



Innovation@Home

Approaches to Successful Aging in Community from 25 Countries

*An Introduction
for Funders*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the insights of everyone who contributed to our learning and discovery process, and for the guidance of our steering committee and contest judges. Support for the *Innovation@Home* initiative was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

ABOUT INNOVATION@HOME

To identify successful innovations supporting aging in community around the world and provide inspiration to those seeking to improve options for older people, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) launched the *Innovation@Home* initiative, including an international contest, co-sponsored by the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC), and this funding guide. Many thanks to the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) for their contribution, particularly IFA Project Officer Jessica Rochman-Fowler for her work on the *Innovation@Home* contest. Learn more at bit.ly/GIA_AF_Housing.

ABOUT GRANTMAKERS IN AGING

Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) is a national membership organization of philanthropies. Believing a society which is better for older adults is better for people of all ages, GIA acts as a relevant and responsive network, resource, and champion, amplifying the voices of older people and issues of aging. Our vision is of a just and inclusive world where older people are fully valued, recognized, and engaged in ways that matter. Learn more at www.GIAging.org.

INNOVATION@HOME STEERING COMMITTEE

Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Aging (IFA)

Kathleen Brasher, Principal Project Leader, Age-Friendly Rural Communities Northeast Health Wangratta, Australia

Stephanie Firestone, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor, Health and Age-Friendly Communities, AARP International

Alexandre Kalache, President and Founder, International Longevity Center ILC-Brazil

Emi Kiyota, President and Founder, Ibasho

Nora OBrien-Suric, President, Health Foundation of Western & Central New York

Alana Margaret Officer, Senior Health Adviser, Aging & Life Course, World Health Organization (WHO)

Susan Mende, Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Vivian Vasallo, Partnerships and Innovation Director, Fannie Mae

John Feather, CEO, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) (ex officio)

Jennifer Campbell, Campbell Collaboratives, *Innovation@Home* program lead (ex officio)

INNOVATION@HOME CONTEST JUDGES

Nathalie Röbbel, Technical Officer, World Health Organization (WHO)

Stephanie Firestone, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor for Health and Age-friendly Communities, AARP International

Vivian Vasallo, Partnerships and Innovation Director, Fannie Mae

Ian Spero, Founder and CEO, Creative Skills for Life; Founder, Agile Ageing Alliance

Betty Lynch, Community Champion, Avondale, Arizona

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



When it comes to promoting health in aging, good ideas have no borders. We need to learn from the best ideas the world has to offer – the bright spots from around the globe that can provide both inspiration and practical solutions to help us accelerate progress toward improved health as we age in communities across the United States.



The desire to remain in our homes and communities as we age is felt around the world. As a result, there is a great need for safe, supportive housing (or housing-related services and arrangements) to promote health, prevent injury, delay the need for institutional care, reduce social isolation, and build intergenerational connection and stronger families and communities.



As the global population gets permanently older, housing and housing-related supports must keep pace with this profound demographic change.



This report from **Grantmakers In Aging (GIA)**, a Washington, DC-based membership organization of philanthropies, seeks to capture a range of promising approaches to aging in community being used around the world. In doing so, we hope to provide inspiration for interested communities, funders, and others to explore similar solutions. It is part of GIA's *Innovation@Home* initiative, supported by the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**, which also featured a contest, co-sponsored by the WHO, to gather international examples of aging in community. Almost all contest entries became part of the **World Health Organization's (WHO) Database of Global Age-friendly Practices** and several are profiled in this report.

Many different models, pilots, and grassroots efforts are sometimes short-handed as “age-friendly housing.” Approaches from around the world are explored here according to the following six themes:

- The many ways of **sharing** housing;
- Approaches for **retrofitting** existing homes;
- Approaches to **building** new structures;
- Policies and practices for **supporting** people so they can live at home;
- **Monitoring** and other technology-based approaches; and
- **Incentivizing** positive behaviors through zoning, policy, and funding.

No single model will work everywhere, and some are closely tied to local policies or funding options. Many successful approaches do not require construction or large-scale change, but focus instead on involving volunteers, increasing community engagement, and improving coordination and availability of services in entire neighborhoods. Finally, the importance of listening and respecting the strengths and preferences of older adults can not be overstated.

APPROACHES TO AGING IN COMMUNITY

Challenges, Possibilities, and Inspirational Examples

House and home matter deeply to us. Housing -- the physical structure -- shelters us. Home -- the psychological construct -- supports our sense of identity, history, and community. The role of housing is difficult to overstate; the **World Health Organization (WHO)** believes housing's importance as a social determinant of health is growing and that, "improved housing conditions can save lives, prevent disease, increase quality of life, reduce poverty, and help mitigate climate change."

The desire to stay in community as we age is universal. It is felt in cities and villages, rich and poor neighborhoods, and more and less developed countries around the world. The WHO includes housing as one of the eight domains in its [framework](#) for age-friendly cities and communities, and there is broad consensus among governments, industry, and philanthropy that safe, supportive housing (or housing-related services and arrangements) do much to promote health, prevent injury, delay the need for institutional care, reduce social isolation, and build stronger families and communities by encouraging intergenerational connection.

Older people recognize this. Eight out of ten people age 50+ say "aging in community" is important to them, according to [polling](#) by **AARP**. "Aging in community" refers to being able to remain near the people and places we know and love as we get older (although not necessarily in the same home or housing arrangement), avoiding institutionalization or being required to move. Some in the field view "aging in community" as a more inclusive approach, preferable to "aging in place," which refers specifically to staying in the same housing. While not viable for everyone, "aging in place" has its adherents, including half of respondents in the [AARP poll](#), who say they will "never move."

As the global population gets permanently older, housing and housing-related supports must keep pace with this profound demographic change. So far, so easy, but finding the right approaches, and the political will to realize them, can be more difficult. This is a concept that has come of age, but our ability to realize it is still maturing.

"It all comes back to this: how much do we value older people being in the community? And what does the social and economic infrastructure to enable that look like?" says **Jane Barratt**, General Secretary of the **International Federation on Ageing (IFA)**.

Innovation@Home: Good ideas have no borders

To provide a sense of what is already working, and inspiration for interested communities, funders, and others, this report examines a range of approaches to aging in community from the US and around the world.

This report is part of the [Innovation@Home](#) initiative, led by **Grantmakers In Aging (GIA)**, a Washington, DC-based membership organization of philanthropies, and supported by the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**. [Innovation@Home](#) also featured a [contest](#), co-sponsored by the WHO, which gathered international examples of aging in community. Almost all of the contest entries became part of the WHO's [Database of Global Age-friendly Practices](#).

CHALLENGES AND INSPIRATION

Some Ideas Travel Better than Others

Looking internationally for approaches to aging in community yields fascinating ideas, as well as a number of considerations for communities, funders, governments, and others, such as:

- No “one-size-fits-all” approach exists and no model can be expected to work everywhere.
- Finding basic program facts and contacts (much less evidence and evaluation) in this dynamic but young and highly decentralized field can be a challenge. So can navigating differences in culture and language.
- Political systems matter. It is unclear whether models that depend on government funding can travel well to places that do not offer such support. Conversely, there are examples of government-supported systems that are resistant to innovation.
- Costs and funding vary widely, raising questions about the feasibility of adapting the solutions of the rich for the poor, and vice versa. Skepticism also exists about whether the fundamental goal of “aging in place” is relevant for everyone.

“I challenge the notion that aging in place is best,” says **Alexandre Kalache**, president and founder of the **International Longevity Center of Brazil** and the first director of the WHO’s age-friendly initiative. “Many people saying this are not talking about Brazil or Kenya, where the last place people would like to age is the place where they are now. For many people who live in very bad circumstances, with violence, no services, no public transport, dilapidated conditions, and without the money to do anything about it, they would like to age in a better place.”

- Ageism slows progress. “Ageism keeps older adults from thinking they should be allowed to ask for anything,” says **Jennifer Campbell**, GIA *Innovation@Home* project lead. “The idea of listening to older people too often boils down to just lip service, and older people are only invited in after everything is done.”
- The role of philanthropy varies. In much of the world, governments provide primary funding for housing and other age-friendly services, while most US age-friendly work has required foundation backing. The US incubator-style approach to philanthropy is similar to what is called “social funding” or “social investment” in Europe and elsewhere.
- Improving aging in community must be multi-factorial. “It’s not only homes, but neighborhoods that need to be age-friendly, providing easy access to key services, especially public transport,” says **Ian Spero**, founder of the **UK Agile Ageing Alliance** and an *Innovation@Home* contest judge.

- Ideas do not have to be brand new or complicated to be effective. “We often hear about the large-scale construction of custom facilities, but it’s also important for those of us in philanthropy to remember that undertaking smaller efforts, or putting into practice ideas that are already working elsewhere may ultimately be more cost-effective and help more people,” says **John Feather**, CEO of **Grantmakers In Aging (GIA)**.
- Preserving connection to the larger community matters, says **Stephanie Firestone**, **AARP Senior Strategic Policy Advisor for Health and Age-friendly Communities**. “Someone could be in a house that is perfectly modeled or modified for them, and they might get home- and community-based services in their home, but if they are not engaged, it’s not success.”

Six Thematic Approaches

There are many ways to consider the different models, pilots, and grassroots efforts that are sometimes short-handed as “age-friendly housing.” Since the goal of this report is to provide an overview then pinpoint the most replicable aspects, the top approaches are grouped here according to six themes:

- The many ways of **sharing** housing;
- Approaches for **retrofitting** existing homes;
- Approaches to **building** new structures;
- Policies and practices for **supporting** people so they can live at home;
- **Monitoring** and other technology-based approaches; and
- **Incentivizing** positive behaviors through zoning, policy, and funding.

This paper offers examples of each approach, with a section on considerations for philanthropy. Read them in order or jump to any section by clicking these links:

- **SHARING**
- **RETROFITTING**
- **BUILDING**
- **SUPPORTING**
- **MONITORING**
- **INCENTIVIZING**
- **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PHILANTHROPY**
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

APPROACH #1

SHARING



Many of the challenges facing older adults at home could be alleviated by simply having someone else there. Sharing can take many forms.

Shared Housing: This can refer to taking on roommates, lodgers, or homeowners providing free accommodation.

- In **Porto, Portugal**, a university town, local government saw a chance to solve two problems at once: a large number of isolated older adults, and many students unable to find affordable housing.

Through **Aconchego**, students can live rent-free in the homes of older people who have extra space, in exchange for companionship. Aconchego, a **winner** in the *Innovation@Home* contest, has a 15-year track record of success attributed to active matchmaking, evaluation, and support that includes monitoring, calls, visits, and emails.

- A novel approach in the **Netherlands** permits students to live rent-free in retirement homes operated by Humanitas. Healthcare and technology researcher **Marlous Elisabeth Arentshorst**, who has **studied** the arrangement, says it succeeds in large part because of a facility director who was intent on creating a joyful atmosphere.

“The director said, ‘If residents want to do a mobile scooter race with students, it is their decision!’ There were so many objections: ‘What if they fall! They are so frail!’ But she insisted. ‘They are experienced, they are wise, able to make their own decisions, and they should be able to have fun!’”



- In the **US**, half of people over 50 would consider sharing a home, according to AARP [polling](#), but zoning and other regulations often make sharing difficult for people who are not blood relatives.

Services like [SilverNest](#) are working to make it easier. Targeted to the Baby Boom generation, SilverNest describes itself as creating “the next generation of roommates” and provides matchmaking and background checks.

In South Florida, where rental costs are some of the highest in the nation, **Peter Kaldes**, president of the nonprofit **South Florida Institute on Aging (SOFIA)** was ready to try something new for his clients. He was introduced to SilverNest by **Steve Ewell**, executive director of the **Consumer Technology Association (CTA) Foundation**, and the two groups have [forged](#) a new partnership.

“The cost of living often comes up as an issue and historically we haven’t been able to do anything about it, so we needed to get creative,” Kaldes says. “We really liked the opportunity to partner with a for-profit entity to help solve a social issue.”

- **Multigenerational housing:** Intergenerational living can benefit people of all ages and the number of “grandfamilies” – children being raised by grandparents – has been [growing](#) steadily in the last ten years, to about 2.8 million children. Unfortunately, many subsidized and market-rate senior residences do not allow children.

One intentionally grandfamily-friendly building is **Plaza West**, an apartment complex in Washington, DC that reserves apartments with support services for low-income older people raising grandchildren. Plaza West was started, with local government funding, by Bible Way Pentecostal Church and the [Mission First Housing Group](#).

As resident Tonya Carter [told](#) the Washington Post, “We need these buildings. Whoever thought up grandfamily housing is a genius.”

PLAZA WEST

¡ESTAMOS RENTANDO!

Viviendas unifamiliares disponibles
con 2 y 3 dormitorios



¿Tiene más de 55 años de edad, tiene un nieto (s) de menos de 17 años y busca una vivienda en una ubicación en el vibrante centro de la ciudad?

Nuevas y espaciosas unidades asequibles están ahora disponibles en el corazón de Mt. Vernon Triangle con servicios en el sitio para personas mayores y jóvenes residentes en el lugar.

¡Aplica ya! Llame al (202) 969-0103 o envíe un correo electrónico a Leasing@PlazaWestDC.com.

1035 4th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001  

Cohousing: Common in Europe, and [represented](#) in the US by 165 communities in 36 states, cohousing typically offers private apartments with communal living, dining, laundry, and/or outdoor and recreational space. This generally requires unique construction.

Senior cohousing in the US is growing, with 13 completed senior communities and 15 more in the works, according to the **Cohousing Association of the United States**.



High Barnet: An Intentional Community by Women, for Women

High Barnet opened in 2016 in the UK. Eighteen years in the making, it is the first and only senior co-housing community in Britain. It offers private apartments with common living space, gardens, shared meals, parties, social events and trips, accepts only women, and was conceived and designed by the **Older Women’s Co-Housing (OWCH)** group.

“We started with women saying, “I don’t want to end up as my mother did, lonely and isolated, or in some kind of care facility where everywhere was done for her, and to her,” recalls advisor **Maria Brenton**.

Support for the Older Women’s Cohousing Community at High Barnet has come from **Hanover Housing Association, Housing for Women** and the **Tudor Trust**.



APPROACH #2

RETROFITTING



While new construction might seem like a go-to solution, the bulk of age-friendly housing will be accomplished by renovation or retrofitting, because 80 percent of the homes people will be living in by 2050 are already built.

Renovation programs come in many varieties but the fundamental approach – increasing accessibility and home safety with modifications like bathroom grab bars – is highly adaptable and can benefit almost anyone.

- In Spain, the **Home Refurbishment Program** ([Programa d'Arranjament d'Habitatges de la demarcació de Barcelona](#)), run by the Barcelona regional council, offers government-paid non-structural repairs, improves energy efficiency, and provides assistive technologies in older people's homes.

The program has helped 10,500 people since 2009. Eighty percent say it improved their quality of life. A [winner](#) in the *Innovation@Home* contest.

- In the US, the **CHORE Handyman Service of Bergen County, New Jersey** performs free home repairs for older adults, most of whom are very low-income, but with a twist: the volunteers doing the work are older as well, creating opportunities for social interaction and meaningful civic participation for retirees as well as help for people in need. [Honorable mention](#) in the *Innovation@Home* contest.





Help for both the House and the Householder



Retrofitting a home can help an older person age in place, but that person may also need help with mobility and other functional disabilities. The CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place—Advancing Better for Living for Elders) model addresses both by providing handyman services to improve safety and accessibility, as well as nursing and occupational therapy.

Now CAPABLE will extend its reach through a new collaboration with **Habitat for Humanity International**, backed by a \$1.25 million grant from one of the nation’s largest aging funders, the **Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**.

Sites in five communities in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Maryland will work with health system partners to provide the nursing and occupational therapy services. Habitat will provide home modification and repairs. Evaluation will be performed by researchers from the **Johns Hopkins School of Nursing**.

“Everything we fund in aging is focused on direct services that keep vulnerable older adults aging in their communities with the highest possible quality of life, and housing is the foundation for that,” says **Aaron Merki**, managing director for programs and grants at the **Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**.

“If I were talking to a funder in the aging space who wanted to keep older adults in their homes, CAPABLE is the first place I would send them. It’s a model where you can make a difference even with a small level of investment.”

CAPABLE has been shown to lower healthcare costs and offer a seven-fold return on investment. Other support has come from the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, and the **Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation**.

Habitat for Humanity also runs a home repair program for older adults in China.

APPROACH #3

BUILDING



When new construction is indicated, focus shifts to what might be called age-friendly building standards, such as Universal Design and Visitability standards in the US, or Lifetime Homes in the UK, where the concept was initially developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The WHO estimates it is 22 times more cost-effective to build housing with key accessibility features from the start than to add features later.

- **Universal Design:** This approach allows people of all ages and levels of mobility to live and move easily. Five key Universal Design elements that can help make homes safer for seniors, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center’s report [Healthy Aging Begins at Home](#), are:
 - No-step entries;
 - Single-floor living, eliminating the need to use stairs;
 - Switches and outlets accessible at any height;
 - Extra-wide hallways and doors to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs; and
 - Lever-style door and faucet handles.

Only 1 percent of US houses today [have](#) all five features, even though nearly a quarter of older households have at least one resident with a disability.

- **Georgian Village in Simcoe County, Canada.** A public, municipal-paid construction [program](#) in Ontario, featuring housing and care alternatives ranging from independent living to long-term care. Part of the broader Age-friendly Simcoe County strategy, this “community within a community” meets many levels of socioeconomic need and features an adult day program and a Village Centre with pub, library, fitness center, therapy pool, and sauna. An [entrant](#) in the *Innovation@Home* contest.
- **Kampung Admiralty: A “vertical village” in Singapore.** In Singapore, one of the fastest-aging countries in Asia, more than 80% of the resident population lives in public housing. Support for aging in place is longstanding government policy, setting the stage for lots of interesting innovation.

The story begins in the late 1960s, after Singapore gained independence from Britain. The country faced massive housing shortages and more than half of Singaporeans lived in slums deemed some of the worst in the world, says **Belinda Yuen**, an urban planner and research director of the **Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities**, Singapore University of Technology and Design, where she leads the **Lee Li Ming Programme in Ageing Urbanism**.

“The government responded with a massive public building program that has transformed the landscape,” Yuen explains. “Singapore is well known for its forward planning, and when its population was young, began looking at the implications of aging and potential strategies to deal with it.”

The latest experiment by the **Singapore Housing and Development Board** is **Kampung Admiralty**, an apartment complex with “green features” such as rooftop community gardens, many co-located services onsite (a medical center, childcare, active aging hub, grocery shopping, restaurants, and public transit), and subsidized studio apartments for older people equipped with many accessibility and safety features.

State of the art in many respects, Kampung Admiralty was honored as “**World Building of the Year**” at the 2018 World Architecture Festival.

“Because it’s public housing, there are grants and subsidies available to those who are eligible,” says Yuen. “We hope that this will be the prototype for the coming years.”





An ADU to Call Home: “It’s Kind of What Families Should Do”

Around the world, interest is growing in tiny homes that are attached or adjacent to a main house or apartment. These are variously known as “granny flats,” “dual-key apartments” and Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs.



باختصار ...

ما هي الوحدة السكنية المصغرة؟
الوحدة السكنية المصغرة هي مسكن مؤقت ومساحة بسيطة يوفر للعائلة الإستقرار على قطعة الأرض الخاصة بهم قبل بناء مسكن أبنائهم والمعروف بـ “المعلق”

In the **Emirate of Sharjah**, on the Persian Gulf, the government will pay 100% of the cost of building an accessory structure on a homeowner’s property, to encourage families to live close together. The program, part of **Age-friendly Sharjah**, was an **entrant** in the *Innovation@Home* contest.

In **Singapore**, multi-generational apartments were introduced in the 1980s and are now being built by private developers and selling fast under the name “**dual-key apartments**.”

In the US, 70% of people **surveyed** by AARP said they would consider building an ADU. But it’s not easy: zoning and restrictions on parking, density, and short-term rentals often impede construction.

An early leader in ADUs was **Portland, Oregon**, where researchers identified that many apartments in basements and above garages were not accessible for older adults or people with disabilities, recalls **Alan DeLaTorre** of Portland State University.

Portland incentivized ADU construction by waiving its \$10-\$15,000 System Development Charges for new or increased use of a property.

The change helped people like **Lesla Dixon-Gray**, whose mother, Shirley, moved into the 590 square foot home Lesla built in her backyard.

“What we’ve done has worked really well. It’s an Accessible house and I’m really pleased that we had that foresight because my mother now uses a wheelchair and she’s not going to be forced out.”

After living on the other side of the country from her mother for 35 years, Dixon-Gray is delighted with the tiny house that brought them together again.

“I just think it’s ideal in many ways. It’s kind of what families should do.”



APPROACH #4

SUPPORTING



Whether it is help shoveling snow, coping with a chronic health condition, or simply feeling safe and connected to other people, some measure of support can make a huge difference to older people who want to live independently.

Examples of how to approach and fund this kind of support run the gamut, in the US and internationally:

- **Volunteer home care in Southeast Asia:** In many lower-income countries, governments do not provide many supports, limiting options for older adults. One model developed to answer this is the [ROK-ASEAN Community-Based Homecare Project](#).

Community volunteers receive training in home visiting, housekeeping, and personal care from NGO's, which also provide case management. Governments support the work with policy and referrals to health and social services.

One volunteer, Nguyen Thi Dua from **Vietnam**, described her experience this way: "I'm so moved to learn I have a new father and mother as my own parents passed away long ago. I'm really happy to have the opportunity to take care of them."

Begun in **South Korea** in 2003 with technical assistance from **HelpAge Korea** and **HelpAge International**, this program grew to include all ten ASEAN countries (**Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.**)

ROK-ASEAN Cooperation Fund



- **Japan: What 7-Eleven Can Teach Us about Aging in Community:** A nation that describes itself as “super-aging,” Japan has found unexpected support for its oldest citizens in the private sector.

One example is its beloved convenience stores, including the US chain 7-Eleven, which offers well-regarded food options, onsite pharmacy services, and outposts of government health services. One government-backed pilot [project](#) even enlisted the chains to create mobile “stores” to reach older people in remote areas.

- **Robyn Stone**, Director of Research for the **Global Ageing Network**, visited Japan with an official delegation from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Ginnie Mae that was hosted by the government of Japan, and [blogged](#) about how impressed she was:

The 7-Eleven chain [is] ... offering home-delivered meals. Company nutritionists ensure that older adults receive food that meets their special dietary needs. Drivers, who live in the neighborhoods where they work and know their customers, provide a valuable combination of food delivery and friendly visiting that would look familiar to any American receiving Meals on Wheels.



AARP’s **Stephanie Firestone** found another innovation in **Age-friendly Akita City** (Japan): a private service provided by the **Minamiyama Daily Service Company** working with Akita City’s Age-friendly Partner Program, in which the milk delivery woman also does wellness checks on her older customers.

Photo by Marco Javier for AARP International

- **Supportive Communities in Israel:** Israel is home to 260 Supportive Communities with more than 52,000 older adult members, overseen by [Eshel](#), Israel’s aging social research and service development incubator.

Each supportive community has active volunteers and a community “parent” who provides support, can make minor repairs or arrange for technicians, and functions as an advocate in emergencies. Social activities such as classes, cultural events, parties, and special outings are also offered.

- **It Takes a Village (Network):** One almost completely grassroots-driven US example is the [Village to Village Network](#). In these fee-supported, hyper-local membership groups, older adult neighbors provide volunteer support on driving, yard work, and small home repairs; social activities to combat social isolation, sometimes with an inter-generational flavor; and vet commercially provided services.

Initially incubated in partnership with **Capital Impact Partners** with funding from **Archstone Foundation** and **The SCAN Foundation**, the Village to Village Network provides capacity-building tools, peer-to-peer support, and national advocacy in communities worldwide. **Archstone Foundation** continues to support the California Coalition of Villages.

- **Supportive Service in Public Housing:** government-funded at-home support is being tested in the [Supportive Services Demonstration for Elderly Households in HUD-Assisted 202 Multifamily Housing](#) run by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Established in 1959, Section 202 is the only HUD program exclusively for very low-income older people. This pilot will evaluate the impact of adding a full-time onsite Enhanced Service Coordinator and a part-time onsite Wellness Nurse, with the goal of delaying or preventing institutionalization, and will serve 20,000 people in California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and South Carolina. An *Innovation@Home* contest [entrant](#).

“These wellness coordinators are taking a person-centered approach to engaging seniors, gaining trust, becoming a partner and an advocate for their care,” says **Calvin C. Johnson, HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring**.

- [Portable Assisted Living Services \(PALS\)](#): Another innovative public approach is the **Medicaid Portable Assisted Living Services (PALS)** model. Being tested in the US under New Jersey’s Assisted Living Program, PALS provides assisted living services to low-income, vulnerable, or nursing-home eligible residents in publicly-subsidized housing. Individuals can either apply Medicaid Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) funds or pay out of pocket.

Grant funding from the **Taub Foundation** is supporting coordination and research and a statewide replication is currently being designed. A 2016 evaluation by **Emily Greenfield Cohen** of Rutgers University can be seen [here](#), and the model’s cost-benefit and scalability is being studied by **Candace Robinson**, Director of Strategic Aging Initiatives at **Capital Impact Partners**.



Age-friendly Doormen in Rio

Ninety-five percent of older people in the Copacabana section of Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil** live in apartment blocks. **Porteiro Amigo do Idoso** (Doorman Friend of the Elderly), trains the building doorman as a supportive presence for older residents.

The program was started by **Alexandre Kalache**, also the father of the WHO's age-friendly program, in partnership with Bradesco Seguros Group.

During qualitative research, Kalache recalls, “older people reported that, ‘the doormen are our best friends.’ Now we train the doormen to know how to respond during floods, heat waves, to look for signs of depression, and whom to call in case of an emergency.”

In turn, the doormen get certificates to document their training, which increases their wages and job prospects. More than 2,700 have been trained so far.



APPROACH #5 MONITORING & TECHNOLOGY



Most sectors have had to come to terms with the pros and cons of technology. While there are certainly some examples of tech helping people age in community, some of the people with the highest hopes say that it still has a long way to go and lags other sectors badly.

“This giant market [of connected homes] has a trillion-dollar potential, but it’s currently broken and dysfunctional, with bad user experience, poor technology integration, and a lack of business cohesion,” writes [Wired magazine’s Gadi Amit](#).

Ian Spero, founder of the **UK Agile Ageing Alliance** and editor of [Neighbourhoods of the Future: Creating a Brighter Future for Our Older Selves](#), agrees. “Housing is archaic. Realistically, we should be able to buy a home fully kitted out with technology, made to measure, as you can with a car,” says Spero. “If you buy a new car and you open one door, you can expect all the doors to open. The same with automatic lighting – when it gets dark, the lights come on in most modern cars. Imagine what these features would cost you in a home.”

Some hopeful examples of what is possible include:

- **In-home sensors to lower the risk of falling.** A project called [HCC: Elder-Centered Recognition Technology for the Assessment of Physical Function](#) at the **University of Missouri Center for Eldercare and Rehabilitation Technology** found that built-in sensors could predict, within a three-week period, when the residents of independent living apartments (average occupant age: 83) were likely to fall. It works by analyzing their gait speed and stride length. According to professor **Marjorie Skubic**, who [developed](#) the system, people with the sensors were able to remain independent for almost twice as long (4.3 years versus 2.6 years).

The use of in-home sensors can predict changes in gait and help prevent falling injuries.



- **Technology for people with cognitive decline.** In Oslo, **Norway**, the [Welhavens Street 5](#) apartment building is designed for people with cognitive decline to live independently, supported by technology and monitoring such as sensors, anonymous cameras, GPS watches, automatic medicine dispensers, and automatic voice instructions. An *Innovation@Home* contest [entrant](#).
- **Using data to recognize changes in behavior.** In **Italy**, the city of Bolzano [collaborated](#) with **IBM** on a “Safe Living” program to collect data for strategies to keep older people more independent. Using technology, the homes of older Bolzano residents could automatically report information including temperature, humidity, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide levels, smoke levels, electricity and water usage, motion, blood pressure, and weight.



The Importance of Connection ... to Your End User

Given the number of promising new technologies, Dutch researcher **Marlous Arentshorst**, **Senior Researcher at Utrecht University**, wondered why they were not taking hold more successfully in the housing sector.

In her paper, [From niche level innovations to age-friendly homes and neighbourhoods: a multi-level analysis of challenges, barriers and solutions](#), (co-authored with Alexander Peine), Arentshorst identifies two key obstacles: the lack of curiosity and attention to what older users actually want, and developers’ assumption that frailty, dependence, and ignorance of technology are the norm.

She conducted workshops in seven European countries in 2016 and recalls one group in particular that brought together tech designers and Dutch people over the age of 80.

“The designer started by saying to people, ‘Of course you don’t have a smartphone...’ but right away a woman interrupted her and said, ‘Yes, I do! And my daughter lives in Canada and I Skype her all the time.’ Then the designer asked, ‘What kind of burdens do you face in your daily life?’ and one older woman got quite angry and said, ‘I don’t have any negative things at all!’”

Arentshorst’s conclusion: “You’re not going to sell your product or housing environment if it is negatively framed and not connected, or experienced, as added value to the daily lives of intended users. If we talk about elderly people as fragile and dumb, too old to think, it’s not going to work out.”



APPROACH #6

INCENTIVIZING



Social change is never simple but removing obstacles and rewarding constructive behaviors can help. In pursuit of better aging in community, a number of examples have been successful:

- **A policy-driven approach: Reduced-cost building permits.** Nestled into the hills above the San Francisco Bay, the city of **Sausalito, California** enjoys beautiful views but its location also requires older residents to climb a lot of stairs. Every eleven seconds, an older adult in the US is treated in an Emergency Department for a fall-related injury, so in this city where more than 30% of residents are age 60 or older, the grassroots group [Age-friendly Sausalito](#) decided to help older people retrofit their homes.

The group gathered stakeholders to create the [Age-Friendly Home Adaptation Grant Program](#), which enables both homeowners and renters to get a no-cost or reduced fee building permit for accessibility improvements up to \$10,000 in value. The policy has now been replicated in statewide in California through legislation. An *Innovation@Home* contest [winner](#).

Says Age-friendly Sausalito chair **Sybil Boutilier**, “A small group of older citizens was able to bring about policy, scale it, and make it sustainable.”



- **Convincing Builders: Age-friendly Sarasota:** Universal Design and Visitability standards are not required in most US construction, but some communities are beginning to promote their use. In Florida, Sarasota County passed resolutions in 2015 encouraging builders to use the standards and offering fast-track permitting and certifications and awards to builders who comply.

The program is outlined in the [Age-Friendly Promising Practice Brief: Housing](#) published by **Age-friendly Sarasota**, an initiative of **The Patterson Foundation**. An [entrant](#) in the *Innovation@Home* contest.

- **Master planning and coordination:** Some places, particularly members of the [WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities](#) or the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#), have embedded supportive and forward-looking policies in urban and regional planning processes and documents. In **Age-friendly Portland (Oregon)**, the first US city to join the WHO age-friendly network, coordination provided by the **Institute on Aging at Portland State University** was an important factor.



A key aspect of Portland’s success is participation by citizen volunteers who attended years of zoning hearings, commented on planning documents, lobbied elected officials, and ultimately ensured that age-friendly goals became the city’s own goals in the official Portland Plan (see pages 24-25: [Portland Is a Place for All Generations.](#))

“We consider ourselves policy entrepreneurs,” says PSU professor **Margaret Neal**. “The policies are now in place, giving us the ability to hold the city’s feet to the fire.” Learn more about this expertly supported grassroots activism (an [entrant](#) in the *Innovation@Home* contest) in the [Age-friendly Portland Action Plan](#).

- **Advocating for solutions:** The nonprofit **Woodstock Institute of Chicago** advocates for change in five categories in [Aging in Place: A Strategic Plan to Support Older Adult Housing Needs in the Chicago Region](#).

The report, funded by **First Midwest Bank, JP Morgan Chase, and The Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust**, offers widely applicable strategies, including:

- Encouraging accessible and Universal Design through density bonuses, tax abatements, and parking restriction easements;
- Integrating health and housing services;
- Expanding federal Supportive Housing Services; and
- Private financing options such as reverse mortgages.

- **Family-friendly financing:** In **Belgium**, reduced-rate or interest-free **Intergenerational Family Loans** are provided to families that want to expand a home or build an accessory unit to make their home large enough for three generations or several children by a social funding organization, **Fonds du Logement des Families Nombreuses de Wallonie** (Housing Fund for Large Families in Wallonia).



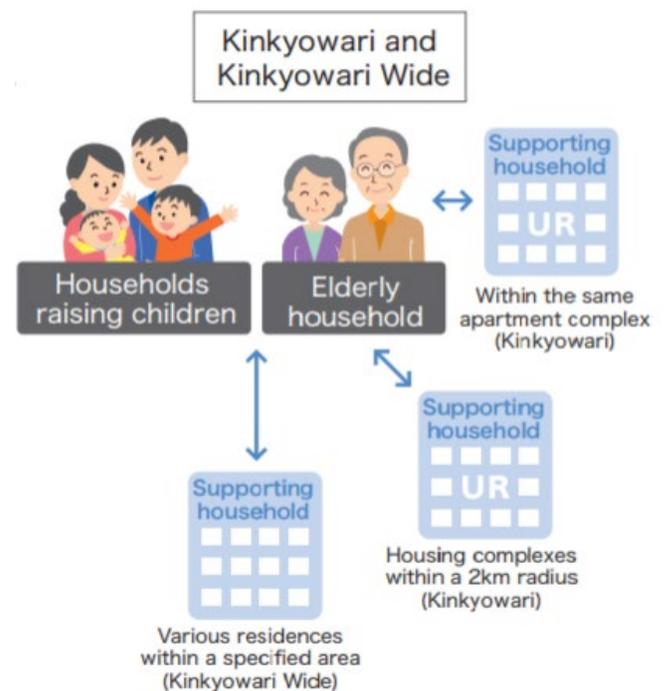
Incentives for Intergenerational Neighborhoods

In both **Singapore** and **Japan**, the traditional practice of multigenerational living has become less automatic. To encourage younger generations to support parents and grandparents, both countries offer financial incentives through their public housing ministries.

In **Singapore**, the Housing and Development Board (HDB) offers the Proximity Housing Grant (PHG) (\$10,000 to \$20,000 in Singapore dollars, or approximately \$7,300 to \$14,700 USD) to people who move within 4 kilometers of their parents (or children).

The HDB's Silver Housing Bonus also provides an incentive for older people to downsize to smaller, more accessible flats.

In Japan, the government **Urban Renaissance Agency** incentivizes multigenerational neighborhoods. **Kinkyowari**, or the “nearby-living discount,” provides a 20%, five-year rent discounts to families that are raising children if they live near grandparents, and makes construction costs tax deductible if they modify a home to allow multiple generations to live together.



CONCLUSION AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PHILANTHROPY



By putting a spotlight on promising approaches to aging in community around the world, GIA seeks to elevate the value of global learning and foster collaboration and sharing of ideas and solutions that will improve the well-being of older people. Many stakeholders are needed to make this process successful, but philanthropy has a particular opportunity, and perhaps even a mandate, to take this powerful lever for good seriously.

Happily, the centrality of housing and the multi-faceted benefits of age-friendly approaches to aging in community mean that funders of all types – corporate, individual, civic, community, national, local, and regional – can find helpful partners and compelling reasons to get involved. A funder need not focus on aging or housing per se to find value or opportunities.

As the programs in this guide demonstrate, these high-impact approaches make a difference in aging but also in social justice, community development, urban planning, education, children and youth, the environment, and health care. Working on age-friendly housing approaches also presents promising opportunities to help people with low incomes, LGBTQ people, racial and ethnic minorities, and other special populations.

In **Manchester, England**, home of one of most celebrated age-friendly initiatives in Europe, the voices of older Mancunians, captured in [focus groups](#), show us what's possible when aging in community is successful. In [Age-Friendly Manchester](#), people describe their neighborhoods variously as, “a place we feel safe and secure,” “a place where we look out for each other,” and “something I can be a part of.” We can't predict where the next great idea for a better society will come from, so it's essential that we keep experimenting, evolving, and sharing. But as we contemplate our shared future, we could do a lot worse than that.



[BACK TO TOP](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[Neighbourhoods of the Future: Creating a Brighter Future for our Older Selves](#) from the UK Agile Ageing Alliance.

[Housing America's Older Adults 2018](#): Report by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (2018)

[Healthy Aging Begins at Home](#) (2016) from the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC)



[The Forgotten Middle: Many Middle-Income Seniors Will Have Insufficient Resources for Housing and Health Care](#) (2019 study by NORC at the University of Chicago)



World Health Organization's [Age-friendly World Database of Global Age-friendly Practices](#).

International Federation on Ageing (IFA) webinar: [Age-friendly Housing: Promoting Healthy Spaces for All Ages](#) (February 2019, features winners in the *Innovation@Home* contest)



[AARP: Housing that Works for People of All Ages](#)

[Lee Li Ming Programme for Ageing Urbanism: Resources](#) (Singapore) includes case studies of international models.

[Time to Adapt: Home Adaptations for Older People: The Increase in Need and Future of State Provision](#), from Care & Repair England

[Cohousing Association of the United States](#)

[Housing Learning and Improvement Network \(LIN\)](#), the UK's leading "learning lab" for housing, health, and social care professionals

[The Halton HomeShare Toolkit](#) from Burlington Age-friendly Seniors Council (Canada)

[Aging in Place: A Strategic Plan to Support Older Adult Housing Needs in the Chicago Region](#) (July 2018, the Woodstock Institute)

[Age-Friendly Promising Practice Brief: Housing: Municipal Resolution for Voluntary Universal Design and Visitability Program for Residential Housing](#) (part of the [Age-Friendly Sarasota County Action Plan 2017–2020](#))

[An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook: For the Socially Engaged Urban Practitioner](#) (2014), by the UK Urban Ageing Consortium and MICRA

[Age-friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan](#)

[Action Plan for an Age-friendly Portland \(Oregon\)](#)

American Planning Association (APA) Knowledge Base article: [Accessory Dwelling Units](#)

[Sf-ADU: A Guide for Homeowners, Designers, and Contractors Considering Adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit to an Existing Residence in San Francisco](#) (San Francisco Planning Department)



Visit us at GIAging.org



Support
provided by



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Written by
Elliott Sparkman Walker and designed by Carly Warner
of SCP (Strategic Communications & Planning)

