

TOWN OF HINGHAM
Center for Active Living
STRATEGIC PLAN
September 11, 2024 – September 11th, 2029



CENTER FOR ACTIVE LIVING
*Connect * Discover * Grow*

Adopted by the Hingham Council on Aging
September 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Councils on Aging

A Council on Aging (COA) is a municipally appointed, volunteer board authorized under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, section 5B. The Council's major responsibilities include the setting of local policy for the administration of elder programs and services; developing, coordinating and/or conducting such activities; serving as an advocate for elders; and educating the community-at-large about the needs and resources affecting the lives of elders.

The Hingham Council on Aging was established in 1970 through a vote at the Annual Town Meeting and serves in an advisory capacity to the Hingham Center for Active Living (HCAL), formerly named Hingham Senior Center, for the purpose of carrying out policies, programs, and services in accordance with the mission of the Department.

This mission is to support the independence and ongoing personal development of Hingham's population 60 and older, advocate for their needs, and work to enhance the quality of their lives. Together, the HCAL staff, assisted by the COA, work to:

- identify the needs of Hingham residents 60 and older.
- design and implement services to address these needs, plan for future needs and to coordinate existing services.
- provide advice and consultation concerning the health and welfare of individuals aged 60 and older to other Town departments and agencies in Hingham.
- serve as the primary advocate for services to older adults in the community.

The investment in our Seniors is an investment that benefits every Hingham community member regardless of age. Seniors in the town are active participants in staffing town boards and committees, assist in school programs, and provide great examples of civic engagement.

The Center for Active Living

HCAL operates as a full-time, nationally accredited center dedicated to improving the quality of life of Hingham's senior population cohort. HCAL operates in a 5,500 square foot facility situated within the Town Hall municipal complex. Its current hours of operation are:

- Monday: 7:30 am - 7:30 pm
- Tuesday: 7:30 am - 7:00 pm
- Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:00pm
- Thursday: 7:30 am - 5:00pm
- Friday: closed

HCAL services and programs are open to Hingham residents aged 60 and older. If registration and space permit, older individuals from neighboring communities as well as Hingham residents under the age of 60 are welcome to participate in the programs and activities at HCAL.

HCAL is staffed with four full-time paid professionals (Director of HCAL, Outreach Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, and Program Coordinator), and four part-time positions (2 medical drivers, 1 Transportation Coordinator, and 1 Office Assistant). The HCAL is further supported by a volunteer corps of Hingham citizens.

Programs and services provided include door-to-door transportation for medical appointments and essential errands, outreach, friendly visitor, home repair assistance, health and wellness clinics, fitness and educational classes, men's group, social and cultural programs.

HCAL partners with community agencies and organizations to provide the wide variety of programs and services. These partnerships exist with a broad range of organizations including South Shore Elder Services, Inc., Hingham Interfaith Food Pantry, the Hingham Library, Visiting Nurse Associations, assisted living residences, other municipal departments, local churches, and civic groups.

A monthly newsletter, Central Times, is mailed/emailed to individuals 60 and older living in Hingham and describes information about current and planned activities, services and other issues of importance to seniors. The newsletter is also available electronically and can be found at <https://mycommunityonline.com/organization/hingham-center-for-active-living>.

Our Aging Population

The health and welfare of Hingham's senior community is a vital ingredient to the health and economic viability of Hingham. According to the estimates provided by the UMass Donahue Institute, approximately 8,200 Hingham residents are aged 60 or older, a 45% increase since 2010.

Hingham's total population in 2024 is approximately 25,000.¹ The future population growth will be disproportionately concentrated in older age groups.²

The 2000 census indicated that 19% of Hingham's population was aged 60 and older. This increased to 26% in 2010. UMass Donahue Institute estimate that this percentage will grow to 27% in 2025 to approximately 8,800 residents.

Community Needs Assessment

In 2023 the Town of Hingham, at request of the COA, commissioned a Community Needs Assessment. The study was conducted by the University of Massachusetts Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging.

Key findings of that study included:

- The current space of HCAL is inadequate to meet current needs of the mature Hingham

¹ Approximately 1200 seniors reside in Linden Ponds. While they remain eligible participants in Center programs, their self-contained community reflects a lower level of need, desire and participation for HCAL programs and services.

² *Aging in Hingham: A Community Needs Assessment*, University of Massachusetts Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute, September 2023.

population cohorts. This space deficit limits accessibility -- due to parking constraints -- and seriously limits programming opportunities (due to inadequate interior and exterior space).

- Additional programming in the areas of exercise, lifelong learning, and special events should be increased.
- Programming should be increased to better support residents with physical or cognitive conditions as well as their caregivers.
- Additional staff is needed to maximize the utilization of current and future space and support programming.
- Transportation services will be in increased demand as the senior cohort ages.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process has been a multi-phase effort directed by the COA and HCAL staff. The first phase of this effort was the 2023 Community Needs Assessment. The needs assessment provided a reliable base of demographic data and included a survey of Hingham's population in the 40-59 and 60+ age cohorts identifying strengths and weaknesses related to the COA and HCAL.

The second phase of the process included a series of focus groups conducted to learn more about the community's thoughts, views, opinions, and feelings about HCAL. The focus groups were also intended to increase the engagement of current clientele. Between February and April of 2024, six focus groups were held with:

- HCAL staff
- HCAL volunteers
- Friends of the HCAL ("FOCAL")
- Active participants in HCAL programs and services
- The Council On Aging Board
- Transportation service clients

See Appendix A for focus group protocol.

The third and final phase of this planning effort included a meeting with the HCAL staff to summarize and prioritize the focus group responses into a workable Action Plan that:

- establishes specific objectives for improving future operations
- identifies specific actions to achieve objectives
- assigns responsibility for executing the Action Plan to HCAL staff and COA Board Members
- establishes a target schedule for achievement of goals.

Summary Focus Group Results

Strengths

- Strong leadership and staff team
- Energy of the members
- Energy and commitment of the board
- Caring staff and peers. “This is a caring community where you get embraced by others.”
- Educational programming
- Hard working staff and volunteers
- Commitment of the volunteers
- Diversity of the programs
- One-off events and celebrations
- Collaborations with other groups in towns
- Transportation

Opportunities

- Open Houses throughout the year
- More outreach to housing developments
- Alternative outreach methods – e.g. seniors have emails, but maybe not WIFI
- Disseminate more information to outlier residents
- If we get a new building, we can have intergenerational programming
- Fall assessment with Fire and Health Departments
- Free medical alerts – must be a grant funded program
- Outdoor programming - offsite program opportunities i.e. history tours
- Engage 50-60 year olds
- Welcome wagon with gifts and coupons
- Advertise in the new Greet Hingham magazine
- Provide publishing-ready copy to the Hingham Anchor and Patriot Ledger
- Update brochure
- “I don't know why the people aren't coming!” there is such a diversity of programming

Aspirations

- New building
- Increased and easily accessible parking
- Increased number of men participating in programs
- Increased number of volunteers and volunteer drivers
- Have a café and food services
- Achieve age friendly and dementia friendly community status
- Establish additional support groups for multiple eldercare issues

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Goals in Summary

Goal Heading	Goal Description
Goal 1: Increase Space	To acquire and utilize a larger building space that will increase accessibility for our aging members, increase membership, and enable increased programming to promote healthy, active living for our community members.
Goal 2: Outreach and Marketing	To increase engagement between HCAL and the broader Hingham community generally, specifically targeting the 50 – 60 and 60+ age cohorts through increased marketing, outreach, and partnerships with other community groups and municipal departments.
Goal 3: Transportation	To increase use of available transportation as well as provide increased and targeted transportation when needed.
Goal 4: Programming	To increase the range and capacity of programs to ensure a wide variety of programming that will lead to increased participation in programs.
Goal 5: Food Services	Enhance food services to encourage increased attendance and duration of daily time spent at HCAL.

Goals in Detail with Actions and Outcomes

Goal 1: Increase Space

Objectives	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
Acquire larger facility for the Hingham Center for Active Living.	<p>~Complete facility feasibility study by December 2024</p> <p>~Develop communication strategy/talking points for COA and others to generate support for the new facility initiative.</p> <p>~Advocate for larger facility when and where ever possible.</p> <p>~Advocate for passage of April 2025 Town Meeting article authorizing and funding detailed design phase.</p> <p>~Expand and diversify HCAL programming.</p> <p>~Design, develop and implement new programming for target membership groups.</p>	<p>~Secured HCAL facility with 20k-30k sq ft of space</p> <p>~Increased parking spaces.</p> <p>~Improved accessibility for members.</p> <p>~Wider Hingham community will become aware of the space and accessibility needs.</p> <p>~Increased number of community members support the larger facility.</p> <p>~Positive vote for the larger facility at town meeting.</p> <p>~Positive assessment of current programming.</p> <p>~Additional new programming for targeted member groups.</p>	<p>Building Committee, COA HCAL</p> <p>HCAL leadership HCAL staff</p>	<p>By 2030</p> <p>Grand Opening Mid FY2028 (est)</p>	
Increase membership in target groups including, a) Young membership 50-65yrs, b) men, c) homebound, d) caregivers.	<p>~Increase Facebook and other local media presence.</p> <p>~Increase classes for members on using social media.</p> <p>~Increase HCAL presence at community events and town famers market.</p> <p>~Reestablish the men’s group.</p>	<p>~Increased member and non-member engagement on Facebook and other Social Media.</p> <p>~Increased numbers joining the HCAL Facebook page.</p> <p>~Increased number of volunteers.</p>	HCAL Staff and COA		Ongoing

Goal 2: Outreach and Marketing

Objectives	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
Increase broader Hingham community awareness of HCAL, services, and programming provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Establish a marketing subcommittee ~Establish a marketing plan ~Develop a marketing ‘travel box’ to include HCAL marketing materials and an “Elevator Pitch” ~Develop a separate volunteer opportunity messaging and sign-up application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Rebranding campaign – to include new name, PR materials and merchandise ~Design new name, new logo, branding materials, schedule of marketing and PR events including a launch event 	COA, HCAL Staff, Ambassadors	Spring and Summer 2024	Rebranding complete Ongoing
Increase connections and partnerships between HCAL and broader Hingham community groups, organizations and municipal departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Re-establish connection between COA and FOCAL ~Identify new FOCAL liaison and invite to COA board meetings ~Identify strategic partners and opportunities to collaborate on events and community efforts, e.g. Hingham Arts Alliance, Hingham Public Library, Hingham Historical Society, and the Recreation Center ~Develop a list of potential partners ~Design a plan to cultivate and formalize partnerships ~Develop an annual calendar of partnership events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Increased participation of HCAL in broader Hingham community events ~Increase visibility of HCAL ~Increased engagement with younger Hingham residents ~Increased member engagement ~Increased new membership 	COA, HCAL, & Marketing subcommittee.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Review HCAL Mission Statement	~Update Mission Statement ~Regular postings on Town website and Social Media	~Increase visibility and awareness of HCAL within the wider Hingham community	HCAL staff and COA	Winter 2025 Ongoing	
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Goal 3: Transportation

Objectives	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
Acquire new van.	~File grant applications	~New, fully operating, fully accessible vehicle to transport community members to appointments and events	HCAL Leadership	Summer 2024	Pending delivery
Increase use of medical transportation.	~Identify target populations who might use the transportation ~Develop a transportation specific marketing and PR plan.	~Increased medical transport service to full day availability	COA Marketing subcommittee HCAL leadership HCAL staff	Summer 2027	
Increase use of shuttle.	~Identify target populations who might use the transportation ~Outreach to those target populations advertising availability of transportation e.g..Park new van down on beach with balloons advertising volunteer opportunities and HCAL generally	~Increase ridership and destinations	HCAL staff Marketing subcommittee	Fall 2024	
Increase number of van driver volunteers.	~Recruit van drivers via the newsletter	~Increase in number of volunteer van drivers ~Increase in availability of transportation services	HCAL staff	Fall 2024	

	~Recruit van drivers via fliers in the building				
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Goal 4: Increase participation and capacity of programs

Objectives	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
Increase awareness of programs	~Market programs to senior housing developments by coordinating informational sessions at Lincoln School Apartments and Thaxter Apartments ~Set up informational tables at venues in town	~Increased participation in programming	HCAL Staff & Mkt subcommittee Volunteer ambassadors	Ongoing	
Broaden range of programs	~Conduct periodic interest surveys to existing and potential members to design programs of interest ~Find volunteers with skillsets tailored to member interests ~Include outdoor programming	~Create Men's group ~Expand medical support groups ~Increased outdoor programming	HCAL Staff Volunteers COA	Ongoing	
Increase program collaborations	~Partner with businesses, agencies, non- profits and municipal departments to cosponsor programs	~Increased partnerships ~Increased collaborations for community events e.g. 4 th of July parade float collaboration with the Hingham Arts Alliance	HCAL Staff, COA Volunteers	Ongoing	

Goal 5: Enhance Food Services

Objectives	Actions	Expected Outcomes	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
Increase member attendance at congregate meals	~Target isolated and home bound residents ~Continue marketing congregate meals ~Coordinate sign-up for congregate meals	~Increased new attendance at congregate meals ~Increased return attendance at congregate meals	HCAL Staff	Ongoing	
Establish additional social meal programs to decrease isolation while eating.	~Continue to provide pizza lunch every Thursday ~Identify one additional meal program to provide a meal or refreshments for members to consume in the company of others	~Continuation of pizza Thursdays ~Steady attendance at pizza Thursdays ~Increased communal meal offerings ~Decreased isolation	HCAL Staff Volunteers	Fall 2024	

Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol

Hingham Center for Active Living Strategic Planning Focus Group

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Why do we do a strategic plan?
3. UMass Boston Report and Goals for the Center for Active Living.
4. The Strategic Planning Process Community Engagement and Inclusion and the structure/purpose of a focus group.

The SOAR model

Differing from the traditional SWOT (strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, threats) model analysis, the SOAR model focuses on strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. It is a model that focuses an organization on its current strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals.

CAL STRATEGIC PLANNING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4 main questions and then prompts within that to help keep the conversation focused.

1. What are our greatest strengths?
 - a. What makes us proud?
 - b. What makes us unique?
 - c. What is our greatest achievement?
 - d. How do we use our strengths to get results?
 - e. How do our strengths fit in the town?
2. What are our best opportunities?
 - a. What are our stakeholders asking for?
 - b. What are the top 3 opportunities to focus on?
 - c. Who are our new members?
3. What is our preferred future? Aspirations.
 - a. What do we care deeply about?
 - b. What are our aspirations for the Center?
 - c. What is the most compelling aspiration?
 - d. What strategic initiative would support our aspirations?
4. What are the measurable results that will tell us we've achieved our vision of the future?*

*This question was used to guide the work with HCAL leadership and team to develop the Strategic Action Plan.