



# Age-Friendly

## Why This is Important

One in four Vermonters are 60 years or older (approximately 183,000 adults) and by 2030, that ratio is expected to increase to 1 in 3. In a 2022 survey of older Vermont adults, 70% of adults 65 years and older who are currently working said they would like to continue working for as long as possible. Over a quarter (27%) of adults 60 years and older who are employed also provide regular care for a friend or family member with a health condition or disability or for a child under 18 years of age. Vermont's changing demographics present our state with an opportunity to capitalize on the diverse knowledge, experience and skills of older adults and ensure that every older Vermonter may engage in their community and contribute to its vibrancy. Yet, national data on workers 50 years and older shows that nearly all believe older adult discrimination is common in the workplace and one-third report hearing a negative comment in the workplace about older age.

## How to Support This Outcome

### Education and Awareness:

- Curate and promote trainings to reframe aging and make the business case for age diversity.
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational social engagement.
- Include employees' family members in campaigns that promote health and wellbeing.
- Promote available respite options for family care partners.

### Behavior Change:

- Provide training for managers that addresses age discrimination (refers to the unfair treatment of employees or job applicants based on their age, whether they are considered too young or too old. This type of discrimination can occur at any stage and aspect of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, compensation, and termination.)
- Create a culture of inclusivity with employee “-isms” trainings.

### Policy and Environmental Change:

- Revise hiring practices to ensure qualified candidates of any age are considered for employment without bias.
- Allow flextime for caregiving needs.
  - Ensure leave policies support the caregiving needs of employees.
  - Offer family medical leave to care for family members.

- Offer a set number of days for emergency leave for medical or other emergencies.
- Allow the use of paid sick leave for family care.
- Be sure new employee orientation reviews, leave policy, opportunities for self-care, and medical benefits.
- Share resources for medical decision making and advance care planning.
- Expand recruitment criteria to attract older workers.

### **Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:**

- Use multiple channels—such as e-mail, webinars, training videos, and phone conferences—to communicate about the job, the organization, the wellness program, and other benefits.
- Create a challenge so remote employees can participate on a team and monitor physical activity through an online tracking system.
- Use blogs and other social media to share examples of healthy living stories of remote employees and provide inspiration.

## **Considerations for Employers of All Sizes**

There is evidence that mixed age teams in the workplace are more productive than teams of workers of the same age. Customers appreciate seeing long-time workers and feel that their presence sends the message that the business values its workers, its customers, and its community. Older workers bring a lot to the table: experience, know-how, reliability, work ethic, professionalism, and loyalty, among other valuable qualities.

## **Where to Go for Resources**

- Vermont Department of Health’s Age Strong Vermont:  
[HealthVermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia/age-strong-vermont-our-roadmap-age-friendly-state](https://HealthVermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia/age-strong-vermont-our-roadmap-age-friendly-state)
- AARP Age-Friendly Network:  
[Aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html](https://Aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Clearing Up Myths About Older Workers While Understanding and Supporting an Aging Workforce:  
[blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2023/09/25/older-workers/](https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2023/09/25/older-workers/)
- National Center to Reframe Aging’s Changing the Conversation Toolkit:  
[Learning.ReframingAging.org/](https://Learning.ReframingAging.org/)
- Vermont Ethics Network: [VTEthicsNetwork.org/](https://VTEthicsNetwork.org/)
- United States Department of Labor’s National Employ Older Workers Week:  
[DOL.gov/agencies/eta/seniors/national-employ-older-workers-week](https://DOL.gov/agencies/eta/seniors/national-employ-older-workers-week)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:  
[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://HealthVermont.gov/local)