

## Age-Friendly Communities Conference Actor Mapping Exercise

**Overview:** this exercise is meant to serve as an example of how to approach an “actor mapping” activity. We will walk through the various steps at a high level to illustrate the process so that you can conduct this activity with others in your community in the future. A full actor-mapping process is best conducted with a group of diverse, cross-sector actors that are convened for 2+ hours to engage in the exercise and discuss its implications.

### Instructions

- **Building the Actor Map (15 minutes):**

- Step 1: At the top of your paper, write out the **goal statement** for your age-friendly initiative (if you aren't working on a formal age-friendly initiative, name the goal of an existing partnership or collaboration)
- Step 2: Identify the **beneficiary** of this current initiative or partnership. In a circle, write down the beneficiary in the center of your paper
- Step 3: Choose one **domain, issue area, or set of domains / issue areas** to focus on for this exercise. These may include:
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Social participation
  - Respect and social inclusion; intergenerational connections
  - Civic participation, volunteering, and employment
  - Communication and information
  - Healthy living, exercise and recreation
  - Community / social services and health support
  - Built environment, outdoor spaces and buildings
  - Aging in place

- Step 4: Using the stickies provided, write down **15-20 organizations or community groups** (or types of organizations/groups, if you don't know specific names) *currently participating in the initiative within the issue area* chosen that influence the goal you've identified (one per sticky note)

*NOTE: WE ARE NOT ASKING YOU TO IDENTIFY ALL THE ACTORS IN YOUR EFFORT. Some collaborative efforts have hundreds of actors. For the purposes of this exercise, select the 15-20 actors that represent a range of types of organizations, community groups, or individuals involved in the effort.*

- Step 5: Taking your paper, divide your system into “rings” and label each one with the **geography levels** your age-friendly effort reaches (e.g., local, state, regional)  
*NOTE: it is ok if your actor map only reaches local stakeholders and actors.*
- Step 6: **Place the actors on the system map**, thinking about:
  - Which actors are closest to the beneficiary
  - Which actors are related to one another (and group them together)
- Step 7: Identify a few key actors who might be missing from the effort and **use a different color sticky** to add them to the map

- **Pair Share (5 minutes):**
  - Pair up with one fellow cohort member and share your map (2-3 minutes each) addressing the following questions:
    - What is the goal you are focused on in your effort?
    - What observations do you have about your populated map?
  
- **Analyzing the Actor Map by “seeing into the system” (10 minutes):**
  - Identify the **level of engagement** of each actor with your age-friendly initiative
    - Use a **green dot** for those with a high level of involvement
    - Use a **yellow dot** for those with a medium level of involvement
    - Use a **red dot** for those with a low level of involvement
  - What observations do you have about the engagement of different actors?
  - How might you better engage those who are currently missing from or have low levels of involvement with the initiative?
  
- **Large group reflection (10 minutes):** Pull up on what people learned
  - What did you learn from this activity?
  - What did your assessment of engagement of actors reveal? Are there opportunities to increase engagement that might accelerate the work? What ideas do you have to increase engagement?