

## Age Strong Vermont: Social Connection is Key

### **Objective 1: Increase awareness and identification of social isolation and loneliness among all older adults.**

#### **Strategies may include:**

1. Conduct at least one targeted public awareness campaign per year, and ensure the campaign reaches historically marginalized populations.
2. Increase the screening of social isolation and loneliness in primary care practices and long-term care facilities.
  - a. By 2026, identify one validated screening tool to disseminate; conduct a targeted education campaign for PCPs; and disseminate community resources to PCPs to increase referrals.
3. Provide training and education about social isolation and loneliness to a broad range of organizations who interact with older Vermonters, including those working with historically marginalized communities.

### **Objective 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of high-quality and equitable programming for older Vermonters.**

#### **Strategies may include:**

1. Modernize and support local centers and local community institutions to address the needs and desires of a changing demographic of older Vermonters, with a focus on high quality meals and equity and inclusion of underserved communities.
2. Invest in senior centers, adult day centers and local community institutions via local, state and federal funding opportunities and through expanded community partnerships.
3. Expand a diversity of programming at centers, local community institutions and long-term care facilities, such as creative aging with art, music, movement, intergenerational programs, lifelong learning, multicultural programs, virtual opportunities, etc.
4. Increase engagement in centers and in community programs through outreach and innovative strategies such as a buddy system.
5. Develop/increase local social groups for older adults like book clubs or craft nights as part of age-friendly communities.

6. Create affordable access to telecommunications to maintain social interactions, communication with medical professionals, and others. This includes access to affordable equipment to benefit from wireless and/or internet access.

### **Objective 3: Increase volunteerism of older Vermonters.**

#### **Strategies may include:**

1. Strengthen Vermont's volunteer infrastructure to better recruit, support and retain older Vermont volunteer volunteers.
  - a. Promote volunteerism in connection with health/well-being and wisdom transfer.
  - b. Make it easy for people to find and apply for volunteer opportunities, such as through a statewide volunteer hub or clearinghouse.
  - c. Train organizations to utilize the 10 best practices in volunteer management.
  - d. Explore development of high value incentives for older Vermonters.
  - e. Identify and address barriers to volunteering, especially transportation and ageism in recruitment.

### **Objective 4: Increase the number of intergenerational engagement opportunities for all Vermonters.**

#### **Strategies may include:**

1. Encourage Vermont higher education institutions to join the Age Friendly University (AFU) Network. Encourage universities and colleges to respond creatively to the interests, needs, and desires of older adults, including expanding access to meet the needs of those who desire to take courses.
2. Partner with the Agency of Education and local schools and colleges on workplace learning opportunities to engage more students in providing services, conducting research, and learning from older Vermonters.
3. Leverage community partnerships to expand intergenerational opportunities.
4. Research, promote and support innovative intergenerational models.

*Find the full plan at [www.healthvermont.gov/agestrongvt](http://www.healthvermont.gov/agestrongvt). Contact [agestrongvt@vermont.gov](mailto:agestrongvt@vermont.gov)*

## **Age Strong Vermont: Social Connection is Key**

**Questions for Reflection:**

**Of these objectives and strategies, which should be prioritized? (consider what may be most feasible with current resources and most impactful for Vermonters)**

**Of these objectives and strategies, what am I most excited about? In what way could I, or my organization, contribute to or be involved in this work?**

**Is there work already going on that I'm aware of that can contribute to these objectives?**

**Are there other strategies I want to recommend be considered as part of the plan?**