

1 Identify experience and values required and recruit for balance & inclusivity.

(e.g. knowledge of community, public relations skills & working with the media, ability to speak to Council or chair meetings or keep records; career skills such as programming for inclusive recreation, or in healthcare; experience of being personally affected by a disability or a family member living in longterm care) Postscript: How about “not involved in community activities with time on their hands” as their “experience”? Rather than asking the busiest people in the community who can “always get things done”, how about asking someone who is not an active volunteer to become involved with your efforts?

2 Establish clear expectations of length of term and expectation of time commitment.

Design positions including short-term, in person, blended and virtual. For example: “We need someone for one year to co-chair our Age-Friendly Committee meetings. There will be a 2-hour meeting every 2 months with an hour’s prep beforehand and after. We don’t expect you to be the spokesperson in the community. What we need is an experienced Chair, and we know you have that experience from chairing the CO-OP board.” Consider short-term volunteer positions while ensuring that you have plans for long-term sustainability when the first generation of volunteers moves on.

3 Consider each Age-Friendly domain - who could help with each domain (retired or experienced professional, trades person, and other skills)? Consider sorting the list of potential

committee volunteers by stakeholders or domain particularly if your Committee is focusing on 1 or 2 particular domains for the next year (i.e., Outdoor Spaces and Buildings). Is there someone who uses a scooter or wheelchair or walker who is willing to travel up & down local streets to determine accessibility and report to the Age-Friendly Committee or Council?)

4 Invite a potential volunteer to observe a Committee or Stakeholders Meeting and ask questions about Age-Friendly work.

Volunteers often have several options about what organization they will choose to be part of, and want opportunities to ‘interview’ about the work of a potential new Committee.

5 Invite a volunteer to consider joining with a friend or spouse to instil a feeling of confidence or companionship.

This could be important for someone who may be nervous about joining on their own if they feel uncertain or the work is ‘beyond them’. For example: “I wonder if you & Jim might consider helping us out in this way.....or perhaps you know someone else who could be interested who could join with you.” Offer ‘new’ models of volunteering (family, corporate, by event, as a group).

6 Encourage peer-peer invitations to volunteer. Think about who currently volunteers for your Committee as a member or partner/stakeholder or for occasional activities such as an Age-Friendly coffee-hour once a month. Invite these volunteers to consider all their connections

in the community (e.g. retiree colleagues such as teachers/nurses or faith community connections) while considering what skills are needed among committee members (e.g. someone who knows the new Canadians community).

7 Invite an organizational appointment to your Age-Friendly Committee or Stakeholders group. This could include an appointee from Council, Town/City Departments or Committees, Seniors' Clubs, and less obvious organizations in your community that have a vibrant presence (e.g. a young parents' organization, or a marginalized group, service club, or social housing project). The appointee may be a member of their organization, but not someone in visible leadership. Be clear about what their role is as a representative of that community. Then make them feel welcome and special. Acknowledge who they represent in Age-Friendly articles in the local media.

8 Discuss the mutual relationship involved in Age-Friendly work in your recruitment. Often individuals, companies and organizations are looking for new ways to contribute and be a responsible member of their community. They may be asking: "How do I give back to those that buy from us or do volunteer work — or to others who could use my skills?" Let a potential volunteer know what will they receive in return for their volunteer efforts (e.g. a feeling of purpose or meaning, social interaction, new friends, practical evidence of change in their community, fulfillment of faith community obligation or school requirement, opportunity to explore new strengths in a new life chapter). As an Age-Friendly Committee, consider

what your volunteer recognition looks like? (e.g. giving the volunteer a title, their name in the local media, a career experience reference for a student or young adult who has helped you out).

9 Share Age-Friendly resources that do not overwhelm and provide optional reading (the Age-Friendly Saskatchewan brochure, link to Age-Friendly Website). Consider each potential volunteer as a unique individual. Recognize that some potential volunteers will be content with a verbal invitation and a brochure to help them consider whether to say yes. Others may prefer to do their own research at home by exploring the Age-Friendly Saskatchewan website including links to Canadian and global Age-Friendly references. Consider that there may be a continuum of interest from those that really want to focus on their own community to others who are interested in being part of a provincial, Canadian or global movement that is creating positive change.

10 Provide access to meetings (e.g. car ride, accompaniment for evening meetings and therefore, a feeling of safety; physical accessibility to the meeting; access to meetings by video-chat such as Zoom). Video-chat can create opportunities for some volunteers who are physically unable to attend in-person meetings because of geography or health reasons. What role can your Age-Friendly Committee play in helping an older adult learn how to use a digital device to be able to participate?

*Contributed by Catherine Barnsley,
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Creating Vibrant Communities for All

To learn more about the Age-Friendly journey, please visit our website: www.agefriendlysk.ca, email the Age-Friendly Communities Staff at: agefriendly@skseniorsmechanism.ca or scan the QR code to access all of our Age-Friendly Resources. Age-Friendly Saskatchewan is proud to be part of SSM (Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism).

