

Social Services

Amy Correia, LMSW – Coordinator

August 26, 2009

Robin Harlow
Iowa State Association of Counties
501 SW 7th Street, Suite Q
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Robin:

It is my pleasure to submit an application for a 2009 Excellence in Action Award on behalf of Johnson County. This application is submitted under the Inter-governmental award category.

Please find the attached application nominating the Johnson County Livable Community for Successful Aging Policy Board. This Policy Board is appointed by the Board of Supervisors in support of community-wide efforts to support a vision of a livable community where all can grow up and grow old with the maximum amount of independence and success.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this effort to ISAC. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Correia".

Amy Correia, LMSW
Social Services Coordinator

**Iowa State Association of Counties
2009 Excellence in Action Awards
Application**

County: Johnson

Award Category: Inter-governmental

Application Prepared by: Amy Correia, Social Services Coordinator

Johnson County Social Services

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1. Abstract

Johnson County nominates the **Livable Community for Successful Aging Policy Board** for the 2009 Excellence in Action Award. The Johnson County Board of Supervisors created the Policy Board in January, 2008. Its role is to encourage and support the efforts of governmental units, the business community, private and non-profit organizations to help Johnson County, with its urban –rural mix, be a model livable community where persons can grow up and grow old with maximum independence and success..

The Policy Board leads local multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional efforts to implement the priorities of grassroots organizing that occurred during the three-year period 2005-2007. Initial priorities established through a community-wide planning event that included representatives from Johnson County, Heritage Area Agency on Aging, City of Iowa City, Johnson County Council of Governments, City of Coralville, University of Iowa, Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Johnson County and its member agencies, included: 1) assuring that older persons and their families throughout the county have easy access to accurate information about county-wide services and activities; 2) motivating and engaging seniors about the benefits of physical activity and healthy lifestyles to affect behavioral change; and, 3) addressing barriers to obtaining accessible/universal designed housing.

2. The problem/need for the program

Our population is aging. Since 1900, the percentage of Americans age 65+ has more than tripled from 4.1% of the population to 12.4% of the population in 2000. In 2000 in the U.S. there were 35 million people over the age of 65-representing one in every 8 Americans. As the Baby Boomers age, by 2030, 70 million Americans-twice their number in 2000-will be 65+. At that point, older Americans will comprise 20% of the U.S. population, representing one in every 5 Americans.

In 2000, Census projections estimated that by 2005, the 65+ population in Johnson County would be 8,729. However, in actuality, by 2005 there were 9,482 Johnson County residents age 65 and over (8.1% of the population), which is just shy of the 2010 projection of 9,511. Johnson County is aging faster than earlier estimates. A report released by the MetLife Foundation, in cooperation with NACO – *The Maturing of America* - concluded that communities are not well prepared for an aging population.

A livable community for successful aging is one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options. Together, these facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.
(AARP)

While a variety of national organizations have promoted “Livable Community” concepts - Johnson County’s strategy of appointing a Policy Board to lead efforts is unique, in fact we are not aware of any other county that has created a specific Policy Board to advance the goals of creating a livable community for successful aging.

While there are no legal obligations that spurred the creation of the Policy Board, it was deemed crucial that Johnson County be prepared for its aging population, and that County government should play a central role in pulling together other governmental units, the business community, and community-based organizations and committed residents in order to contribute to the quality of life of its aging residents. Three county officials were instrumental in promoting the creation of a Policy Board: Amy Correia, Social Services Coordinator, Ralph Wilmoth, former Director of Johnson County Public Health, and Rod Sullivan, member of the Board of Supervisors. All three participated in planning committees and data discovery processes prior to the creation of the Policy Board. Correia and Wilmoth were instrumental in securing seed funding to support livable community efforts.

3. Description of the Program

By Resolution, in January 2008 the Johnson County Board of Supervisors created the **Livable Community for Successful Aging Policy Board**. There are a maximum of 15 members.

Members consist of the following:

At least one (1) and up to two (2) staff persons representing Johnson County government. One (1) representative of the Heritage Area Agency on Aging. One (1) representative from the United Way of Johnson County. One (1) representative of the University of Iowa. One (1) representative of the Johnson County AARP, one (1) of the Johnson County Task Force on Aging, and one (1) representative of the Iowa City Senior Center. At least two (2) and up to four (4) members that are residents of Johnson County and serve in an at-large capacity, with at least two (2) members residing outside of the urbanized area. At least one (1) and up to three (3) representatives of non-profit Social Service Agencies.

The Board of Supervisors appoints one of its members to serve as a liaison between the Policy Board and its body. Johnson County’s Social Services Coordinator is the staff person that assists in coordinating logistics of the Board (space, notification of public meetings, fiscal agent duties, etc.).

This Policy Board is a unique way to bring together representatives from governmental units, funding bodies, higher education, non-profit sector, and community members. It promotes communication, collaboration, and coordination to spur new actions while avoiding duplication

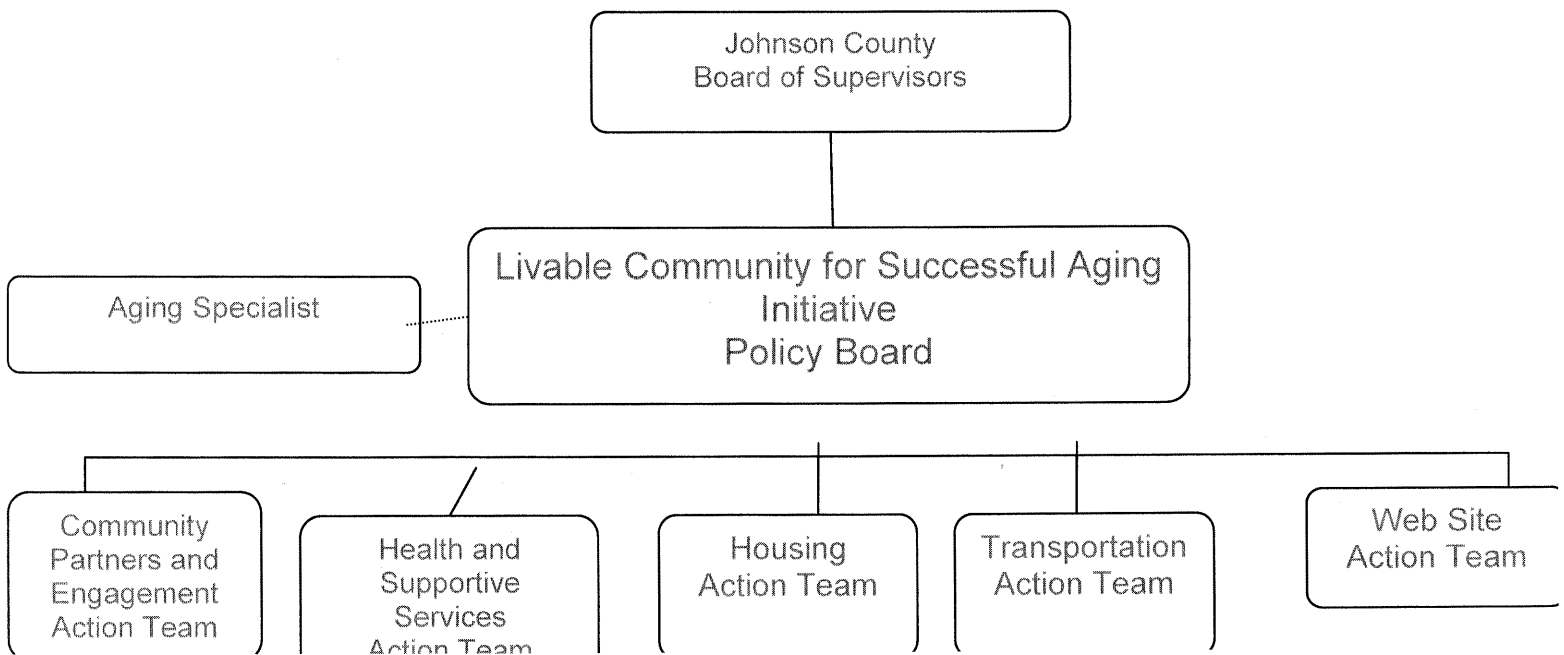
of effort. At least 50% of the Policy Board membership is comprised of persons aged 50 and over.

The Policy Board's role is to:

- Provide financial oversight, monitoring, and program planning to support the vision of Johnson County a livable community for successful aging.
- Encourage and supports the efforts of governmental units, businesses and private and non-profit organizations to help Johnson County, with its urban –rural mix, be a model livable community where persons can age successfully.
- Lead efforts to implement the priorities of the Livable Community planning event sponsored by the Johnson County Consortium on Successful Aging and AARP Iowa in September, 2006. These include: 1) assuring that older persons and their families throughout the county have easy access to accurate information about county-wide services and activities; 2) motivating and engaging seniors about the benefits of physical activity and healthy lifestyles to affect behavioral change; and, 3) addressing barriers to obtaining accessible/universal designed housing.
- Facilitate the exploration and implementation of the "future directions" contained in the September 2006 reports on: a) housing, b) transportation, c) health and supportive services, and d) successful aging that covered the areas of education and leisure, faith-based opportunities, employment and volunteerism.

The Policy Board acts as an organizing tool around which Action Teams operate to fulfill the vision of Johnson County a livable community where all can grow up and grow old successfully. During FY 08 & FY 09, the Policy Board provided oversight of three grants that were secured from Heritage Area Agency on Aging, the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, and Johnson County. Funding provided staff assistance in the form of an Aging Specialist to provide capacity building and assistance to each of the Action Teams. This Aging Specialist was initially housed at Johnson County Public Health. This position has transitioned to Elder Services, Inc., a local non-profit organization.

The following is a "Table of Organization" that visually represents the initiative:



As represented in the above table of organization, during the period 2007-2009 there were five action teams working in a variety of areas. Between the five action teams, there were upwards of 100 community members working in each area to affect change. Policy Board members serve on at least one Action Team, and provide strategic directions to Action Teams and support efforts implemented by action teams to further the vision. Samples of activities of these action teams include:

- 1) Community Partners & Engagement: sponsor community-wide forums in the areas of spirituality and health; employment; re-visioning retirement
- 2) Health: Create a pilot program for Seniors targeting residents in Tiffin & Oxford called Eat Better Move More, that encourages physical activity
- 3) Housing: Create a voluntary universal design certification program to promote the inclusion of universal design concepts in new and rehabilitated housing.
- 4) Web-Site: Design and populate a web-site to serve as an on-line resource of services and amenities provided in Johnson County that create options for successful aging.
- 5) Transportation: Apply for funding to create a senior volunteer transportation program. Create a booklet of current transportation options for Seniors in Johnson County.

Johnson County government staff persons from the following departments serve on one or more action teams: Public Health, SEATS (Para transit); Social Services, Planning & Zoning; Board of Supervisors. In addition, the following County departments have provided information and consultation on a variety of issues: Human Resources, Mental Health/Disability Services; Information Technology; County Attorney.

Action Teams meet monthly, and reports of their efforts are reported during monthly Policy Board meetings. The Policy Board convenes a large community event annually to inform of Policy Board efforts, to build additional participation from new community members, and to refresh ideas for action.

4. Use of technology

A major effort of the Policy Board over the FY 08/FY 09 time-period was to develop a comprehensive web-site to serve as a resource for Seniors, their caregivers, and other service providers. This web resource went "live" in May, 2009, and can be viewed at: www.livablecommunity.org. Text from the Welcome Message on the home page:

JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA: A livable community for successful aging

Welcome to the Johnson County Livable Community for Successful Aging Initiative website. A Livable Community has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features, and mobility options. Together, these features facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.

Explore this website to discover why Johnson County, Iowa is a livable community where

everyone can grow up and grow old with maximum independence, safety, and well-being. Where do I go next? You are currently on the Welcome page. Click any of the menu options to the left to begin exploring this website. Please help us improve the website by clicking the "Did we help?" tab at the end of your experience and answering a few questions. Thank you!

5. Cost of the program

Johnson County received seed funds from the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs and the Heritage Area Agency on Aging for FY 08 & FY 09 totaling \$90,000. In addition, Johnson County matched these funds with \$13,000. These funds supported a full-time Aging Specialist position for the time-period, as well as costs associated with developing the web-site and supporting various Action Team efforts. For FY 10, Johnson County is providing \$13,000 to support efforts to continue to strengthen Johnson County livable community efforts. In addition, there are grant writing efforts underway to support specific efforts to make Johnson County a livable community.

6. The results/success of the program

The accomplishments of the Initiative - led by the Policy Board - is impressive, and include:

Community Partners & Engagement:

- Initiated the process of Iowa City being awarded the Excellence in Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging Award by the Environmental Protection Agency
- Hosted an Employment Seminar with national and state leaders
- Hosted a Spiritual Care Seminar with national leaders in cooperation with Mercy Hospital and Hartford Center for Nursing Excellence at U of I.
- Created the print resource document: Aging Without Limits
- A quarterly newsletter to 900 seniors and community members is published.
- Older Americans Month proclamations made by the county and five communities
- A series of TV panels were held in celebration of Older Americans Month including Access to: Education, Volunteer Opportunities, Housing, Transportation and the Aging Disability Resource Center

Health:

- Eat Better. Move More” pilot program offered in rural Johnson County including the communities of Tiffin and Oxford.
- Laid the foundation for a walk-ability audit in the Tiffin-Oxford area.
- Train the Trainer - a Successful Living with Chronic Disease program has been started this program utilizes the services of seniors to assist their peers in fitness activities and educational programs was implemented.

- A Fall Prevention Workgroup has been formed. This workgroup provided educational information on preventing falls at a Senior Center Health Fair and at the Johnson County booth at the County Fair on Senior Day.

Housing:

- “Homes for Life” - a voluntary certification program - was developed in cooperation with the Greater Iowa City Home Builder Association to promote accessibility and visitability standards in new home construction. Every building department in the County presents information about this certification through its offices and application processes.
- Work has been done on code amendments that will improve accessibility and visibility with no or minimal extra costs during construction.
- Sent letter to Iowa City Council in support of Board of Appeals recommendation to include mandatory universal design features in building code (effort failed but opened conversations)
- Educational program concerning Universal Design on-going
 - Parade of Homes to feature universal design and green homes.
 - Television series planned on home modification
 - Expert panel on Housing in Johnson County televised as part of Older Americans Month

Transportation:

- Johnson County selected to send a team to the Senior Transportation Institute - one of 15 communities nationwide to attend national training institute in Washington DC. Representatives from Iowa City Transit; SEATS (County-operated Para transit program); Board of Supervisors, & Policy Board attended.
- Conducted a train the trainer program for “When to Stop Driving”. Those trained are offering programs throughout the county.
- A Transportation Guide on Mobility options was developed and is in its second printing of 1000 booklets
- Policy Board provided input to Johnson County Council of Governments (JCCOG), and they added Senior Users of the Transportation System to their Planning documents.
- Transportation Action Team submitted an application for a \$50,000 grant to start a volunteer action plan
- Brought the “Car Fit” program to Johnson County.

Web-Site:

- The website www.livablecommunity.org was publicly launched in May 2009. For the period May-July there has been an average of 386 unique visits a month to this site, with the average time spent on the site between 6.14 and 7.25 minutes. The site includes information on:
 - What Makes Johnson County a Livable Community?
 - What is available to help me stay in my home?
 - What options are available to me when I need to move?

What is the Initiative and what is it up to?

The web site unique features include:

- Information on eligibility and costs of the services.
- An interactive map that provides direction to the services.
- Information on how to select a service to meet one's needs.

7. **Worthiness of an award**

The **Johnson County Livable Community for Successful Aging Policy Board** deserves this award because the program promotes intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems. It addresses the emerging issue that all communities face, which is an increasingly aging population.

As evidenced by the appointed membership of the Policy Board itself, as well as the participation of other governmental bodies in Action Teams, the effort to make Johnson County a livable community is successful because it draws from a broad base for participation. For example, the Transportation Action Team is effective because it includes participation from local and regional government transit providers and planning organizations.

The Policy Board endorses the following strategies for working together and has been successful using this process to accomplish an incredible amount over the past 2 years:

1. The importance of partnership. Our effort includes a wide array of persons, including persons in positions of authority who are open to discovering what can be done and willing to work to make things happen.
2. The importance of communication. We keep in contact with our key partners; through e-mails, phone contact and in-person meetings.
3. The importance of patience. Floods happen, progress slows, key people switch positions, and mistakes will be made. The goal is worth all efforts.
4. The process is cyclical. We have developed a system of team-building, discovery (data collection); Share Information, Plan, Organize, Take Action and Celebrate.