

Building an Age-friendly Business in the City of Kawartha Lakes

Businesses Guide



age
friendly
CITY OF KAWARTHA LAKES

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This age-friendly business guide is designed to provide insight into the older adult market and to provide practical, no-cost and low-cost tips to assist your business in reaching and engaging this growing market.

The Age-friendly Business Recognition Program provides resources, tools and assistance to help business owners identify, promote and improve their age-friendly features. This will facilitate the changes to ensure local access to a variety of goods and services for everyone to enjoy, regardless of their age.

Age-friendly communities in both urban and rural settings are essential components to the health and well-being of older people as well as to the broader community.

The make-up of our communities is undergoing a fundamental shift as members of the Boomer generation mature into older age. According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over in the City of Kawartha Lakes, was 21.9%, compared with a national percentage of 14.8%. In 2010, the City of Kawartha Lakes developed an age-friendly plan, to help identify areas of strength and areas of opportunities to increase the age-friendliness, and therefore liveability of our region.

It's not just the numbers that are changing. Older adults today are living longer than ever before and are staying active well into older age. While today, people are living longer than those in generations past, the majority are also living with at least one chronic health condition.

The Age-friendly Business Recognition Program is a component of the larger community age-friendly plan.

For more information please contact Barb Condie at bcondie@city.kawarthalakes.on.ca

Why have an age-friendly business?



Simply put, age-friendly business is good business.

A business that is welcoming and comfortable for older adults will be comfortable for all customers, including parents with children in strollers, expectant mothers and individuals with injuries, disabilities or other limitations (i.e., sight, hearing, mobility).

Entrances with fewer stairs and that are clear of snow or other obstacles will allow customers to safely access your business and **spend money**.

The availability of a place for customers to sit while waiting or rest during shopping **may result in customers spending more time and therefore more money at your business**.

A service or help desk that is clearly visible and accessible will allow customers **to find and purchase all the products they require**.

Staff who are patient and trained to handle incidents (such as a customer fall), while preserving the customer's dignity, **will create positive word of mouth and potentially increase your customer base**.

Making your business age-friendly has many benefits;

It can make a positive difference to your bottom line.

It's an easy way to ensure that your business is customer friendly.

Most age-friendly practices are low or zero cost and can result in more sales.

You will create loyal customers by showing older people that you value their patronage.

Top 5 ways for businesses to be Age-friendly: (as identified by older adults in the region)

1. Seniors' discounts
2. A place to sit and rest
3. Large print on signs
4. A person on the other end of the telephone
5. An available washroom



What makes a business age-friendly?

An age-friendly business welcomes older adult consumers and works toward meeting the needs of this diverse, fast-growing and economically powerful consumer base.

The Age-friendly Business Recognition Program was created to recognize those businesses that have instituted, demonstrated and promoted best practices toward service to older adults. Specifically, the program seeks to recognize businesses that have demonstrated a willingness to improve access for older adults by making improvements to their business.

An Age-friendly business considers (but is not limited to) the following areas:

For a more extensive list, please visit our website

www.advantagekawarthalakes.ca/en/businessResources/age-friendly-business.asp

Safety & Accessibility

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 (avoiding tripping hazards or shiny surfaces that could lead to falls);
- wider aisles and uncluttered pathways (to better accommodate walkers and wheelchairs); and
- easily opened or automatic doors that provide more accessibility.

Comfort

Consider places to rest and refresh, such as:

- a comfortable area in which to sit while waiting;
- chairs that are sturdy and stable, not too low or too soft, with arms for individuals who need to push themselves up; and
- an easily accessible customer washroom;
- a chair that will accommodate customers of larger stature.

Clarity

Consider how people are able to see what you want them to see, and hear what you say:

- lighting is adequate and glare-free;
- signage has good contrast, and wording is easy to follow;
- the service desk is clearly visible so people can ask for help;
- there is no background music and machine noise, which can be distracting and uncomfortable;
- have a paper and pen at the service counter to provide options for communication.

Respect

Consider how your business shows that it promotes respect. Members of your staff should:

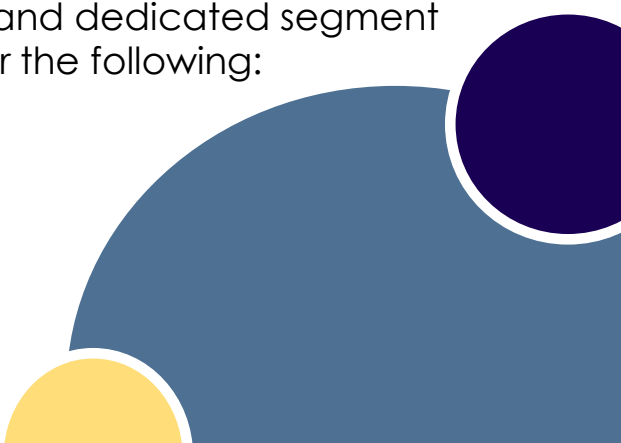
- know how to address people's needs without stereotyping;
- have options for serving customers in a more comfortable way;
- be trained to handle incidents such as a fall or an outburst, while preserving the customer's dignity; and
- know how to recognize signs that a person needs help or is being abused.

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white lab coat, is smiling and looking to her left while holding a small green notebook and a pen. She is in a laboratory or pharmacy setting with shelves of bottles and containers in the background. Another person in a white lab coat is visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

Being an age-friendly employer

Today, more and more people are working well past traditional 'retirement-age'. Employment among people over age 55 is on the rise in the City of Kawartha Lakes and across the country. Older workers represent a highly-skilled and committed segment of the workforce. As older people make the transition into new positions or new careers, they bring with them a wealth of experience and expertise.

If you would like to capitalize on this skilled and dedicated segment of the workforce, you may want to consider the following:

- flexible work arrangements
 - part-time positions or job sharing
 - snowbird programs
 - phased retirement options
 - mentorship and training programs
- 
- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of overlapping circles in shades of blue and yellow.

What have other businesses done to increase their Age-friendliness?

Here are examples of what some businesses in the City of Kawartha Lakes have done to better serve their older adult customers.



A grocery store:

- formed a partnership with a local Community Support Service to provide rides one afternoon per week to this store;
- includes a magnifying glass in each aisle to help customers read signs;
- provides delivery service;
- assigns a staff member to assist customers in accessing the items in the store;
- offers smaller portions of meat to accommodate small households.



A restaurant:

- serves senior specials with smaller portion sizes;
- provides chairs with arms that are steady and easy to use;
- conducts staff training that addresses appropriate communication skills, such as speaking clearly and at an appropriate speed;
- provides menus and bills with easy-to-read print.



A retail store:

- offers help in carrying packages out to customers' cars;
- has eliminated background music;
- holds a monthly seniors' day;
- provides a chair for customers to sit and rest.



Age-friendly Business Checklist

The age-friendly business checklist is designed to allow owners to assess age-friendly features at their business.

Begin by reading through the checklist; it is designed to take you through your business from parking to paying. Check off the features that you have; if you are unsure ask one of your older adult customers to complete the checklist with you.

Once you have completed the self assessment, choose 3 to 5 improvements you can complete at your business.

If you want more information please visit our website;

www.advantagekawarthalakes.ca/en/businessResources/age-friendly-business.asp

There you will find links to more age-friendly features, universal design and accessibility standards.

Age-friendly Business Checklist

Parking:

- ☐ The parking lots are clear of wet leaves, puddles, snow and are kept ice free.
- ☐ Available parking is well maintained and located nearby for easy access.
- ☐ Areas designated for parking are well lit.
- ☐ Drop-off and pick-up areas are available, obstruction free, clearly marked, and conveniently located.
- ☐ Courtesy parking spots for older adults are available.

Notes

Entrance:

- ☐ Doors are easy to open and wide enough to use by someone in wheelchair or walker.
- ☐ Stairs are safe and have sturdy hand railings on both sides.
- ☐ There are automatic doors with accessible buttons that are open long enough to allow people to easily enter.

Once inside:

- ☐ The flooring is non-slip and non-shiny.
- ☐ Accessible washrooms are available.
- ☐ Most-popular items are shelved at medium height.

Age-friendly Business Checklist

Notes

Once inside:

- ☐ Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straight forward sentences.
- ☐ Background music is absent or low in volume.
- ☐ You provide 'Senior Discounts' or specials.
- ☐ Signage has legible fonts and good contrast.
- ☐ Mats are level with the floor and door thresholds are bevelled so they do not create a tripping hazard.
- ☐ People in wheelchairs or using a walker can easily navigate entrance, aisles and spaces in your business.

Paying for your purchase:

- ☐ Sturdy seating is placed in waiting or line-up areas
- ☐ At least one service or checkout counter is accessible for customers in wheelchairs
- ☐ Customers are offered assistance when taking items to their cars
- ☐ Service counters have a place on which to hook a cane so it doesn't fall.

Age-friendly Business Checklist

Customer Service:

Notes

- ☐ A person answers the telephone
- ☐ Staff orientation includes training specific to serving older adults, to be friendly and patient with all customers, and try to meet their needs. (training available through the age-friendly business project)
- ☐ Staff are sensitized to avoid condescending behaviour (i.e. speaking too loudly, speaking too familiarly-as in calling someone "dear" or showing visible impatience).
- ☐ Staff are rewarded for being respectful.
- ☐ Staff are courteous, helpful and speak clearly.
- ☐ Staff can identify if a person is experiencing a medical emergency and can notify the appropriate service or authority.
- ☐ Products and services are designed for smaller households, smaller incomes, and smaller appetites.
- ☐ Your business supports local Senior organizations, groups or events.
- ☐ Your business is open to hiring and supporting employees of all ages.
- ☐ Seniors are visible in advertising and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the checklist. Please select some action items that you will undertake in the next 12 months:

Action	Now	6 months	1 year
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

The business of _____ has made a commitment to account for the needs and preferences of older adult customers. We will continue to look for opportunities, training and accommodations that will create an accessible and inclusive business, which in turn will allow all members of our community the opportunity to safely access our goods and services.

Signature: _____



Resources

Do you need more information?

Accessibility-

Ontario: www.accessON.ca

StopGap Foundation: www.stopgap.ca

Accessible Training Modules: www.accessforward.ca

Accessibility Kawartha Lakes:
www.city.kawarthalakes.on.ca/residents/accessibility

Age-friendly-

CKL Age-friendly:

www.advantagekawarthalakes.ca/en/businessResources/age-friendly-business.asp

Ontario Age-friendly: www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/afc

Dementia-

Alzheimer Society of PKLNH: www.alzheimer.ca/pklnh

Elder Abuse-

Elder Abuse Ontario: www.elderabuseontario.com/

Crimestoppers: www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca

Community Support Services-

211: www.211ontario.ca

