



# FCHS

**Family & Community  
Health Sciences**

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services and the Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Program of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County have been funded by the Division of Aging Services at the New Jersey Department of Human Services to implement an age-friendly communities grant project, *Age-Friendly Ocean County*. This project aims to assess, plan, and develop local age-friendly initiatives that support older adults' health and well-being and advance efforts that result in the tangible and sustainable transformation of policies, systems, and environmental conditions. This 15-month project will promote public, private and cross-sector partnerships between County leaders, and engage older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers to participate in an accessible, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate community needs assessment to identify strategies and best practices to improve communities for older adults and enable residents to remain in their homes as they age.

*Age-Friendly Ocean County* has the following objectives:

- 1) Form a cross-sector, County Advisory Committee, including older residents, that guides age-friendly engagement, assessment, and action planning—working closely with the Principal Investigator and Project Director and reporting to the Ocean County Board of Commissioners;
- 2) Facilitate community assessments in the form of surveys, town halls, review of existing survey data, etc.;
- 3) Launch a county-wide communications campaign to familiarize people with *Age-Friendly Ocean County* and enhance broad representation of Ocean County's residents and civic leaders in community assessment activities and action planning;
- 4) Formulate an action plan based on stakeholder engagement and assessment insights, with an emphasis on identifying municipal readiness for age-friendly action planning at the local level; and
- 5) Disseminate Ocean County's work for awareness among key stakeholders, as well as potential replication in other Counties, and sharing process and outcomes evaluation through academic publication.

Maria La Face, the Executive Director of the Ocean County Office of Senior Services, is the Project Director, and Kathleen Cullinen, FCHS Educator of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, is the Principal Investigator. A full-time Project Coordinator (T-120) will be hired to support all aspects of *Age-Friendly Ocean County*. The resultant *Age-Friendly Ocean County* Action and Evaluation Plan will 1) Help fulfill Ocean County's requirements for Age-Friendly Designation by AARP; 2) Serve as a model for age-friendly designation and planning for expansion to other New Jersey counties; and 3) Position Ocean County to leverage future state and national resources to implement and evaluate the strategies and best practices detailed in the Plan that improve communities for older adults and enable residents to remain in their homes as they age. For more information, call Rutgers Cooperative of Ocean County at 732-349-1247.