

AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities **AT A GLANCE**

Making Plans, Taking Action

America's population is rapidly aging.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Americans age 65 or older will grow by almost 50 percent from 2016 to 2030. By 2034, the nation will have more people age 65 or older than under 18. By 2060, nearly 1 in 4 people in the United States will be at least 65 years old.

The **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** supports the work of local, regional and state governments as they prepare for the nation's changing demographics.

The AARP network was founded in 2012. Its membership consists of towns, cities, counties, states and, so far, one territory that, by joining, have made a commitment to making its communities more livable for people of all ages.

The program's framework equips local leaders and residents to assess the needs of older adults related to housing, public spaces, transportation, community involvement and more. Once identified, those needs can be incorporated into a clear action plan for achieving solutions.

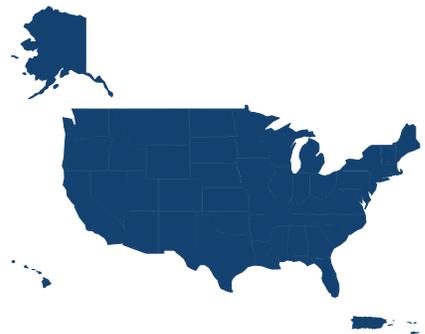
At the start of 2020, the network included more than 450 communities. (About 10 are added each month, on average.) More than 100 million Americans now live in a community that is committed to being age-friendly.

Community Population Size

- 45% have fewer than 24,999 residents**
- 26% have 25,000 to 124,999 residents**
- 15% have 125,000 to 399,999 residents**
- 14% have more than 400,000 residents**

Membership by Community Type

- 6 States**
- 1 Territory**
- 79 Counties**
- 221 Cities**
- 138 Towns**
- 10 Villages**
- 5 Townships**
- 2 Boroughs**



As of May 1, 2020

The Impact of Membership

60% of communities achieved a change in policy.

- The most common success: integrating an “age-friendly lens” into community planning
- The most frequent “wins,” by category: housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and buildings, and health and community services

34% secured a private sector investment or action.

- The most frequent categories: housing, health and community services, and communication and information

85% reported “other successes,” categorized as:

- Raising awareness of livable issues
- Increasing collaboration within the community
- Enacting programs described in the action plan
- Integrating age-friendliness into strategic planning

From a survey of 99 member communities with a completed action plan.



Most Common Needs by Areas of Focus

Many members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities use the **‘8 Domains of Livability’** to organize and prioritize their work. The items listed below are the most common objectives being pursued within each domain.

TRANSPORTATION

- Comprehensive plans that promote affordable, accessible, reliable and quick transportation and pedestrian-friendly roads and sidewalks
- Services that enable nondrivers, especially older adults, to get around their community
- Public transportation that is easy to use, timely, available and safe
- Increased awareness about existing transportation options

RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION

- More intergenerational, culturally inclusive activities
- Better use of the skills and experience older people bring to solving community problems
- Encouragement for older people to spend time with others
- Communities that see their older residents as vital resources rather than needy dependents

OUTDOOR SPACES and BUILDINGS

- Public venues that can be easily and safely visited by older adults
- Safe and accessible parks and green spaces
- Safe, clean and accessible public restrooms and water fountains
- Benches and other seating



HOUSING

- Improved affordability
- Expanded options, including apartments, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and single-story homes
- Accommodations for both buyers and renters (including cohousing and home sharing)
- Options that meet, or can be modified to meet, the needs of older adults

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

- Activities and destinations that are fun, entertaining and welcoming
- Opportunities to join local activities through clubs and service organizations
- Invitations to join or help lead programs and events
- Programs that enable people of different ages and life stages to engage with one another

COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION

- Increased awareness among older adults of community resources and how to find them
- Ways to find information or seek assistance without having to use an internet-connected computer or smartphone
- “One-stop” resource centers or clearinghouses for accessing local information

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT and WORK

- Opportunities for older adults to be involved in their community through volunteering
- Fair access to paid employment for older workers
- Work that is suitable to the skills and physical abilities of older adults
- Consideration by local leaders and neighbors of the views and needs of older residents

HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Nearby, affordable health care services
- Health and wellness activities
- Disease management, including for age-related conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease and dementia
- Support for caregivers and those in need of care

Member Snapshots A sampling of communities taking action

TUCSON, ARIZONA

Population: 535,677*
Community Type: Midsize city
Joined the Network: 2016
Action Plan Released: 2018
Program Leads: United Way of Tucson and ELDER Alliance
Website: UnitedWayTucson.org/Elder
Twitter: @cityoftucson, @connect_tucson
Hashtag: #AgeFriendlyTucson

The action plan developed by the city and the ELDER Alliance focuses on all eight of the 8 Domains of Livability. Goals include improving the quality and accessibility of the public parks system and green spaces, making the new Sun Link streetcar system even more accessible, and expanding transportation options (both public and private). The city has committed to implementing its newly adopted Complete Streets policy and to increasing the quantity of safe, affordable and accessible housing. To combat social isolation among older residents, Tucson promotes activity programs and partners with local businesses and organizations to make events more affordable and inclusive.

FISHERS, INDIANA

Population: 91,830
Community Type: Small city
Joined the Network: 2019
Action Plan Released: 2020
Program Lead: Age-Friendly Fishers
Website: Fishers.in.us/1090/Age-Friendly-Fishers
Twitter: @FishersIN
Hashtag: #AgeFriendlyFishers

The Age-Friendly Fishers committee incorporated all of the livability into its comprehensive plan. Goals include making the city's parks and public spaces accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities. Fishers is exploring a zoning ordinance update to incentivize the use of universal design features in residential properties and allow for expanded housing options, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs). As expressed in the plan, Fishers is committed to improving walkability and the city's transportation options. The plan also calls for more community outreach by the police and fire departments and a centralized source for communications between the city and older residents.

GRAYSON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Population: 15,665
Community Type: Rural
Joined the Network: 2017
Action Plan Released: 2018
Program Lead: Grayson County Senior Advocacy Committee
Website: GraysonCountyVA.gov
Twitter: @GraysonCountyVA
Hashtag: #AgeFriendlyGraysonVA

In addition to supporting local efforts to expand access to high-speed internet service, the age-friendly advocacy committee is focusing on Grayson County's serious health challenges. According to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, the county is medically underserved. The uninsured rate among adults is 13 percent. Nearly 20 percent of residents report being in fair to poor health — and there are no primary care clinics in the western, most rural part of the county. There's just one dentist in the entire county. Although the committee's efforts to secure federal funding for a health clinic didn't succeed, a nearby, federally-qualified clinic is planning to expand into Grayson County. Another neighboring clinic has offered to provide a mobile dental care program.

Who (or What) Is Leading the Work

- 37% Government Agency**
- 33% Age-Friendly Advisory Committee**
- 21% Volunteers**
- 18% Senior Citizens Center**
- 17% Local Nonprofit**
- 17% Area Agency on Aging**
- 11% College or University**
- 9% Mayor's Office**
- 6% Local Businesses**
- 6% Foundation**
- 6% Planning Office or Government Council**
- 3% United Way**
- 3% Chamber of Commerce**

From a 2019 survey of 380 member communities

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Population: 182,827 **Community Type:** Midsize city
Joined the Network: 2017 **Action Plan Released:** 2019
Program Leads: City of Fort Lauderdale and the Age-Friendly Fort Lauderdale Council
Website: *FortLauderdale.gov*
Twitter: @FTLCityNews
Hashtag: #AgeFriendlyFortLauderdale

The Fort Lauderdale age-friendly action plan consists of four focus areas: Health and Wellness, Transportation, Housing, Socialization. Developed by the Age-Friendly Fort Lauderdale Council — along with representatives from the city’s parks and recreation, transportation and mobility, and housing departments — the plan commits Fort Lauderdale to expanding activities for older adults and ensuring that public spaces are usable by people of all ages and physical abilities. The city is seeking to expand its Sun Trolley system, designate new bike lanes, and improve pedestrian and roadway safety. Another goal is to create transit-oriented housing developments that connect residents with employment opportunities, shopping and needed services.

EASTPORT, MAINE

Population: 1,267 **Community Type:** Small, remote city
Joined the Network: 2016 **Action Plan Released:** 2019
Program Lead: City of Eastport
Website: *Eastport-ME.gov/Age-Friendly-Committee*
Twitter: @Eastportme
Hashtag: #AgeFriendlyEastport

Eastport’s age-friendly action plan is part of the island community’s comprehensive plan. The work was convened by Eastport’s city council and included the planning board, several local businesses and the Washington County Council of Governments. Eastport seeks to preserve its character and public access to the shoreline while encouraging economic growth with a focus on tourism, commercial fishing and light industry. An investment in high-speed internet and infrastructure will support these efforts and enable Eastport to boost its shrinking population size by promoting itself as a great place to live for people who can telework. Since the vast majority of the area’s housing stock was built before 1940 and is unaffordable for about half of the population, Eastport is prioritizing access to “affordable, decent housing,” by allowing a mixture of housing types, including accessory apartments, and educating residents about home modifications that can improve safety and enable single-story living.

THE STATE OF MAINE

Population: 1,344,212
Joined the Network: 2019
Website: *Maine.gov*
Program Lead: Maine Office of Aging and Disability Services

With a median age of 44.9 years old, Maine has the oldest population in the nation. It is also the most rural state, with six out of 10 residents living in a rural area. Prior to the state itself joining the network, more than 70 Maine-based towns, cities and villages had already enrolled.

“In Maine, people over age 50 start the largest percentage of new businesses and donate more to charities,” Governor Janet T. Mills told AARP. “They share their decades of experience with students searching for successful careers and, in exchange, they receive millennials’ guidance on navigating new technology.” But, she added, “every day some Maine seniors struggle to steer wheelchairs through narrow hallways or climb steep stairs with aching knees.”

Maine is using voter-approved bonds to build affordable housing for older adults and to modify, repair and weatherize existing homes. Efforts are underway to combat elder abuse, make prescription drugs more affordable and develop a statewide age-friendly action plan. The AARP network supports Maine towns as they adopt and implement innovative programs that, Mills notes, “benefit not only older Mainers but Mainers of all ages.”

The **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** is a program of the **AARP Livable Communities** initiative.

- Learn more about the network and check out the roster of member communities: [AARP.org/AgeFriendly-Member-List](https://www.aarp.org/AgeFriendly-Member-List)
- Find free publications, information about the AARP Community Challenge grant program and more at [AARP.org/Livable](https://www.aarp.org/Livable)
- Subscribe to the free, weekly AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter: [AARP.org/LivableSubscribe](https://www.aarp.org/LivableSubscribe)

Twitter: @AARPLivable | **Facebook:** @AARPLivableCommunities | **Email:** Livable@AARP.org

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. | [AARP.org](https://www.aarp.org)