



Commit to Connect Office Hours: Resource Recap

Topic: Highlighting Innovative Social Connection Programs

Brief Overview:

Commit to Connect hosted an Office Hours on February 25, 2026 and featured [FriendshipWorks](#), an organization with three programs on the [Social Engagement Innovations Hub](#). Office Hours are virtual discussions with a subject matter expert for anyone interested in best practices and strategies for improving social connections.

The February 2026 Office Hours features Julie Burkley, Director of Programs with FriendshipWorks, a Boston nonprofit that reduces isolation by connecting volunteers with older adults for friendship and support. The Office Hours is moderated by Katie Clark Wheeler, Policy Analyst at the Administration for Community Living (ACL). During the session, Julie highlighted their Friendly Visiting program which is just one of three programs featured on the hub. Topics discussed included:

- FriendshipWorks mission and the population/region they serve
- Overview of the Friendly Helping, Friendly Visiting, and the Medical Escort programs featured on the Innovations Hub
- How the Friendly Visiting program has positively affected social isolation and loneliness outcomes in older adults
- How volunteer matching, training, tracking and follow-up play an critical role in their programs
- Methods for reaching hard-to-reach individuals
- Partnerships and their roles in the program's successes
- Advice for starting similar programs and how to sustain them

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

Resources:

- Find more information about the nonprofit, [FriendshipWorks](#), and the work they do to serve older adults in the Greater Boston area. Learn about all the programs FriendshipWorks offers with this [Program Overview](#).

- Details specific to the FriendshipWorks Friendly Visiting program can be found [here](#).
- Julie highlighted the value of providing training to volunteers working with individuals with low-vision, hearing, or mobility impairments. Access the [Low-Vision Resource Guide for Elder Service Providers](#) guide developed by FriendshipWorks.

Commit to Connect Resources:

- 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.
- 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.