

MUNICIPAL TOOLKIT

BUILDING AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



AGE FRIENDLY
RIDGEWOOD

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FUNDING FOR THIS MUNICIPAL TOOL KIT WAS GRANTED THROUGH THE HENRY AND MARILYN TAUB FOUNDATION.

Age Friendly Ridgewood has been fortunate to have established and maintained many positive collaborations with Ridgewood's municipal elected officials and employees. This document was created by Beth Abbott and Sheila Brogan based on their work with Age Friendly Ridgewood and their partnership with many who work in this field. The toolkit was then thoughtfully reviewed by the Village of Ridgewood's Village Manager, Department Heads and staff members and their feedback has been incorporated. We would also like to thank Julia Stoumbos from the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation, Tess Tomasi from Bergen County Division of Senior Services, Katie Squires from AARP, Janet Sharma from Age Friendly Englewood, Lisa Bontemps from Westwood for All Ages, Lisa MacClements from Fair Lawn for All Ages, Lorri Steinbacher, Roberta Panjwani and Robin Ritter from Ridgewood Public Library, Joan Groome from the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce and Cathy Rowe and Dorothy Sanders from New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well for their many ideas in support of this project.



How to Use this Toolkit

We anticipate that this toolkit will be used by a Municipal Manager and Governing Body in coordination with municipal department heads, staff and related entities.

A separate section is included for each department so that they can focus on steps that can be taken to make their town **a great place to grow up AND grow old.**

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SCAN THE QR CODE FOR
A DIGITAL VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT
AND EASY ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Introduction

In 2006 the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated the age-friendly movement. The goal was to create communities that understood and embraced the essential efforts to meet the needs of older adults. Fast track ten years later and eight communities in northern New Jersey funded through the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation and the Grotta Fund have become the models for New Jersey's Age-Friendly movement. **Ridgewood, Garfield, Englewood, Westwood, Teaneck, Elizabeth, South Orange-Maplewood, and The Chathams** became age-friendly communities that adapted their services, created programs, and collaborated in new ways between community organizations to improve the quality of life for their older adult residents. The material provided in this binder and on our website will provide community leaders with information on how to design age-friendly efforts to create the physical and social environments to help make our communities better places to live as we grow older.

Eight Domains of Livability

WHO recommends that when evaluating a municipality's age-friendliness that they look to the Eight Domains of Livability. The work a municipal department does likely falls into at least one domain. For example:

Domain Areas	Municipality Departments & Services
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Government and Governing Body • Planning Board • Building Department • Engineering
TRANSPORTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Manager • Senior Bus Services • Parking
OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering • Parks Department
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Department
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Department • Recreation Department • Public Library • Chamber of Commerce
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Technology • Municipal Manager's Office and Governing Body
RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma Free Committee • Health Department • Recreation Department • Public Library • Chamber of Commerce
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Manager • Governing Body • Clerk's Office

For more specific information about the Eight Domains of Livability see WHO Global age-friendly cities: a guide, 2007

iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/43755/9789241547307_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Municipal Manager and Governing Body

- When considering community representation on committees that act as advisory boards to the municipal council, ensure age diversity.
- Assure that older residents are considered and included as decisions are made. One option is a Senior Citizens Advisory Council to facilitate this input. This Council would consist of older residents plus representatives from organizations who serve older residents and its function would be to offer input to the municipal government.
- A survey of your community's adults 55 and over is the best way to learn more about their situations, needs and goals. See here for examples <https://www.agefriendlyridgewood.org/survey/>.
- Consider how to facilitate attendance and welcome input at Council meetings for residents who have difficult driving and/or do not tend to go out at night, for example provide streaming and Zoom options for public meetings and for providing public comment.
- Install Hearing Loop technology in rooms where municipal meetings are held.
- Working with the Planning Board and Building Department, evaluate zoning to allow for more housing appropriate for the older population—duplexes, townhomes, multi-family or one-level accessible homes for example.
- Work with the Planning Board and Building Department to evaluate potential sites for additional affordable and low-income housing options.
- In conjunction with the Planning Board and/or Building Department evaluate the need for and community's willingness to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and what zoning ordinances would be needed to allow for this type of housing.
- If your municipality has a Senior Center provide as much support as possible. If there is not a senior center or shared community space that welcomes older adults, consider creating one.
- Consider creating a line item in the municipal budget to support age-friendly efforts that include promoting policies and procedures, addressing safety concerns, creating programming, expanding transportation and housing options, and expanding accessibility to municipal services.

Resources

Example of by-laws for a Senior Citizens Advisory Council
glenrocknj.net/media/attachments/2024/10/10/scacby-lawsjan2023.pdf

How to include consideration of all ages when planning local service delivery
www.marc.org/document/communities-all-ages-inclusion-tool-2024

See this Regional Plan Association report on Aging in Place in New Jersey with Accessory Dwelling Units
rpa.org/news/lab/aging-in-place-in-new-jersey-with-adus

Municipal Departments

Building Department

- Require Universal Design for new construction or modification of older buildings. For other situations encourage Universal Design Concepts through informational postings or educational workshops.
- Enable streamlined approvals for ramps and other mobility aids. Exempt some requests for barrier-free provisions from fees and ease zoning restrictions. Fast-track applications for barrier-free modifications.
- Endorse a variety of housing options (in Master Plans for example). Working with the governing body and Planning Board evaluate zoning to allow for more housing appropriate for the older population—duplexes, townhomes, multi-family or one-level accessible homes for example.
- In new multi-unit building designs or renovations include passive recreation areas with available bench seating throughout. Similar efforts should be made for new park areas.
- Engage in thoughtful evaluation of potential sites for additional affordable and low-income housing options (also under Planning Board and Municipal Governing Body).
- Evaluate community's need for and willingness to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and what zoning ordinances would be needed to allow this housing option (also under Planning Board and Municipal Council).
- Install hand rails in public building hallways where possible.



Adapted from the [ABCs of ADUs](#)

Resources

Learn More about Universal Design

www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2023/video-universal-design.html

www.section508.gov/develop/universal-design/

New Jersey Future is a non-profit advocating for age friendly land use decisions, creating more livable places and open spaces

www.njfuture.org/research-reports/aging-friendly-guide/

The Regional Plan Association is an independent non-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency, equity and quality of life of the New York Metropolitan area

rpa.org

See AARP's information about Accessory Dwelling Units

www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2019/accessory-dwelling-units-adus/

Communication, Public Information and Information Technology

- Consider hiring a public information officer.
- Recognize that all residents may not be comfortable with social media, internet or email and might be unable to access information through these platforms.
- Good communication should include municipal and surrounding area events and services.
- Promote programs such as local transportation and Meals on Wheels.
- Provide information about affordable housing in the area.
- Encourage volunteerism, provide ways for older adults to offer skills for community benefit. Consider hosting a volunteer fair.
- Enhance communication by collaborating with established community organizations frequented by older adults (post in their newsletters for example) including religious institutions, senior centers, libraries, residential senior living communities.
- Plan for and install hearing loop technology in all public spaces. These systems assist people with hearing loss by transmitting sound from a microphone directly into hearing aids, cochlear implants, or through a portable receiver.
- The Municipal website should be ADA compliant and have features allowing for adjustable font sizes and foreign language options.
- Allow remote access and input at meetings to accommodate those who do not drive at night or who are immobile.



James J. Tedesco, III
Bergen County Executive

Bergen County Board of Commissioners

Mary J. Amoroso, *Chairwoman* • Steven A. Tanelli, *Vice Chairman* • Dr. Joan M. Voss, *Chair Pro Tempore*
Rafael Marte • Germaine M. Ortiz • Thomas J. Sullivan • Tracy Silna Zur



NAVIGATOR NOTES

Housing Wait Lists

March 2025

Resources

Let your residents know about services for older adults in your County, such as this Bergen County Key Services Guide

www.co.bergen.nj.us/images/Departments__Services/Human_Services/Senior_Services/About/2024/key-services-guide-october-2024.pdf

Let your residents know about affordable housing in your area, for example these Navigator notes published in Bergen county

myemail.constantcontact.com/NAVIGATOR-NOTES--Dec-2024-Edition.

For ideas on how to communicate in a non-Ageist manner

thischairrocks.com/

Here is an example of a valuable local service worth communicating to residents

www.bergenvolunteers.org/cheer-chore

Information about hearing loop technology

www.hearingloss.org/advocacy-and-resources/get-in-the-hearing-loop/

Engineering Department

- Install pedestrian safety measures including pedestrian refuge islands, curb bump-outs to narrow street crossings and slow traffic speeds, well timed signals at crosswalks, flashing beacons at busy and/or dangerous crosswalks.
- Review and upgrade striping in roadways and pedestrian crossings as needed.
- Assure that there are clear and readable street signs and well-lit street and pedestrian crossings.
- Consider car-free zones.
- Create bike lanes so bikers are not riding on sidewalks.
- Working with the police and other departments consider creating a Citizen's Pedestrian and Traffic Safety committee to evaluate existing sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, and make recommendations for improvement.
- Complete periodic sidewalk and curb line audits and schedule sidewalk and curb repairs as needed to assure that all residents, especially those with mobility issues, can move safely through the area.
- Complete a Walkability Study of the downtown/business district.
- Evaluate outdoor seating. Locate benches where residents can rest and/or socialize.
- Work with NJ transit to provide safe, well-lit bus stops.
- Install hand rails in public building hallways where possible.
- Consult external resources. For example, consider the non-profit Strong Towns listed in the Resources box to the right.

Resources

AARP's Walk Audit Toolkit
www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit.html

United States Department of Transportation "How to Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan"
safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_focus/docs/fhwasa0512.pdf

Strong Towns is a nonprofit organization that advocates for safe, livable and inviting cities and development that is financially strong and resilient.

www.strongtowns.org/journal/2024/8/30/cities-should-handle-car-crashes-like-they-handle-frat-houses



Health Department

- Serve as a resource and referral center for health, wellness and fitness issues.
- Join the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's Mayors Wellness Campaign.
- Arrange for flu shot and other vaccine information and clinics.
- Host periodic wellness clinics (such as blood pressure clinics).
- Disseminate health information aimed at older adults especially on topics of importance such as nutrition and exercise.
- Hire a social worker that has experience working with vulnerable adults.
- Collaborate with local hospitals and wellness centers for programming and information.
- Host a Health and Wellness Fair bringing together service providers and broad array of resources for older adults.
- Have a plan for creating a coordinating committee in the event of a pandemic or other health crisis, with the goal of combining resources and information. Include municipal leaders, representatives of community and faith organizations, and leaders from social services organizations and other non-profits. Discuss and agree on best methods to provide needed assistance and disseminate information.



Walking Club (above)

Englewood Hospital Meal Event (below)



Resources

Information about the Mayor's Wellness Campaign
www.njhcqi.org/healthy-town/

In Englewood New Jersey the Health Department hosted a "Walking Club" during the summer, and Age-Friendly Englewood provided free fitness trackers to those who completed six sessions.

Englewood Hospital and the non-profit Community Chest hosted a series of Healthy Eating dinners. Groups of residents were invited and a nutritionist and chef would give a demonstration of a low-cost, nutritious meal. Guests would then enjoy the meal and be given the ingredients and the recipe to prepare the meal at home.

Potential New Jersey State Funding
www.nj.gov/humanservices/providers/grants/nofa/

Information about Teaneck's Social Worker
www.teanecknj.gov/living-in-teaneck/funding-and-assistance/

Ridgewood's 2024 Senior Health and Wellness Fair



Learn about transportation available through
The Ride Connect Program

RESOURCES | INFORMATION | GIVEAWAYS | REFRESHMENTS

DATE: Tuesday, October 29, 2024

9:15 AM Presentation in Senior Lounge
 Orestes Rios, Mobility Manager
 The Ride Connect Program

TIME: 10:00AM-12:00PM Health and Resource Fair
 in Anne Zusy Youth Lounge

LOCATION: Village Hall 131 N. Maple Ave, Ridgewood

REGISTER: <https://register.capturepoint.com/ridgewood>
 or call 201-670-5500, ext. 2313

Ridgewood Senior Bus is providing free transportation.
 Reservations required. Call 201-670-5500, ext. 2203







Office of Emergency Management, Police and Fire Departments

- Create an Emergency Preparation guide for all residents.
- Work with OEM, Police and Fire Departments to develop a list of residents who are frail or have mobility issues with the goal of quickly providing assistance.
- Implement an Operation Blue Angel lockbox program so emergency staff can safely enter a home where a resident is in danger or in need of medical assistance and unable to leave the home.
- Evaluate the need for a program to provide smoke detectors in homes to vulnerable and low-income residents.
- Create an emergency evacuation plan for residents that includes communication, transportation, housing, and care for special needs residents. Have knowledgeable municipal employees on call in the case of a disaster where evacuation is needed.
- Have a plan for creating an ad hoc coordinating committee in the event of a flood or other disaster, with the goal of combining resources and information. Municipal leaders, representatives of community and faith organizations, social services and other non-profits, etc. Provide needed assistance and disseminate information.
- If there is a local program that calls residents each day to make sure they answer, communicate information about the program.
- Host an event to introduce your community to File of Life kits.

Resources

See this guide written by Ridgewood's OEM and Age Friendly Ridgewood www.agefriendlyridgewood.org/oem-emergency-planning-guide/

Many New Jersey towns have implemented the Operation Blue Angel lockbox program www.westorange.org/1731/Operation-Blue-Angel

rfd.ridgewoodnj.net/DocumentCenter/View/3428/Operation-Blue-Angel-FAQs

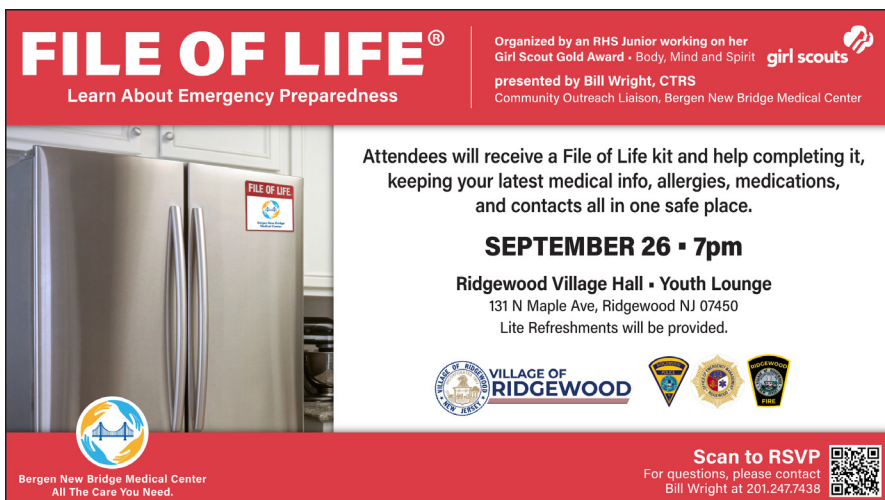
Rebuilding Together North Jersey offers assistance with smoke detectors and other repairs in specific areas for some low-income home owners rtnorthjersey.org/safe-and-healthy-housing

Bergen County's program to call at-risk residents daily www.co.bergen.nj.us/division-of-senior-services/health-and-wellness


U.S. Fire Administration's Fire Safety Guide for Older Adults www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/at-risk-audiences/older-adults/

Nonprofit New Jersey Future's report on Creating Age-Friendly Communities Amid Climate Change www.njfuture.org/research-reports/weatheringthestorms/

Book Recommendation: *Climate Resilience for an Aging Nation* by Danielle Arigoni








FILE OF LIFE®
Learn About Emergency Preparedness


Organized by an RHS Junior working on her Girl Scout Gold Award • Body, Mind and Spirit 
presented by Bill Wright, CTRS
Community Outreach Liaison, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

Attendees will receive a File of Life kit and help completing it, keeping your latest medical info, allergies, medications, and contacts all in one safe place.

SEPTEMBER 26 • 7pm
Ridgewood Village Hall • Youth Lounge
131 N Maple Ave, Ridgewood NJ 07450
Lite Refreshments will be provided.


Bergen New Bridge Medical Center
All The Care You Need.

Scan to RSVP
For questions, please contact
Bill Wright at 201.247.7438 

Parks and Recreation

- Include programs for older adults.
- Plan and implement Intergenerational programs.
- If the municipality does not have a Senior Center space evaluate the need and work with the governing body to create one. Be mindful of County resources nearby that may already exist.
- Identify a space and build an outdoor adult fitness area.
- Provide areas in the parks for passive activity. Ensure adequate benches in all parks and on roadways leading to parks.
- Schedule time on playing fields for older adults to engage in team sports.
- Plan programs to combat social isolation scheduled across weekdays, weekends and evenings coupled with available, affordable transportation options.
- Consider special events throughout the year to provide social engagement, for example a Community Giving Thanks Elder Dinner or a Breakfast for Older Adults to open the town pool, or an intergenerational ping pong tournament.

Resources

CoGenerate is a non-profit that focuses on what the vast and growing older population can do in collaboration with younger generations to solve our nation's most pressing problems
cogenerate.org/

Fair Lawn For All Ages' created a Volunteer Youth Corps program. Consider organizing through Parks and Recreation or recruiting a local volunteer organization to do so
fairlawnforallages.org/volunteering



Ridgewood's Elder Dinner



Senior Prom hosted by Age-Friendly Englewood and Bergen Family Center



Ridgewood's Pool Opening Day Bagel Breakfast



Planning Board

- Evaluate potential sites for additional affordable and low-income housing options. This can be coordinated with Building Department and Municipal Governing Body.
- Working with the governing body and Building department evaluate zoning to allow for more housing appropriate for the older population—duplexes, townhomes, multi-family or one-level accessible homes for example.
- In conjunction with the Governing Body and/or Building Department evaluate the need for and community’s willingness to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and what zoning ordinances would be needed to allow for this type of housing.
- Consider how to make attending and offering input at Planning Board meetings easier for residents who have difficulty driving and/or do not tend to go out at night. Streaming and Zooming options should be considered for these meetings where public input is expected.
- Install Hearing Loop technology in rooms where Planning Board meetings are held.
- Consult older adults and include reputable research about older adults when creating or updating a town Master Plan.

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD MASTER PLAN
VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, BERGEN COUNTY

AUGUST 23, 2022
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING BOARD XXX, 2022

PREPARED BY
HEYER, GRUEL & ASSOCIATES & NV5



Resources

From AARP Livable Communities: Expanding Middle Housing Options
www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2024/middle-housing-policy.htm?CMP=EMC-DSM-NLC-OTH-LC-1771001-2020401-8442270-NA-07102024-LivableCommunities-F1-MMHpolicy-BTN-ALL-Community-&encparam=J0Jx-v%2fsqQDzhE8yNVkm-AdV5PiIJFg5X3MYsLV00B%2f-CI%3d

From the American Planning Association, information about Accessory Dwelling Units
www.planning.org/knowledgebase/accessorydwelling/

See Information about Teaneck’s new affordable housing building and community center
taubfoundation.org/new-age-friendly-community-center-opening-in-teaneck/

Ridgewood’s Master Plan:
www.ridgewoodnj.net/DocumentCenter/View/693/Ridgewood-Master-Plan-Final-October-5-2022-PDF

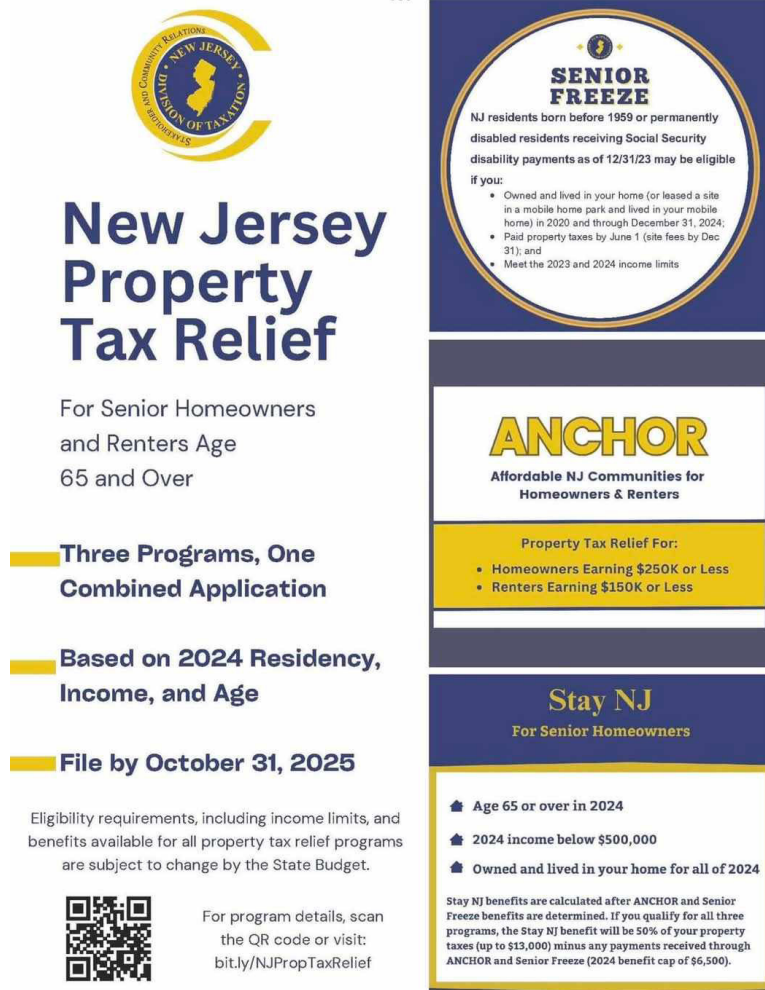
Tax Department

- Circulate information about property tax relief programs— ANCHOR, Senior Freeze, Stay New Jersey, Senior Deduction and Veterans Deduction.
- Consider including information in mailed tax bills. Share information via fliers and digital communication with Senior Centers and Libraries and other similar entities so that they can publicize these relief programs.

Resources

Information about Stay NJ from the New Jersey Division of Taxation

www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/staynj/index.shtml



The flier is titled "New Jersey Property Tax Relief" and features the New Jersey Division of Taxation logo. It lists three programs: Senior Freeze, ANCHOR, and Stay NJ. Each program has a corresponding graphic with details. The Senior Freeze graphic shows a house and a person, with text: "SENIOR FREEZE. NJ residents born before 1959 or permanently disabled residents receiving Social Security disability payments as of 12/31/23 may be eligible if you: • Owned and lived in your home (or leased a site in a mobile home park and lived in your mobile home) in 2020 and through December 31, 2024; • Paid property taxes by June 1 (site fees by Dec 31); and • Meet the 2023 and 2024 income limits". The ANCHOR graphic shows a house and text: "ANCHOR. Affordable NJ Communities for Homeowners & Renters. Property Tax Relief For: • Homeowners Earning \$250K or Less • Renters Earning \$150K or Less". The Stay NJ graphic shows a house and text: "Stay NJ. For Senior Homeowners. • Age 65 or over in 2024 • 2024 income below \$500,000 • Owned and lived in your home for all of 2024". At the bottom, it says "Stay NJ benefits are calculated after ANCHOR and Senior Freeze benefits are determined. If you qualify for all three programs, the Stay NJ benefit will be 50% of your property taxes (up to \$13,000) minus any payments received through ANCHOR and Senior Freeze (2024 benefit cap of \$6,500)." and provides a QR code and website link: "For program details, scan the QR code or visit: bit.ly/NJPropTaxRelief".

New Jersey Property Tax Relief

For Senior Homeowners and Renters Age 65 and Over

Three Programs, One Combined Application

Based on 2024 Residency, Income, and Age

File by October 31, 2025

Eligibility requirements, including income limits, and benefits available for all property tax relief programs are subject to change by the State Budget.

For program details, scan the QR code or visit: bit.ly/NJPropTaxRelief

SENIOR FREEZE
NJ residents born before 1959 or permanently disabled residents receiving Social Security disability payments as of 12/31/23 may be eligible if you:

- Owned and lived in your home (or leased a site in a mobile home park and lived in your mobile home) in 2020 and through December 31, 2024;
- Paid property taxes by June 1 (site fees by Dec 31); and
- Meet the 2023 and 2024 income limits

ANCHOR
Affordable NJ Communities for Homeowners & Renters

Property Tax Relief For:

- Homeowners Earning \$250K or Less
- Renters Earning \$150K or Less

Stay NJ
For Senior Homeowners

- Age 65 or over in 2024
- 2024 income below \$500,000
- Owned and lived in your home for all of 2024

Stay NJ benefits are calculated after ANCHOR and Senior Freeze benefits are determined. If you qualify for all three programs, the Stay NJ benefit will be 50% of your property taxes (up to \$13,000) minus any payments received through ANCHOR and Senior Freeze (2024 benefit cap of \$6,500).

Transportation, Parking Utility and Senior Transportation

- Provide free or discounted local transportation via bus or van with accessibility accommodation if possible.
- Offer discounted travel for older adults.
- Provide information about all area transportation options to assist those who want to drive less.
- Offer travel training, such as through NJTIP.
- Consider a variety of abilities when setting parking regulations. Assure that meters or kiosks are easy to navigate for those not as comfortable with newer technology that is dependent on smart phones or who have vision impairments. When looking at the parking space inventory are there enough parking spaces for people with mobility issues?
- If parking payment procedures change or if potentially confusing technology is involved, create a video showing the procedure and host an in-person tutorial session.

Resources

Information about NJTIP—New Jersey Travel Independence Program at Rutgers
vtc.rutgers.edu/njtip/

See this printable resource showing local transportation options for those who do not wish to drive

www.agefriendlyridgewood.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Age-Friendly-Transportation-Chart-10.26.23.pdf



SENIOR BUS

SAFE | CONVENIENT | RELIABLE | FREE

Have a medical appointment?
Need to go grocery shopping?
Want to stroll around the mall?
Take a ride on the Senior Bus!

**RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED**

 Call 201-670-5500, ext. 2203



Tuesdays - within Ridgewood -
9:30 am to 2:00 pm

2nd and 4th Wednesdays -
to Wyckoff ShopRite - 9:00 am
to 11:15 am

3rd Wednesdays - within
Ridgewood and surrounding
towns - 9:30 am to 2:00 pm

Thursdays - within Ridgewood
and surrounding towns -
9:30 am to 2:00 pm

Other Vital Organizations

Chamber of Commerce and Other Business Entities

- Design a program to provide discounts for older adults.
- Evaluate lighting and accessibility to accommodate those with visual impairments or mobility issues. Encourage businesses to have adequate lighting, aisles wide enough for walkers and wheelchairs, and signage with large type.
- Consider circulating Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly Tips for Businesses.
- Provide awareness training about dementia and other issues older adults face; stress how a business could be helpful to patrons with cognitive impairments. Provide businesses with a printed informational card listing dementia symptoms for employees to access.


Resources

Tips for Creating a Dementia Friendly Business

www.agefriendlyridge-wood.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Age-Friendly-Tips-for-Dementia-Friendly-Businesses-PDF.pdf

Tips for Creating an Age Friendly Business

www.agefriendlyridge-wood.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Age-Friendly-Business-Tips-PDF.pdf



**AGE FRIENDLY
RIDGEWOOD**

Tips for Creating an Age Friendly Business

Why is it important to be Age Friendly?


- Retain existing customers as they age
- Attract new customers: Ridgewood has over 6,000 residents age 55 and over. Bergen County has 246,712 older adults 55 and over. (27% of the 898,694 Bergen County residents)
- 335,730 households in Bergen County have someone 60 or over living in the home
- 57% of consumer spending in NJ is done by people 50 and over (AARP.org)
- The "longevity economy" is one of the most vital in the U.S., with 106 million people over the age of 50 collectively responsible for \$7.6 trillion annual economic activity.

Interacting with Older Adults

- Be welcoming • Speak clearly • Be patient • Listen closely • Smile
- Make eye contact • Provide personal assistance as needed

Tips for Marketing your Business to Older Adults

- Websites should be easy to navigate with zoom control and text resizing features. Allow the website to be translated into another language with a translation button on the top of the page.
- Marketing material should be clear and easy to read. Use large (14 or higher) font, bold type, and contrast between words and background on signs, brochures, and flyers. Consider translating your materials into other languages if you notice that it would be helpful to your customers.
- Consider targeting special events or discount days to older adults.



**AGE FRIENDLY
RIDGEWOOD**

Tips for Creating a Dementia Friendly Business

Why is it important to be Dementia Friendly?

- There are more than 5 million people living in the United States with Alzheimer's Disease.
- 1 in 10 adults 65 and over has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias are not a part of normal aging.
- 1 in 3 adults age 85 and over are diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.
- Almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's are women.

Interacting with older adults who have dementia

- Speak clearly and be patient • Listen closely • Smile warmly and make eye contact • Respond to a look of distress • Help when confusion is present • Watch for signs of change and offer help accordingly – every day can be different

Tips for Businesses when serving an older adult with dementia

- Remembering and finding items. People with dementia may have forgotten what they came in to buy. They may have a list, but have problems finding the things they want. Offer to help them with their list.
- Making choices. While having choice is good, for someone with dementia, too much choice can be confusing. Ask what the person would like and then describe two or three options. Allow him/her time to think and make a decision.

Public Library

- Libraries are an excellent source for lifelong learning opportunities. Consider an English as a Second Language program, art classes and book discussion groups.
- Provide assistance with technology.
- Plan and present speakers, films, and activities with the older adults in mind. Speaker topics could include Medicare and other health-related issues, scams and fraud, downsizing/decluttering, housing options, and property tax relief. Provide information about end-of-life planning so older adults have a will, living will and power of attorney for healthcare.
- Provide dementia-sensitive assistance and materials.
- Initiate homebound residents outreach services—delivering books to older residents and others who are unable to get to the library, whether the need is just temporary or long-term.
- Encourage more intergenerational programs.
- Schedule programs of interest to older adults on weekdays, weekends, and evenings to combat social isolation.
- In addition to scheduled programs to combat social isolation, provide a dedicated space in the library with tables, chairs and arts and craft supplies to provide space for people to express their creativity and interact with others.
- For Older Americans Month host a photo display or contest comprised of photos taken by and about older adults.

Resources

See this page under Dementia Friendly for more information about the program created by Ridgewood Public Library and Bergen County [ridgewoodlibrary.org/library-services/library-of-things/](https://www.ridgewoodlibrary.org/library-services/library-of-things/)





General Age-Friendly Resources and Organizations

Age Friendly North Jersey, an alliance of leaders strengthening communities for all ages
age-friendly-nj.constantcontactsites.com/

Rutgers University School of Social Work Hub for Aging Collaboration
socialwork.rutgers.edu/centers/hub-aging-collaboration

New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well provides leadership and education to enable older adults to live with dignity in their communities
www.njaaw.org

Supportive Housing Association Toolkit focuses on making the case for inclusion and how to include people with disabilities and physical limitations in community participation.
www.shanj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SHA-NJ-ICP-Toolkit-Second-Edition-Final.pdf

State of New Jersey Human Services Age-Friendly Blueprint
www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/reports/AF%20Blueprint_v5.pdf

Report to the US Congress May 2024 on Aging in the United States: A Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging by the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Healthy Aging and Age-Friendly Communities
acl.gov/sites/default/files/ICC-Aging/StrategicFramework-NationalPlanOnAging-2024.pdf

National Center to Reframe Aging, led by the Gerontological Society of America
www.reframingaging.org/resources

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Age-Friendly North Jersey

AN ALLIANCE OF LEADERS STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES



**RIDGEWOOD
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



**FAIR LAWN
FOR ALL AGES**
An age-friendly community initiative

**AARP®
New Jersey**



**Age-Friendly
BERGEN ROUNDTABLE**



njaaw
NEW JERSEY ADVOCATES
FOR AGING WELL

WESTWOOD FOR ALL AGES



A Community for All Ages
An Age-Friendly Initiative



Scan the QR Code

To get a full list of all the resources mentioned in this toolkit scan the QR code above. Our team will continue to add additional resources as they become available to help you focus on steps that can be taken to make your town **a great place to grow up AND grow old.**