



PHOTO CREDIT:  
Colin Haigh

# TOOLKIT

## Creating Dementia Friendly Communities

### FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIRST RESPONDERS

This toolkit was designed for Law Enforcement and emergency responders to create a Dementia Friendly culture that embraces, supports, and properly responds to residents with Dementia and their caregivers.

[www.m4a.org](http://www.m4a.org)  
205.670.5770







## Table of Contents

Introduction.....2

### ***Dementia Knowledgeable***

What is Dementia?.....3

Shifting Our Perceptions of Dementia .....5

The Impact of Dementia.....6

### ***Dementia Sensitive***

What is a Dementia Friendly Community/Department?.....7

How to Create a Dementia Friendly Community/Department....9

### ***Dementia Responsive***

How to Engage Your Community.....10

How to Respond to an Individual with Dementia .....11

Dementia Tools and Resources.....12

Quick Tips for Law Enforcement.....15

Official Certificate of Designation.....18

Area Agency on Aging Contact Map.....19

Notes.....20



# Introduction

Dementia Friendly Alabama is a movement and growing network dedicated to support and serve those living with Dementia and their loved ones.

The Dementia Friendly Training Toolkit was developed to provide training to Law Enforcement to create a Dementia Friendly culture that embraces, supports, and properly responds to residents with Dementia and their care partners.

The training covers three important steps to become a Dementia Friendly community:



The information included in this toolkit will help Law Enforcement and other First Responders understand Alzheimer's Disease and other related Dementias and provide them the tips and techniques needed to properly respond and interact with someone with Alzheimer's Disease or other form of Dementia. The training also provides information on the invaluable programs, services, and resources available through Alabama's 13 local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) offices in the state.

## What is a Dementia Friendly community?

Dementia Friendly is much more than simply being kind to those impacted by Dementia. A Dementia Friendly community is one where those living with Alzheimer's and their care partners feel respected, supported, and included in every day community life.

Communities across the country are actively modeling the Dementia Friendly America movement, demonstrating collaborative, community-level change to foster Dementia Friendliness. Those with Dementia say they feel marginalized by society and feel excluded by friends, neighbors and every day community life.





# 1 Dementia Knowledgeable

## What is Dementia?

Dementia is not easy to describe or understand. It is most easily described as changes in:

- Memory
- Thinking
- Language
- Judgement
- Behavior

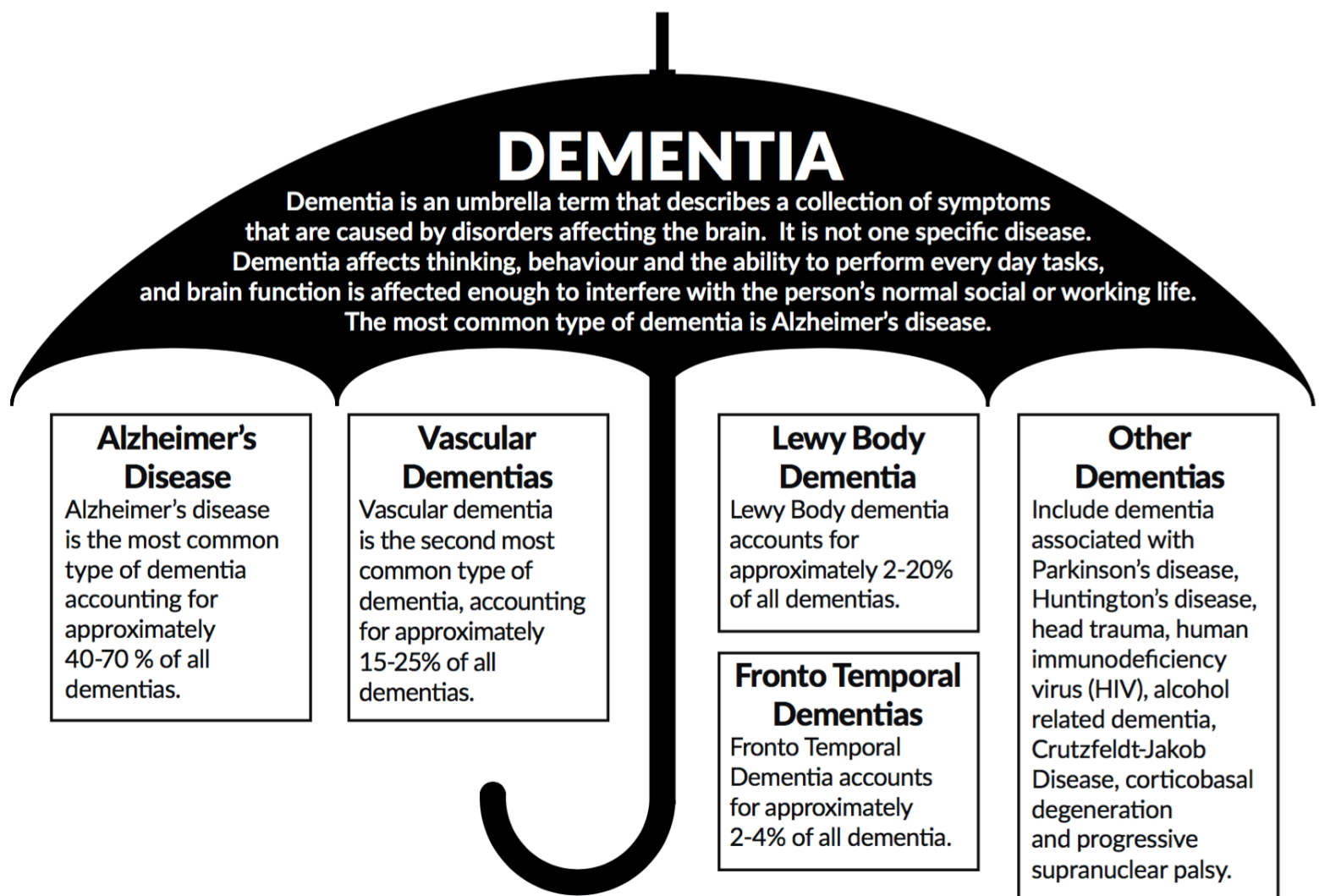
Dementia is usually diagnosed in older adults but there is also early onset Dementia that is diagnosed in younger adults.

Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's Disease is the most common type of Dementia.

As many as half of the estimated 5.2 million Americans with Alzheimer's may not be aware that they have the disease as it is severely underdiagnosed. There is no cure for the disease and it will progress over time.

Some describe having Dementia similar to "moving backwards in time", with signs and symptoms starting out slowly and increasing over time. At least two of the following core mental functions must be significantly impaired to be considered Dementia:

- Judgment
- Perception
- Reasoning
- Organizational Abilities
- Memory
- Abstract Thinking
- Communication and Language
- Ability to Focus and Pay Attention
- Orientation to Time and Place
- Awareness of Socially Appropriate Norms



Kate Swaffer © 2016



# 1 Dementia Knowledgeable

## Shifting Our Perceptions of Dementia

Over 10,000 Americans each day are turning the age of 65 and experts estimate there will be a large increase in older adults who have some form of Dementia. Current estimates predict those with Dementia will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050.

As the nation's population continues to age and we see this large increase in Dementia-related cases, Law Enforcement and other First Responders will need to become better equipped to identify and respond to situations that involve someone with Dementia.

As the symptoms of those living with Dementia increase, they may worry about others noticing their difficulties and retreat into their homes. Without stimulation, social interaction and physical exercise, individuals with Dementia decline more rapidly.

People with Dementia report the following barriers to daily living:

- Lack of confidence
- Worried about becoming confused
- Fear of getting lost
- Mobility difficulties
- Physical health issues
- Fear of being a burden on others



These barriers inevitably lead to social exclusion, a reluctance to seek help, a sense of shame and inadequacy, low self-esteem, depression and an overdependence on their caregiver. Creating a community where all are included and understood, where they can experience a sense of belonging and where they can continue to express themselves, is critical to building and sustaining a Dementia Friendly community.



# 1 Dementia Knowledgeable

## The Impact of Dementia

### IMPACT ON CAREGIVERS

In 2013, Americans provided 17.7 billion hours of unpaid care to people with Alzheimer's Disease and other related Dementias. Providing care can place demands on a caregiver's health and emotional well-being. Caregivers can experience depression, sleep disturbances and chronic stress.

Although caregivers report some positive feelings, including family togetherness and the satisfaction of helping others, they also report high levels of stress related to providing care, including a strain on finances and family relationships.

More information on the impact on caregivers can be found at [www.alz.org/care](http://www.alz.org/care) (Alzheimer's Association).

### IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The memory loss and confusion that can accompany Dementia make it difficult for individuals to carry out daily activities such as shopping,

banking, and frequenting local businesses. Forgetting to pay for something prior to leaving the store, difficulty using debit or credit cards, and asking for help in the store are just some examples people with Dementia encounter within their community.

The greatest challenge for any community is how to create a Dementia Friendly business and community so people with impairment can more easily navigate stores, banks, police departments and other similar locations.







# 2 Dementia Sensitive

## What is a Dementia Friendly Community/Department?

### DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

In a Dementia Friendly community, every part of the community plays a role and works together to create a Dementia Friendly culture. It's all about partnerships: partnerships with those diagnosed with Dementia; partnerships with those caring for loved ones with Dementia; partnerships with religious organizations, Law Enforcement and First Responders; partnerships with schools; and partnerships with businesses and the community to promote awareness of Dementia.

Dementia Friendly is much more than simply being kind to those impacted by Dementia. A Dementia Friendly community is one where those living with Dementia and their care partners feel respected,

supported, and included in every day community life.

Dementia Friendly communities build infrastructure to support and take responsibility for enlarging the beneficial effect of services for individuals with Dementia and their caregivers. Communities can develop new models of collaborative service delivery and advocacy.

A Dementia Friendly community is a place where individuals with Dementia:

- Are able to live good lives.
- Have the ability to live as independently as possible.
- Continue to be part of their communities.
- Are met with understanding.
- Are given support where necessary.



Individuals with Dementia described a Dementia Friendly community as one that lets them:

- Find their way around and be safe.
- Access local facilities they are used to and where they are known (banks, shops, post offices, local police and sheriff's departments).
- Maintain their social networks by feeling they belong.

## **DEMENTIA FRIENDLY DEPARTMENTS**

A local Law Enforcement agency wanting to create a department that is Dementia Friendly can use the same conceptual steps provided by the Dementia Friendly America Toolkit (Building Dementia Friendly Communities). This resource can be found at [www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org).

The key steps to building a Dementia Friendly Community are outlined below.

**Step 1:** Define the Problem

**Step 2:** Create a Vision

**Step 3:** Build a Plan

**Step 4:** Build a Coalition or Network

**Step 5:** Engage a Community

**Step 6:** Start Somewhere

**Step 7:** Evolve the Initiative



# 2 Dementia Sensitive

## How to Create a Dementia Friendly Community/Department?

For the purpose of Dementia Friendly Alabama, we are committed to working with our local Law Enforcement agencies to simplify the process and provide the basics to create and sustain your Dementia Friendly Department.

Three primary focus areas will be used to facilitate your effort to build your department to be Dementia Friendly:

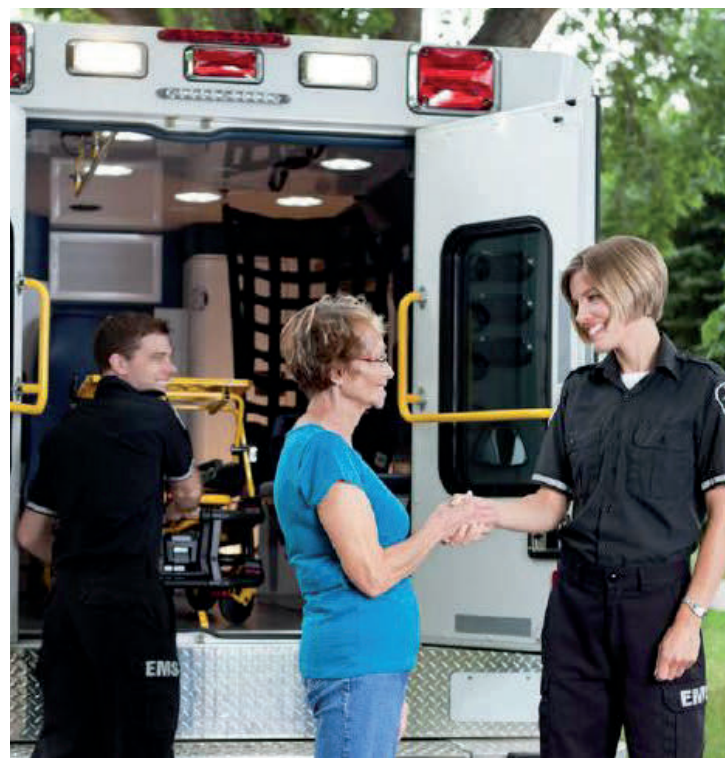
1. Engage Law Enforcement/ First Responder Personnel
2. Involve the Community
3. Raise Awareness of Dementia

### **ENGAGE LAW ENFORCEMENT/ FIRST RESPONDER PERSONNEL**

The first step to creating a Dementia Friendly Department is to provide training to all personnel who will come in contact with individuals with Alzheimer's Disease or another form of Dementia.

Although people with Dementia have memory loss and an inability to recognize things that should be familiar to them, they can also be confused, emotionally unstable, and perhaps even combative.

A team of professionals that are highly trained to not only recognize Dementia but how to respond appropriately to handle a crisis situation can make all the difference to prevent a possibly life threatening situation.





# 3 Dementia Responsive

## How to Engage Your Community

There are several innovative ways to reach out to, educate, and engage community leaders and members, and inform the public of the steps you have taken to develop your Dementia Friendly Department. Suggested community outreach activities include:

- Displaying the Dementia Friendly poster and stickers in various locations.
- Utilizing social media to share personal stories.
- Talking to local groups and other Law Enforcement agencies about the initiative.
- Send letters to organizations and community leaders informing them of your initiative.
- Develop a Train the Trainer Dementia Program to train other Law Enforcement and First Responders.

Just as Law Enforcement personnel need to be educated on their involvement and interaction with persons with Alzheimer's

Disease and Dementia, the community should be informed about the ways the disease can have an impact on their lives and how they can support, encourage, and interact with persons with Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Some other suggestions for involving and educating your local community includes:

- Designate a "Senior or Elder Liaison Officer" at your agency to address issues specifically to impacting this generation.
- Create a campaign to expand awareness and participation in your LifeSaver Project and Dementia Registry programs.
- Utilize the resources included in this toolkit to connect community members with Dementia and their caregivers to invaluable programs and services they may be eligible to receive.
- Make a commitment to continually build and sustain your Dementia Friendly Department and Community.



# 3 Dementia Responsive

## How to Respond to an Individual with Dementia

### **QUICK TIPS:**

*(Provided by the Alzheimer's Association)*

Use the TALK Tactic:



**T**ake it slow.  
**A**sk simple questions.  
**L**imit reality checks  
**K**eept eye contact.

As you communicate with someone with Dementia, it is best to use these following tactics to keep the situation calm:

- Reassure the person. Speak calmly. Listen to his or her concerns and frustrations. Make sure you let them know you understand and that you are there to help them.
- Reduce noise, if possible, even if you have to take them into a separate room.
- Redirect them with a photograph or a keepsake.
- Let them know they are safe and comfort them as much as possible.

## **10 Tips for Talking to Someone with Alzheimer's**

- 1 Diminish Distractions.** Things like the tv can make it hard to hold a conversation.
- 2 Converse One-on-One.** More people equals more confusion.
- 3 In Groups.** Ensure only one person speaks at a time.
- 4 Keep Things Simple.** Stick to short, specific statements; speak slowly and distinctly.
- 5 Avoid Arguments.** No one will win.
- 6 Try Not to Ask Open-Ended Questions.** Make it easy to answer yes or no.
- 7 Be Patient.** Try not to finish their sentences for them.
- 8 Never Say "I've Told You Before".** They're bound to forget information they've had in the past.
- 9 Try Not to Contradict Them.** Move the conversation along.
- 10 Be Flexible to Their World.** Even with no response, don't speak as if they are not there. It makes them feel frustrated and ignored. Keep the conversation moving.



# 3 Dementia Responsive

## Dementia Tools and Resources

This section will highlight many useful tools and resources available to assist individuals with Dementia who need help in their local communities.

### Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

Alabama's Aging Network serves as the starting point for consumers to get help, information, and resources. The ADRC will assess service needs, determine eligibility, and connect individuals to information, services, and resources. Consumers are encouraged to contact their ADRC and allow us to conduct a comprehensive screening of all programs and services they may be eligible to receive.

ADRC Specialists will guide them through the necessary steps to community-based living by giving them information about the full spectrum of long-term care

options. ADRC eliminates many of the frustrations consumers and their families may experience when trying to access help, information and services.

ADRCs specialize in helping consumers of all ages with:

- Transportation
- Food Assistance
- Nutritious Meals
- Legal Assistance
- Crisis Intervention
- In-Home Services
- Senior Employment
- Elder Abuse Prevention
- Long-Term Care Advocacy
- Caregiver Support Services
- Prescription Drug Assistance
- Benefits Screening & Counseling
- Medicare & Medicaid Counseling

**Consumers can contact their local ADRC by calling 1-800-AGE-LINE(1-800-243-5463).**



## **Virtual Dementia Tours (VDT)** **(Second Wind Dreams)**

The VDT Comprehensive Program, a valuable, easy-to-follow experiential training program, is designed for use by caregiving facilities and community organizations to help identify with and understand behaviors and needs of people living with Dementia. It has been used to train the staff at hospitals, home care agencies, hospices, and colleges and universities.

After experiencing the VDT, staff members are able to identify with, and better understand, the behaviors and needs of those with Dementia. You can also use the VDT to spread awareness of the impact of Dementia on everyday life of our seniors. The local AAA's can schedule and conduct VDT Training.

## **Memory Screening Tool** **(Alzheimer's Foundation of America)**

AFA's National Memory Screening Program provides free, confidential memory screenings – administered by qualified healthcare professionals – to individuals across the country.

A memory screening can indicate if someone might benefit from a comprehensive medical evaluation. It is not used to diagnose any particular illness and does not replace consultation with a physician or other clinician.

## **Aging Sensitivity Kit (Secure Project through Lee Health)**

Our “hands on” Aging Sensitivity Training Program will help your officers be more empathetic, understanding and patient - the “human touch” makes such a difference and can significantly improve your customers' opinions of your business, which affects referrals and ultimately your bottom line success. In many hospitals, for example, studies show that patients equate the quality of nursing care with how nicely the nurses treated them. SECURE Age Sensitivity Training has valuable information, in addition to exercises, in which your staff can participate. It is also reusable, and the most competitively priced service of its kind on the market.





## Project Lifesaver:

Most local Law Enforcement agencies offer the Project Lifesaver Program. Project Lifesaver is a system that helps locate and rescue individuals with cognitive disorders who are at risk of wandering, including individuals with Alzheimer's Disease, Autism, Down's Syndrome or other cognitive disabilities.

Project Lifesaver provides equipment, training, certification and support to Law Enforcement, public safety organizations and community groups. The program consists of a tamper-resistant locator worn on the individual's wrist or ankle that is set to broadcast a specific frequency. If the individual is lost, trained Law Enforcement officers can dial into that frequency to locate the person. The system has helped to reduce the average search time from hours to approximately 30 minutes.

If you would like to participate, call your local Sheriff's Office. To learn more about Project Lifesaver visit them at [www.projectlifesaver.org](http://www.projectlifesaver.org).

## Education & Support

M4A has an Alabama CARES Program that is federally funded and offers support to caregivers and grandparents/relative caregivers raising children.

Caregivers can get support with:

- **Information** on resources and services available through public education, health fairs, brochures, and newsletters.
- **Caregiver Access Assistance** to obtain access to the services and resources that are available through outreach and case management.
- **Caregiver Education** to assist in making decisions and solving problems relating to areas such as health, nutrition, and finances.
- **Caregiver Respite** or temporary relief from caregiving by providing personal care, homemaker services, adult day programs, and other services requiring a skilled helper in the home.
- **Supplemental Services** such as incontinent supplies and nutritional supplements are available on a limited basis.



# 3 Dementia Responsive

## Quick Tips for First Responders

### Address Firearm Safety

When speaking with a caregiver, ask if there are any weapons in the home where a person with Dementia lives. If that is not possible:

- Store the weapon in a gun safe or a locked container.
- Store the key in a safe location.
- Store the gun, unloaded, with a safety lock.

### Wandering Calls

**Recognize Wandering** - Look for these clues that a person may need help:

- Blank or confused facial expression.
- Inappropriate attire.
- Unbalanced or shuffling gait.
- Person not aware of unsafe actions or situations.
- Age (Dementia is more likely with advanced age, but can also affect those under age 65).

**Search & Rescue** - Call the MedicAlert+ Alzheimer's Association Safe Room at (800) 625-3780 which is a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for access to:

- Caregiver contact information.
- Critical medical information.
- Assistance with found persons who are not enrolled.

### Driving Calls

Help ensure a positive resolution to a driving incident.

- Issue a citation to create a paper trail.
- Do not let the person drive home.
- Follow local agency protocols for reporting the incident to the DMV.





## **Abuse and Neglect Calls**

Situations of abuse and neglect can be complicated and require careful response.

- If the person is injured, transport to the hospital immediately.
- If the person is not injured, but in immediate danger, move him or her to a safe location (preferably a hospital in compliance with agency policy).
- If the person is not in immediate danger, offer referral to available resources.
- Always involve Adult Protective Services.

## **Disaster Response**

To move a person from danger and keep him or her calm in evacuation situations:

- Avoid physical force or restraint.
- Be creative rather than rely on reality.
- Provide one-on-one instruction.
- Provide step-by-step instructions using simple language.
- Try to relocate the person to a quiet place.
- Use distraction by giving the person a simple task.

***Source: Alzheimer's Association***

## **Shoplifting Calls**

If a person with Dementia unknowingly walks out of a store without paying:

- Attempt to resolve the issue with the store manager instead of arresting the person and filing criminal charges.
- Inform the person's caregiver about the incident and recommend the person be accompanied on future shopping trips.



## **Project Life Connect**

M4A's Project Life Connect Program "connects your information to First Responders" in case of an emergency. Included in Project Life Connect is important emergency client information, such as who to contact, a list of allergies, current health conditions, and a list of medications. This information, which can make the difference between life and death, is kept in the Project Life Connect red vinyl portfolio which is magnetized on the back so that it can easily stick to a refrigerator and, therefore, be accessed by First Responders in case of an emergency.

Project Life Connect currently covers Blount, Chilton, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker Counties and is available at no cost to senior citizens and people of all ages with one or more disabilities who live in these counties.

Contact M4A at (205) 670-5770 or request your free Project Life Connect red pouch on line at [www.M4A.org](http://www.M4A.org). Quantities for distribution can also be requested.

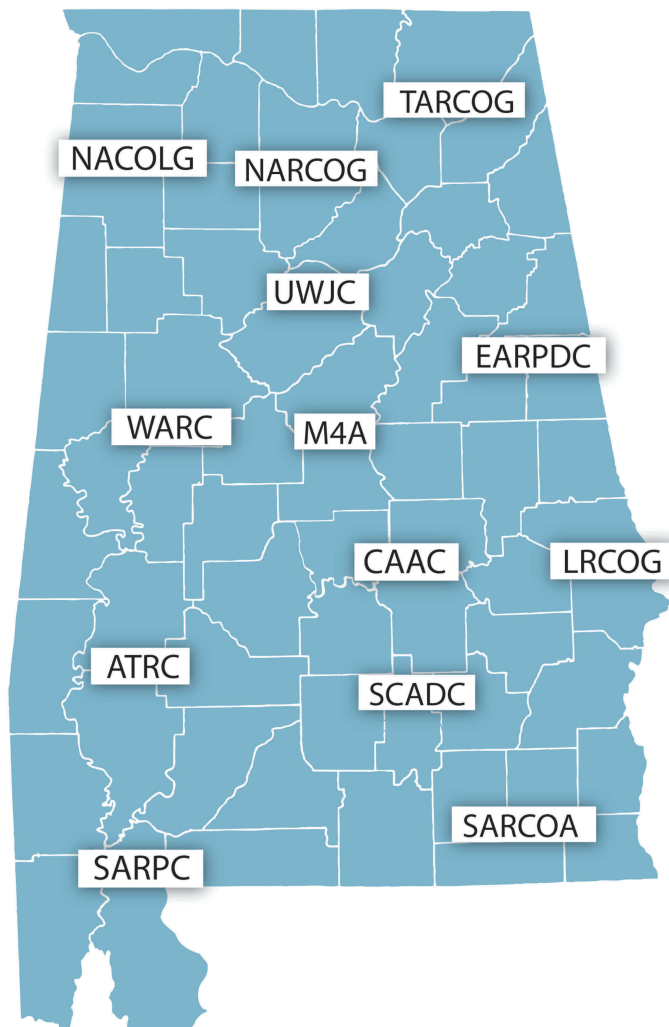
**FIRST RESPONDERS  
ARE ENCOURAGED  
TO LOOK FOR THE  
RED POUCHES ON  
REFRIGERATORS AT  
LOCAL RESIDENTS'  
HOMES IN CASE  
OF AN EMERGENCY.**

# Official Certificate Of Designation As A Dementia Friendly Department



# Alabama Area Agencies on Aging Locations

## 1-800-AGE-LINE (243-5463)



### **UWJC - United Way's Area Agency on Aging of Jefferson County**

800-243-5463

Counties: Jefferson

### **WARC - West Alabama Regional Commission**

205-333-2990

Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Hale, Greene, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa

### **M4A - Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging**

205-670-5770 or 866-570-2998

Counties: Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, Walker

### **EARPDC - East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission**

256-237-6741 or 800-239-6741

Counties: Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, Tallapoosa

### **TARGOG - Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging**

256-830-0818

Counties: DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, Marshall

### **NARCOG - North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments**

256-355-4515

Counties: Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan

### **NACOLG - North West Alabama Council of Local Governments**

256-389-0500 or 800-838-5845

Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, Winston

### **CAAC - Central Alabama Aging Consortium**

334-240-4666 or 800-264-4680

Counties: Autauga, Elmore, Montgomery

### **LRCOG - Lee Russell Council of Governments**

334-749-5264 or 800-239-4444

Counties: Lee, Russell

### **SARCOA - Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging**

334-793-6243 or 800-239-3507

Counties: Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston

### **SCADC - South Central Alabama Development Commission**

334-244-6903

Counties: Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, Pike

### **SARPC - South Alabama Regional Planning Commission**

251-433-6541

Counties: Baldwin, Escambia, Mobile

### **ATRC - Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging**

334-682-5206 or 800-617-0500

Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, Wilcox







## A Special Thanks

The reproduction of this toolkit was made possible by a grant from the Cawaco Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Much of the content included in this toolkit was provided by the Wisconsin Building Dementia Friendly Communities Toolkit.



ASSISTING  
ALL AGES AT  
ALL STAGES



## For More Information

For more information about the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative, contact the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging.

[www.m4a.org](http://www.m4a.org)

205.670.5770

