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Age-Friendly Institute and NJ Advocates for Aging Well Complete Landmark Initiative, Certifying 10 New Jersey Employers as Age-Friendly

Redefining Work for the 100 Year Life: Grant-Funded, 12-Month Program Brings CAFE Certification to Employers Spanning Food, Health Care, Senior Living, the Arts, Construction, and Banking

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The Age-Friendly Institute, a 55/Redefined Company, home of the internationally recognized Certified Age-Friendly Employer (CAFE) program, and New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well (NJAAW) announced the successful completion of their grant-funded partnership to bring age-inclusive employment practices to the Garden State. Over the course of the 12-month, \$100,000 initiative, supported by a New Jersey Department of Human Services Age-Friendly Project Grant, the partnership certified 10 New Jersey employers as Certified Age-Friendly Employers — building a cohort of organizations recognized for their commitment to hiring, training, and retaining workers age 50 and older.

“This initiative shows what's possible when a state, an advocacy organization, and employers themselves commit to the same goal. Ten New Jersey employers, across seven different industries, have now built the policies and practices that make them genuinely competitive for experienced talent — and they're serving as a model for other companies, in New Jersey and beyond, that are rethinking what work looks like across a longer, healthier lifespan.” — Carol Jackson, Director of the Americas, Age-Friendly Institute, a 55/Redefined Company

Certified employers span seven industries and all three regions of the state, reflecting the initiative's goal of building a diverse, statewide model for age-friendly employment:

Employer	Location	Industry	Certification Date
Allen Flavors	Edison	Food	September 2025
Jewish Home Family	Rockleigh	Home Care	September 2025
Peace Care New Jersey	Jersey City	Home Care	October 2025
Lutheran Social Ministries of NJ	Burlington	Home Care	October 2025
Erickson Senior Living	Various	Senior Living	November 2025
Parker Health Group	Highland Park	Healthcare	January 2026
New Jersey Performing Arts Center	Newark	Cultural Institutions	February 2026
Count Basie Center for the Arts	Red Bank	Cultural Institutions	February 2026
EI Associates	Cedar Knolls	Architectural Services	June 2026
Columbia Bank Online - NJ	Fair Lawn	Banking	June 2026

“We appreciated the opportunity to take our partnership with the Age Friendly Institute to a higher level. This grant enabled us to do the outreach and education we were not able to do before. As many companies and businesses use DEI strategies to recruit and retain a broader range of employees, age has not been included in those efforts. This certification program helps us blow up the stereotypes and recognize both the talents and the choices of older adults. While some people work past the traditional retirement age because they need to do so financially, so many more choose to work to share their talents, stay connected, and make meaningful contributions. We plan to continue working with CAFE and

NJ businesses to realize the potential — and necessity — of integrating practices that support older employees.” — Cathy Rowe, Executive Director, New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well

For many of the certified employers, the program prompted concrete changes rather than a one-time review. At **Jewish Home Family**, an elder care organization in Bergen County where roughly 40 percent of employees are themselves over age 50, certification led to monthly workgroup meetings between managers and front-line staff built around a simple question: what are workers worried about, and where could they use more support? The conversations led to a series of “Living Well” sessions open to employees of all ages — including one to help staff approaching Medicare eligibility weigh that option against their employer plan, and another, “Sandwiches for the Sandwich Generation,” addressing the caregiving demands many employees face for both children and aging relatives.

“We sought the age-friendly certification to build on our history of creating a supportive workplace environment,” said Lauren Baruch, Chief Human Resource Officer for Jewish Home Family.

The initiative directly supported Recommendation #8 of New Jersey's Age-Friendly Blueprint, to “obtain credentials, such as CAFE, to signal workplace support for older employees” and built on the state's 2021 law eliminating mandatory retirement. With more than 2 million New Jersey residents over age 60, at least a quarter of whom remain in the workforce, the certified cohort demonstrates a scalable model for employers seeking to attract and retain experienced talent amid ongoing labor shortages.

The CAFE program, established in 2006 by the Boston-based Age-Friendly Institute, now part of the global company 55/Redefined, has certified hundreds of employers worldwide through its two-year certification process, including a widely cited cohort model in Nova Scotia that led to expanded, province-wide adoption. The New Jersey cohort adds to that track record, giving employers across the state a proven, structured framework for building age-inclusive workplaces.

Employers interested in pursuing certification, or learning more about the Age-Friendly Institute's work in New Jersey and beyond, are encouraged to contact support@agefriendly.com.

About the Organizations

The Age-Friendly Institute, a 55/Redefined Company, is the leading authority on age-friendly employment practices and home to the Certified Age-Friendly Employer program. 55/Redefined is the global company redefining work for the 100 year life, helping employers and individuals adapt to longer, healthier, multigenerational careers. The Institute has worked with senior leaders at hundreds of organizations to establish and promote best practices for age-inclusive employment.

New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well has served New Jersey's older adults since 1998 as the only statewide nonprofit dedicated solely to advocating for policies, programs, and services that enable older adults to live with independence and dignity in their communities.

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