Membership Application

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** and the **World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**

- If you have questions while completing this form, please email [livable@aarp.org](mailto:livable@aarp.org)
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper

**Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE:** 12/17/2021

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY:** City of Columbus

**STATE:** Georgia

**POPULATION SIZE:** 206,922

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 19.2%

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** B.H. Henderson, Mayor

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** 100 10th Street Columbus, Georgia 31901

**Section 2: COMMUNITY CONTACT for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities**

- The community contact is the local staff member or volunteer who is primarily responsible for carrying out the community-level work — it is not the responsible AARP staff member.

**NAME:** Holli Browder

**POSITION:** Director of Parks and Recreation

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Please describe the named person’s role in the city or community’s age-friendly initiative:

Holli Browder is the Director of the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department. She oversee programs and initiatives of the City in regards to programs and opportunities for citizens of all ages in the Columbus-Muscogee County community.

The person named above agrees to be subscribed to the **AARP Livable Communities Weekly e-Newsletter**, which is one of the primary ways we share useful news and resources. To add additional subscribers, type their names and email addresses into below. Once this application is processed, a subscription confirmation message will be sent so the individual can confirm that they want to subscribe. To subscribe today, follow the link above or visit [AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe](http://AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe).
Section 3: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ENGAGEMENTS and COLLABORATIONS

1) Please provide a brief summary of the community policies, programs and services that are targeted toward older people and how the community plans to become more age-friendly.

The 2038 Comprehensive Plan in conjunction with the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce – Columbus 2025 has set forth goals as outlined in the Columbus 2038 Comprehensive Plan. These goals address the 8 domains of Livability which include Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect and Social Inclusion; Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information; and Community and Health Services. https://www.columbusga.gov/Planning/pdfs/cplan2038-UPDATE.pdf This will serve as a guide for the City of Columbus and its partners as plans are made for the community and how we can become more age-friendly. In addition, as part of this process numerous programs, services and facilities are already made available for the aged population of our community throughout Columbus, Georgia. Specifically, Columbus has four designated senior facilities: Fox Senior Center, Edgewood Senior Center, Gallops Senior Center, and Frank Chester Senior Center although the City also has eight additional recreation centers, and all offer programming for senior citizens there as well. Programs at all our facilities are geared to keep our older citizens physically and socially engaged as well as healthy and happy. The Columbus Parks and Recreation Senior Division is instrumental in bringing various community organizations together to provide services offered throughout Columbus. These programs are collaboratives with medical and health organizations as well as other services that are vital for older citizens. We are a conduit to help bridge gaps for seniors to receive information or get access to things they need. Locally we also work with the Columbus’s Sheriff Department who created the S.A.L.T Program (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together), designed specially to address concerns, to generate awareness, and to provide information about law enforcement trends, new/changes in laws, elder abuse, and scams/crimes that victimize seniors. This is a free service to our seniors. Throughout the year the department offers various senior fitness walks as a means of bringing seniors from all over the City together to meet and greet as well as enjoy physical activities and enjoy our parks. Annually, our seniors participate in NRPA Walk with Ease programs in which the senior walk programs are conducted 3-times a week. We also have been able to take our more active seniors who participate in our Active Adults programs ziplining across the Chattahoochee River as well as hiking various longer trails in and near Columbus. Currently, the department is working with the Mayor’s Health Task Force to begin a mobile recreation program that will work collaboratively with a mobile health unit and a mobile fresh food pantry unit that will allow us to go out into the community and serve neighborhoods that perhaps lack the opportunities found by those who live closer to such amenities. With these three units, we will be able to offer medical services, fresh food, and vegetables in areas that may exist as food deserts as well as physical activity to seniors who may not be able to get to a City recreation facility.

2) How will the community engage and involve older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly?
Recently a city-wide SPLOST was passed for the City of Columbus. Many departments will receive funds through the SPLOST that will aid the community in moving forward for engagement and involvement of our older citizens as projects and plans are made for the SPLOST funding. One example would be the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department who will benefit from this SPLOST in the amount of $48 million. Much of this funding will be used to upgrade and reinvigorate our existing parks which are aged and in much need of repairs. As part of our process for the projects that will be focused on the parks we will look to engage and involve our older citizens to be certain that new amenities meet the needs and are more age-friendly for people who have and want varying levels of activities. Focus meetings will be held in parks and recreation facilities and notices will be posted at all our recreation facilities including our senior ones as well as social media to get people from all areas as well as all demographics. In addition, programs at facilities will continue to move from being sedentary to being a more active environment. Programs will be designed and implemented that will provide more opportunities for active adults’ “seniors” who are physically able to participate. Seniors, themselves, will continue to be included and welcomed in the planning stages for all activities and programs.

3) Briefly describe the mechanisms the community has or is planning to put in place to facilitate collaborative planning and implementation between different agencies and departments.

Collaborative efforts already exist within our community to network and include collaborative planning and implementation as demonstrated with the 2038 Comprehensive Plan. The broad network and outreach of those involved from all areas of the community not just in Columbus but in neighboring communities shows the dedication and forward thinking of those involved to cast a far-reaching net to be sure that everyone in our community is involved and included for today and for many years to come. This will continue to exist and function as we strive to achieve the goals that have been set forth over the next nearly 20 years. In regard to other current daily methods for collaboration and inclusion the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department has established relationships with several organizations and already has partnerships with various facilities within our city that provide information on a regular basis for our senior participants. This information is provided in the way of handouts, in-person educational and informational sessions, classes, health, and wellness checkups etc. Piedmont Columbus Regional, West Georgia Health Department, WellCare, Morningside of Columbus, Columbus Hospice and River Valley Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging represent some of the organizations we currently work with. These partnerships will continue, and we will look to further expand to reach out to other senior organizations to help with the implementation of active adult programming.
Section 4: NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

• Your answers to the following questions will help us complete your membership in the global age-friendly network and better enable us to understand how to support the network.

4) How do you hope to contribute to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

It is our goal to make Columbus a life-long home for all who wish to do so and that means making all aspects of living accessible for everyone. Columbus stands ready to assist and contribute as needed to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities as well as the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities. The WHO was established as a means for cities and communities to have the opportunity "to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning" it is our goal that we contribute any information or data possible that would further aid others. Columbus has long since been a valued and respected resource for other cities and communities and we certainly expect that we would continue to do so in providing information to assist others in striving to become a more age-friendly community as we move closer to reaching many of our goals that will positively improve our ability to be a more age-friendly community.

5) What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

In learning of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities, it became clear to the City of Columbus that becoming a member of this network was something we could certainly benefit from as well as help support by sharing our experiences with others. While we continue to focus on becoming an increasingly stronger age-friendly community, the opportunities to learn and collaborate with other States and Communities will allow us to network and broaden our perspective, to grow and achieve greater success in our focus to helping those who live in our community. We certainly want to be a part of such a positive network. We look forward to the opportunity to engage with other like-minded organizations and individuals who can help us to further the great work that has been done in making Columbus the life-long home for those who call Columbus, Georgia home today, tomorrow, and the future.

https://www.columbusga.gov/ We will also send a copy of our logo by email attachment to livable@aarp.org.
6) Provide a digital file or link of a logo or other image that represents your community and for which you have reprint rights. The image resolution should be at least 72 dpi. As an example of an image, here's ours: