

# Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Initiative

## BACKGROUND

An estimated 5.4 million people in the United States and more than 120,000 Massachusetts residents are living with dementia, which is a general term for changes in thinking such as memory loss and difficulty planning and communicating. Dementia may be caused by Alzheimer's disease or other conditions. Despite the widespread impact of dementia, lack of information, fear, and stigma can prevent those affected from feeling safe, socially connected, and able to thrive in their communities.

## DEFINING DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

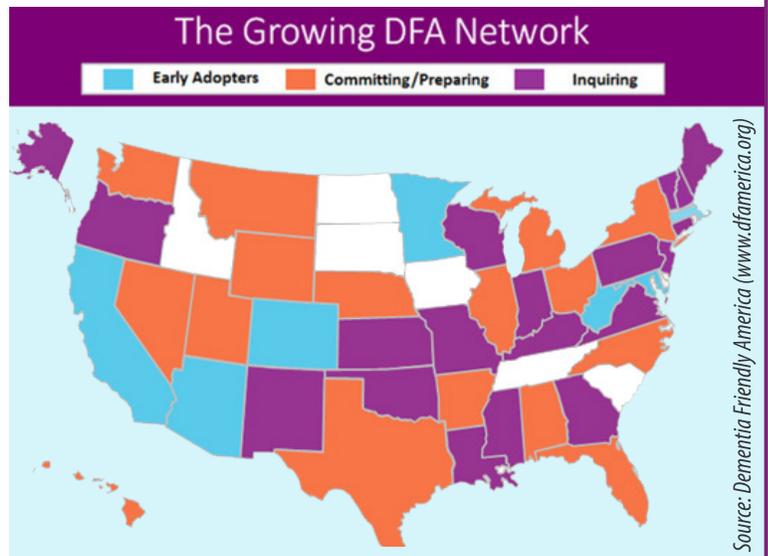
By working together, we can make strides in supporting individuals living with dementia as well as their friends and families. A "dementia friendly community" is informed, safe, and respectful, and enables people living with dementia and those who care about them to live full, engaged lives.

## IN MASSACHUSETTS

We are building upon the work of the Age-Friendly movement, which benefits people of all ages by supporting community standards for inclusion, access, safety and engagement. In this way, communities that are age-friendly and dementia friendly embrace everyone – younger people, older people, individuals with and without dementia, individuals with disabilities of all kinds.

Elder Affairs and JF&CS are convening a group of organizations to begin to chart a direction for building a dementia friendly Massachusetts. Participants include citizens from all walks of life, faith leaders, first responders, businesspeople, town government members, and more.

Massachusetts is an "early adopter state" in the dementia friendly communities movement – more cities, towns, cultural groups, and other self-defined communities are becoming involved every day!



Executive Office  
of Elder Affairs



*Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Initiative is co-convened by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS), and managed by representatives from the Alzheimer's Association MA/NH Chapter, LeadingAge Massachusetts, Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging, Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, and the Multicultural Coalition on Aging. The Advisory Committee includes over 40 organizations statewide. The initiative is generously supported by Tufts Health Plan Foundation.*

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## What Can I Do?

- ✓ **No matter who you are, you can play a role in making your community more dementia friendly!** Dementia Friendly America has an easy-to-use toolkit and sector guides for individuals and communities that want to implement dementia friendly initiatives. Visit [www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org) to learn more and get started!
- ✓ Join us! For more information, please contact **Pam MacLeod** ([Pam.MacLeod@state.ma.us](mailto:Pam.MacLeod@state.ma.us)) or **Emily Kearns** ([ekearns@jfcsboston.org](mailto:ekearns@jfcsboston.org)).
- ✓ Visit [www.dfmassachusetts.org](http://www.dfmassachusetts.org) to learn more or join the Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Initiative mailing list.

## Response to the Need: Dementia Friendly Community

