Membership Application
Join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

Section 1: Community Details

Application Submission Date: 10/26/2021
State: Minnesota
Community Name: City of Oakdale
Total Population: 27,963
Percentage of Residents Age 60 or Older: 23.61%
Community Governance Structure: City
Community Type: Suburban (mostly residential)

Elected Official Signing the Community’s Letter of Commitment

Name (elected official): Paul Reinke
Title: Mayor
Office Mailing Address: City of Oakdale, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota 55128
Community Contact

The community contact is the community staff member or volunteer who is primarily responsible for carrying out the community-level work. (It is not the AARP staff member the community might be working with.)

Please describe the named person's role in the community's age-friendly initiative. (100 words minimum)

Colleen Herrmann will be the primary lead on the Age Friendly Oakdale task force team. She has been a member of the Oakdale Wellness 50+ team for approximately four years. She will be working with the task force to develop and complete the community survey and action plan. As the work progresses, she will call upon other members of the community and the Oakdale Wellness 50+ team to assist with the project. She will also work as a liaison with the city council to keep the council informed and solicit input on the plan. She will be the contact person for periodic updates and will work on the five-year progress report.

*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 subscribe now, visit AARP.org/LivableSubscribe. After completing the newsletter form, AARP will send an email — with the subject line "Action Required" — containing a link for you to confirm the subscription.*
Section 2: Community Activities, Engagements and Collaborations

Briefly describe your existing community policies, programs and services that are targeted toward older people. Please identify how your community plans to become more age-friendly. (250-300 words required)

The Oakdale Wellness 50+ team began its work seven years ago with a team of six volunteers. Its first project was with a senior residential cooperative; helping residents discover their fitness level, improve upon it, and create goals to make it a sustainable effort. Subsequently, the team added members with 12 on the current team. The audience expanded to include all Oakdale citizens over the age of 50 who are kept informed by the city's newsletter, Oakdale Update, the Oakdale Wellness 50+ Facebook page, and by emails to over 300 recipients. Each year the team creates a variety of events on wellness topics including:

1) Healthy Eating: gardening and cooking classes plus a team-written cookbook Healthier Recipes for One or Two.
2) Physical / Social Activities: exercise challenges, walking club, dancing, yoga, biking, kayaking, book & movie clubs, writing encouraging notes to seniors in residential settings.
3) Healthy attitudes: “brain food” information on a variety of subjects like dementia, chronic illnesses, and guiding seniors to explore local parks and recreational facilities.
4) Preventative healing and coping: mental health seminar, training and instruction on first aid and CPR through our local EMT’s & fire department, blood drives, flu shots, and personal safety workshops.

These activities are conducted by volunteers, all over the age of 50, who want to “pay it forward” to their community with some assistance from grants from the Vital Aging Network.

After the community survey, we will identify the priority domains of livability we wish to pursue for our project plan to continue to make Oakdale an age-friendly community. We plan to expand our community collaborations to be
able to recommend community policies to our partners to help address these efforts, increase programming, and reach more older adults.

**How will older adults be involved in the community's efforts to become more age-friendly? (250-300 words required)**

Age-Friendly Oakdale will involve older adults in the community's efforts to become more age-friendly in a number of ways.

Oakdale Wellness 50+, a grass-roots, volunteer group made up of older adults, will carry out much of the work of Oakdale becoming an age-friendly community. We will involve older adults throughout the age-friendly planning process and intend to attract additional volunteers as the assessment and planning process proceeds. Several members of the Oakdale Wellness 50+ group will be core members of the Age-Friendly Oakdale committee.

We plan to begin our assessment of Oakdale’s age-friendliness by supplementing the city’s most recent community survey with an assessment designed to hone in on issues of particular concern to our older adults. In addition to this supplemental survey, we will have informal one-on-one conversations to solicit ideas and concerns from older adults at community events, such as the local farmers markets and Oakdale Wellness 50+ events. We will also reach out to senior living communities and other organizations focused on older adults for additional input. Oakdale’s Park and Recreation Department and Oakdale Wellness 50+ have a strong history of offering a variety of programs promoting health, wellness and social connection for older adults. As Oakdale moves through the age-friendly planning process and identifies additional opportunities, we expect the programming for older adults to become even more extensive. It can only be done if we invite a cross-section of our 50+ community to help.
How will the efforts to become more age-friendly increase collaboration and coordination among relevant community agencies and departments? (250-300 words)

We have set our sights on several organizations to expand our efforts, among them the Oakdale City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, local churches, senior residences, and minority communities. By signing the Age-Friendly letter of intent and resolution, the city council took an important step in acknowledging our efforts. We plan to build on their support for communication and promotion about Age-Friendly work.

Oakdale Wellness 50+ has been fortunate in receiving support from the Oakdale Parks and Recreation Department and the Vital Aging Network. (https://vital-aging-network.org)

We were recognized by our county’s Public Health and Environment department with a Public Health Achievement Award for outstanding community education about wellness to older adults. As we determine our focus areas for this project, we plan to continue to build relationships and collaborate with our county. This may include working with the departments of Community Services, Library, Parks, and Public Health and Environment.

Our next steps will include adding to our core team some representatives of the local organizations named above. The team currently includes representatives from the Lions Club, the health department, the library, the city council, and a local health provider. The core of the Age-Friendly task force will continue to be Oakdale Wellness 50+ team members who have served for several years expanding our efforts and who serve other local organizations as well.

We also intend to learn from some of the current Minnesota Age-Friendly communities, such as Maple Grove. Their experience with collaboration and coordination with community groups will be invaluable.

The overarching purpose in joining Age-Friendly is to make Oakdale an even better place for seniors to live and thrive. Collaboration will be the key.
Section 3: Network Membership

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

1-a. What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities? (100 words minimum)

Oakdale Wellness 50+ sees this as a unique opportunity to expand our reach into the community. Up to now, we have experienced somewhat limited publicity and citizen recognition of who we are and what we do. The AARP Age-Friendly connection can give us greater recognition due to its broad network of cities and states. It can also help us connect to the governor's initiative on Age-Friendly communities, established this year with a State Age-Friendly Council.

AARP has created a helpful template for community action, one that will help us learn and grow. We look forward to being a part of an endeavor that is larger than what we have experienced thus far.

1-b. If you have consulted with an AARP State office or the national AARP Livable Communities team to discuss enrollment, please provide that person's name, title and e-mail address or phone number.
2. What aspect of your community’s current or intended age-friendly work could be useful to other communities in the network? (100 words minimum)

Over the past seven years we have achieved a great deal, especially in the area of programs for seniors. We can share how Oakdale Wellness 50+, a grass-roots, volunteer group made up of older adults was formed and how we have recruited older adults to participate in our programming. We can discuss the community partnerships we have already built and wellness activities that have been well received and attended. We can share our success stories with other communities while learning about their achievements. Our news in the Oakdale Update, Facebook page, and city website can help other communities as we continue to grow.

Section 4: Required Materials

1-a. Letter of Commitment
Provide a digital file (PDF preferred) of the signed document.

1-b. Resolution or Proclamation (optional)
If your community issued either document in addition to the commitment letter, provide a digital file (PDF preferred) here.

2. Logo or Image
Provide a digital file (JPG preferred) and/or a link to a downloadable logo or other image that represents your community and for which you have reprint rights and permission to provide for use by AARP and the World Health Organization.

Please email attachments of items 1-a, 1-b and your community’s logo or image to livable@AARP.org.

Website URL: https://www.ci.oakdale.mn.us
Section 5: Social Media

Provide the most applicable Twitter handle(s) and Facebook account(s) for your community (i.e. an age-friendly coalition, the local government, key elected officials and/or local partners).

Twitter 1:

Facebook 1: https://www.facebook.com/Wellness.Oakdale/

Twitter 2:

Facebook 2: https://www.ci.oakdale.mn.us/292/Oakdale-Wellness-50

Additional social media accounts (optional)

Section 6: Agreement

I have read and understand the requirements for my community to become a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, including the need to conduct a community assessment; develop and acquire approval of an action plan; implement the plan; submit an annual best practice and provide periodic updates, including a five-year progress report.

☑️ Yes, I understand the requirements.

SUBMIT YOUR COMMUNITY’S APPLICATION TO THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY STATES AND COMMUNITIES

Receipt of the application will be acknowledged by AARP within 24 hours of submission or during the next business day.