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
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS
APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: Click here to enter a date.
NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Chatham County Georgia – 6 Cities of Bloomingdale; Garden City; Pooler; Port Wentworth; Savannah and Tybee Island. 2 Towns of Thunderbolt and Vernonburg
STATE: GA
POPULATION SIZE: 295,291
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 16.0%
NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Chester A. Ellis
OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: Chatham County of GA, 124 Bull Street, Suite 210, Savannah, GA 31401

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: Tara Jennings
POSITION: Strategic Planning Administrator
EMAIL ADDRESS: [redacted]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [redacted]

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

Tara Jennings is the Strategic Planning Administrator for Chatham County Government. She is responsible for researching, developing, communicating, executing and sustaining strategic initiatives. Jennings supports the County Manager; balancing between advising and acting, with the responsibility of ensuring the execution of strategies to support the stated goals and priorities of the Board of Commissioners. Jennings is responsible for leading the development of the Chatham Community Blueprint. The Blueprint is a long-term plan that is intentionally moving Chatham County in the direction of 4 specific goals and key theme areas: Economy; Education; Health and Quality of Life. Focusing on the community’s interests and concerns, the Blueprint continues to serve as a catalyst for Chatham County’s improvement in alignment with the Healthy People 2030 Framework and Plan 2040. One of her current projects include; “Breaking the Cycle” – working to reduce the number of individuals booked into the detention center with mental illness; therefore, reducing the recidivism rate.

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.
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.

Chatham County contracts with the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, Inc. (CGIC) serving as the responsible organization for the development, implementation and evaluation of the Chatham Community Blueprint. CGIC is a group of community members and advocates working together for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to planning and accountability (www.coastalgaindicators.org). Its goal is to improve community well-being by engaging and leading the public, civic and private sectors to work collectively in development of strategic priorities that guide policy, programs and resource allocation. CGIC addresses the growing need to better assess the position and progress of Chatham County’s well-being using community-level indicators and performance measures. Indicators and performance measures are data points that can be useful in assessments by helping to track and measure community health. Adopted by Chatham County Government, the Blueprint includes timelines for short, mid- and long-term work to drive future action of the commission and other boards and councils operating in the community. The Blueprint strategically moves the community towards the accomplishment of specified goals within four priority areas: Economy, Education, Health and Quality of Life. Vision statements exist for each priority area as follows:

1) ECONOMY: Chatham County anchors a thriving, business-friendly, regional economy in which all workers regardless of age are prepared for quality jobs and allowing residents to feel empowered to attain a high quality of life. 2) EDUCATION: From early childhood education through post-secondary achievement, Chatham County’s innovative and inclusive educational systems is a model of academic excellence that enables students to attain the knowledge, skills and ability to succeed at their chosen pathways. 3) HEALTH: Chatham County has a culture of health including equal access to quality and affordable healthcare, chronic disease prevention, health inclusive policies, and environmental design. 4) QUALITY OF LIFE: Chatham County citizens strives to achieve a superior quality of life within a safe, active and healthy environment inclusive of the area’s history, natural resources, public mobility and efficient government.

2) How will the community engage and involve older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly?

As a result of the implementation of the Blueprint, Chatham County and CGIC continues to be challenged to incorporate participation representative of all demographics across a community of more than 250,000 people. CGIC leadership is pleased with the specific efforts to include stakeholders in the Community Summit, Focus Groups and Neighborhood Forums to receive feedback and input. CGIC has engaged more than 100 stakeholders and solicited support in determining priorities within each topic area. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 75 with the highest percentage age group represented being 45-59. The group was made up of 60% women, 40% male; this break down included: 49% White, 40% African American, 7% Asian, 1% Hispanic and 3% other. Each Chatham County district had representation with some participants living outside the County. Chatham County continues to expand on its Lifelong Learning classes for seniors; establish user-friendly methods and processes for volunteer engagement in public schools, offer leadership opportunities on municipal Boards and Advisory Committees; expand and enhance mentorship programs (peer mentors and adult mentors) and opportunities to promote multigenerational engagements and collaborations in support to improvement community services and health.
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.

While many of the CGIC sponsors have worked in the same community and toward similar goals for years, the idea of working side-by-side and agreeing to focus on the same outcome and the idea of leveraging funds to support community wide projects has been an innovative idea. Individuals working in non-profit, government and social services often change, causing barriers to consistent messaging, working through long-term commitments, and building of trustful relationships. While working to strengthen capacity of the CGIC in Chatham County is a priority, the group has also been working to increase partnerships and diversify network members across a four county sub-region. The charter organizations were Chatham County based but when the CGIC decided to expand there were members representing public health and postsecondary education who had interest in enlarging geographically with data. The Chatham Community Blueprint is a living document that updates can be added to the document as additional information is gained and or as resources are leveraged to address specific areas of need. CGIC provides annual reports to the Board of Commissioners and the community- at-large through Status Reports with updated indicator comparisons, new data that needs to be highlighted, success stories, and any new initiatives that have been explored to address a community need. This information is provided will be provided on the website, social media and print with acknowledgement of volunteers, any new data that needs to be highlighted and success stories to date. CGIC continues to work with Chatham County Board of Commissioners to provide annual updates on the process (incremental steps toward short-term and long-term goals). Community stakeholders have continued engagement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the plan because it is vital to the long-term sustainability and overall community impact.
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?

Chatham County is a major economic engine for the state of Georgia and Coastal Region due to the significant contributions from the Port of Savannah. The Port of Savannah is home to the largest single-terminal container facility of its kind in North America and is comprised of two modern, deepwater terminals: Garden City Terminal and Ocean Terminal. Together, these facilities exemplify the GPA’s exacting standards of efficiency and productivity. Garden City Terminal is the fourth busiest container handling facilities in the United States, encompassing more than 1,200 acres and moving millions of tons of containerized cargo annually. The Port of Savannah is also a major employer of adults of all ages with diverse innovative technical skills. As one of the state’s largest public employers, the Port directly employs almost 1,300 trained logistics professionals and is responsible for generating far more employment throughout the state. Port operations together with private sector, port-related operations, account for more than 440,000 jobs statewide, $106 billion dollars in revenue, and income exceeding $25 billion annually. Chatham County believes, it’s Port of Savannah and 8 municipalities will offer some unique world class perspectives and best practices as new members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and States and the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities & Communities.

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?

Chatham County has been motivated to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities to help expand and strengthen its statewide partnership with AARP Georgia as it's working towards becoming an Age-Friendly State. The County and its communities continue to enjoy being one of the best and most popular destinations for seniors and their families to live, work, play and retire in the Southeast Region of the state and country. Joining the Age-Friendly Network also aligns with Chatham County’s Community Blueprint and Plan 2040 with commitments and strategies to improve community health and well-being for older adults and residents of all ages and abilities.
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:

Chatham County seal is attached.