

# Coshocton, Ohio: How Age-Friendly is my Community?

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## ABSTRACT

An important problem that is on the rise is that the older population is continually growing. With this concern on the rise, it is important that communities start to examine whether they are considered to be age-friendly communities. In order to be an age-friendly community, the World Health Organization sets forth the following criteria for a community's consideration: housing, outdoor spaces and built environments, transportation, social environment, community support, and health and wellness services. The purpose of my study is to look at my own community of Coshocton, Ohio and examine if my community has what it takes to be an age-friendly community.

## HOUSING

When looking for housing, Jeste et. al. (2016) recommends the following criteria for older adults:

- Accessibility to needs (e.g., transportation, social services, retail, healthcare, & house maintenance)
- Affordability
- Safety within the home and neighborhood
- Appropriate design for the older adult to move about their home

Within Coshocton, Ohio there are a few housing options and two of the better options include Covington Square Apartments and Seton Coshocton. Covington Square Apartments is very close to a couple grocery stores that are in walking distance and the sidewalks to get to those places do not have curbs or steps to enhance the safety of the older adults. The apartments at Covington Square do not have long term leases and they are not part of any government-subsidized programs.

Seton Coshocton is close to town but there are no sidewalks so an older adult would have to drive into town or get transportation to do their shopping. The apartments are for older adult 62 and older and must meet HUD income limits. There are also a couple nursing homes within the city as well as an assisted living facility.

## OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Coshocton, Ohio has a few outdoor spaces and built environments. These include Lake Park and the Himebaugh Park. Lake Park has an aquatic center and playground along with paths to walk and bike on and nature trails. The Himebaugh Park has a half mile walking path with a playground, basketball courts, a shelter, and room to play soccer and basketball.

## TRANSPORTATION

Available transportation services in Coshocton include Coshocton County Coordinated Transportation Agency (CCCTA). Trips come as a first come, first served basis and require a 48-business hour advanced notice. The CCCTA vans have wheelchair accessibility and can accommodate to individuals who have mobility disabilities. Rides within the City of Coshocton vary on pricing but for elderly it costs \$2. Within Coshocton County it costs \$4 for elderly. CCCTA also offers an Elderly & Disabled (E&D) discount. These half price fares are for elderly 65 and older and are disabled. To get half price fares the older adult has to get an E&D card and the older adult does this by completing a Pre-Approved E&D Application.

## SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The social services that are available to older adults in Coshocton, Ohio include Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission as well as a Senior Center.

The services that are available through the Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission include:

- Community Services
- Emergency Services
- Energy Services
- Health Services
- Senior Services
- Housing

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Coshocton, Ohio does have a senior center to offer community support to older adults. The senior center offers a lot of activities for older adults to engage in some of those are:

- Exercise classes
- Painting classes
- A meal delivery service
- Dinner almost everyday



## HEALTH & WELLNESS SERVICES

Coshocton, Ohio has many health and wellness services available in the community. In Coshocton there are a few nursing homes within the city as well as in the county as well. There is also an assisted living facility within the city. Coshocton does have a hospital, but they are not equipped to do much, so another hospital is in Zanesville, Ohio and it is about 40 minutes away. In Coshocton there are also a few home healthcare agencies as well as hospice agencies. There is also an urgent care in Coshocton as well.

## CONCLUSION

Coshocton, Ohio is a smaller community that has a lot to offer for older adults with good housing that available and transportation. In terms of community support there could be more services available for older adults. There could be more services that incorporate all generations such as kids all the way up to older adults. There could also be improvement in health and wellness services as well. There could be improvements made to the hospital in Coshocton so that older adults would not have to travel so far to get adequate care.

## REFERENCES

1. Jeste, D. V., Blazer, D. G., Buckwalter, K. C., Cassidy, K. K., Fishman, L., Gwyther, L. P., Levin, S. M., Phillipson, C., Rao, R. R., Schmedings, E., Vega, W. A., Avansino, J. A., Glorioso, D. K., & Feather, J. (2016). Age-friendly communities initiative: public health approach to promoting successful aging. *Am J Geriatr Psychiatry*, 24(12), pp. 1158-1170.
2. Reference list available upon request