New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well gives the 2025 Carl F. West Award for Excellence in Aging to Governor Phil Murphy and the Murphy Administration

Each year at our annual conference, New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well recognizes outstanding work in the field of aging through the Carl F. West Award. NJAAW considers "Excellence" not a one-time event, but a consistent approach that fosters innovation and continuous improvements with long-term benefits for older adults.

This year, we are pleased to announce the Carl F. West Award is given to Governor Phil Murphy and the Murphy Administration for their work towards making New Jersey an age-friendly state.

In March 2021, Governor Phil Murphy announced that New Jersey was applying to become an age-friendly state under the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Through Executive Order 227, he set a path and structure for the Department of Human Services to develop, expand and support communities that are welcoming and livable not only for older residents, but people of all ages.

The Executive Order created an Age-Friendly State Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from state and local government, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community groups to work with the Department of Human Services. In May 2024, the Department published the Age-Friendly Blueprint, which outlines strategies and practices that municipalities, counties, and business organizations can undertake to create age-friendly communities. Since the release of the Blueprint, the Division of Aging Services opened the Age-Friendly Grants Program for new age-friendly communities and projects.

In addition, over the past few years, the NJ Department of Human Services and the Division of Aging Services have significantly expanded the eligibility criteria for older residents to receive help with prescriptions, hearing aids, utilities and other services - all of which enable residents to plan ahead and remain in the state and the communities that they love.

The work of the Age-Friendly Advisory Council, the publication of the Age-Friendly Blueprint by the Division of Aging Services and the age-friendly grant program lay a clear plan forward for New Jersey to prepare for its shifting demographics and be a state that is great not only to raise a family, but to age and retire in.

NJ Department of Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman is scheduled to accept the award at the "Faces of Aging" conference on May 16.

Previous award winners include:
2024 – The Irma Rivera Center, Christina Seix Academy
2023 - Marilyn Mock, Fair Share Support Services
2022 – Elizabeth Davis, Brightsode Manor
2021 - JESPY House

About the Carl F. West Award:

Carl F. West, a New Jersey resident all his life, had a long and distinguished career in public service. As Director of the Mercer County Office on Aging from 1967 to 2004, and as a cabinet member for the Mercer County Executive, he worked tirelessly to bring the issues facing older adults to the attention of elected officials and policy makers. In 1998, he and County Directors from Middlesex, Hunterdon and Union counties stepped forward to form the NJ Foundation for Aging, now New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well. Carl also lent his talents to leadership positions with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the National Caucus and Center on Black Aging. He was President of the National Caucus and an active Board member for more than three decades.

Established after his death in 2018, NJAAW's Carl F. West Award recognizes his legacy as founding trustee and his contributions to the field of aging. The award recognizes outstanding programs, organizations and individuals that provide extraordinary service in their work with older NJ residents.