

Age-Friendly Businesses Initiative | Concord, MA

2025



THE TOWN OF
CONCORD
MASSACHUSETTS



KITCHENWARE

HARDWARE &

What is **age-friendly**?

"A movement to make communities more welcoming and livable for older residents and people of all ages. It describes efforts we can take together to create places where people can grow up and grow old together."

Age-Friendly Massachusetts

Why does Concord want to be age-friendly?

Concord's population of older residents is growing, and older people make up a considerable portion of consumer spending. Businesses can accommodate and encourage older customers – it's the right thing to do and **good business practice.**

20% of Concord's population is over 60 and this percentage is growing.*

57% of overall consumer spending is by consumers who are age 50+. **

Older adults are loyal customers and patronize businesses near home.

People with memory issues tend to change where they shop based on how the business caters to people with dementia.

Visitors to Concord generate 1/6 of total consumer spending. The Town's cultural assets are particularly attractive to older, leisure travelers.***

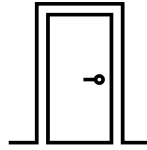
How do I become an **age-friendly business**?

Follow the **Concord Age-Friendly Business Checklist** to unlock the potential of your business for older residents and visitors. Most policies and practices listed can be completed at low to no cost.

Check out the following best practice examples from businesses around Concord.

* Please note that this checklist, including the Access portion, is not a replacement for an ADA accessibility assessment or meeting ADA requirements. Concord residents voiced concerns over ADA accessibility challenges in Concord.

Entrances and Exits



- ✓ Entrances are easy to identify
- ✓ Accessible entrances are unobstructed and easy to enter
- ✓ Doors have easy pull/push handles or lever handles instead of turn knobs
- ✓ Doors stay open (such as with a pump) without swinging closed right away
- ✓ Doors require a minimal amount of force to open or have a push button opener
- ✓ There is an awning/overhang outside the business entrance, or vestibule



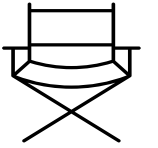
Concord Teacakes



Helen's Restaurant



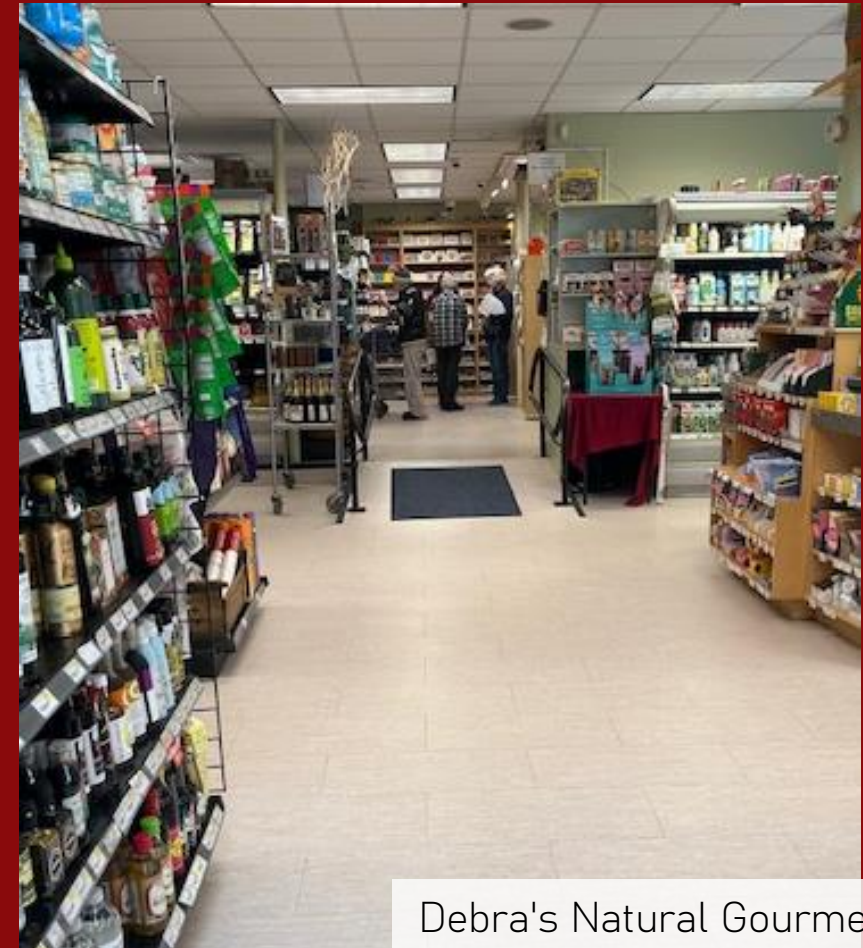
Furniture and Seating



- ✓ Seating is available inside the entrance door and around the business for people to wait or rest
- ✓ Seating is available outside the entrance/exit
- ✓ Seating has arms and at an accessible height
- ✓ Furniture is color contrasted with walls and floors

Flooring

- ✓ Flooring is non-slip, flat, without carpet edges or other trip hazards sticking up
- ✓ Floors are clean and dry
- ✓ Flooring is moderately color contrasted without distracting patterns
- ✓ Edges of any steps are clearly marked



Debra's Natural Gourmet



Lighting & Noise

- ✓ Lighting is bright and uniform
- ✓ There is good lighting at the entrance/exit
- ✓ Lighting is diffuse and without glare
- ✓ Space is quiet with little background noise
- ✓ A quieter seating area is available away from speakers, street noise, and busyness

Access*

- ✓ Handrails are available along any single step or set of steps
- ✓ There are no steps to or within the business
- ✓ Products are visible and reachable with little bending or reaching
- ✓ Aisles are wide enough to comfortably accommodate mobility devices (wheelchair, walker, cane) and are unobstructed; there is plenty of space to move around inside the business, including bathroom aisles
- ✓ Service counters and tables are at wheelchair accessible height
- ✓ Electronic payments are at wheelchair accessible height



Bank of America



Signs and Printed Items



- ✓ Entrance and exit signs are clear and at eye level
- ✓ Menus and product lists are available in large, clear font with ample lighting
- ✓ Symbols, such as for the bathroom, are clear and universal
- ✓ Signs are affixed to the thing they represent rather than next to it, such as the exit sign on/above the exit door
- ✓ Fonts of signs and merchandise are easy to read – without serif preferred
- ✓ There is signage for stairways, ramps, obstacles/hazards
- ✓ Signage on windows is limited



Crosby's Marketplace

Bathrooms

- ✓ Bathrooms are open and publicly available
- ✓ Bathrooms have wide stalls, large enough to accommodate caregivers and are gender-neutral
- ✓ There are handrails in the bathroom with no steps to enter
- ✓ The toilet and sink are clearly visible from the restroom entrance; fixtures and toilet seats are visible through color contrast
- ✓ Sinks, paper towels, hand dryers, and soap are accessible from a wheelchair



Debra's Natural Gourmet

Staffing and Customer Service



The Concord Cheese Shop



Vanderhoof Hardware Co

- ✓ Staff speak to customers clearly, respectfully, and patiently, using eye contact with the customer rather than a caregiver or family member
- ✓ Staff are comfortable helping people who need a hand up a step, reaching an item, or bringing merchandise to a car
- ✓ A live person answers the business phone directly
- ✓ Delivery to customers is available and advertised, and can be easily requested through any channel (online, on phone, in person)
- ✓ There are specialty programs to expand access such as discounts for older adults, quiet shopping hours, or reserved seating for customers needing special assistance
- ✓ Staff are easily identifiable, such as with a nametag or apron

Other Age-Friendly Business Practices



- ✓ Handicapped parking is available with an accessible path to the business entrance
- ✓ Websites are easy to navigate and without distracting pop-ups and animation
- ✓ Ads/marketing reflect older people positively
- ✓ Announcements are made through channels older people use
- ✓ TVs or screens, if applicable, have closed captions enabled
- ✓ There are supportive staff policies for older workers and/or caregivers
- ✓ There are no other hazards



Debra's Natural Gourmet

Remember...

- ✓ There are many ways to enable or encourage local business patronage from older customers in your community. Listen to local residents and tailor strategies to your unique business districts.
- ✓ While Concord business are overall highly regarded by the older community, common issues include advertising senior discounts (word-of-mouth means not everyone benefits) and door pumps or push buttons for hands-free entering and exiting.



Concord's Age-Friendly Bench Program

A Note on Process

The Concord Age-Friendly Businesses Program was funded through a Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices Program grant in Fall 2023. The Town of Concord collaborated with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2024-2025 to:

1. Survey older residents and caregivers about their experiences with and desires for Concord businesses and business districts
2. Research and develop the Age-Friendly Business Checklist
3. Engage business owners to encourage age-friendly business practices

As a result of this process, the Town secured funding and community-buy in for age-friendly benches, which are now placed across Concord's business districts. Business owners are now more familiar with age-friendly policies and practices, and are working to implement them.