



Commit to Connect Office Hours: Resource Recap

Topic: Highlighting Champions of Social Connection

Brief Overview:

Commit to Connect hosted an Office Hours on January 7, 2026 and featured a member Champion from the [Nationwide Network of Champions](#). Office Hours are in-depth interviews and virtual forums with a subject matter expert for anyone interested in best practices and strategies for improving social connections.

This Office Hours features Kari Johnson, the Director of Strategic Initiatives at 50 Forward Mohawk Valley. Based in New York, 50 Forward Mohawk Valley is a senior service agency serving Herkimer and Oneida counties with locations based in Verona Beach and Utica. The Office Hours is moderated by Katie Clark Wheeler, Policy Analyst at the Administration for Community Living (ACL). During the session, Kari highlights strategies, models, and programs from 50 Forward Mohawk Valley:

- The role nutrition programs play in promoting social connection
- Strategies to develop strong outreach efforts and local community partnerships to reach rural areas
- The Livable Communities Initiative in Oneida County, which covers the eight domains of livability as defined by AARP
- Discussions about funding opportunities and partnerships

Contact information for Kari Johnson: kjohnson@50forwardmv.org

This document provides a list of resources shared during the Highlighting Champions of Social Connection Office Hours.

Resources:

- 50 Forward Mohawk Valley website (www.50forwardmv.org)- provides information on available programs, resources, and opportunities.
- Oneida County Livable Communities Initiative website (livableoneidacounty.com)- to learn more about Oneida's age-friendly plans
- Learn how AARP Livable Communities Domains impact the well-being of older adults (<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>).
- Explore the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York Aging by Design resources (<https://hfwcnny.org/program/aging-by-design/about/>).

- engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults is a national effort to increase the social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers by expanding and enhancing the Aging Network's capacity to offer social engagement: <https://www.engagingolderadults.org/>

Commit to Connect Resources:

- Join the [Nationwide Network of Champions](#) and connect with peers across the country interested in addressing social isolation and loneliness. This free virtual platform hosts an open forum where leaders can engage in discussions, share resources, and find events related to social connection. Kari is one of hundreds of member Champions in the Nationwide Network of Champions.
- The [Innovations Hub](#) is a public-facing clearinghouse of more than 100 model programs, services, and interventions focused on social connection across the U.S.