Age Friendly MA AARP Application  
August 4, 2021  

Section 1, Community Details  
State: MA  
Community name: Hadley  
Total population: 5,338  
Percentage of residents age 60 or older: 32%  
Community Governance Structure: Town  
Community Type: Mixed  
Elected Official Signing the Community’s Letter of Commitment: David Fill  
Title: Select Board Chair  
Office mailing address: Town Hall, 100 Middle Street, Hadley, MA 01035  
Community Contact: Hayley Wood  

Community Contact role in initiative (100 word min):  
Hayley Wood will act as the main municipal advocate for the age-friendly initiative in Hadley. As such, she will convene monthly meetings of the already-formed Age- and Dementia-Friendly Hadley working group comprised of seniors in the community and fellow COA staff members. She will invite directors of other Town of Hadley departments as well as leaders in the community sectors identified in the age- and dementia-friendly focus areas to join the effort in a variety of ways, being sensitive to time constraints but alert to creative ways people can join the effort. She will be the principle liaison with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), which has entered into an agreement with the Town of Hadley to provide professional support for the initial year of Age-Friendly membership and planning. She will convene community conversations and focus groups in the Hadley Senior Center to increase support for the initiative as well as gather information about the town’s needs and priorities in regards to bolstering the ability for residents to age in place. She will lead efforts to distribute a written and online needs assessment survey that is being crafted in collaboration with the PVPC. Along with PVPC Senior Planner Becky Basch, she will analyze survey results and use this data to inform a strategy and set of priorities for activating age-friendly projects in Hadley.
1. Existing policies, programs, services, how will Hadley become more age friendly

The Hadley Senior Center building was completed in May 2020. It is a 10,250 square foot, attractively designed space with high-quality amenities that were chosen and designed for older adults. The staff of the Hadley Council on Aging consists of Director Hayley Wood (full time), Programs Coordinator Violet Suska (full time), Outreach Coordinator Lauren Hannigan (part time), and Van Driver Mark Glowatsky (part time). Seven members comprise the Hadley COA Board, which meets monthly, advises on policy, and makes programming recommendations. A dedicated group of 30 volunteers fills other important roles: reception, food preparation, food delivery, class instruction, and driving seniors to medical appointments. The Senior Center is available to anyone over 60, Monday-Friday, 9 AM-4 PM. Its wheelchair accessible van system runs three days a week. Services include assistance with seeking public benefits, SHINE appointments, weekly town nurse hours, footcare, AARP tax service, daily lunches, and monthly grocery distribution. Recreational and educational offerings include fitness classes (yoga, Tai Chi, and others), nutritional cooking classes, art classes, writing workshops, special van trips, unstructured use of our large living room/library and our Creativity Room (an art studio), and presentations featuring speakers on diverse topics. Hadley will become more age-friendly by creating, disseminating, and analyzing a community needs assessment survey designed to provide data that will guide age-friendly priorities, participating in a regional program to provide housing rehabilitation grants (if funded), expanding use of its existing Senior Tax Work Off program, and inviting community feedback and participation in many ways including contributing ideas to an interactive, visual “knowledge wall” that Hayley Wood will design in the building’s classroom. The COA staff and Age-Friendly working group will be responsive to community needs revealed through the survey and other means, such as public forums.

2. How will older adults be involved?

Hadley boasts a large network of seniors who gained the support of the majority of voters who passed, in a series of town meetings, the tax-dollar funding of the new building. This was a multi-year campaign that experienced set-backs and challenges. This group of supporters is the current core of Senior Center participants. In March 2021, COA Director Hayley Wood invited all older adults in Hadley via the newsletter to be involved in an Age- and Dementia-Friendly working group, which started in April. The group has nine members. Older adults will continually be invited to participate via public forums, focus groups, newsletter articles, social media posts, and an interactive knowledge-wall devoted to Age-Friendly MA. The survey will introduce people to the initiative and request their feedback. Survey parties will be held with refreshments and raffle prizes to encourage a strong response rate. The Friends of the Hadley COA will work to promote the initiative as well as the COA Board. Hadley Media, with a cable station and YouTube channel, will film public service announcements and other video content designed to increase awareness and invite participation. As the working group evolves and a work plan is created, specific ideas for ways to improve Hadley’s infrastructure for aging in place will be defined, and involved seniors with COA staff and other allies will advocate for specific proposals and projects at both Select Board meetings and Annual Town Meetings. Anticipated local initiatives include working to increase the stock of affordable housing, adaptation of public greenspace to be fully accessible to people using mobility devices, and local programs designed to support caregivers.
Members of the working group are working on a shared Google sheet for contacts in the various town sectors including faith communities, business, health, home care, finance, higher education, and housing. Group members will share the task of reaching out to these people to build awareness of Age- and Dementia-Friendly Hadley. Hayley Wood will spearhead the effort to gain support from other municipal departments and has already had success with current and past collaborations designed for older adults including providing space at the Senior Center for the Tax Collector to have walk-in office hours to assist those who want to pay a bill, design a payment plan, or ask questions. Jane Nevin-Smith, Select Board Member, is liaison with the Council on Aging. She is an ideal person for this role, being the president of the Friends of the Hadley COA and the Chair of the Senior Center Building Committee, which she led with great effectiveness. She is a member of the current Age-Friendly working group and will be an important ally in Town Hall. The Chair of the town’s Finance Committee has noted her eagerness to have regular hours that the Senior Center to offer assistance with check-book balancing. The University of MA-Amherst is a stone’s throw away as well as Five Colleges Learning in Retirement, of which one working group member is an active member. The new minister for the Hadley Congregational Church recently introduced himself to COA staff and is interested in the Age-Friendly process. A volunteer who is a member of Hadley’s mosque recently gave a presentation on Islam at the Senior Center and will doubtless be willing to introduce this initiative to her community. We expect many other connections and avenues of growth to emerge with this process.

Section 3

1-a:

Hayley Wood, who began her career in senior services five years ago, became acquainted with the Age-Friendly movement while she worked as an Outreach Coordinator for the Easthampton COA, which had recently engaged the UMass-Boston Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging to complete a planning study. In reading this study and working to surface significant data to share with the community, she became motivated to join the Age-Friendly movement. As director of the Hadley COA, she now has an opportunity to act on that motivation. Advocating for ever-increasing awareness of the ways municipalities and other organizations can promote aging in place for all people of all income levels has been a focus of her work since she joined the senior services sector as an ASAP Care Advisor in 2016.

1-b:

N/A

2:

Hadley’s partnership with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, which, funded by a grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, is supporting its work to join the Age-Friendly MA community by conducting monthly meetings, creating a Hadley needs assessment survey, analyzing results, and helping the Hadley Age-Friendly working group construct a one-year work plan, provides a unique opportunity to leverage planning expertise administrative support that would not be available otherwise. The interactive, visual knowledge wall that will both display Age- and Dementia-Friendly information and paradigms as well as invite participation and feedback, is a unique and creative way to invite a closer inspection of how this movement has the potential to influence policy and actual projects by using the
force of a collective set of values related to aging in place. Hayley Wood, trained in graphic facilitation, is well suited to creating this large-scale visual tool and has done so for the city of Easthampton.