this Toolkit.

Age-Friendly Parks Resolution

Resolution

Before the process of creating and adopting a city specific Age-Friendly Parks Policy, a resolution can be adopted by the City commission. The resolution should be tailored to the specific needs and context of each community. A resolution can help direct internal government operations, establish a task force to propose next steps, as well as set official policies. Signing the Age-Friendly Parks Resolution is the first step in the commitment to implement age-friendly parks and create age-friendly communities where older adults can live active and be engaged in the community.



A sample South Florida Coalition Charter is available in the **Virtual Appendix** section of this Toolkit.

✓ Template Age-Friendly Park Resolution

Resolution No. ___ Committing City/Municipality _____ to Implement Age-Friendly Parks

A resolution of the Mayor and City Commission of the City of _____, Florida supporting and endorsing the Age-Friendly Parks Initiative and the principles on which it stands; and providing for an effective date.

Whereas, the estimated Miami-Dade County population of people aged 60 and over is 543,000+ and is expected to grow 135% by 2050; and

Whereas, older adults are a valuable part of our community and, as such, it is our interest to create a community that fosters active living; and

Whereas, age-friendly parks allow for active aging and accessibility to and availability of clean, safe community centers, parks, and other recreational programs that influence the health, quality of life of older adults and their ability to age in place; and

Whereas, the City/Municipality of _____ accepts the invitation from the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative to join the efforts in creating age-friendly parks in Miami-Dade County; and

Whereas, by adopting the age-friendly initiative approach, the City of _____ recognizes that the involvement of community members in the decision-making and collaboration with local organizations is vital to achieve long-lasting results and improve the health of the community;

Therefore, be it resolved that on _____ the City of _____ makes a commitment to improve access to and within parks and develop age-specific programs by adopting the Age-Friendly Parks Policy and incorporate specific tools as outlined in the Parks Toolkit.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Mayor and City Commission that:

The City of _____ endorses the Age-Friendly Parks Initiative and Toolkit, attached and included by reference, and fully supports the principles on which it stands.

Other Resources

- **Miami-Dade Master Parks and Open Spaces Plan:**
www.miamidade.gov/parksmasterplan/library/OSMP_FINAL_REPORT_entiredocument.pdf
- **Miami-Dade County: Park Structure and Landscape Pattern Book:**
<http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/library/park-pattern-book.pdf>
- **Active Ageing: A Policy Framework:**
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/67215/1/WHO_NMH_NPH_02.8.pdf?ua=1

AGE-FRIENDLY PARK STANDARDS



Miami-Dade County Outdoor Space and Buildings

Miami-Dade County has one of the most unique parks and recreation systems in the world, and the third largest county park system in the United States.²⁷ The existing Parks System includes 12,825 acres of land and 260 parks, in addition to hundreds of parks owned and managed by each of the County's 35 municipalities.²⁸ These valuable resources place Miami-Dade County on a lead in creating an age-friendly community, because these parks and open spaces are already available and just need to be adapted to better accommodate older adults.

Steps Towards Age-Friendliness

In the same fashion that everyone benefits from age-friendly features, older adults also benefit from certain actions that are currently being taken to improve the health of the community. On a County level, some steps being taken towards creating a healthier and more age-friendly Miami-Dade include:

- **Miami-Dade Parks and Open Space Master Plan**

The Master Planning process aims to “create a seamless, sustainable system of parks, recreation and conservation open spaces for this and future generations.”²⁸ The goal is that every resident in the County can access a neighborhood park within a 5-minute walking distance, in addition to the ability to safely use other modes of transportation, such as bicycle and transit, to get to parks and recreation centers.²⁸ The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan also aims to create “equitable access” by reducing disparities in the distributions of parks and recreation facilities that are available and continually identify and address barriers to access so as to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.²⁸

- **Complete Streets Policy**

Complete Streets are designed to provide safe and convenient access to all types of transportation. This infrastructure design offers pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities a safe environment that fosters active commuting. Deerfield Beach, Florida, was the first city in Florida to adopt the Complete Streets guidelines. Shortly after, Governor of Florida Rick Scott and Ananth Parad signed into policy the implementation of Complete Streets by the Florida Department of Transportation on September 17, 2014.³¹ In Miami-Dade County, sponsored by Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, a legislation to create Complete Streets was approved on November 5, 2014.³⁰ The implementation plan is expected to be presented to the Commission by the end of 2015.³⁰

- **Neat Streets Miami**

The Neat Streets Miami Committee is coordinated by a County board that works in partnership with Miami-Dade Transit to create a welcoming gateway for commuters through the beautification and maintenance of corridors and connections.²⁷

- **Miami-Dade Safer People, Safer Streets Local Action Team**

The Miami-Dade Safer People, Safer Streets Local Action Team was developed to address a critical issue in our community – pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle crashes. The team will work to implement a multi-pronged approach to reduce these types of avoidable injuries and fatalities, and is working to identify the most effective legislative, educational, planning, engineering, and enforcement steps necessary to achieve their goal of a safer, more inviting environment for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists alike.

Areas for Improvement

Although actions are being taken to create healthier and more age-friendly communities, there is still room for improvement. The Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department conducted a countywide community leisure interests survey aimed at determining the assets and gaps in the Park and Recreation System. The ratings obtained for the quality of parks and recreation facilities in Miami-Dade lag behind national averages. In order to create communities that foster active use of parks and programs, priorities need to be set to improve the quality of parks.

- **The top 5 reasons that prevent residents from using available parks and recreation programs are²⁹:**
 - ❖ Insufficient security
 - ❖ Lack of knowledge of what is offered
 - ❖ Poor maintenance of facilities
 - ❖ Too distant from home
 - ❖ Lack of numerous quality programs with high frequency

Age-Friendly Parks Gold Standards

As a result of the Global Age-Friendly Cities project, conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the information obtained from 33 participating cities in 22 countries, the WHO created a checklist of essential age-friendly features.²⁶ This checklist was adopted into the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department's operations manual in 2013. Additionally, the department also adopted an Age-Friendly Older Adults Program Policy and Checklist, which aims to:

- Ensure quality recreation programs responsive to community needs;
- Create healthy communities;
- Ensure the equitable provision of program opportunities;
- Ensure financial sustainability for program delivery; and
- Foster environmental and cultural stewardship.

Assessing Parks in your Community

Miami-Dade County Parks System has a large number of parks. Assessing a targeted group of parks within a local community can assist in identifying the needs and determining priorities for implementing actions towards an age-friendly park. An age-friendly park is one that is accessible to everyone; therefore, it is important to involve people of all ages and abilities during the assessment.

Recognizing the novelty of the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative and that each park in the community might meet different degrees of age-friendliness, requiring more funds and a longer timeline to implement changes, we have separated the standards into tiered levels of age-friendly standards, taking into consideration standards, as well as the types of parks being considered. This will allow you to determine where each of the parks in your community is at, as well as identify priorities for the improvements necessary to reach the desired level: the gold standard.

It is important to note that not all standards may be in the jurisdiction of a municipal park. As an example, there are certain conditions included, such as parking or restrooms, that some parks, because of their designation and function, will not have. There are other conditions, such as transit stops and crosswalks, that are not within the scope or control of a Parks Department. Other criteria (police presence, emergency call boxes, lighting) might be far outside of what would be expected in certain park classifications. Larger parks might have a police substation, emergency call boxes and lighting, but smaller neighborhood and community parks may not. In addition, not all parks are planned, designed or developed to include the necessary resources (such as a recreation center) to provide programming for older, active adults. So, when reviewing and assessing parks in your community, it is important to also consider the resource/user orientation, staffing, size, and service area of the parks but also consider ways that parks may be able to work together with other departments or agencies to better serve the needs of all ages and abilities.

Parks can be organized into three categories based on their classical functions. These categories include:

- **Neighborhood Parks:** are typically from 5 to 10 acres in size and located in less dense suburban residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood Parks are generally passive, with unlighted open fields, low maintenance landscaping, and limited recreation facilities (backstops, courts, or tot lots). Designed as “walk-to” facilities, they are often located proximate to other programmed areas, such as schools, eliminating the need for recreation centers or programming staff. And, since they serve approximately

the same number of people, the combination of park and school recreation open spaces often more effectively meets the public's recreational needs than each one individually. These parks may have limited resources and opportunities to implement age-friendly standards. In neighborhood parks, joint facilities or areas of gathering should strive for minimum criteria that would serve populations across the lifespan.

- **Community Parks:** are typically from 20 to 100 acres in size and serve a number of neighborhoods. They provide a broad range of recreational facilities that are sensitive to the composite needs of the surrounding community. Community Parks are programmed and staffed recreation areas that are designed to provide recreation opportunities and can include staffed recreation and sports centers, lighted athletic fields, formal picnic areas, and natural and landscaped open space. These parks may have some resources and opportunities to implement age-friendly standards and should also strive to serve populations across the lifespan.
- **Metropolitan Parks:** are typically 200+ acre natural resource-based parks with important environmental features. They are designed to meet the broad needs of all Miami-Dade County residents and tourists. These parks attract both residents and non-residents and offer a variety of recreation opportunities, such as beach swimming, marina boating, and nature-trail hiking. Each activity is integral to and reliant on the resource itself. They are most often found along the Atlantic Ocean or Biscayne Bay, where there is proximity to salt water and its accompanying natural areas. These parks have more resources and opportunities to implement more age-friendly standards.

Below is a brief assessment tool designed for Metropolitan Parks to utilize to assess their parks based on the top five barriers to park use. The park assessment tool has been divided into four sections to facilitate detection of priority areas. Parks and planners can use these lists to help guide their assessment of the parks and opportunities for age-friendly improvements. Although this assessment is designed for metropolitan parks, smaller neighborhood and community parks can use these items to help them consider opportunities to strive for metropolitan standards.

METROPOLITAN PARKS ASSESSMENT

AREA SURROUNDING THE PARK (1/4 mile radius)

Are there signs indicating the park location?

No (0 points)

Yes (5 points)

How many entrances does the park have?

Only one (1 point)

Two (3 points)

Three or more (5 points)

How many public transit stops are there in front or in close proximity to the park?

None within a ¼ mile radius (0 points)

At least one within a ¼ mile radius (3 points)

At least one in front of the park (5 points)

Is parking available?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but only on-street parking (3 points)
- Yes, enough accessible parking available (5 points)

Are there sidewalks on the roads within ¼ mile radius surrounding the park?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but only on one side of street, but not continuous (1 point)
- Yes, on both sides of the street, but not continuous (3 points)
- Yes, continuous on both sides of the street (5 points)

Are the sidewalks free of obstructions, wide enough and with curb cuts adequate for wheelchair users?

- No (0 points)
- Yes (5 points)

Are there crosswalks on roads surrounding the park?

- None (0 points)
- Yes, but only one (3 points)
- Yes, more than one (5 points)

Are there shaded areas within a ¼ mile radius surrounding the park?

- None (0 points)
- Yes, but only in some areas (3 points)
- Yes, plenty of shade (5 points)

Are there outdoor seating areas with hand rests within a ¼ mile radius of the park?

- None (0 points)
- Yes, but only one with no hand rests (2 points)
- Yes, but only a few with hand rests (3 points)
- Yes, more than one seating area with hand rests (5 points)

Results: Areas Surrounding the Park

- **Under 33 points:** Bronze Standards; improvement is needed in this area
- **34- 38 points:** Silver Standards; although improvements can be made, meets various age-friendly standards
- **39 and up:** Gold Standards; meets all or most age-friendly standards

AREAS WITHIN THE PARK

Are there signs indicating the following?

- Park name No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Park hours No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Park programming No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Park rules No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Park map indicating location of toilets and facilities No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- No signs available (0 points)

Are there walk/bike paths within the park?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but only one that serves as both walk and bike paths (3 points)
- Yes, bike paths are separate from pedestrian paths and wheelchair accessible (5 points)

Are public toilets available?

- No (0 points) Yes, only one indoor; wheelchair accessible (3 point)
- Yes, both indoors and outdoors; wheelchair accessible (5 points)

Is there outdoor seating with hand rests within the park?

- None (0 points) Yes, but only one with no hand rests (2 points)
- Yes, but only a few with hand rests (3 points)
- Yes, more than one seating area with hand rests (5 points)

Are areas within park properly maintained?

- Free of trash and debris No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Playground areas well-kept No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Walkways free of obstructions No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Toilets clean and well-kept No (0 points) Yes (1 point)
- Other facilities clean and well-kept No (0 points) Yes (1 point)

Are there shaded areas within the park?

- None (0 points) Yes, but only in some areas (3 points) Yes, plenty of shade (5 points)

Results: Areas within the Park

- **Under 22 points:** Bronze Standards; improvement is needed in this area
- **23-25 points:** Silver Standards; although improvements can be made, meets various age-friendly standards
- **26 and up:** Gold Standards; meets all or most age-friendly standards

SAFETY

Is there visible police patrol surrounding and within the park?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but not enough (3 points)
- Yes, sufficient police patrol at all times (5 points)

Are there emergency call boxes within the park?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but only one, distant from most areas (3 points)
- Yes, more than one available throughout the park (5 points)

Is there street lighting (at least ¼ mile radius from park)?

- None or very little (0 points)
- Yes, but not enough (3 points)
- Yes, sufficient lighting (5 points)

Is there lighting within the park?

- None or very little (0 points)
- Yes, but not enough (3 points)
- Yes, sufficient lighting (5 points)

Are there any other safety or appearance concerns surrounding or within the park?

- Graffiti No (1 point) Yes (0 points)
- Vandalism (e.g. damaged signs, seats, playground etc) No (1 point) Yes (0 points)
- Heavy traffic No (1 point) Yes (0 points)
- Abandoned buildings or houses No (1 point) Yes (0 points)
- Hostile environment (e.g. gangs or alcohol/drug use) No (1 point) Yes (0 points)

Results: Safety

Under 18 points: Bronze Standards; improvement is needed in this area

19-21 points: Silver Standards; although improvements can be made, meets various age-friendly standards

22 and up: Gold Standards; meets all or most age-friendly standards

PROGRAMMING

Are there programs specifically tailored for older adults?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but very few (3 points)
- Yes, varied programming available for older adults (5 points)

Are there programs available for other age groups?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but very few (3 points)
- Yes, varied programming available for all ages (5 points)

Are programs conducted at suitable times?

- No programs available (0 points)
- No, very limited schedule (3 points)
- Yes, varied program schedule available (5 points)

Are programs available year-round?

- No programs available (0 points)
- No, limited seasonal schedule (3 points)
- Yes, varied shedule available year round (5 points)

Is information about available programs available and advertised within the community?

- No (0 points)
- Yes, but very little (3 points)
- Yes, information readily available and programs well-advertised (5 points)

Results: Programming

Under 18 points: Bronze Standards; improvement is needed in this area

19-21 points: Silver Standards; although improvements can be made, meets various age-friendly standards

22 and up: Gold Standards; meets all or most age-friendly standards

Below are some tips that can be used to prioritize areas for improvement based on each age-friendly standard level.

✓ Bronze Standard Tips

If your park only meets Bronze Standards in the following areas, priority should be given to:

Area Surrounding Park

- Implementation/improvement of sidewalks
- Implementation of crosswalks with sufficient time for older adults to cross
- Ensuring that transit stops in front or in close proximity to the park is implemented

Areas within the Park

- Ensure that all areas surrounding and within the park are clean and well-maintained
- Implementation/improvement of walk paths that are wheelchair accessible
- Implement or increase number of seating areas with hand rests throughout the park

Safety

- Ensure that all areas surrounding and within the park have good lighting
- Ensure that constant surveillance and police patrol is available

Programming

- Creating programs especially tailored to older adults, available at suitable times

✓ Silver Standard Tips

If your park meets Silver Standards in the following areas, it means it meets several standards but can improve age-friendliness; priority should be given to:

Area Surrounding Park

- Improvement of sidewalks
- Addition of more crosswalks with sufficient time for older adults to cross
- Ensuring that more transit stops in front or in close proximity to the park are added

Areas within the Park

- Increase number of seating areas with hand rests throughout the park

Safety

- Ensure that all areas surrounding and within the park have good lighting
- Ensure that constant surveillance and police patrol is available

Programming

- Increase programs especially tailored to older adults,
- Increase availability of programs at suitable times for all family, including intergenerational programs
- Ensure that programs are well-advertised within the community to increase attendance

✓ Gold Standard Tips

If your park meets Gold Standards in the following areas, it means it meets all or most age-friendly standards; priority should be given to:

Area Surrounding Park

- Ensure that Complete Streets are implemented in all roads at least within a ¼ mile radius from the park

Areas within the Park

- Implementation of water fountains throughout the park
- Increase number of seating areas with hand rests throughout the park
- Increase number of wheelchair accessible toilets, both indoors and outdoors
- Installation/addition of emergency call boxes

Safety

- Installation of emergency call boxes
- Ensure that constant surveillance and police patrol is maintained

Programming

- Increase programs especially tailored to older adults
- Increase availability of programs at varied times for all family, including intergenerational programs
- Ensure that programs are well-advertised within the community to increase attendance

Other Resources

- **Miami-Dade Master Parks and Open Spaces Plan:**
www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS



In order to accommodate for the needs of the growing older adult population, we need to start acting now. A substantial amount of data demonstrates the health benefits parks can have in the lives of older adults. An age-friendly park is needed in every community and it will not be possible unless people like you take the initiative to join the efforts of creating age-friendly communities that foster active and healthy living not only to older adults, but to individuals of all ages and abilities. The benefits of age-friendly communities are not restricted to older adults, because an age-friendly environment is good for everyone and provides people with an environment that is supportive of a healthy lifestyle that will benefit not only current older adults, but future older adults for generations to come. Age-friendly parks bring vitality to the community, increases social capital, and, most importantly, they help in the creation of healthy communities that we all need to age in place.

Next Steps

- Assess the parks in your community for age-friendliness: make sure to involve people of all age groups during the assessment and decision making process
- Set priorities: identify short and long term goals to achieve the Gold Standards for all park areas
- Identify existing policies and advocate for implementation in your community. Examples of existing policies that can be implemented include: Complete Streets, Age-Friendly Parks Policy and Checklist, and Age-Friendly Older Adults Program Policy and Checklist
- Advocate for support both within and outside the community, which can include but is not limited to:
 - ❖ Local residents
 - ❖ Department of Transit and Transportation
 - ❖ Local Businesses and Organizations
 - ❖ City Health Department
 - ❖ City Council, among others
- Advocate for political commitment from the Mayor and/or Governor: develop and present a proposal containing information about the importance of creating age-friendly communities and parks, the objectives, timeline, and budget
- Identify additional policies that are necessary to make your community and its parks an age-friendly environment that fosters active and healthy living

Get Involved

We are now taking steps toward changing our community. Your Interest in this Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Park Toolkit shows that you are committed to making Miami a more comfortable place to live for everyone, especially older adults. You have read through the plan and are *dedicated to effecting change* — but what's next?

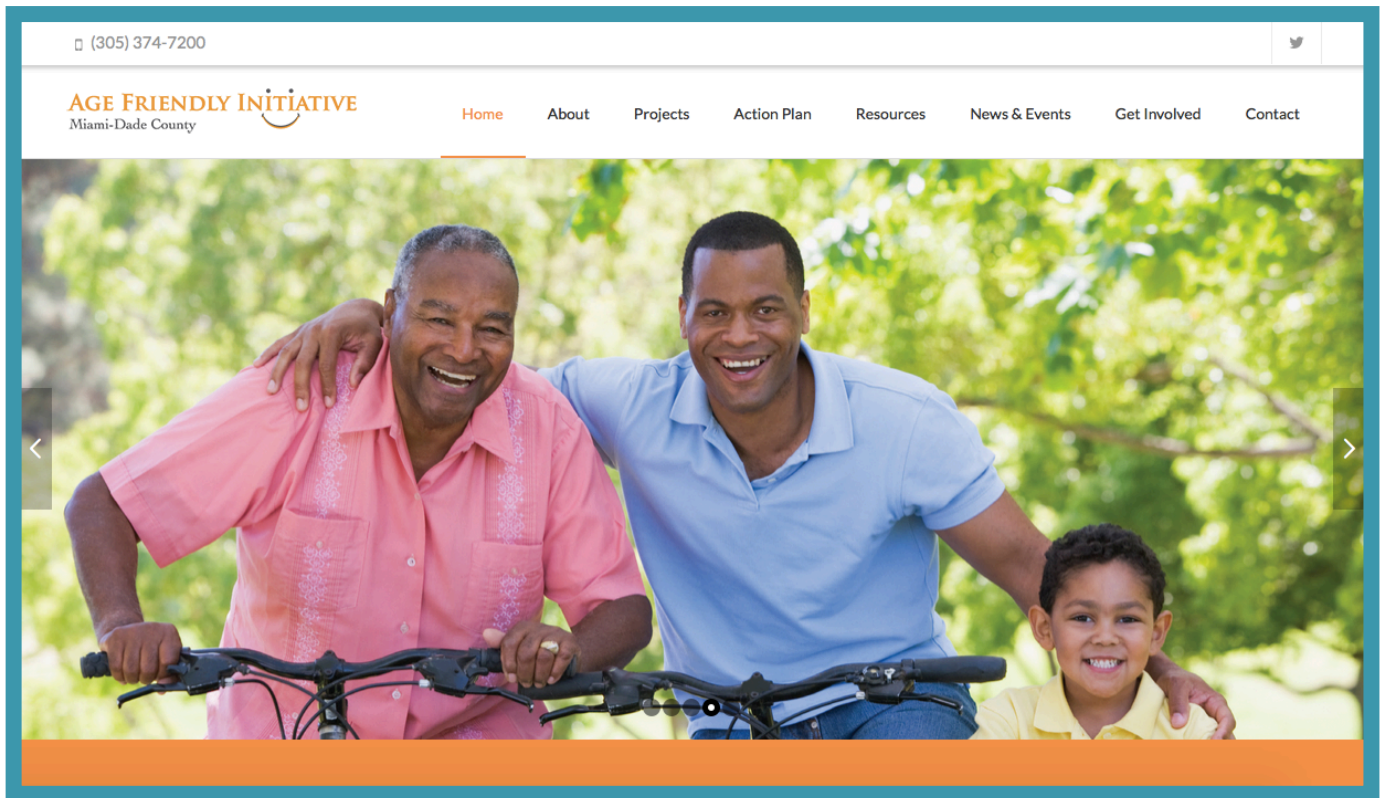
If you haven't done so already, we invite you to sign Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez's Challenge and pledge to make your corner of Miami more age-friendly at www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/Challenge.

We also encourage you to take these steps to continue improving Miami-Dade County, bit by bit:

- ✓ Get more involved and join our Steering Committee by contacting us at www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/Contact.
- ✓ Sign up for our updates by joining our mailing list at www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/Contact.
- ✓ Download our Action Plan for An Age-Friendly Miami-Dade, which includes other strategies for making your community more age-friendly, at www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/ActionPlan.

- ✓ Assign a staff person or organize a task force to prioritize your areas of interest and develop a plan to move forward.
- ✓ Start Planning! Use this Toolkit to help guide you as you make decisions about what steps to take in your own community, focusing on those areas that are of most interest and are most needed by the older adults in your community.

There's one more thing we hope you do — share with us. Are there changes that you think Miami should make its priority? Specific ways the Age-Friendly Initiative can help? Do you have information on what's happening in your community or what you are doing or planning to do? From policy commentary to environmental changes, we want to hear about it! Contact us via our website or contact information below.



www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org

Contact Us

For more information on The Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative or the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Parks Toolkit, please contact:

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VIRTUAL APPENDIX

**PLEASE VISIT www.AgeFriendlyMiami.org/ParksToolkit
TO ACCESS THE VITUAL APPENDIX MATERIALS**

1. Community Leisure Interests Survey Report
2. Wayfinding and Signage Plan
 - a. Wayfinding Manual
 - b. Wayfinding Signage Palettes
3. Evaluating Park Accessibility
4. Miami-Dade Pilot Project Examples
 - c. Continental Park
 - d. Goulds Park
5. Comprehensive Park Program Schedule
6. Walk For Life Resource Guide
7. Park Program Sample Marketing Materials
8. Age Friendly Park Policy Checklist
9. Age Friendly Park Program Policy Checklist
10. South Florida Parks Coalition Charter