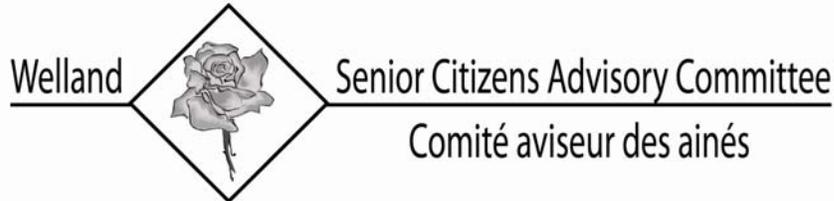


# Creating an Age-Friendly Business in Welland/Pelham





**CITY OF WELLAND**  
**Recreation and Culture Services Division**  
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To: Chamber of Commerce Members

The term Age-Friendly was coined in a world-wide study led by the World Health Organization in 2006 in 33 cities, four Canadian, collaborated to identify the characteristics of an Age-Friendly Community.

On April 21, 2009, the Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee presented the idea of an AFC Welland project that was unanimously supported. After consultation with other partners for the purpose of funding, we decided we would be more successful with a regional approach. That was launched on October 1, 2009. Welland is leading the first regional community to receive membership in The World Health Organization Network.

We are pleased to report that the Welland Chamber of Commerce supports us in initiating this guide that sets out ways your business or service can serve older customers better.

Niagara has one of the oldest populations in Canada. As a result, in the near future many more of your customers and clients will be older. Although most older people are healthy, independent individuals, changes can occur with age. Attending to some of the most common issues relating to aging (e.g.: diminished sight, limited mobility) will increase the age-friendliness of your business.

We want our communities to be welcoming, accessible, and to enable citizen participation.

Your business or service can help our communities reach these goals. The principles set out in this guide will help make your business more appealing to seniors and yours can become recognized as an Age-Friendly place to do business.

Your business or service adopting the principles set out in this guide can use the "Rating Guide" to see how well you are doing.

The Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee and Age-Friendly Welland Action Committee look forward to working with you to make our community's businesses and services more Age-Friendly.

D.H. Rapelje, Chair  
Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee

Henry O'Keefe, Chair  
Age-Friendly Welland Action Committee



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The Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce applauds the efforts of the Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee in developing this guide which will assist local businesses in creating an age-friendly environment. The Committee was very interested in obtaining feedback from the business community to ensure they developed a guide that provided tangible information that could easily be implemented.

Having one of the oldest populations in Niagara, combined with data that shows seniors have been picking up their spending levels in the past decade, creating an age-friendly business environment makes good business sense. We encourage all of our members to review this guide, and to implement the many usefully principles outlined.

Congratulations to the members of the Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee for being visionaries on this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dolores Fabiano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "F".

Dolores Fabiano, Executive Director  
Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce

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## Why have an age-friendly business?

The term age-friendly was coined in a world-wide study led by the World Health Organization in 2006.

Governments, societies, researchers and older people in 33 cities collaborated to identify the characteristics of an age-friendly city.

Niagara has one of the largest senior population in Canada. According to reports, the number of seniors is expected to double within 25 years.\*

Our large baby boomer generation, which began to turn 65 in 2011, has a great deal of purchasing power along with the time to shop.

Senior households spend a smaller share of their expenditures on food and shelter, as such a higher proportion report they spend more on discretionary items including, clothing,

recreational equipment, travel accommodations, cellular phone services, etc.\*\*

It has been proven that satisfied customers focus their spending power where they have a long-term relationship. Older adults tend to be loyal customers.

If your business is age-friendly you can attract and keep customers within a large and expanding demographic.

\* Living Longer, Living Well, Dr. Samir K. Sinha – Report submitted to the Minister of Health to form a Seniors' Strategy for Ontario.

\*\* Industry Canada – Consumer Spending Government of Canada.

## An age-friendly business is a people-friendly business – appealing to many ages:

- ◆ Pregnant women.
- ◆ Parents with children in strollers.
- ◆ People with injuries.
- ◆ People with sight, hearing or mobility limitations.
- ◆ People with limited English.
- ◆ People with mental illness.

# How can you better serve older customers?

Most older people are healthy, independent individuals but changes can occur with age. Attending to some of the most common issues related to aging will increase the age-friendliness of your business.

**Consider the following points:**



## Safety

Consider how people with mobility limitations access your place of business. They will find it easier if you have:

- ◆ fewer stairs, sturdy railings, and non-slip surfaces;
- ◆ parking lots and sidewalks clear of ice, snow and puddles;
- ◆ wider aisles, uncluttered pathways to accommodate walkers, wheelchairs and scooters;
- ◆ easily opened or automatic doors;
- ◆ in-store scooters for mobility impaired shoppers.



## Comfort

Consider places to rest and refresh, such as:

- ◆ a place to sit while waiting, and a place to put packages down;
- ◆ chairs that are sturdy and stable with arms for people who need to push themselves up, and that are not too low or too soft;
- ◆ an easy to find wheelchair-accessible customer washroom.



**If you suspect that an older person may be experiencing some form of abuse, please call Niagara Regional Police or dial 911.**



## Visibility and Clarity

People are able to see what you want them to see, and hear what you say when:

- ◆ Lighting is adequate and glare-free;
- ◆ Signage has good contrast, uses large print, and wording is easy to follow;
- ◆ Phones are answered by people. Few or no menus to navigate;
- ◆ The service desk is clearly visible so people can ask for help;
- ◆ There is no background music or machine noise which can be distracting and uncomfortable;
- ◆ Staff speak clearly and at an appropriate speed while looking directly at the person;
- ◆ Staff know how to assist customers with vision or hearing challenges;
- ◆ A quiet space to discuss people's business or concerns in privacy is available.

## Respect

A business shows that it promotes respect when:

- ◆ Older adults are not treated impatiently or dismissively;
- ◆ Staff are sensitized to condescending behaviours (speaking too loudly, too familiarly or calling someone "dear");
- ◆ Staff know how to address people's needs without stereotyping or drawing conclusions about people based on their age or other characteristics;
- ◆ Staff are trained to handle incidents like a fall or outburst while preserving the customer's dignity;
- ◆ Staff respond to errors and complaints promptly and courteously.

# How to start making your business age-friendly.

## Take a look around your business.

What if you had a walker? What if you couldn't see or hear as well? What if it was painful to stand for more than a few minutes? Would you be comfortable patronizing this business? Ask for input from an older person.



### First look outside.

- ◆ Are there steps without railings?
- ◆ Slippery or uneven patches, or cluttered walkways?
- ◆ Are there curb cuts for walkers, wheelchairs and strollers?
- ◆ At night is the lighting even, or are there dark areas that hide hazards?

### Walk around inside.

- ◆ Are the floors shiny? slippery? are there obstacles?
- ◆ Is signage readable?
- ◆ Are the most needed items within easy reach?
- ◆ Are staff friendly and respectful?
- ◆ Are wheelchair-accessible washrooms available?
- ◆ If your building is large, are scooters available?
- ◆ Do you have staff members greet customers?



## Take a look at your advertising and information materials as well as your website.

Do you use print with good contrast? Can a customer enlarge the font on your website?

### Age-friendly details:

The age-friendly business assessment in this guide provides details on features of an age-friendly business.

# What have other businesses done?

Here are examples of what businesses in Niagara have done:



## A grocery store has

- ◆ Wide, uncluttered aisles, automatic doors, places for people to sit;
- ◆ A volunteer shopping and home delivery website;
- ◆ Pricing and advertising in legible print;
- ◆ Staff help customers carry goods to cars if need be.

## A pharmacy has

- ◆ Clear aisles and easy-to-read signage;
- ◆ Magnifying glasses to help people read fine print on product labels;
- ◆ Prescription staff who move to a private area if discussion is required.



## A bank has

- ◆ Visible customer service areas and some counters at scooter height;
- ◆ Staff trained to identify signs of possible financial abuse, or people needing additional care;
- ◆ An area where people can sit to conduct business.

You can use the age-friendly business assessment included in the following pages to help you get started in making your business more safe, comfortable and attractive for older customers and for others who would benefit.

# Age-Friendly Business Assessment

Use this age-friendly business assessment to help you get started in making your business more safe, comfortable and attractive for older customers and for others who would benefit.

## RATING GUIDE

Please use the following rating system for the questions on the following pages to assess your business:

N/A = does not apply

1 = Needs work

2 = Fair

3 = Good

4 = Excellent



# 1.Safety: provide for people with reduced mobility, agility and balance.

## Outside space: access to your business is free of hazards

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sidewalk access and parking areas are level and well-maintained, with curb cuts where needed;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pick-up/drop-off areas are convenient and clearly marked and sheltered (where possible);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrances, sidewalks and parking lots are well and evenly lit;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible and seniors' parking spaces are designated and enforced;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parking lot and sidewalks are promptly cleared of hazards (e.g. snow, puddles);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrances are kept clear of street furniture and obstructions;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance doors open automatically or have access buttons. They stay open long enough to get through;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doors are wide enough for wheelchairs/scooters;
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is clearance by the door for a person waiting with a wheelchair or walker.

### RATING GUIDE

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## Inside space: customers can navigate without obstructions and distraction

- \_\_\_\_\_ Stairways have sturdy handrails on both sides;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stair edges are clearly marked;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flooring is non-slip and non-shiny;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Necessary mats are securely fastened;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elevators are available for other floors and there are ramps for change of levels;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obstacles or hazards are clearly marked (e.g. step up);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aisles are wide enough for two walkers or wheelchairs (approx. 4 feet) and uncluttered by displays;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Location of elevators, washrooms, customer services and other amenities and services is clearly posted. A store layout map is visible near the entrance;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most popular items are shelved at medium height;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency training of staff addresses warning and evacuation of the elderly and disabled.

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### RATING GUIDE

N/A = does not apply

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## 2.Comfort: Consider customers with reduced mobility, agility and balance.

### Provide for people with limited strength and stamina.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sturdy, regular-height seating is placed in waiting or line-up areas;
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least one service or checkout counter is wheelchair/scooter accessible;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Service counters have a place on which to hook a cane so it doesn't fall;
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is space by the entrance for customers to park scooters;
- \_\_\_\_\_ In areas where customers sit for some time (e.g. restaurant tables), temperature is held at comfortable level with no chilly air currents;
- \_\_\_\_\_ An online or phone-in ordering delivery service is available;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Customer washrooms are found on all service floors (if possible);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Washrooms contain at least one wheelchair-accessible toilet cubicle and hand-washing area;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Customers are offered assistance when taking items to their cars.

### RATING GUIDE

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## Provide for people with poor sight or hearing

- \_\_\_\_\_ Premises are evenly and well lit;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signage has legible font and good contrast (e.g. black on white);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Printed or written materials have good contrast and readable font sizes;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff speak clearly, and at an appropriate speed, while looking directly at the person;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some staff are trained to assist customers who have vision or hearing challenges (e.g. reading labels and locating items);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sound systems for public announcements are loud enough, distortion-free, and not over-used;
- \_\_\_\_\_ A quiet space;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Background music is absent or low in volume.

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### RATING GUIDE

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## 3. Respect: Ensure all customers are treated with respect.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff are trained to be friendly and patient with all customers, and try to meet their needs;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff are sensitized to avoid condescending behaviours (e.g. speaking too loudly, speaking too familiarly as in calling someone “dear”, or showing visible impatience);
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff are encouraged to move to an area where they can more comfortably serve someone who may have trouble seeing, hearing, understanding, or making their requests known;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Errors and customer complaints are addressed promptly and courteously;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff are trained in managing situations such as a fall or an outburst while preserving a person`s dignity;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff can identify if a person is experiencing a medical emergency and can notify the appropriate service or authority.

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### RATING GUIDE

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## 4. A few extras that will increase the attractiveness of your business for older customers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Promotional material includes depiction of older people;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer research included older people;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Products and services are designed for smaller households, small incomes and smaller appetites.

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### RATING GUIDE

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# What are the principles of the Age-Friendly Community framework (following the principles of the World Health Organization)?

## **Respect and Support of All Citizens**

- ◆ recognizes that all citizens are vital members of a community and have the right to self-determination, to fully engage in life across their life span, and to be treated with respect and dignity.

## **Access and Inclusion for All**

- ◆ responds to the needs of all citizens ensuring fair access to flexible resources, supports, and spaces not negatively influenced by diversity and responds to their needs across their lifespan.

## **Community Engagement in Decision-Making**

- ◆ values relationships that actively include older adults in all aspects of decision making and program development relevant to them and based on mutual respect and inclusion of multiple, diverse, and equally valuable perspectives and experiences.

## **Livability**

- ◆ promotes many of the values of “liveable communities” and recognizes that health and well-being includes many aspects of community living including the built environment, vibrant public spaces, community identity and choices in transportation, housing options, and other social programs.

## **Accountability**

- ◆ demonstrates that programs, services, and the overall planning of communities are delivered in a manner that respects these principles, is effective and efficient, and considers the voices of all citizens including older adults.

# Notes