

NORTH CAROLINA

Dementia Friendly Communities

Standards & Information for those Interested in Starting or Growing a Dementia Friendly Community

1) What is a Dementia Friendly Community?

According to Dementia Friendly America (DFA), a Dementia Friendly Community is a village, town, city, or county taking action to ensure people with dementia can live independently for as long as possible. It is a community where people with dementia and their care partners will be able to engage in a variety of activities and be supported in these activities.

2) What Does a Dementia Friendly Community Look Like?

Dementia Friendly communities are places where people with dementia can live as independently as possible with value and with respect:

- Where they engage in activities that we all take for granted
- Where they are supported as these daily activities become difficult
- Where the changes in the person are noticed, understood, and accepted
- Where shops, restaurants, and streets are evaluated through a dementia lens

3) How do I find out if my community already has a Dementia-Friendly initiative underway?

Call the NCDHHS Division of Aging at 919-855-3400 or contact us at Division of Aging's Dementia Capable NC webpage www.ncdhhs.gov/dementiacapablenc.

4) In North Carolina, Dementia-Friendly Communities are expected to adhere to the following minimum standards:

- a. Address the physical, social and environmental needs of people living with dementia by utilizing a person-centered approach.
- b. Include people living with dementia on their leadership team or steering committee.
- c. Include caregivers of people living with dementia on their leadership team or steering committee.

- d. Work in collaboration with and have representation from three or more sectors of the community such as:
 - i. Banks and Financial Services
 - ii. Neighbors and Community Members
 - iii. Legal and Advance Planning Services
 - iv. Local Government
 - v. Health Care
 - vi. Libraries
 - vii. Faith Communities
 - viii. Businesses
 - ix. Community-based services
 - x. Residential and Specialty Care
 - xi. Hospitals

For more information on sectors, visit Dementia Friendly America Sector Guides at www.dfamerica.org/sector-guides

- e. Prioritize awareness and education for all members of the community, including but not limited to the following key messages:
 - i. Dementia is not a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.
 - ii. Dementia is caused by diseases and/or disorders of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer's.
 - iii. Dementia is not just about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
 - iv. It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.
 - v. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.
- f. Educational outreach to the community is expected to be ongoing and not a one-time effort. Communities that develop a local or regional dementia friendly business or organizational certification or designation must include criteria for onboarding of new employees or volunteers, and a plan for monitoring/maintaining this business or organizational local designation.

- g. Every part of the community has a unique role in fostering meaningful access to and engagement in community life for people living with dementia and their family and friend care partners. As each sector of community takes its own steps to foster support, a community emerges that is informed, safe and respectful.

If your community wishes to pursue Dementia Friendly America designation, visit the DFA website www.dfamerica.org. Then under the “Communities” tab, click on “Overview and How to Join.” [Dementia Friendly Community Readiness and Recognition Criteria](#). Benefits of this DFA designation include participation in a national movement, access to webinars and listservs, technical assistance by DFA staff team, monthly newsletter, and access to DFA logo.

The Division of Aging can provide a required letter of support for this DFA application for communities that meet these baseline standards.

5) Dementia Friends vs Dementia Friendly Communities



- a. Dementia Friends USA is part of a global public awareness movement with the goal of changing the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. Dementia Friends is about individual impact.
- b. Dementia Friends is an Information Session, not a training. It is not intended to be used as a complete dementia friendly business, dementia friendly hospital, or direct care worker training for people who provide care to individuals with dementia.
- c. The Dementia Friends Information Sessions can be part of a much wider/larger Dementia Friendly Community strategy.
- d. Dementia Friends is a licensed program. In North Carolina, NC4A (the Area Agencies on Aging) and Division of Aging co-own the Dementia Friends Sub-License. This means only these two organizations are permitted to train Dementia Friends Champions to offer in-person or live virtual Information Sessions. NC’s license applies to in-person and live virtual Information Sessions.

- e. Anyone can become a Dementia Friend online through the national Dementia Friends link. The material varies somewhat from the live experience. <https://dementiafriendsusa.org/become-a-dementia-friend>

6) Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly Collaboration

Some communities may choose to incorporate age friendly and dementia friendly initiatives simultaneously or work on each effort separately. For a step-by-step guide to becoming an age- and dementia friendly community, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/AFDFguide>.

7) Dementia Friendly Hospitals

The overall goal of the Dementia Friendly Hospitals’ movement is to improve the care of patients with dementia while they are hospitalized. Since patients with dementia are at increased risk for complications, prolonged stays, falls, and readmissions, dementia friendly hospitals strive to ensure that hospital staff are trained to recognize dementia, meet the unique and complex needs of patients with dementia, improve communications, and provide better care. Additionally, hospitals may make environmental changes to improve care. In some cases, individual hospitals undertake efforts to become dementia friendly; in others, an entire health care system may work to accomplish that goal. Currently, numerous dementia friendly hospital models are available using different training courses and techniques, and there is currently no credentialing body or set process for hospitals to become accredited or officially designated as being “dementia friendly.”

8) Opportunities to Get Involved with other North Carolina Communities

- a. Join the Dementia Friendly Communities & Hospitals Network. This is a statewide group that meets virtually three or four times per year. Representatives who are in a leadership position and working to start or grow a dementia friendly community or hospital effort are welcome. For more information, contact Heather Carter at NCDHHS Division of Aging at heather.carter@dhhs.nc.gov.

