



Fire Safe Seniors

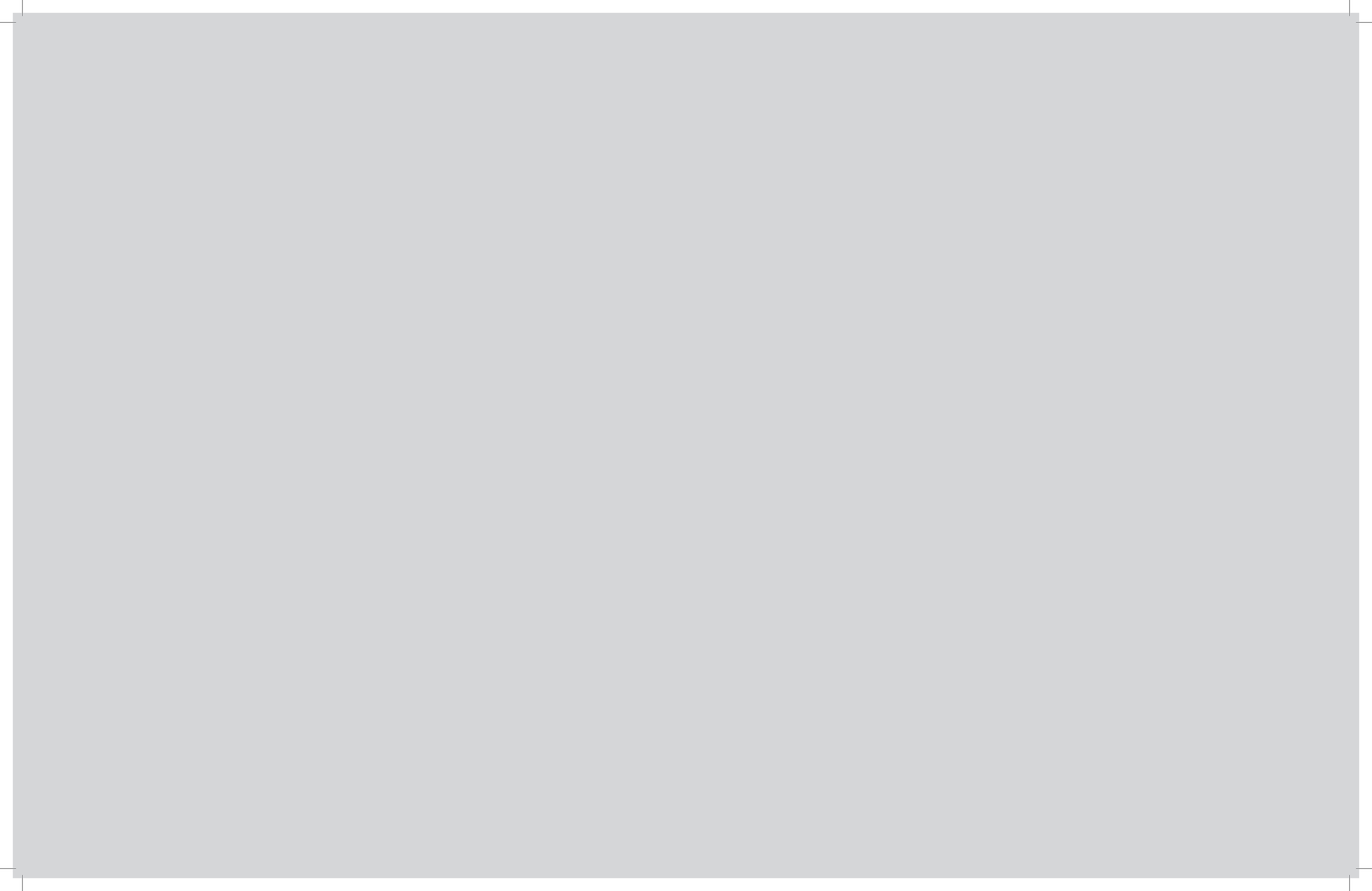
# Implementation Guide



FEMA

U.S. Fire Administration







Fire Safe Seniors

# Implementation Guide

---

Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Atlanta, Georgia



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                          | <b>1</b>  |
| Residential Fire Safety                      | 1         |
| Fire Safe Seniors Tool Kit                   | 2         |
| <b>Planning and Structuring Your Program</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| Initial Planning Tasks                       | 4         |
| Setting Goals and Objectives                 | 4         |
| Choosing Communities                         | 5         |
| Establishing Eligibility Criteria            | 6         |
| Responsibility for Program Components        | 7         |
| Engaging Local Partners                      | 7         |
| Establishing a Timeline                      | 9         |
| <b>Staffing Your Program</b>                 | <b>11</b> |
| Types of Staff                               | 11        |
| Training and Incentives                      | 12        |
| <b>Smoke Alarm Installation</b>              | <b>14</b> |
| Obtaining Alarms and Supplies                | 14        |
| Choosing Appropriate Smoke Alarms            | 14        |
| Smoke Alarm Standards                        | 17        |
| Consent and Liability                        | 17        |
| Safety Issues                                | 18        |
| Escape Barriers                              | 18        |

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Promoting Your Program</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| Community Outreach             | 19        |
| Media Outreach                 | 21        |
| <b>Evaluating Your Program</b> | <b>26</b> |
| Process Evaluation             | 26        |
| Impact Evaluation              | 27        |
| Outcome Evaluation             | 28        |
| <b>Summary</b>                 | <b>29</b> |
| <b>Resources</b>               | <b>30</b> |

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Template for Setting Objectives

Appendix 2: Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

Appendix 3: Sample Consent and Waiver Form

Appendix 4: Sample Flyer

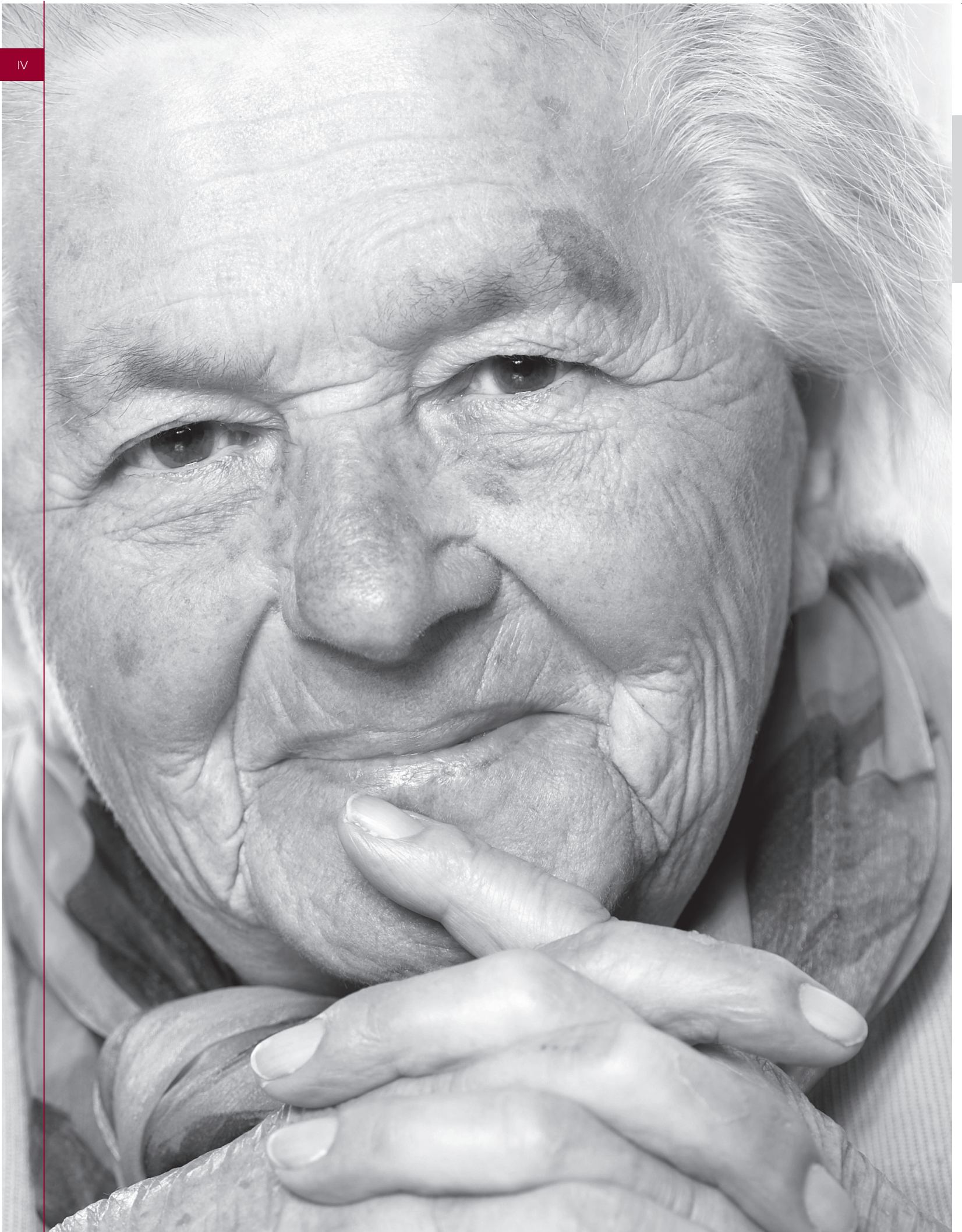
Appendix 5: Sample Community Press Release

Appendix 6: Letter to the Editor Template

Appendix 7: Op-Ed Template

Appendix 8: Sample 30-Second Live-Read Public Service Announcement Script for Radio

Appendix 9: Sample Tracking Sheet for Process Evaluation



# Introduction

## Residential Fire Safety

Each year in the United States, about three of every four fire-related deaths and injuries occur because of home fires. Seniors are at particularly high risk for injury and death from residential fires. In fact, people over 65 years of age are three times more likely to die in a residential fire as people younger than 65. Having physical or mental impairments, using chemical substances such as medicines and alcohol, and living with smokers or in substandard housing are some of the risk factors that make older adults more vulnerable to fire injury and death.

Although most fires and associated injuries could be prevented, a large number of households lack working smoke alarms, which could alert them in case of fire. Other households may not be aware of fire safety actions they can take that could potentially save their lives.

Effective residential fire safety interventions, including smoke alarm installation and fire prevention education, have been proven to reduce the risk of injury and death, particularly among high-risk households. Therefore, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) have created the Fire Safe Seniors Program to help organizations like yours to plan and implement fire safety interventions for the high-risk group of older adults.

Fire Safe Seniors can be implemented by organizations that serve seniors at the national, state, or community level, such as meal delivery programs, home companion groups, senior center associations, and many other groups. These organizations are not only seen as trusted sources of information in the community but also regularly visit older adults at their homes.

Comprehensive fire safety programs consist of the following elements:

1. **home assessments**—to determine the need for smoke alarms and identify any existing fire hazards in older adults' homes;
2. **smoke alarm installation**—to ensure participants' homes are adequately equipped with working smoke alarms;

3. **education**—to provide in-person fire safety messages and tips to older adults, their family members, and caregivers; and
4. **follow-up**—to determine if alarms are still working; to assess any changes in the older adults' fire safety knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors; and to see if any fires have occurred.

CDC and USFA recommend implementing all four components to ensure a comprehensive approach to fire prevention, but, at a minimum, doing home assessments and smoke alarm installations. You are encouraged to incorporate the additional components based on your resources.

For programs to achieve maximum success, the following conditions must be met:

- Your organization currently serves seniors.
- Seniors in your community need smoke alarms and/or fire safety education.
- Your organization wants to implement a fire prevention initiative targeting seniors and their caregivers.
- Your organization has sufficient staff and/or volunteers to support this program.

### Fire Safe Seniors Tool Kit

The Fire Safe Seniors Tool Kit has been designed to help you effectively implement a smoke alarm installation and fire safety education program targeting older adults. To do so, the tool kit contains the following elements:

- an implementation guide with helpful information for planning and running a comprehensive fire safety program for seniors;



- three different training curricula:
  - training of trainers (TOT) curriculum,
  - a 4-hour curriculum to train your staff or volunteers who will conduct home assessments and education; including an optional session on smoke alarm installation,
  - a 2-hour curriculum to train your staff or volunteers who will only conduct education; and
- tools for conducting the home assessments, education, smoke alarm installations, and process evaluation.

# Planning and Structuring Your Program

## Initial Planning Tasks

As soon as you have the idea for your program, complete the following tasks:

- Investigate to ensure that an effective fire safety program similar to the one you envision does not already exist in your community.
- If a similar fire safety program does exist *and* if it is fully meeting the needs of your proposed target population, modify your ideas for the program so that you can fill a need that is not being met.
- If you have sufficient funds, conduct formative research to help determine the needs of your target population. For example, you could conduct focus groups with seniors and interviews with staff of local agencies serving older adults.
- Decide where you will seek financial support. One option is to seek grant funding from organizations—such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which has an Assistance to Firefighters Grant—to fund your smoke alarm installation programs. You may also wish to approach your state health department to see if they have a grant program. Another option is to ask local businesses, such as hardware stores and large home supply stores, to donate alarms or supplies. Local insurance companies or health-care organizations may also be willing to donate funds.

## Setting Goals and Objectives

Setting goals and objectives is important because they can serve as a roadmap for guiding your program implementation, and they can also help demonstrate the success of your program, as the section “Evaluating Your Program” discusses. Most funding applications require a description of program goals and objectives. In this case, goals and objectives may be driven by the prospective funder, or you may create them from scratch and then seek funding to support them.

A **goal** is an overall statement of what your program hopes to achieve. For example:

>> **GOAL:** To improve the health of older adults in our community by reducing fire-related injury and death.

**Objectives** relate to specific indicators or measures of success. These indicators may include the number of

- communities reached by your program,
- homes benefiting from smoke alarm installation,
- smoke alarms installed,
- seniors educated about fire safety,
- fire injuries prevented by smoke alarms, and
- fire deaths prevented by smoke alarms.

Creating SMART objectives—in other words, objectives that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ppropriate, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound—is helpful. Here are some examples:

>> **OBJECTIVE 1:** In the next 12 months, install 1,000 smoke alarms in local residences occupied by seniors.

>> **OBJECTIVE 2:** In the next 12 months, educate a minimum of 800 senior households in our city about home fire safety practices.

>> **OBJECTIVE 3:** In the next 24 months, reduce by 10% the number of household fire-related injuries experienced by seniors in our community.

Be sure to be realistic when estimating how much you can accomplish in a given amount of time. Your funders will be more impressed if you set modest objectives and exceed them than if you set unrealistic objectives and fail to meet them. You can set your objectives by using the template in Appendix 1.

## Choosing Communities

Once you have set goals and objectives, you need to create a structure for your program. The first aspect of structuring your program is deciding how many states, cities, or communities in which to implement the program. Your organization may work in only one community so

selection decisions are not an issue. On the other hand, you may have the capacity to work in multiple communities so you will need to make selections that will maximize the chances of achieving your objectives.

Many factors go into this decision, including:

- which communities have high levels of fire injuries and deaths;
- which communities have populations of older adults who could benefit especially from the program, such as low-income residents and residents with substandard housing;
- which communities are not currently being served by other fire safety programs;
- which communities are likely to be supportive of your program; and
- whether your funder expects you to do a pilot project in one state or community, or whether you are expected to do a national or statewide program.

### Establishing Eligibility Criteria

Although you may hope to install smoke alarms in the homes of all older adults in your community, in reality, you will have finite resources and this goal may be impossible. You will need to prioritize which adults will receive smoke alarms and establish clear eligibility criteria. Following are some issues to consider:

- **Age**

The term *older adult*, or *senior*, can be interpreted in different ways. Your plan should specify the age group that will be eligible for the program. These materials are currently written for programs serving adults aged 65 years and older. You will need to modify the materials if your age criteria will be different—for example, if your program will serve adults aged 55 years and older, then you would need to change the age information in the training guides, PowerPoints, community flyer, press release, and live-read radio script.

- **Risk Factors for Fire Injury and Death**

You may wish to establish eligibility criteria based on specific characteristics. For example, your program could serve older adults who are homebound, live in substandard housing, have incomes below the poverty level, or live in communities that have fire deaths and fire incident rates that are higher than the state or county average. To find out the fire rates in your community, contact your local fire department.

- **Laws Regarding Renters**

Many states and counties have laws regulating the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms in apartment dwellings. These laws may prohibit you from installing alarms in apartments and rental houses. The materials in this tool kit have been written assuming that apartment and house renters *are* eligible for alarms. You will need to modify the materials to exclude renters if your state laws prohibit you from installing smoke alarms in apartments.

Resources permitting, you may wish to offer fire safety education to seniors who are not eligible for smoke alarms. For example, if state law prohibits you from giving alarms to renters, you may still wish to offer them education. Or, you may wish to offer education to adults aged 55–64 years if the minimum age for receiving free alarms is 65. These materials assume that you will offer education to older adults who cannot receive alarms.

Before starting your program, review the training facilitator’s guides and PowerPoint presentations to see if the eligibility criteria presented match those that you have chosen for your own program. If not, you will need to adjust the materials accordingly.

## Responsibility for Program Components

Once you have chosen where to implement your program, you will need to decide how to structure the implementation. Many options are available, depending on the size and scope of your organization and your objectives. National organizations may choose to implement their program through their state or local chapters or affiliates. State or local organizations may implement the program on their own. At the implementing level, two possible scenarios exist:

- Your organization implements **all** components of the program, including home assessments, smoke alarm installation, and education.
- Your organization implements **some** components, and local partners implement others. For example, your organization may conduct home assessments and education but partner with the fire department to install the alarms. Or, your organization may conduct the home assessments and install the alarms but partner with a service organization to conduct the education.

## Engaging Local Partners

Obtaining political support for your program will help to ensure its success. Early in the planning process, approach your local city or county officials to explain the purpose of your program and ask for their support. This support can be helpful for promoting your program and also for engaging fire departments.

Once you have this support, you can begin approaching local partners, which can help to promote your program, recruit seniors, and provide other types of support. The following questions can help you to decide which organizations to approach about partnering:

- Which organizations share the goal of preventing home fires and/or promoting a better quality of life for older adults in our community?
- What are the advantages and potential drawbacks of collaborating with those groups?
- What do we have to offer them in return for their collaboration?

Following are some examples of possible partners:

### **Fire Departments**

Reach out to local fire departments and let them know that you plan to implement a fire safety program. Many fire departments already have smoke alarm installation programs that you could tap into. If not, you may wish to ask your local fire department to install alarms provided by your program. Collaborating with firefighters may also legitimize your efforts and help you gain access to target homes. Firefighters can also facilitate the connection between smoke alarm installation and fire safety education. Some fire departments have ladies auxiliaries, which can help with canvassing and promotional efforts. Tips for collaborating with your local fire department are included in Appendix 2.

### **Businesses**

Local businesses, including hardware and home improvement stores, are often willing to donate supplies such as smoke alarms, ladders, drills, and safety goggles. Local cell phone stores may be willing to donate a cell phone and phone service for your program coordinator. Local pizza parlors, delis, and food stores may be willing to donate food and snacks for volunteers. Pharmacies, libraries, and post offices may be willing to display promotional flyers or program applications. Printers or photocopy shops may be willing to print promotional materials at low or reduced cost.

### **Organizations Serving Older Adults**

Local senior centers, agencies on aging, local AARP chapters, Meals On Wheels programs, companion and homemaker groups, and home health-care service organizations can help you promote and add credibility to your program. These organizations can also help you identify volunteers to assist with home assessments and provide in-person fire safety education at alternative times or during the weekend.

### **Faith-Based Groups**

Churches, mosques, and temples can help you spread the message about your fire prevention and education program in their bulletin announcements, during services, or through existing community outreach programs.

### **Local Chapters of Service Clubs**

Service organizations, such as Kiwanis International, Rotary International, The Lions Clubs International, 100 Black Men of America, fraternities, and sororities, can be a key source of volunteers and often have connections with local businesses.

Once you have identified potential partners, you will need to approach them and convince them to work with you. To do so, you should develop a pitch that emphasizes the following points:

- how the project will make a difference in the lives of seniors and benefit your community,
- how great the burden of fire-related injuries and death is among older adults,
- how other partners are getting involved,
- how the proposed partnership will be mutually beneficial, and
- what exactly you are asking them to do or contribute.

A tool that you can use to formalize this commitment is a partnership plan or agreement. This document describes the scope of work of both your organization and your partner's, outlines materials you will be sharing, lists the contact person from each partnering organization, and provides a tentative timeline for proposed activities. Appendix 2 includes additional guidance for developing partnerships and a partnership agreement template that you can adapt for your partnerships.

You may wish to bring all of your partners together for periodic meetings during the course of your project. This collaboration is important not only for getting their strategic input during the planning stages but also for coordinating activities once things get up and running.

### **Establishing a Timeline**

Establishing a comprehensive fire safety program can take about 6–18 months, depending on how much time you need to secure funding. Following is a month-by-month guide to the key tasks involved in setting up a program, assuming that you need to apply for grants. Many of these tasks will be discussed in greater detail later in this guide.

| Time to Launch   | Task   |
|------------------|--|
| <b>18 months</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that no similar, effective programs exist in your community.</li> <li>• Obtain support of key stakeholders, such as local government officials and fire departments.</li> <li>• Apply for local, state, federal, or nongovernment grants.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>14 months</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential program partners, including businesses that could provide financial or in-kind support.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>12 months</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch potential partners.</li> <li>• Determine the type of smoke alarms to purchase and investigate vendors.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>9 months</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize partnership agreements.</li> <li>• Begin holding planning meetings with partners.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>6 months</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold planning meetings with partners.</li> <li>• Recruit volunteers (if necessary).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3 months</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold planning meetings with partners.</li> <li>• Set dates for training staff and volunteers and secure training venue.</li> <li>• Develop print materials needed for canvassing, home assessment, and education.</li> <li>• Start thinking about the program launch event (if applicable).</li> <li>• Order smoke alarms and other supplies (step ladders, drills, etc.) needed for smoke alarm installation.</li> <li>• Meet with your media relations staff from your organization and your partner organizations to start planning the program launch.</li> </ul> |
| <b>1 month</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold planning meetings with partners.</li> <li>• Print out materials needed for canvassing, home assessment, and education.</li> <li>• Develop media materials about the launch of your program, including media lists, press releases, media advisories, etc.</li> <li>• Purchase training supplies and make copies of the tool kit for your trainers.</li> <li>• Train your trainers (if applicable).</li> <li>• Prepare tracking sheets for the program.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2-3 weeks</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold planning meetings with partners.</li> <li>• Train staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Begin pitching media about the launch event.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1 week</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold final planning meetings with partners.</li> <li>• Ensure that staff and volunteers have supplies and materials for canvassing, home assessments, and education.</li> <li>• Continue pitching media.</li> <li>• Reconfirm all arrangements for launch event.</li> </ul>   |



# Staffing Your Program

## Types of Staff

The types of staff that you need to recruit depend on the size and scope of your program. Following are different types of staff members that are needed to implement a multi-site, comprehensive fire safety program:

- **Program Coordinator:** This person is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the program, including obtaining smoke alarms, recruiting and supervising staff and volunteers, promoting the program, monitoring, and evaluating. If your organization is national, you may need to hire a national-level coordinator and chapter/affiliate coordinators.
- **Site Coordinators:** These people coordinate the implementation of all program components in their local communities. This coordination includes liaising with the local fire department, recruiting participants, making installation appointments, conducting local promotional activities, and implementing the assessments, installation, and education activities. If your organization is implementing the program in only one community, then the program coordinator can serve as the site coordinator. If your organization is operating in multiple communities, however, then each community should have its own site coordinator.
- **Assessors, Installers, and Educators:** These people conduct home assessments, install smoke alarms, and educate seniors about fire safety. Depending on the structure of your organization, they may be staff, volunteers, or a combination. You may train them to do all three tasks or only selected tasks. In some cases, your partner organizations may implement some of these tasks. For example, your staff/volunteers may conduct assessments and education, with local firefighters installing alarms.



The number of assessors, installers, and educators that you need to hire depends on your goals and objectives (see pp. 4–5) for how many alarm installations and education sessions you are planning for your program. For safety reasons, a minimum of two people is always recommended to conduct home installations of smoke alarms.

Assuming that your organization already has a cadre of staff and volunteers (or partners with an organization that can supply volunteers), you will need to identify those people who are interested in being assessors, installers, and educators. You will then want to select those people with the skills needed for conducting home assessments, alarm installation, and education, including the following:

- good verbal communication skills;
- experience working with older adults;
- physical capacity to install alarms (which may require standing on a step ladder); and
- ability to speak Spanish or other languages, depending on the needs of the residents.

Of course, not all volunteers will meet all of these criteria. Therefore, you may choose to use certain volunteers to install alarms, for example, and others to conduct education.

## Training and Incentives

Once you have recruited your staff and/or volunteers, you will need to train them to conduct home assessments, install smoke alarms, and provide face-to-face fire safety education. As explained earlier in the guide, the tool kit offers three different curricula to train your staff and/or volunteers, depending on the type of program you are implementing.

- **Training of Trainers Facilitator’s Manual**

The TOT curriculum is designed to teach your own organization’s trainers how to train your staff and volunteers on all aspects of the program. This curriculum is most appropriate for national or state-level organizations that have their own cadre of trainers. During this 8-hour training, participants examine statistics related to older adults and fires; learn how to use the home assessment and education tools and materials; practice installing smoke alarms; and discuss how to roll out their own training sessions in their communities.

- **Training Curriculum on Home Assessments, Education, and Smoke Alarm Installation**

This 4-hour curriculum is for training staff and/or volunteers who will conduct all aspects of the program, namely home assessments, education sessions, and smoke alarm installations.

- **Training Curriculum on Education**

This 2-hour curriculum is for training staff and/or volunteers who will only be conducting education.

Each curriculum is accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation and handouts. These documents will need to be modified to match any changes that you make in the training content. All three curricula also include posttests to assess the effectiveness of the training. Some of these questions may need to be changed to match your program’s eligibility criteria.

The tool kit also contains the home assessment, smoke alarm installation, and educational resources for use by your staff and volunteers, including the following:

- home assessment tool;
- education tool;
- educational flyers about smoke alarms, escape planning and fire prevention; and
- sample letter for your fire department to present to residents when firefighters come to install alarms (if applicable).

Optional Items:

- clipboard stickers with key educational messages for staff and volunteers;
- pocket reminder card with key educational messages for staff and volunteers;
- refrigerator magnet with a testing reminder;
- emergency number card to post near a phone;
- phone sticker with emergency numbers; and
- testing reminder stickers.

All of the education materials are available in both English and Spanish. In addition, all of these materials can be customized with your own program's logo. Resources permitting, you may wish to print or produce these materials centrally and distribute them to your chapters, affiliates, or sites.

In addition to these materials, you will also need to supply your staff and volunteers with T-shirts, hats, or badges to wear when going to residents' homes. These items will clearly identify them as part of your program, which will be important for gaining access to residents' homes.

You may also want to provide volunteers and fire department partners with incentives to help keep them motivated. Following are some incentive options:

- gift cards, which can be distributed upon completion of a certain number of assessments, installments, or education sessions;
- luncheons or dinners to recognize their contributions;
- plaques or certificates of appreciation;
- media stories about their contributions; and
- specific items that the department or organization needs (within reason).

You can find additional tools related to volunteer recruitment and management in the "Resources" section at the end of this guide.

# Smoke Alarm Installation

## Obtaining Alarms and Supplies

Smoke alarms are the centerpiece of a comprehensive fire safety program. If you are not partnering with fire departments that already have smoke alarm distribution programs, then you will need to find a way to obtain alarms. You will also need to obtain other installation supplies for your program, including:

- drills (cordless, if possible),
- screwdrivers (cordless, if possible),
- double-sided tape (for areas where screws cannot be used to attach alarms),
- step ladders,
- safety goggles,
- tape measures, and
- pencils.

You may be able to negotiate bulk-buy discounts directly with smoke alarm manufacturers, depending on the number of units you are planning to purchase. Appendix 2 includes a sample pitch letter you can use to request donations and other support from local stores and businesses.

## Choosing Appropriate Smoke Alarms

If you are not partnering with a fire department that has a smoke alarm installation program, you will need to decide what kind of smoke alarms to purchase or request from businesses that agree to donate them.

When choosing your smoke alarms, do not shop by price alone. Be sure that the alarm bears the seal of an independent testing laboratory. When possible, purchase smoke alarms that are powered by long-life lithium batteries and include hush buttons, which allow people to stop false alarms quickly.

The various alarm features to be considered when making your choice include:

### **Sensing Systems**

Smoke alarms commonly use ionization or photoelectric systems for detecting smoke or flames.

- **Ionization alarms** are better at detecting fast, flaming fires like grease fires. They are most sensitive to dark or black smoke. They are also more sensitive to steam than photoelectric alarms so they are more likely than photoelectric alarms to produce nuisance alarms if they are installed near kitchens, bathrooms, or laundry rooms.
- **Photoelectric alarms** are best at detecting slow, smoldering fires such as furniture upholstery ignited by a cigarette. They are more responsive to light gray smoke. These alarms have fewer nuisance alarms than ionization alarms in areas near kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms and where steam might be present.

Predicting which type of fire might occur in an individual's home is impossible. Therefore, you may wish to purchase **combination alarms**, which have both ionization and photoelectric detectors. If that proves too costly, another option is to purchase a mixture of ionization and photoelectric alarms and install both types in homes that require multiple alarms.

### **Power Systems: Battery Operated vs. Hardwired**

Depending on the area, new homes and multifamily dwellings are required to have smoke alarms hardwired into their electrical systems. Older homes, built before modern building codes, may not be required to have smoke alarms at all. In older homes where alarms are mandated, most states accept the use of battery-operated smoke alarms. Many older adults live in older homes, so the focus of this tool kit is on the installation of battery-powered alarms. Two types of battery-operated smoke alarms are available:

- **Alarms that use long-life lithium batteries:** Smoke alarms with long-life lithium batteries should be tested monthly, but they can last up to 10 years. Some of these alarms have removable batteries, while others do not. Some also are tamper proof, which means that batteries are permanently sealed into place so residents cannot remove them. Manufacturers offer 10-year warranties on most of these units. Although long-life smoke alarms are more expensive than conventional alarms, their longer life often offsets the higher cost and can be a better value for the homes of older adults. **CDC and USFA recommend using alarms with long-life lithium batteries, and all of the tool kit materials were written assuming that they will be used.**



- **Alarms that use conventional (non-lithium) batteries:** These include alkaline and carbon zinc batteries. These alarms should be tested at least once per month, and the batteries should be replaced annually or when the low-battery indicator sounds. When replacing batteries, ensure that the replacements are compatible with the manufacturer's recommendations.

#### ***Low-Battery Warning Feature***

All battery-operated smoke alarms have a low-battery warning device that emits a signal (a chirping or high-pitched sound) when the battery power is low. When older adults hear this sound, they need to change the alarm batteries. Because the warning signal will stop after a few days, you should advise older adults to test their alarms after being away from home several days.

#### ***Other Smoke Alarm Features***

Manufacturers offer smoke alarms with added features, some of which are especially appropriate for older adults. You may wish to consider these features when choosing your smoke alarms:

- **Alarms for the hearing impaired:** Some ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms come with louder alarm signals and/or strobe lights. Also, alarms are available that trigger wireless vibrating units that can be placed under a pillow or carried in a pocket. These alarms can cost up to two or three times as much as conventional alarms, but you may wish to purchase them for older adults who have significant hearing impairments.
- **Pause buttons/nuisance alarm features:** These features allow occupants to silence nuisance alarms, such as those caused by burning toast or opening smoky ovens, without affecting the operation of the alarm. The pause, or hush, button deactivates the alarm for approximately 7 to 10 minutes, after which it reactivates automatically. If a fire occurs, the unit will override the pause feature and sound the alarm. This feature discourages people from disconnecting or removing the batteries from the unit.
- **Easy-to-install battery mounts:** The 9-volt batteries used in many smoke alarms require the consumer to snap the battery's terminals into tight-fitting connectors. This procedure can sometimes be difficult for older adults. Alarms with spring-metal terminal contacts reduce the difficulty for installing the battery but increase the possibility of installing the battery backward (switching positive and negative terminals). People installing batteries in smoke alarms must ensure that the positive and negative terminals are correctly connected and should test the alarm after installation.
- **Easy-to-push test buttons:** These buttons can make it easier for older adults or their caregivers to test alarms.

## Smoke Alarm Standards

Many states and counties have their own smoke alarm standards or codes, and you should obtain this information from your community's building inspector or fire department. In general, CDC and USFA recommend installing alarms in the following locations:

- on every level of the home, including the basement, and
- directly outside every sleeping area.

For maximum protection, also install alarms inside each sleeping area, particularly if someone in the house smokes.

CDC and USFA also recommend replacing any non-lithium alarms or alarms with unknown battery types (even if working), any nonworking lithium alarms, or any lithium alarms that are more than

10 years old. New lithium alarms may also be installed next to any hardwired alarms that are not working or are more than 10 years old. Your organization may choose to follow different standards, depending on the number of alarms available to you and your local standards or codes.

You will need to evaluate the number of smoke alarms you have available compared with the number of seniors in your communities who need them and decide if you will restrict the number of alarms that each household can receive.

Detailed instructions for installing and maintaining smoke alarms are provided in the Training of Trainers and 4-hour training curricula.

## Consent and Liability

Before your team members actually install smoke alarms in a particular household, you may need to have the resident sign a form that grants consent for the installation and waives your organization and your partners from any responsibility for damages in case of fire. Consent and liability requirements vary from state to state. By signing the waiver, the resident agrees not to sue the fire department, the city or town, or other organizations involved in the smoke alarm installation program in the event that the smoke alarm fails to work properly. Your installers should bring two copies of the form to each home, so that one copy can be left with the resident.

An important part of the consent process is informing residents who they should contact if they experience problems with the alarm. If the fire department is conducting the installation, provide residents with the fire department's nonemergency phone number. If your staff or volunteers are conducting the installation, provide residents with the site coordinator or program coordinator's phone number.

A sample consent and waiver form is included in Appendix 3. Any form that you choose to use should be reviewed by a lawyer to ensure that it complies with your state laws.

## Safety Issues

During the home assessment, smoke alarm installation, and education process, your staff and volunteers may visit unfamiliar settings or unsafe neighborhoods. In addition, risk is always involved in going into an unfamiliar home. The following guidelines can help to keep your staff and volunteers safe.

- Always visit homes in pairs.
- If you are going to an unfamiliar neighborhood, bring a map or global positioning system (GPS) with you to avoid getting lost. Also, bring the program coordinator's phone number.
- Do not show up unannounced—ensure that an appointment for the visit has been made and then reconfirm it the day before. If possible, also call that day to request that any dogs be shut in a room prior to your arrival.
- Conduct all visits during daylight hours, if possible.
- If possible, mix genders within the pairs (i.e., send a man and a woman together).
- Do not enter any homes that make you feel unsafe. If you are unsure about whether to enter, call the program coordinator.
- Leave the home immediately if you feel threatened for any reason. Establish a code word with your partner that you can use to alert each other if you feel unsafe.
- Do not look around inside the homes any more than is necessary to conduct the assessment—this could make residents or their family members confrontational if, for example, they feel that their homes are being scoped out for theft.

## Escape Barriers

Many older adults have barriers in their homes that can prevent them from escaping in case of a fire, such as windows that are nailed shut or doors that are blocked by furniture or piles of clutter. As part of the Fire Safe Seniors home assessment process, volunteers are asked to make a note of any escape barriers. It is up to your program to decide whether or not you can address these barriers. For example, you may be able to send volunteers back at a later date to move furniture, clean up clutter, or remove nails from windows, or your local fire department may be able to perform this service. If you are not able to address these barriers, you may still wish to mention them to residents receiving smoke alarms in case they have friends or family who can help address the barriers.

You will need to make a decision about whether or not your program can address escape barriers prior to the Training of Trainers, so that participants know what to tell residents if they identify any barriers.



# Promoting Your Program

Proactive promotion, including media outreach, is an effective way to raise awareness of the Fire Safe Seniors Program in your community.

Depending on your organization, you may need to rely on promotion to recruit residents to receive alarms and education in your program. Some organizations already have a client base of older adults from which they can recruit. In this scenario, contacting the residents, who already have trust in your program, is relatively easy. Other organizations do not have a formal client base, however, and they need to recruit participants through community outreach.

Broad-based outreach is critical for building trust around smoke alarm installation programs, which require strangers to enter the homes of older people. Seniors are frequent targets of fraudulent scams, and they may be reluctant to participate in your program. (Note: Your staff should find out what scams are prevalent in your community because they can have a negative

impact on your program.) Older adults will be more likely to participate in your fire safety program if they have heard about it through multiple sources in the community and the media.



## Community Outreach

Getting out as much information as possible about the program to the community beforehand is important for recruiting participants. If people expect program staff to be visiting for the installation of smoke alarms, they will be more willing to let them into their homes. If you are targeting an urban or

suburban area, you may want to consider canvassing. Canvassing involves driving into target neighborhoods, visiting each individual home on a street, and informing them about the upcoming program. Depending on the size of your target area and the number of volunteers, canvassing may be done over the course of 2 or 3 weekends. In rural areas, canvassing may not be a practical use of resources due to the distance between residences. In these areas, program staff may try to schedule appointments with residents.

For both canvassing efforts and appointments, having written information available, such as a door hanger, is useful to let residents know that you are planning to be in the area to install smoke alarms and to provide information about fire safety. Be sure to include a phone number and contact name to call for more information, to schedule an installation appointment, or to reschedule a visit if they were not at home when an Fire Safe Seniors canvasser was in their neighborhood.

You can also develop flyers to be handed out at local businesses, senior centers, churches, and other frequently visited locations. These flyers should include important details about your program activities, relevant dates, and a phone number to call for more information. You can get photos to use on your materials, free of charge, [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov). A sample flyer has been included in Appendix 4. The following types of organizations may be willing to display your flyers or posters:

- senior centers,
- pharmacies,
- grocery stores,
- libraries,
- doctor's offices,
- health departments,
- churches, and
- other locations that older adults frequent.

You can also explore ways to announce your program through community venues:

- **City/county government:** Submit an announcement for posting on the city or county Web site. You could also ask to present the program at town or city meetings (another reason why having local political support is important, as discussed earlier).
- **Citizens/neighborhood associations:** Submit an announcement for their newsletters, and ask if you could present the program at their meetings.
- **Faith-based organizations:** Meet with faith-based leaders and ask if they could mention the program during their religious services. Also, provide them with a written announcement to put in their bulletins or other member publications.
- **Community events:** Set up a table with information about your program at health fairs, county fairs, art festivals, outdoor concerts, and other community events.

## Media Outreach

Media outreach is an effective way of promoting your program to your entire community. Reporters, editors, and producers are always looking for news that will interest their readers and viewers. They are especially receptive to information with a local angle. You can organize a special media event to launch your program, and you can also provide your local media with fire safety story ideas on an ongoing basis.

### **Press Releases**

A press release is a one-page description of your news or event designed to inform media of high-level information—the who, what, where, when, why, and how. It is the most efficient and economical way to get your program in front of the media. You can use it to publicize the program launch and any other major events that take place over the course of the program.

A press release should include the program representative's contact information, a captivating headline, and information that is brief, accurate, and to the point. Including local information also can increase the chances of your issue or event being covered. This could include state or county statistics about fire-related injuries; highlighting the work of a local partner; or a quote from a local community leader, Fire Safe Seniors volunteer, or your organization's president or director.

Other tips for writing a press release include:

- Keep your press release short, one page if possible.
- Describe the main news in the first paragraph.
- Check your facts two or three times.
- Follow AP style. You can purchase the *AP Stylebook* at [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com).
- Include a release date in the upper left margin and “# # #” centered at the end of the page.

A sample press release announcing the Fire Safe Seniors Program can be found in Appendix 5. You can post the press release on your organization's Web site and also send it to selected media outlets.

### **Media Lists**

Determining who receives your press release is as important as writing the press release itself. One way to keep track of your contacts and outreach efforts is to develop a media list. Media lists help you organize local editors', reporters', and producers' names, outlets, and contact information. These contacts should be a mix of local television, radio, newspaper, and magazine reporters. For the Fire Safe Seniors Program, your media list should include health reporters, medical reporters, lifestyle reporters, and other columnists who might be interested in injury prevention and fire safety. Media lists should be detailed and include journalists' beats or topics they cover, submission deadlines, conversation notes, contact information, and best times to

call. Do not overlook small city or community newspapers—it can be easier to get stories placed in these papers than in larger metropolitan papers.

Developing media lists requires research. To identify the right media contacts, begin by identifying and prioritizing your best media prospects. Focus on outlets that appeal to the populations you are trying to reach, such as older adults and their caregivers. You can compile information by calling local newsrooms, keeping track of journalists that have contacted your organization in the past, or tracking the media that cover health-related or fire prevention-related stories in your community or state. Local libraries also may have copies of news service software that can help you build a media list. Here is a sample media list:

| First Name | Last Name | Title              | Outlet              | Phone        | Email           | Fax          | Notes  |
|------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Jane       | Doe       | Health Reporter    | The Daily Newspaper | 555-555-5555 | jdoe@daily.com  | 000-000-0000 | Sent pitch 1/25/10.<br>Spoke 1/26/10.<br>Interested in interview with Fire Chief Jones.                |
| John       | Smith     | News at 6 Producer | WXYZ-TV             | 444-444-4444 | jsmith@wxyz.com | 111-111-1111 | Left voicemail 1/25/10.<br>Spoke 1/26/10.<br>Sending a camera to get footage of canvassing activities. |

Send your press release to the contacts on your media list at least 2 weeks before you plan to conduct your program activities. Follow up with the reporter to introduce yourself as a resource for fire prevention information and ask if they have any questions about your release. Keep track in your media list of feedback from reporters, such as additional information requested, stories they are working on, or a change in their beat. And, if you agreed to any further actions, such as sending them supplemental information, be sure to follow through within the agreed-upon time frame.

### ***Letters to the Editor***

Letters to the editor are letters that can be written by any reader of the publication in response to an issue that has been covered in the publication or is of interest to its readers. Letters to the editor provide a wide public forum that can be used to your advantage, before and after your event. Newspapers are most likely to publish a letter to the editor if it addresses an article that

has been previously published in the paper. Make sure to reference that article in your letter. If possible, the letter to the editor should be signed by a reputable and leading participant or supporter of the initiative, such as your organization's president or director, a local fire chief, or another influential community partner with whom you work closely. A template for writing a letter to the editor is included in Appendix 6. Reading your newspaper's letter-to-the-editor section may also give you a sense of what type of responses the paper is publishing.

### **Op-Eds**

Op-ed is short for "opposite the editorial" because these pieces are usually placed on the page opposite the editorial page. While an editorial is written by the news organization and expresses the opinion of the editor, editorial board, or publisher, an op-ed represents the opinion of an individual contributor, such as an expert, public official, or anyone who represents an organization. Write your op-ed as if it were a stand-alone piece and accompany it with a letter introducing yourself, suggesting timing for the placement of the piece, and providing contact information if the newspaper has questions or needs additional information. The op-ed should be signed by a well-known community leader, decision maker, or public official. After sending the op-ed, follow up within 3 days to determine whether the piece is being considered for publication. A template for writing an op-ed is included in Appendix 7. Again, reading the op-eds printed in your local newspaper will help you learn more about what the newspaper staff looks for when deciding which submissions to run.

For both letters to the editor and op-eds, contact your local newspapers to find out about length restrictions (word count limits) or deadlines. All letters must be signed and include contact information for the person who has signed it.

### **Live-Read Radio Public Service Announcements**

Radio is a great way to reach out to older adults. If your program has sufficient funding, you can look into producing prerecorded public service announcements (PSAs) to publicize your program. If you have limited funding, however, you can simply write scripts to be read on-air by local radio announcers. Many radio stations will do this for free as a public service.

Scripts are typically 15 seconds, 30 seconds, or 60 seconds long, so you may wish to write scripts in all three lengths. Scripts should be double-spaced, with all words in capital letters. See Appendix 8 for a sample 30-second script.

Once you have the PSAs drafted, contact the PSA director or PSA program manager at your local radio stations to see about getting the PSAs aired. Before calling these people, develop a pitch about why the issue of fire safety is important for older adults and how your program will benefit the local community.

### **Launch Event**

A special event to kick off your program can help to attract media attention. For example, you could organize a press conference at your local fire department featuring the fire chief, local officials, your local Agency on Aging, and other key partners. Immediately following the press conference, your staff could install a smoke alarm in the home of an older adult, which would provide a nice photo opportunity for the media.

Issue a media advisory to invite the media to your upcoming event. A media advisory is a one-page announcement informing the media of an opportunity to send a reporter, photographer, or TV cameraperson to an event, such as a press conference. Distribute it at least 2 weeks before your event and then again the day before. The advisory should contain the following information:

- media contact;
- an appealing headline;
- bullet points that cover who, what, where, when, and why;
- a sentence indicating names or titles of speakers who will be available for photo opportunities; and
- a short paragraph with key background information or any special instructions for the media.

Another good way to increase media attendance at your launch is to get it listed in your local Associated Press (AP) Daybook. Reporters and journalists consult the daybook to see what media events are happening in their areas. As soon as you have a date for your event, call the daybook editor at your local AP bureau and ask to have it listed. You can find contact information for your local AP bureau at [www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html](http://www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html).

### **Community Calendars**

Many newspapers, radio stations, cable television systems, and broadcast television stations also announce upcoming events in their communities in a special column or program. These columns or programs are often called “Community Calendar,” “Upcoming Events,” or something similar. Listing an event in these columns or programs is generally free, and information is usually provided at the end of the newspaper column or broadcast that includes instructions for how to submit an item for the calendar. This method can be effective for announcing the days that your program will be canvassing in the community, for example.

Some of these calendars will also carry small news items of community interest, such as regular reminders about how to sign up for free smoke alarms. These types of programs are often very good ways to provide information about your program to the public.

### ***Ongoing Media Outreach***

After your launch event is over, you can still use media outreach skills to recognize the volunteers who helped with your program or to continue to raise awareness about fire safety in your community. If your organization will host an awards dinner or honor your staff or volunteers in some other way, send a press release to media outlets that highlights your workers' achievements and provides information about their work with the Fire Safe Seniors Program.

If your local newspaper or television station profiles people of interest who are doing important work within the community, consider submitting your outstanding volunteers for recognition. Stories in the local newspaper or on the local news program are also great ways to recognize contributions made by your volunteers, your local fire department, or other partners.

Also, be ready to respond if a local or national fire injury-related story breaks. If appropriate, consider writing a letter to the editor or op-ed piece to highlight the issue and the impact on your community.

You can find additional media tools in the "Resources" section at the end of this guide. Now that you have the tools, you can begin to develop your own media outreach plans in support of the Fire Safe Seniors Program. The templates and ideas presented here are designed to be adaptable for your individual organization's use. Use these media components wisely so that they represent your organization well, promote the goals of your campaign, and help build greater visibility for your individual activities.

# Evaluating Your Program

Evaluation activities are critical for determining whether your program has been effective and has achieved its goals and objectives. They also give you warnings about potential problems so that they can be resolved in a timely manner. Evaluation results are often required by funders, who want to see whether their money has made a difference in your community. If your results show that your program is doing well, this can potentially lead to additional funding to continue or expand the program.

Evaluation activities should be conceptualized and budgeted during the planning stage of your project. Your program may find that creating a database for tracking program statistics is useful. If you decide to create a database, its development and maintenance should also be included in your budget.

You can consider integrating three types of program evaluation into your plan. Below are a brief description and some examples for each one of them.

## Process Evaluation

Process evaluation tracks how well your program is serving the target population as planned. Process evaluation begins as soon as the program starts, and you can use the results to continually improve your operations. Following are examples of things that you may want to track:

- number of staff and volunteers trained;
- number of homes canvassed in each community;
- number of homes enrolled in the program;
- number of promotional materials distributed;
- number of calls received from community members inquiring about the program;
- number of homes assessed;
- number of homes assessed that had no working smoke alarms;
- number of smoke alarms installed;
- number of education sessions conducted;



- number of residents, family members, and other caregivers educated;
- number and type of educational materials distributed; and
- number of follow-up visits and/or surveys conducted.

For a sample tracking tool that can be used for process evaluation, please see Appendix 9.

## Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation is used to measure the changes your program creates in the target population's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. Ideally, to be able to demonstrate any changes, you should collect baseline information from your audience immediately before the program begins and again after the person receives the services.

One way to measure the impact of your smoke alarm installation program is by conducting follow-up visits **approximately 6 months** after the installation component is completed. If the educational sessions have been completed, you may also assess any changes in behavior regarding testing of the smoke alarms. Another option to complete the follow-up assessments is by conducting short telephone surveys with households that participated in your program. Types of information that can be gathered during follow-up surveys include:

- percentage of smoke alarms that are properly working after being installed by your team,
- percentage of smoke alarms that have been tested since installation,
- percentage of smoke alarms that have experienced problems,
- number of times that the smoke alarm went off and reasons why,
- number of fires in program homes,
- percentage of residents that have developed an escape plan,
- percentage of residents that have practiced an escape plan, and
- percentage of residents that still remember key fire prevention messages.

You will probably not have the resources to do a follow-up survey in every home that has received a smoke alarm. Therefore, you will need to choose a sample of homes to survey. An adequate sample size would be 200 homes or two thirds of the total homes receiving alarms, whichever is less. For example, if you install alarms in more than 300 homes, you would need to schedule follow-up visits in 200 homes. If you installed alarms in only 150 homes, however, you would need to do follow-up visits in 100 homes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kentucky Residential Fire Injury Prevention Project. Local Project Coordinator's Guide. November 2002.

Another way to evaluate impact is to see if the knowledge and skills of your staff have improved after undergoing training. Each of the curricula in this tool kit includes a posttest you can administer after your training. You can use these results to certify staff or volunteers before they begin working on the program. For example, only those who score 80% or above on the posttest can begin work. These results are also useful for identifying training content that might not have been covered adequately and needs to be addressed in follow-up meetings or discussions.

### Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation is used to learn how well the program did in achieving its ultimate goal (i.e., decreasing fire-related injury and death among older adults). Examples of outcome indicators include:

- number of fires in homes enrolled in your program;
- number of fire injuries in homes enrolled in your program;
- number of fire fatalities in homes enrolled in your program; and
- number of lives saved, measured as the number of persons who were warned of a home fire by a smoke alarm that was installed by your program.

These indicators can be difficult to measure because the rates of injury and death due to fire are low. Measuring changes in events that occur infrequently takes a long time (usually years) and requires a large number of study participants. Therefore, this type of evaluation may be more appropriate for large-scale and long-term programs.

The U.S. Fire Administration provides links to various state and county fire death and injury statistics at [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).

# Summary

We hope that this implementation guide has provided you with the information you need to get your own fire safety program up and running. You can find additional fire prevention program guides in the “Resources” section at the end of this guide.

As mentioned earlier, the materials in this tool kit were developed based on a number of key assumptions about your program:

- Homebound adults aged 65 years and older living in residential settings, including renters, will be eligible for free smoke alarms.
- Your state and county fire codes are in agreement with CDC’s and USFA’s recommendations regarding the placement of alarms within the home.
- You will be installing long-life lithium battery alarms and replacing any existing non-lithium battery alarms, any alarms with unknown battery types, and any alarms more than 10 years old.
- The number of alarms that eligible residents can receive will not be limited.
- You will offer fire safety education to those residents who are not eligible to receive alarms.

You will need to modify the materials in this tool kit if any of these key assumptions do not apply to your program.



# Resources

Following are some additional resources that provide more in-depth information on the topics addressed in this implementation guide.

## Media

- *Media Access Guide: Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*, developed by CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>

## Other Fire Prevention Program Guides

- *Planning & Implementing a Successful Smoke Alarm Installation Program*, developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): available at <http://www.nfpa.org>
- *Remembering When: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults*, developed by NFPA and CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: available at <http://www.nfpa.org>

## Program Evaluation

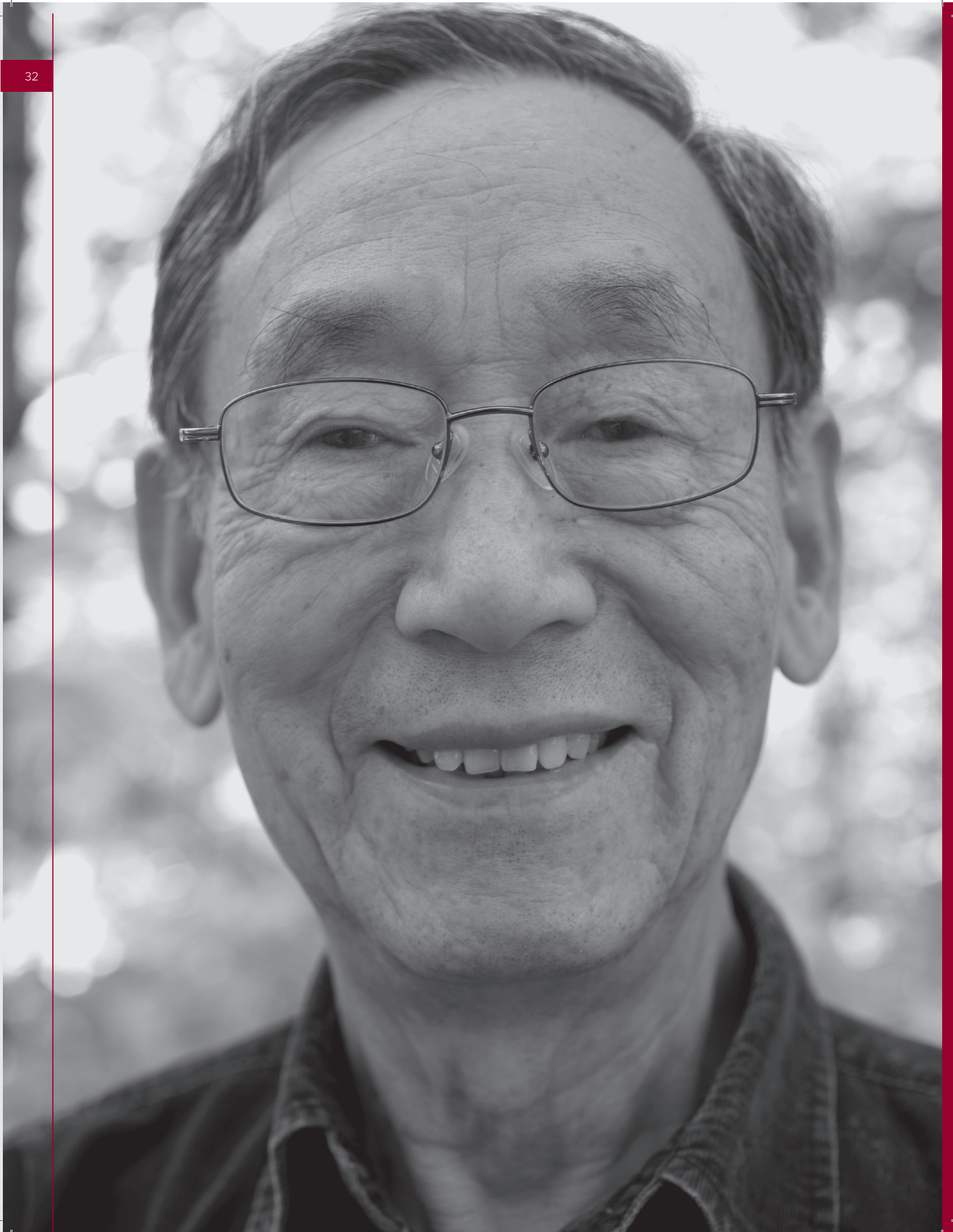
- *Demonstrating Your Program's Worth: A Primer on Evaluation for Programs to Prevent Unintentional Injury*, developed by CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>

## Volunteer Recruitment and Management

- *Developing and Managing Volunteer Programs* by Free Management Library:  
<http://www.managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm>
- *A Legal Handbook for Nonprofit Corporation Volunteers*:  
<http://www.iclesoftware.com/VLH7/index.html>

## Organizations' and Agencies' Web Sites

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>
- U.S. Fire Administration: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov>
- National Fire Protection Association: <http://www.nfpa.org>
- International Association of Fire Chiefs: <http://www.iafc.org>
- Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center: [www.kiprc.uky.edu](http://www.kiprc.uky.edu)



Appendix 1  
*Template for Setting Objectives*

## TEMPLATE FOR SETTING OBJECTIVES

Use the following template for creating objectives that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time-Bound):

>> **OBJECTIVE 1:**

In the next \_\_\_\_ months, install \_\_\_\_ smoke alarms in local residences occupied by older adults.

>> **OBJECTIVE 2:**

In the next \_\_\_\_ months, educate a minimum of \_\_\_\_ older adult households about home fire safety practices.

>> **OBJECTIVE 3:**

In the next \_\_\_\_ months, reduce the number of household fire-related injuries experienced by older adults in our community by \_\_\_\_ %.

>> **OBJECTIVE 4:**

In the next \_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

>> **OBJECTIVE 5:**

In the next \_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



Appendix 2  
*Developing and  
Maintaining Partnerships*

## DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are successful when they are developed and maintained in a systematic and thoughtful way. The following steps can help you to engage organizations in your community that can expand or enhance your fire safety program, such as fire departments, businesses, faith-based groups, service clubs, and organizations serving older adults.

***Developing Partners***

- **Step 1: Assess your current situation, including your strengths and weaknesses.** Determine whether your organization is prepared to reach out to new partners.
- **Step 2: Identify potential partners that could benefit from your strengths and help with your weaknesses.** Identify groups that already work with older adults and have a vested interest in reducing fire injury and death in the community. Determine how this collaboration will mutually support short- and long-term project goals.
- **Step 3: Develop your pitch for partnership.** After strategically selecting potential partners, develop your pitch, or selling points, for partnership. This pitch will vary based on the resources, needs, and priorities of each organization. Make sure you are specific about what you are asking them to contribute and do not forget to showcase the benefits for your potential partners. A sample pitch to engage partners can be found on page 40.
- **Step 4: Make contact.** Once you have identified the decision maker within the organization you are trying to involve, schedule an in-person meeting to discuss your partnership proposal. Consider bringing at least one other person, because different communication styles and demeanors can influence an encounter. However, make sure that your team speaks with one voice, based on the components you have chosen from the tool kit. Delivering mixed messages creates confusion and weakens your credibility.
- **Step 5: Seal the deal.** Being credible and offering incentives are important, but these may not be enough to seal the deal. Use your passion to make potential partners believe they should be involved. For example, you can:
  - describe how your project and services can make a difference,
  - share information about the burden of fire-related injuries and death among older adults,
  - underscore how your community will benefit from your efforts and how others are getting involved,

- remind potential partners of their strengths and how even seemingly small contributions can help prevent injury and death,
- confirm how the proposed partnership is mutually beneficial, and
- be specific about what you are asking them to contribute and do.

Another tool you can use to formalize this commitment is a partnership plan or agreement. This document describes the scope of work of both your organization and your partner's, outlines materials you will be sharing, lists the contact person from each partnering organization, and provides a tentative timeline for proposed activities. A partnership agreement template can be found on page 38.

### Maintaining Partners

Relationships need to be nurtured and maintained. Although commitment is important, so is continuing to review your resources, needs, and expectations as the program evolves. These are some tips for managing and sustaining your partnerships:

- Look for creative ways to convey your gratitude to partners often and thank them publicly (e.g., certificate of recognition, submit an article to local newspapers acknowledging your partners' support).
- As you plan your evaluation, include a component to evaluate your partnerships.
- Revisit your partnership agreement every 3 to 6 months and make adjustments as needed.



Fire Safe Seniors

## PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

### **A. Partner Organizations**

| <b>Your Organization</b> | <b>Partner</b>    |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Organization Name        | Organization Name |
| Contact Person           | Contact Person    |
| Address                  | Address           |
| Telephone                | Telephone         |
| Fax                      | Fax               |
| Email                    | Email             |
| Brief Description        | Brief Description |

### **B. Statement of Intent**

We, the undersigned, acknowledge a common commitment to [purpose of partnership].

By working together as partners, we acknowledge the benefits and added value that each of us can bring to fulfill this commitment.

Specifically, we expect each partner to contribute to the joint effort in the following ways:

**Your Organization:**

**Partner:**

### **C. Structures and Procedures**

1. Partner Roles and Responsibilities
2. Administration (staff, day-to-day activities, contracts, financial oversight)
3. Decision-making Procedures

### **D. Resources and Services**

We will each provide the following resource and/or services:

**Your Organization:**

**Partner:**

[for example, amount of funds, staff time, printed materials]

In addition, we will jointly pursue the following funding opportunities:

[for example, foundation grants, government awards, corporate sponsorships]

**E. Monitoring Plan**

We will review the partnership every [number] months in the following ways:

[list ways in which progress will be monitored]

We will make adjustments to this partnership, including revising this agreement, as necessary based on these reviews.

**F. Communications**

**1. Internal**

In recognition of the importance of maintaining open communications among the partners, we agree to the following protocol:

[e.g., monthly meetings, weekly conference calls, regular email communication]

**2. External**

In recognition of the need to appropriately represent the partnership, we agree to the following protocol:

[outline who will serve as media contacts, process for sharing partnership information, etc.]

---

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Representative for Your Organization*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Representative for Partner*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Title*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Title*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



Fire Safe Seniors

SAMPLE PITCH LETTER FOR REQUESTING SUPPORT  
FROM LOCAL STORES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

[Date]

[Name of Store Manager]

[Title]

[Name of Store]

[Address]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Name of Store Manager]:

The commitment of [NAME OF STORE] to public safety is well known. Therefore, [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] and [NAME OF PARTNERING ORGANIZATION] would like to invite you to support the Fire Safe Seniors smoke alarm installation and fire safety education program. Smoke alarms are the most effective tool we have to prevent deaths from fire, but many [TOWN/CITY] residents do not have working alarms in their homes. With the support of [NAME OF STORE], we will be able to reach more local residents, particularly older adults, than ever before.

[NAME OF STORE] can support this life-saving program in many ways, including donating smoke alarms and batteries, making a financial contribution, or letting your customers know about the installation campaign. I hope that you will consider partnering with us to make this essential safety program a success.

In return, we will recognize the support of [NAME OF STORE] by [clearly explain how you plan to promote the business's involvement in your program].

I will follow up with you next week and look forward to speaking with you about ways that we can work together to increase fire safety in [TOWN/CITY]. I can be reached at [phone number and email address] if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Name of Organization]

[Address]



Fire Safe Seniors

## TIPS FOR COLLABORATING WITH FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Have you decided to engage your local fire department but do not know where to start? Use the following tips to help position your program in an appealing manner, increasing your chances to have a successful partnership.

- 1) **Be knowledgeable about your local fire department structure.** Find out whether they are managed by the municipal government, county government, or a fire district. Who is the appropriate contact person within that structure?
- 2) **Find out if they are already implementing smoke alarm installation and fire safety education programs in your community.** If they are, identify the person in charge of these initiatives and their program goals. Explore ways to complement their efforts.
- 3) **Minimize their burden to support your program.** Have your staff and volunteers do as much work as possible. Be mindful that, if you are working with a volunteer fire department, they may have limited time to donate to your program.
- 4) **Assign a contact person to manage the planning and ongoing communication with the fire department and volunteers.** Having one primary point of contact will avoid any confusion and make communication more effective.
- 5) **Be flexible.** Fire departments often receive emergency calls in the middle of meetings and trainings. Although these interruptions may be disruptive, remember that responding to fires is their first priority.
- 6) **Identify benefits to the fire department.** Think about ways in which this collaboration can improve their organization and help them achieve their goals. For example, if they are looking for ways to increase community support for the fire department, this type of collaboration would be beneficial.
- 7) **Recognize their collaboration.** Offer to include their logo in your educational materials, write an article for the local newspaper about their support, provide them with program T-shirts, or host a luncheon to thank them for their collaboration.

SOURCE: Adapted from *Working with Your Local Fire Department* by Rich Marinucci, Fire Chief, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every receipt, invoice, and bill should be properly filed and indexed for easy retrieval. This not only helps in tracking expenses but also ensures compliance with tax regulations.

In the second section, the author provides a detailed breakdown of the company's financial performance over the last fiscal year. This includes a comparison of actual results against budgeted figures, highlighting areas of both success and concern. The analysis covers various departments, from sales and marketing to operations and R&D.

The third section focuses on the company's strategic initiatives and how they are being implemented. It outlines the key goals for the upcoming year and the resources allocated to achieve them. The author also discusses the challenges faced and the strategies being employed to overcome them.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the overall financial health and a look ahead at the future prospects. It reiterates the commitment to transparency and accountability in all financial reporting.



Appendix 3  
*Sample Consent and Waiver Form*



Fire Safe Seniors

## Fire Safe Seniors Program

### *Consent and Waiver Form*

As a participant in the Fire Safe Seniors Program implemented by [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION], I understand and agree to the following:

1. My participation in the program is completely voluntary, and there is no cost or obligation for me to participate;
2. My decision to continue to participate or not will have no effect on the services I receive from [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION];
3. My home has been assessed by a representative of [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION], who has determined that one or more new smoke alarms are needed;
4. A local fire department or staff or volunteer from [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] will visit my home and install new smoke alarms, which will be provided to me at no cost or obligation;
5. That certain information about me, such as my name, address, and phone number, will be shared with [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] and a local fire department to enable them to contact me for the installation service;
6. That each smoke alarm being provided to me comes “as is” as a gift for which I have not paid or promised anything and that the smoke alarm was not manufactured by or altered in any way by [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] or the local fire department installing the fire alarm, none of which make any representations or warranties about its safety, use, condition, or reliability; and
7. That in exchange for this gift and free service, I hereby release, waive, discharge, and agree not to sue [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] or the local fire department installing the smoke alarm(s) for any claim of any kind (including claims for personal injury) that may result from my participation in this program or from the installation of such smoke alarm(s).

Understood and agreed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

Appendix 4  
*Sample Flyer*

# Free Smoke Alarms



Fire Safe Seniors

*Are you age 65 or older or do you know someone who is?*

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] is partnering with the fire department to install free smoke alarms in homes of eligible adults age 65 and older in [NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY].

Residents receiving free alarms will also benefit from life-saving education about fire safety.

For more information, please contact:  
**Jane Smith, Program Coordinator**  
**(555) 555-5555 or [jsmith@yourorganization.org](mailto:jsmith@yourorganization.org)**

INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME OR LOGO HERE

Appendix 5  
*Sample Community Press Release*



Fire Safe Seniors

SAMPLE COMMUNITY PRESS RELEASE

[Place on your letterhead]

FOR RELEASE ON: [Month Day, Year]

Contact:

Telephone:

Email:

Web site:

**[Insert Organization Name] to Install Smoke Alarms in [Location]  
Activities are Part of a Community-Wide Effort to Keep Seniors Safe from  
Fire-Related Injuries and Death**

[Insert city/state]—As part of a community-wide fire prevention effort called Fire Safe Seniors, volunteers from [list of participating organizations] will visit local residents aged 65 years and older on [Month, Day] to perform free smoke alarm inspections and install smoke alarms as needed.

According to [insert your spokesperson's name], the smoke alarm inspections are an opportunity to inform people in communities about ways to prevent fires and how to respond to fires in their homes. Through the smoke alarm inspection program, we can raise awareness about fire prevention and provide residents with useful information and resources about fire safety.

[Insert a paragraph that highlights key aspects of your inspections.]

Fires are the seventh most common cause of unintentional injury deaths in the United States.\* Most victims of fire die from smoke or toxic gases and not from burns. Smoke alarms give people more time to get out before inhaling smoke or gases. Older adults are about three times more likely to die in fires than younger adults and over two times more likely to die in fires than children ages 1 to 4 years. The death rate for older adults increases with age. By the age of 85, the death rate is more than four times the overall U.S. rate.

In [insert city/state], approximately [insert statewide statistics if available].

[Insert quote from local spokesperson.]

For more information on the Fire Safe Seniors Program, go to [insert your organization's Web site] or call [insert contact number].

###

\*These statistics use 2010 data and are current as of May 2013. Please consult <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html> for more up-to-date data.

Appendix 6  
*Letter to the Editor Template*



Fire Safe Seniors

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATE

[Place on your letterhead]

[Date]

[Newspaper name]

[Newspaper address]

[Newspaper fax number]

[Email address]

RE: [Headline and author if you are referencing a story in your local newspaper]

Dear Editor: [This should be general. You do not need to include the name of the editor.]

**First Paragraph:** State why you are writing. If you want to challenge points made in earlier articles or letters about fire safety, reference the original documents and briefly state your point of view. To add information to an earlier article or letter, again reference the original article and briefly cite the new data.

**Second Paragraph:** This paragraph should convey some brief background material. You can explain how the Fire Safe Seniors Program is working within your community to help prevent fire-related injuries and death. You can also add supporting information, such as recent data or statistics on fire safety and older adults.

**Third Paragraph:** Your opinion should be included in this paragraph. Summarize what you want readers to know about the Fire Safe Seniors Program or fire safety among older adults in general. In conclusion, reemphasize the main point of your letter and tell readers how they can help promote fire safety activities through your organization.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

[Your name (typed) and title(s)]

[Telephone number and email address]



Appendix 7  
*Op-Ed Template*



Fire Safe Seniors

OP-ED TEMPLATE

[Place on your letterhead]

[Date]

Contact:

Telephone:

Email:

Web site:

**Title:** Suggest a title that emphasizes the main point and attracts attention. The newspaper may rewrite the title.

**Opening:** The introductory paragraph should engage the reader and clearly state the importance of promoting fire safety among older adults. You might begin with a statement of fact, a true-life story from a third-person perspective, or a reference to current events.

**Body:** This paragraph should explain why fire prevention among older adults is an important public health and safety problem. Cite statistics on fire-related injuries and death that highlight the extent of the problem. Provide local statistics to help readers see why this subject matters to them.

The body of the op-ed also should provide information on the Fire Safe Seniors Program and how your organization is offering solutions to the problem of fire-related injuries and death among older adults.

**Call to Action:** Ask readers or decision makers for support in a specific way.

**Conclusion:** Wrap up your op-ed by referencing the facts, current events, or personal stories mentioned in the opening paragraph. Give a clear picture of the situation, including the local perspective, with the solution in place. End the piece by reemphasizing your main point.

## Appendix 8

*Sample 30-Second Live-Read Public  
Service Announcement Script for Radio*



Fire Safe Seniors

SAMPLE 30-SECOND LIVE-READ PUBLIC SERVICE  
ANNOUNCEMENT SCRIPT FOR RADIO

**TITLE:** *SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES*  
**LENGTH:** *30 SECONDS*

ADULTS OLDER THAN 65 ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE IN HOUSE FIRES THAN YOUNGER ADULTS. HAVING A WORKING SMOKE ALARM CUTS THE CHANCE OF DYING IN A FIRE IN HALF. DO YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONES AGE 65 AND OLDER HAVE WORKING SMOKE ALARMS?

THE [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] IS PARTNERING WITH THE LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT TO INSTALL FREE SMOKE ALARMS IN THE HOMES OF OLDER ADULTS IN [NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY]. TO SIGN UP FOR THIS FREE SERVICE, PLEASE CALL 555-555-5555.

Appendix 9  
*Sample Tracking Sheet for  
Process Evaluation*



Fire Safe Seniors

SAMPLE TRACKING SHEET FOR PROCESS EVALUATION

Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

| Activities  | Quantities  |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Service-Related   | Community 1 | Community 2 | Community 3 |
| Homes canvassed   |             |             |             |
| Phone inquiries received                                    |             |             |             |
| Email inquiries received                                    |             |             |             |
| Homes enrolled in program                                   |             |             |             |
| Homes enrolled with no working smoke alarms                 |             |             |             |
| Smoke alarms installed                                      |             |             |             |
| Education sessions conducted                                |             |             |             |
| Residents educated  |             |             |             |
| Caregivers and family members educated                      |             |             |             |
| Educational materials distributed                           |             |             |             |
| <i>Flyer: Smoke alarms/escape plans</i>                     |             |             |             |
| <i>Flyer: Fire risk factors</i>                             |             |             |             |
| <i>Refrigerator magnets</i>                                 |             |             |             |
| <i>Phone stickers</i>                                       |             |             |             |
| <i>Emergency number cards</i>                               |             |             |             |
| Follow-up visits/surveys completed                          |             |             |             |
| Training  | Site 1      | Site 2      | Site 3      |
| Staff and/or volunteers trained to conduct home assessments |             |             |             |
| Staff and/or volunteers trained to install smoke alarms     |             |             |             |
| Staff and/or volunteers trained to provide education        |             |             |             |
| Promotion   |             |             |             |
| Flyers distributed  |             |             |             |
| Posters distributed   |             |             |             |
| Other:  |             |             |             |