

Grantmakers In Aging Receives \$1.3 million from the Pfizer Foundation to Boost ‘Age-friendly’ Communities

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Community AGEnda program to help America’s towns and cities prepare for a growing older population

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[\(BUSINESS WIRE\)](#)--In partnership with the Pfizer Foundation, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA), a national association of funders, today launched **Community AGEnda: Improving America for All Ages**, announcing five grants of \$150,000 each to local groups in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, and the greater Kansas City area to accelerate their efforts to become “age-friendly” – that is, great places to grow up and grow old.

“The aging of America’s population is one of the most important trends of the 21st century, with tremendous implications for our future, our health, our economy and our quality of life,” said Caroline Roan, President of the Pfizer Foundation. “By partnering with Grantmakers In Aging, we believe we can promote health and wellness, advance the important national conversation around aging and help our communities take tangible steps to prepare for these huge demographic changes.”

America is getting older fast. Today, 40 million people in the United States are ages 65 and older, and this number is projected to more than double to 89 million by 2050. Yet most cities, towns and regions are not preparing to take advantage of the opportunities — and meet the challenges — presented by a growing number of older adults.

“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.”

A national-local collaboration

In addition to the \$750,000 provided to the participating regions, Community AGEnda will use an additional \$550,000 to assess and support the local efforts and inspire similar work across the country. This work includes promotional activities and the development of planning, assessment and strategy tools and other practical resources, including an online searchable database describing the growing number of age-friendly projects in the United States. The project will also gather national and regional funders to spur greater interest in age-friendly community development.

On the local level, participating communities will seek to raise an additional amount equal to one-third or more of their grant in matching funds, a minimum of \$50,000 each. Community AGenda efforts will include a wide variety of activities, such as:

- Addressing transportation challenges for seniors in Atlanta, including neighborhood walkability;
- Explore zoning, policy and development incentives that could create an age-friendly Lifetime Community District in Bloomington, IN; and
- Preparing large employers to hire more older adults in Miami-Dade County.

What is an Age-friendly Community?

Nationwide efforts to make communities age-friendly take various forms. Often they involve physical environments ? from safe outdoor spaces and accessible public transportation to affordable, well-designed housing. Other age-friendly initiatives tackle social needs: creating engaging cultural and outdoor activities, public services and volunteering options. Each community will focus on their own local challenges.

The **Atlanta Regional Commission** will assess the metro area’s housing, zoning and transportation plans; make recommendations to improve infrastructure; establish a health and wellness promotion plan; and host workshops to raise awareness about the need to create age-friendly communities.

- *Atlanta has already exceeded its match requirements with funds committed by the Clayton County Senior Services, Clayton County Community Development Department and the city of Avondale Estates. Additional grant requests are pending.*

The **Indiana Grantmakers Alliance** will partner with the **Center on Aging and Community at Indiana University** to help three Indiana communities enhance development of existing “naturally occurring retirement communities,” or NORCs, in Huntington and Indianapolis and ensure an age-friendly perspective is incorporated into local efforts; and will use zoning, policy and other incentives to encourage age-friendly neighborhood development in Bloomington.

- Matching funds from the **Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority** and the **Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities** have been secured. Additional requests for foundation funding are pending.

Led by the **Mid-America Regional Council Community Service Corporation (MARC)**, the greater Kansas City area will assess and improve older-adult transportation and mobility options; launch a two-pronged public awareness campaign to raise awareness of the need to support caregivers and on tapping into the expertise of older adults as community resources; work with the **First Suburbs Coalition** to examine the needs and plans for making its surrounding areas more age-friendly.

- *Kansas City has secured its matching funding through a grant from the **W.J. Brace Charitable Trust**.*

An alliance of five partners will work with the **Health Foundation of South Florida** to advance Miami-Dade County-wide planning for age-friendly transportation, land use and community design; develop an action plan for the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces that will establish 12 age-friendly parks; help large employers increase their hiring of older adults; and conduct a demonstration project to improve mobility (including better biking, walking, and public transit options).

- *Miami-Dade County has secured most of its matching funds already, in cash and in kind, from the **Health Foundation of South Florida**.*

Led by the **Maricopa Association of Governments** (MAG), the Phoenix project will develop business plans and institutional capacity for implementing locally-relevant age-friendly models, based on an assessment of the needs of three-to-five neighborhoods. Phoenix will also create a website for older adults ages 60-70, to help them plan to remain in their communities as they get older.

- *Phoenix has raised \$129,800 in cash and in-kind pledges from the city of Phoenix, Sun Health, Benevilla, Duet, the Tempe Community Council, Chicanos por la Causa, and the Area Agency on Aging, with more requests pending.*

About Grantmakers In Aging

Grantmakers In Aging is an inclusive and responsive membership organization including all types of philanthropies with a common dedication to improve the experience of aging. GIA members have a shared recognition that a society that is better for older adults is a society that is better for people of all ages. For more information, please visit www.giaging.org.

About The Pfizer Foundation

The Pfizer Foundation is a charitable organization established by Pfizer Inc. Its mission is to promote access to quality health care, to nurture innovation, and to support the community involvement of Pfizer colleagues. The Pfizer Foundation provides funding and resources to local and international organizations that expand and improve global health strategies. In 2011, the Foundation provided over \$16 million in grants and employee matching gifts to non-governmental organizations around the world. For more information please visit Pfizer.com.

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