CAL CONNECT

HINGHAM
Center for Active Living
Connect • Discover • Grow

To the Hingham Community,

Programming: Understanding Its Role in Designing the Hingham Center for Active Living Project

What Is Programming?

Programming in building projects is about people. It is the process of gathering and analyzing input from staff, leadership, and community members to define what spaces are needed, how large they should be, and how they work together. For the Hingham Center for Active Living, programming ensures the new facility reflects the unique needs of older adults, staff, and the community by aligning today's priorities—like fitness, wellness, education, and social activities—with tomorrow's growth and evolving expectations. Done well, it creates a clear roadmap that avoids the risks of overbuilding or underbuilding, ensuring a center that is both efficient and impactful.

> **DID YOU KNOW…**
> that the HCAL programming costs the Town NOTHING thanks to the high number of volunteers, community partnerships, fees, grants and donations.

HCAL Project Anchored in Local & State Data

To make sure our programming is grounded in well-researched, trustworthy information, we turn to two essential resources:

- The **2022 Aging in Hingham: A Community Needs Assessment** (survey of 1,179 Hingham residents age 45+)
- The **Massachusetts Healthy Aging Community Profile for Hingham** (2025 version)

These sources help us translate demographic trends, needs, and aspirations into spatial and functional decisions for HCAL.

Key Findings & Implications for HCAL Programming

Demographics & Growth

- Already, over **30.8 % of Hingham's population is 60 or older** (versus ~23.8 % statewide)
- For those 65+, Hingham's share (~23.3 %) is well above the state average (17.1 %)
- Projections from the UMass / Donahue Institute show that by **2035, older residents may comprise 39 % of Hingham's population**
- The 2022 local assessment confirms that "Hingham is already aging" — more than 1 in 4 residents is age 60+, and this share is increasing.

Health, Social, and Living Conditions

- Among Hingham residents 65+, a sizable share **(32.5 %) live alone**
- Older adults in Hingham show lower-than-average rates of many chronic conditions compared to state benchmarks, but **higher rates** of hip fractures, Alzheimer's/dementia, osteoporosis, ischemic heart disease, glaucoma, and arthritis
- The local report finds economic inequality among seniors: **24 % of households headed by someone 65+ report annual incomes under $25,000**
- The assessment also highlights increasing demand in program areas such as **exercise/fitness, lifelong learning, social/cultural events, support for those with physical or cognitive impairment, and caregiver services**
- Transportation is already identified as a key barrier, especially for less mobile residents

Implication for HCAL:

Design must emphasize accessibility, safety, and ease of movement. We cannot just build

rooms — we need distributed seating, handrails, visual contrast, / universally accessible restrooms in multiple zones, and **integrated telehealth / virtual programming infrastructure**. We also need to plan for partnerships or in-house provision of **case management, caregiver resources, and outreach**.

Current Usage & Service Gaps

- In 2024, HCAL offered **2,246 program sessions** across **161 program types** and had **1,182 active members**
- However, the existing building is constrained: **insufficient space, limited parking, and restricted indoor/outdoor relationships** currently limit program growth and accessibility
- Study respondents frequently mentioned the need for **more physical fitness / movement programming, educational / cultural programming, and special events**
- The assessment also calls out the need for **program support for individuals with cognitive or physical limitations and their caregivers**, and the need for **staff growth** to maximize utilization of new and existing space

---

Why This Matters - The Impact

- These design decisions are not speculative; they flow from **real demographic trends** and **expressed resident preferences**, strengthening the credibility of our planning.
- Building too small or too rigid is a trap: we risk denying critical programming just when demand is rising.
- By designing with flexibility and adaptability, HCAL ensures it remains relevant, usable, and financially viable for decades.
- Grounding design in data will also help justify funding requests (grants, municipal support), by showing that space decisions are evidence-based.

Please Join the Conversation

The CAL project is the product of thoughtful community conversations and shared goals. As we move forward, your voice matters. We will be engaging you throughout the process and look forward to your questions and feedback. Visit the project website for up-to-date information— and sign up below to get these newsletters sent to your inbox.

Sign Up for Project Newsletters	**HCAL Building Project Website**

Center for Active Living Building Committee: Tom Carey (Chair), Beth Rouleau (Vice-Chair), Vicki Donlan, Joseph Kelly, Sally O'Hare, Jean Silverio, Steve Young, Jennifer Young (CAL Director, ex officio, non-voting member)

Council on Aging (COA): Joe Nevins (Chair), Sara Smithson (Vice-Chair), Rory Earley, Ethel Franks, Karen Johnson, Lucinda King-Frode, Leon Merian, Joshua Ross, Jean Silverio, Elaine Ward

Friends of the Center for Active Living (FOCAL): John Slater (President), Nick Amdur, David Anderson, Betty Foley, Dorothy Galo, Yvette Kanter, Donna Linskey, Eileen McCracken