The City of Chicago was designated an Age-Friendly city by the World Health Organization (WHO). Now, along with other cities across the world, Chicago is working to maintain that designation through routine assessments, evaluations, and strategic improvements of its age-friendly environment. This poster presents the methodology used for a baseline assessment of the city, the process of partnership, and preliminary next steps.

Baseline Assessment: Methods

Environmental Scan
- Literature review and media search of existing age-friendly cities and age-friendly indicators worldwide.
- Focus Groups
  - 8 focus groups at 6 regional senior centers with 106 older adults conducted in English, Spanish and Polish.
- Stakeholder Surveys
  - 41 key stakeholders participated in qualitative interviews to prioritize age-friendly indicators for Chicago.
- Baseline Assessment
  - 77 gerontology professionals and 19 city agency heads described current and planned initiatives to support age-friendliness in Chicago.

Initial Findings
Age-Friendly Overall Satisfaction
Age-Friendly Priority Areas

Stakeholder Interviews

“What is the public sector responsibility?”
- Stakeholders reviewed a comprehensive list of indicators used to assess age-friendly cities and environments worldwide.
- Stakeholders ranked indicators in the order of their perceived importance to older adults.
- The domains of Housing, Community Support & Health Services and Transportation were consistently prioritized by stakeholders as most important to an age-friendly Chicago.

Community Survey

“Thanks for doing this. I hope we hear the results!”
- Findings from this survey include information and opinions from over 2,600 participants from a representative geographical spread across the city.
- Items included socio-demographic information; multiple items covering each of the eight age-friendly domains, items relating to health, including a global health scale.
- Surveys were available both online and in paper format, in English, Spanish, Polish, and Chinese languages.
- 17% of respondents indicated they live below the national poverty level, and 27% reported feeling isolated or lonely.
- The mean physical health score was equal to the national average; roughly 10% of the population is age 65 or over. Half the world’s population lives in cities. Chicago’s population is 2.8 million people with a metro area of over 9.7 million. Roughly 10% of the population is age 65 or over. The Buehler Center partnered with the City of Chicago to conduct a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of Chicago. The project used the WHO Age-Friendly model to identify the environmental, social, and economic factors that influence the health and wellbeing of older adults. Chicago residents and stakeholders were pivotal to the process of establishing a baseline understanding of the age-friendliness of the city.

Sustainability

“Age-Friendly Chicago
Developing an Age-Friendly Metropolitan City: An emerging case study from Chicago"