AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities

An institutional affiliate of the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities©
As our population ages and people stay healthy and active longer, communities need to adapt.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities helps participating communities become great places by adopting such features as walkable streets, better housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

Well-designed, livable communities help sustain economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents — of all ages.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is an affiliate of the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for their own and the world’s growing population of older adults and the parallel trend of urbanization.

**AARP’s Role**

AARP’s participation in the age-friendly network advances the Association’s efforts to help people live easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age. AARP encourages older adults to take an active role in their communities’ plans and ensures that their voices are heard. Related initiatives focus on areas such as housing, caregiving, community engagement, volunteering, social inclusion and combating isolation among older people.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, AARP works with local officials and partner organizations around the United States to identify communities for membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. AARP facilitates the community’s enrollment and guides it through the implementation and assessment process.

Within a year of the AARP program’s April 2012 launch, 17 communities had enrolled. We’ve been steadily growing ever since. (To see the current member list visit aarp.org/agefriendly.)
The 8 Domains of Livability

Our goal: Increase the number of communities that support healthy aging, which will thereby improve the well-being, satisfaction and quality of life for older Americans.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities targets improvements in eight domains that influence the health and quality of life of older adults. The livability domains, and what they represent, are as follows:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**: Availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities.

2. **Transportation**: Safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation.

3. **Housing**: Availability of home modification programs for aging in place as well as a range of age-friendly housing options.

4. **Social Participation**: Access to leisure and cultural activities, including opportunities for older residents to socialize and engage with their peers as well as with younger people.
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.

6. **Civic Participation and Employment:** Paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in the formulation of policies relevant to their lives.

7. **Communication and Information:** Access to communications technology and other resources so older residents can connect with their community, friends and family.

8. **Community Support and Health Services:** Access to home-based care services, health clinics and programs that promote wellness and active aging.
Criteria & Process

Communities participating in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities commit to improving their age-friendliness and submit to a rigorous assessment cycle. How this happens:

1. An AARP state office identifies cities, towns and counties it believes can commit to a continual cycle of improvement in the eight livability domains. AARP then informs municipal officials of the program and ascertains the community’s interest.

2. The mayor or municipal administrator writes a letter to the AARP state office indicating the community’s commitment. AARP then advises the World Health Organization of the municipality’s intent and facilitates its enrollment in the AARP and global age-friendly networks.

3. Upon entry into the age-friendly network, the community moves through the following phases:

**Phase 1: Planning (Years 1-2)**

- Establish mechanisms to involve older people in all stages of the age-friendly cities and communities process
- Conduct a comprehensive and inclusive baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the community
- Develop a three-year community-wide action plan based on assessment findings
- Identify indicators to monitor progress against the plan

**Phase 2: Implementation (Years 3-5)**

- Commit to implementing the approved action plan
- Submit a progress report at the end of the five years that outlines progress against the baseline using the indicators developed in the action plan
Phase 3: Continual Improvements (Year 5 and Beyond)

- Make continual improvements
- Membership is automatically renewed following a positive assessment and the submission of a revised action plan

Benefits of Membership

Members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities become part of a global network of communities committed to providing older adults the opportunity to live rewarding, productive and safe lives. Benefits of membership include:

- Organizational guidance from national experts
- Streamlined admission into the World Health Organization’s age-friendly network
- Resources for identifying and developing assessment and survey tools
- Information about identifying and developing community-success criteria
- Strategies for identifying and developing ways to monitor progress
- Access to a network of communities and best practices
- Access to a volunteer network of support
- Access to evaluation tools
- Invitations to organized trainings and networking events

Resources at aarp.org/livable

- Support and guidance from AARP
- Public recognition by AARP and others of the community’s commitment to become more age-friendly

There is no fee to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.
AARP and the World Health Organization: A Shared Vision

Well-designed, livable communities promote well-being and sustain economic growth, and they make for happier, healthier residents — of all ages.

The World Health Organization’s age-friendly communities concept closely aligns with AARP policies and initiatives.

AARP Livable Communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties and even states to become great places for all ages. AARP believes that communities should provide walkable streets, suitable housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

To empower communities across the country to better respond to the needs of their residents, AARP targets local officials, policymakers, citizen activists and people age 50-plus in its advocacy efforts, policy work and educational programs in the issue areas of housing, transportation, mobility, community design and land use and planning. Key initiatives include Complete Streets advocacy, community engagement workshops and programs to promote universal design.
Additional Information

To learn more about the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, visit aarp.org/agefriendly.

To learn about the work of AARP Livable Communities, visit aarp.org/livable.

Contact Us

To locate and connect with the AARP state office near you, call 1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277), visit aarp.org/states or email AARP Livable Communities at livable@aarp.org.
Opposite page: Age-friendly communities include transportation options for non-drivers and opportunities for residents to participate in community planning. Above: Such livable places also feature walkable streets and (top) activities that encourage social and civic engagement.

Photographs courtesy of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.
Left: Community leaders from Macon-Bibb, Georgia, celebrate joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Below: A sample membership certificate.

Encourage your town or city to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities

aarp.org/agefriendly

AARP
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