State: Wisconsin
Community Name: City of Appleton
Population Size: 75644
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 21
Community Structure: City
Other: Community Type: Urban, Mixed, Suburban (mostly residential)
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment Name: Jacob A. Woodford
Title: Mayor
Office Mailing Address: 100 N. Appleton Street, Appleton WI 54911
Community Contact Name: Karen Harkness
Email: 
Position: Director of Community and Economic Development
Telephone: 
Role: Karen Harkness is the co-chair of Appleton’s Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee. As Director of the Community and Economic Development Department she is very connected with cities involved in the Fox River Valley (commonly referred to as the Fox Cities) that will be instrumental in helping Appleton become a thriving community for all ages. She is also responsible for the City’s Comprehensive Plan update in 2017. (Plan can be viewed at www.envisionappleton.org) The Comprehensive Plan includes many objectives relevant to this initiative across the Housing & Neighborhoods and Transportation Chapters. For the past three years, Karen has served as a Board Member for the Thompson Center on Lourdes (TCoL) our community senior center. TCoL strives to empower adults to enrich their lives and enhance their personal growth. TCoL just received the WASC Accreditation on November 12, 2021. This is the first accreditation
Older Adult Involvement:
The City of Appleton’s first step in engaging the community, specifically older adults, was to create our Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee. This diverse set of people held their first Advisory Committee meeting on January 27, 2022, to begin our journey towards becoming an Age-Friendly Community. Once we complete our application and become a designated Age-Friendly Community we will conduct our community survey and hold community listening sessions. Examples of ways we will engage our older adults include holding a focus group at the Thompson Center on Lourdes. Thompson Center on Lourdes will include a survey link in their weekly eblast to over 2,000 seniors and paper surveys will be available to participants at the center. We will proactively engage with other groups to help us gain this valuable insight through faith-based organizations, veterans services, etc. We also plan to hold ‘pop-up’ booths at the Downtown Appleton Farm Market and at other event opportunities. Armed with this information, we will develop our Action Plan. Priorities for our plan will be based on feedback from the community and those involved in the Age-Friendly Advisory Committee. A recent example of community engagement would be when the Appleton Public Library held a focus listening session at Thompson Center on Lourdes to receive feedback on the library design. Another example is how many organizations were involved with connecting the residents of the Fox Valley for the 2020 Census. Our Age-Friendly Advisory Committee also plans to meet with representatives from both the Village of Shorewood and City of Greendale to discuss ‘lessons learned’ as they went through the process of engaging their communities in this endeavor.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:
We know there are many different groups and organizations working on similar age-friendly initiatives so a great first step would be to document which groups are focusing on what initiatives. From there we can determine if there could be synergies by joining forces and/or collaborating. The Advisory Committee provides an opportunity to gather experts across many of these organizations such as Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, Thompson Center on Lourdes, Aging & Disability Resource Center, Appleton Downtown Inc, and Imagine Fox Cities. Even the City of Appleton staff representatives on the Advisory Committee represent many Departments and perspectives relevant to this effort. The Fox Valley Senior Resource Network provides an opportunity for senior resource providers to educate each other about the services that are available and how to utilize them through networking and informative topics and speakers. Imagine Fox Cities prioritizes developing innovative collaborations around identified priorities, with the Age-Friendly Community being a perfect example. Once established as a supported effort, Imagine Fox Cities will assist to elevate this as a consideration in a side cross-section of decision-making investments. This stated priority would assist Imagine Fox Cities in intentional efforts around gathering and convening people and entities to work together to enhance well-being for the older spectrum of our community. Members of the Advisory Committee will be meeting with Gil Penalosa, founder of 8 80 Cities, to discuss how Appleton could collaborate with, and learn from, this internationally recognized organization. As we move through the process to develop our
Age-Friendly Community Action Plan we will discover many other ways to collaborate with other community agencies!

**AARP Team Member Contact Info:**
Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director AARP - WI

**Most Instructive Area of Work:**
We believe that the City of Appleton does a great job of getting all of our departments working toward the same goal. A recent example is when the City created our Health in all Policies Ordinance. Representatives from the Health Department, Valley Transit, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Community Development work together to create the Ordinance and support it through the political process of adoption by City Council. During the COVID-19 Pandemic over 80 organizations (mainly nonprofits) formed Community Solutions Team (led by United Way Fox Cities and the Community Foundation) to address issues from infants to seniors. As a result, a ?Get Help Give Help? Directory was created. The Outagamie County Aging Unit completes a County Plan on Aging every three years. The work that goes into the County Plan on Aging involves collecting community input, ideas, suggestions, etc. to help improve programs and services for seniors and family caregivers in our community. The results are reviewed and analyzed, and ultimately aging goals are created to be achieved within the next three years. The Outagamie County Plan on Aging 2022-2024 can be viewed at [https://www.outagamie.org/home/showpublisheddocument/86930/637786202342870000](https://www.outagamie.org/home/showpublisheddocument/86930/637786202342870000)

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**Additional Social Media:**