State: Ohio
Community Name: Cuyahoga County
Population Size: 1,253,046
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 24
Community Structure: County
Other:
Community Type: Urban, Mixed, Suburban (offices, apartments and shops)

Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment
Name: Armond Budish
Title: Cuyahoga County Executive
Office Mailing Address: Office of County Executive, 2079 E. 9th Street; Cleveland, OH 44115
Community Contact Name: Patricia Newell
Email: [redacted]
Position: Executive Officer of Cuyahoga County’s Division of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS)
Telephone: [redacted]
Role: Patricia will be responsible for leading and overseeing Cuyahoga County’s AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities Initiative. Patricia brings more than twenty-seven years of senior leadership experience in community engagement, project management, evidence-based program design and evaluation and strategic planning. There will also be a team of staff facilitating and coordinating the day-to-day functions and operations. DSAS will involve several organizations, community leaders, and residents to contribute to the five-year process of becoming an Age-Friendly County.

Older Adult Involvement: DSAS will utilize a community-based participatory approach in becoming more age-friendly. This means the prioritization and empowerment of older adults as equal contributors will become ingrained in Cuyahoga County’s Age Friendly Initiative. There will be multiple opportunities in all phases for older adults and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and thoughts. Cuyahoga County encompasses 59 distinctive municipalities, villages, and townships, including Cleveland, Ohio’s second largest city. 319,624 persons older than 60 reside in Cuyahoga County. The goal is to reach as many older adults in as many communities as possible to ensure our
data collection is representative of our diverse county. DSAS will partner with The Center for Community Solutions and other organizations to facilitate the assessment and planning stages of the Age Friendly process. This phase will include focus groups, survey distribution, tele-town hall meetings, and in-person and virtual listening sessions that will give residents the opportunity to provide their perspective on the livability of Cuyahoga County. These sessions will be held in multiple geographically diverse locations that are convenient to public transportation and accessible to people using mobility devices.

Cuyahoga County is a collaborative community that thoughtfully considers the needs of special populations, including older adults, when planning and looking to the future. DSAS convenes the Cuyahoga County Senior Services Network (CCSSN) of nearly 50+ non-profit agencies, health care systems, municipalities, faith-based organizations and senior centers across the County to share best practices, coordinate resources and collectively advocate on legislation impacting those we serve. DSAS has a thirty-year history working with its active 25-member Advisory Board. Members are appointed by the County Executive and County Council and serve to advise the County Executive, County Council and DSAS leadership in formulating policy, planning and developing programs to meet the county’s older adult and adults with disabilities needs, as well as collectively advocate on legislation impacting those we serve. This body provides a forum for residents, consumers, elected officials, and agency representatives who are subject matter experts in education, housing, health care, food insecurity, transportation, and other critical areas aligned to DSAS’s strategic plan priorities. The Advisory Board will also provide oversight and guidance throughout the age friendly process from the assessment phase to implementation. In addition, DSAS has a strong collaborative partnership with AARP Ohio, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging, City of Cleveland, Department on Aging, and The Center for Community Solutions who will play a vital role throughout the assessment, planning and implementation phases. Furthermore, DSAS and its community partners will identify additional agencies and departments to help shape Age Friendly Cuyahoga County.

**Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:**

With Cuyahoga County becoming an age friendly county, DSAS will provide the knowledge gained from this initiative and important lessons of collaboration with the other members and communities of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. DSAS will be available to other communities to provide help and support for their work in becoming an Age-Friendly County, just as the City of Cleveland, Summit County and Columbus/ Franklin County have been to us. Because of our commitment to providing high quality services across the region regardless of age, race, and socio-economic status, DSAS will be viewed as a vital partner within the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. To that end,
DSAS's Comprehensive Age-Friendly Plan will serve as a roadmap to support Cuyahoga County's local municipalities in becoming age friendly within their respective communities. DSAS hopes to receive support from AARP Ohio to engage their members and volunteers to support our efforts, as no single government entity or non-profit can take on such an endeavor alone. In addition, with Cuyahoga County's enrollment, Ohio's two largest counties will now be age friendly. The inevitable collaborations between Cuyahoga County and Franklin County, and their contributions to the Coalition of Age-Friendly Communities of Ohio (CAFCO) will produce additional resources and insights that will benefit other communities both within Ohio and across the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

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