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# AGE FRIENDLY BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE



Created by  
the Age  
Friendly  
London  
Network



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## The Age Friendly London Network

The Age Friendly London Network (AFLN) is a community-based network responsible for implementing the Age Friendly London: Three Year Action Plan.

### Our Vision for an Age Friendly London

“A diverse, vibrant, caring, and healthy community, which empowers all individuals to age well and have opportunities to achieve their full potential”

For more information about the Age Friendly London Network, visit:

[www.london.ca/agefriendly](http://www.london.ca/agefriendly)

## What is an Age Friendly Business?



An Age Friendly Business is a business that considers the needs of older adults and creates a barrier-free environment so that persons of all ages and abilities can visit, shop, and participate fully. If a business is comfortable and accessible for older people, it will also be comfortable for others. Creating an Age Friendly Business is appealing to everyone.

Older adults tend to be loyal customers with strong purchasing power. Making your business Age Friendly can help you attract and retain customers and appeal to all.

# Older Adults Have Spending Power!

Seniors (65+) have increased their spending power faster than people aged 55-64 and 25-34 years.

Median net worth of households headed by someone aged 65 and older rose more than four-fold (312%) to \$460,700 in 2012 from \$111,693 in 1984 (in constant 2012 dollars).

Although seniors' circumstances are diverse, the typical senior is nearly nine times richer than the typical millennial.

(From BMO Financial Group Report, 2014)

In Canada the average household income of boomers is \$98,000 per year, compared to millennial households at \$71,000 on average.

Baby boomers' consumer spending is 66 per cent higher than that of millennials.

(From Environics Analytics, 2015)

## What is a Baby Boomer?

Baby boomers are people born during the demographic post-World War II baby boom approximately between the years 1946 and 1964. This includes people who are between 51 and 70 years old in 2016.

## What is a Millennial?

Millennials (also known as the Millennial Generation or Generation Y) are the demographic cohort following Generation X. Most researchers and commentators use birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s.

(From Wikipedia)

# I Want to Make My Business More Age Friendly

## Where Do I Start?

Improving the age-friendliness of your business is easier and more affordable than you may think. This guide contains useful information on how to better serve the needs of older adult customers and offers suggestions for no-cost or low-cost changes to your business.

Use this guide along with the Age Friendly Business Checklist. The checklist is a simple tool to get you started and the guide includes ideas to improve the age-friendliness of your business.

### Tips to get started:

#### Talk to Your Customers

One of the best ways to determine the age-friendliness of your business is to talk to your older adult customers and ask them what they think. What do they like about your business? What barriers do they experience when visiting your business? Is staff helpful, courteous, and polite?

#### Look At Your Business through an Age Friendly Lens

See your business through the eyes of an older adult who may have a hearing, vision, or mobility impairment. Is your business easy to navigate? Can a person get around independently? Are staff available to provide assistance if needed? Is signage easy-to-read?

#### Complete the Age Friendly Business Checklist

Complete the Age Friendly Business checklist (at the end of this guide) with your employees or an older adult customer. If you need help, contact the Age Friendly Business Working Group. Our members can offer assistance and connect you with other resources.

### LONDON'S RAPIDLY GROWING SENIOR POPULATION



- In 2011, about 15% of the population or 53,705 people in London were 65 or older.
- This will grow to almost 100,000 or 22% of the total population by 2031.
- For the first time ever, there are more people in Canada age 65 and older than there are ages 15 and younger.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada  
Canada's population estimates:  
Age and sex, July 1, 2015.

# WALKWAYS, ENTRANCES AND PARKING

Think about the space around the entrance to your business. Are your entrances accessible to people who use wheelchairs and walkers? The following are examples of features that enhance the **accessibility** and **safety** of your entrances and walkways:

- Have sturdy handrails on either side of stairs or ramps.
- Consider non-slip surfaces at entrances.
- Make sure doors aren't too heavy or difficult to open or install automatic doors.
- Use ramps or flat entryways.
- Ensure parking lot and walkways are free of ice, snow, and other obstructions such as litter, potholes, or debris.
- Consider whether accessible parking spaces are available close to the entrance.
- Keep floors clean and dry and clean up spills promptly.
- Make seating available immediately inside and outside of the entrance for someone in a wheelchair or scooter to be dropped off or picked up.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The StopGap London Community Ramp Project has provided 61 free access ramps to 58 locations in London, Ontario to eliminate single step barriers and create an inclusive city in which to live, work and play.

The overall goal of the project is to make businesses accessible for all, and to do so in a fun way that gets people talking and thinking about accessibility in new ways.

Website: [www.stopgap.ca](http://www.stopgap.ca)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/StopGapLondonON](https://www.facebook.com/StopGapLondonON)



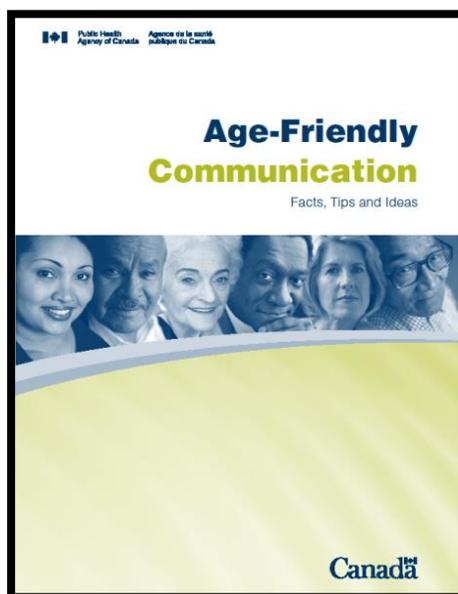
# COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

## Communication

- Make your marketing materials available in a variety of formats, such as newspapers, community newsletters, online, bulletin boards, etc.
- Make websites easy to navigate with zoom and text resizing features.
- Use large, sans serif font types (like Calibri, Arial, or Helvetica) for signs, printed materials and websites. It is recommended that font be at least a 12 point size or higher. The text in this document is 12 point Arial. **This is 16 point Arial.**
- Use simple, clear designs with bold colours.
- Post easy-to-read signage in a prominent location
- Leave 1-inch margins and space between lines of text.
- Consider translating materials into different languages. Think about what languages are spoken in your neighbourhood.

## Age Friendly Communication: Facts, Tips and Ideas

For more information on Age Friendly Communication, see Public Health Agency of Canada Guide:



[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/index-eng.php)

# Customer Service

- If your business has a telephone number, make sure the phone system is easy to navigate.
- It is best if a live person answers the phone. If not, try to minimize the number of automated steps or buttons that a caller must press to get to a live person or an answering machine.
- Prepare staff to deal with medical incidents and emergencies that could occur.
- Keep a first aid kit on site.
- Train staff to speak clearly and slowly but to avoid condescending behaviours such as speaking too loudly or speaking with exaggerated slowness.
- Recognize staff for providing excellent customer service to everyone, including older adults.
- Ensure staff are polite and respectful when interacting with customers.
- Personalized services, such as special help in-store or providing home delivery, can make a big difference to some older adult customers.
- Respond to customer complaints or concerns promptly and courteously.

## Translation & Interpretation Services:

- **Across Languages Translation and Interpretation**  
(519) 642-7247  
[www.acrosslanguages.org](http://www.acrosslanguages.org)
- **Association Canadienne-française de l'Ontario**  
(519) 850-2236  
[www.acfo-ls.org](http://www.acfo-ls.org)
- **Bell Relay Service (BRS) for TTY**  
1 800 268-9243  
[www.bell.ca/Accessibility\\_services](http://www.bell.ca/Accessibility_services)
- **Canadian Hearing Society**  
1 (855) 656-3748  
TTY: 1-877-843-0368  
Skype: callois.chs  
[requests@oischs.ca](mailto:requests@oischs.ca)
- **CNIB**  
1 (800) 563-2642  
[www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)
- **London Cross Cultural Learning Centre**  
(519) 432-1133  
[www.lcclc.org](http://www.lcclc.org)

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# BUSINESS LAYOUT AND AMENITIES

- Minimize loud music and excessive noise.
- Ensure adequate lighting throughout your business, especially at entrances, exits, and hallways.
- Ensure that aisles are wide enough to navigate with a mobility device and are clear of obstructions.
- Clearly mark stairways, or inclines/declines.
- Consider installing a simple cane holder at service counters.
- Install lower service counters, non-slip floors, and handrails. Providing seating with arms is a great way to allow customers to sit and rest when needed.
- Provide an accessible washroom.
- Ensure multiple floors or storeys are accessible by elevator, escalator or ramp.
- Display products at a visible and reachable height.

## Age Friendly is Customer Friendly

Think about the layout and design of your store and how you can accommodate as many customers as possible.

**An Age Friendly environment benefits people of all ages and abilities and makes your business more appealing to shoppers.**

This can include older adults, persons with disabilities, mental illness, injuries, cognitive impairments or dementia, and parents with small children or strollers.

# The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The purpose of the AODA is:

- To achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025
- To involve persons with disabilities in the development of accessibility standards

The Age Friendly Business guidelines are not the same as the AODA, although Age Friendly Business and AODA share many of the same goals. The Customer Service Standard of the AODA states that every provider of goods or services shall use reasonable efforts to ensure goods and services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. There are also other standards in addition to customer service. For more information and tools, visit:

[www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws](http://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws)

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the next 20 years, an aging population and people with disabilities will represent **40% of total income in Ontario** – that's \$536 Billion.

360,000 Ontario businesses and organizations are affected by **Ontario's accessibility law**. It helps them meet the needs of people with disabilities and attract their growing spending power

Improved accessibility in Ontario can help generate up to **\$9.6 Billion** in new retail spending & **\$1.6 Billion** in new tourism spending.

(From The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, 2014)



# Training for Employers and Staff

Many organizations in London offer training that may help your staff members when serving older adult customers and other customers with special needs.

- **Alzheimer Society London and Middlesex**  
Offers training for employees when working with persons with dementia or mild cognitive impairment  
(519) 680-2404  
[info@alzheimerslondon.ca](mailto:info@alzheimerslondon.ca)
- **ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities Inc.**  
Offers ergonomic assessments and training in the use of assistive technology for age-related physical and sensory disabilities.  
[info@atn.on.ca](mailto:info@atn.on.ca)
- **Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex (ESCLM)**  
Offers frontline staff training for optimal client assessment and employment planning and helps clients use the best local and current labour market information for making employment and career decisions.  
(519) 663-0774 Ext. 224  
[info@esclm.ca](mailto:info@esclm.ca)
- **St. John's Ambulance**  
Provides courses and training in first aid and occupational health and safety.  
(519) 432-1352  
[swo@on.sja.ca](mailto:swo@on.sja.ca)
- **Third Age Outreach – Lean On Me**  
A comprehensive training program for volunteers working with seniors in the community and can be adapted to a work environment for employers and staff.  
(519) 661-1621  
[www.thirdageoutreach.ca](http://www.thirdageoutreach.ca)

# Still Looking for More Ideas?

## Age Friendly Business Programs – Best Practices

Many cities in Canada and around the world have developed their own Age Friendly Business programs and resources. Here are some suggestions for Age Friendly Business programs that you may want to check out:

### Age Friendly Ottawa

The Ottawa Age Friendly Business Program encourages older adults to recognize businesses that go the extra mile for seniors. It also provides resources for businesses who would like to become more Age Friendly.

[www.coaottawa.ca/afo](http://www.coaottawa.ca/afo)

### Age Friendly New York City

The Age Friendly New York City local business initiative profiles Age Friendly small businesses and has an Age Friendly Business checklist and guide.

[www.nyam.org/agefriendlynyc](http://www.nyam.org/agefriendlynyc)

### Age Friendly Business – British Columbia

The provinces of British Columbia released an Age Friendly Business Guide with detailed checklists on Age Friendly features for different types of businesses and a scoring system.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/about-seniorsbc/seniors-related-initiatives/age-friendly-bc/age-friendly-businesses>

# More Local Resources for Businesses

- **Argyle Business Improvement Area (BIA)**  
[www.argylebia.com](http://www.argylebia.com)  
(519) 601-8002
- **ATN Access Inc.**  
Partners with businesses and corporations with the focus of integrating qualified individuals with disabilities into the workforce.  
[www.atn.on.ca](http://www.atn.on.ca)  
(519) 433-7950
- **Downtown London**  
[www.downtownlondon.ca](http://www.downtownlondon.ca)  
(519) 663-2002
- **Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex (ESCLM)**  
Job Developers Network (JDN) offers no-fee, professional, and high quality assistance with recruiting and hiring as well as access to on-the-job training resources for new employees.  
[www.jdn.esclm.ca](http://www.jdn.esclm.ca)  
(519) 663-0774 Ext. 224
- **Hamilton Road Area Business Association**  
[www.hamroad.com](http://www.hamroad.com)
- **Hyde Park Business Association**  
[www.hydeparkbusiness.com](http://www.hydeparkbusiness.com)  
(519) 471-7032
- **London Small Business Centre**  
[www.sbcentre.ca](http://www.sbcentre.ca)  
(519) 659-2882
- **Old East Village Business Improvement Area (BIA)**  
[www.oldeastvillage.com](http://www.oldeastvillage.com)  
(519) 645-7662
- **Old South Business Association**  
[www.oldsouthba.ca](http://www.oldsouthba.ca)
- **Service London Business**  
If you are planning to open or expand your business and are unsure where to start, the Service London Business team can help you navigate the process of starting or expanding your business.  
[www.servicelondonbusiness.ca](http://www.servicelondonbusiness.ca)  
[businessconnector@london.ca](mailto:businessconnector@london.ca)  
(519) 661-2500 x 7650



# Age Friendly Business Checklist



*An Age Friendly Business is a business that considers the needs of older adults and creates a barrier-free environment so that persons of all ages and abilities can visit, shop and participate fully.*

This checklist is a resource tool for your business, to assist in enhancing your service.

**Use this tool periodically and keep it for your records to reflect your changes and improvements.**

## Walkways & Entrances

Y N N/A

Entrances are accessible to wheelchairs and walkers  
Entrances can be navigated independently, including:

Sturdy railings

Non-slip surfaces

Easy-to-Open Doors

Free of ice, snow, and obstruction

## Parking

Y N N/A

Parking and public transit is close to the entrance

There are clearly identified drop-off / pick-up areas and parking spaces

## Communication

Y N N/A

Signage is prominently posted in large, easy-to-read format

Information is available in easy-to-navigate formats, in a variety of mediums (e.g. community publications, bulletin boards, online)

## Customer Service

Y N N/A

Phone service is easy to navigate with a live person option available

Staff are mindful and sensitive to seniors' needs (e.g. hearing, vision, mobility, reaching, seating)

Staff are prepared to deal with medical incidents and emergencies

Personalized service (in store, home delivery etc.) is made available

Customer complaints/concerns are addressed promptly and courteously

## Business Layout and Amenities

Y N N/A

Service counters, aisles, change rooms, and washrooms are accessible

Layout of business space is conducive to navigating with a mobility device, and includes amenities such as cane holders, seating with arms, non-slip floors, wide aisles, and handrails

Products are displayed at a visible and reachable height

Environment includes adequate lighting and minimizes excessively loud music and noise

Multiple floors or storeys are accessible by elevator, escalator or ramp



[www.london.ca/agefriendly](http://www.london.ca/agefriendly)

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