



Membership Application

To join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 1/13/2015

1) COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Sarasota County

STATE: Florida

POPULATION SIZE: 379,448 per U.S. Census 2010

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 39%; 31% 65+; 54% 50+

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Carolyn Mason, Chair,
Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: Sarasota County Human Services, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Suite 221, Sarasota, FL 34237

2) COMMUNITY CONTACT* FOR THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY 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.*

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

Click here to enter text.

(You can add an additional sheet of paper if needed.)

3) THE COMMUNITY'S AGE-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES TO DATE

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.

Click here to enter text.

4) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Click here to enter text.

5) CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

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.

Click here to enter text.

2. Person's Role in AFC Initiative:

Dr. Black will serve as the Principal Investigator for the duration of the project. In this role, she will be responsible for conducting and arranging the focus groups, forums, developing and administering the survey, collecting extant data from multiple federal, state, and local sources of county-specific data, as well as the analysis and presentation of the research data. Additionally, she will supervise the activities of the research assistant and serve to coordinate all data collection processes.

3. Summary of Community Age-friendly Activities to Date:

This project builds upon previous age-friendly work including: the community's 2008 designation as a "*Community for a Lifetime*" (via the Florida Department of Elder Affairs), and is also aligned with AARPs' *Livable Communities* initiative. In addition, the project builds upon the priority areas of the Sarasota County Senior Advisory Council (Information Access and Resource Awareness, Transportation, Livability/Communities for a Lifetime, and Affordable Housing for Seniors), and the goals of the Stakeholders in Aging Consortium, comprised of public and private, formal and informal persons with an interest in aging. This project further builds upon the past work of the Patterson Foundation's *Aging with Dignity and Independence Initiative*, a community-based effort to better understand factors impacting the experience of aging with dignity and independence in the context of community. In addition, there are a number of well-established organizations serving older adults and cadres of older adult volunteers.

4. Community Engagement:

This project will initially conduct a two year baseline assessment of our community's age-friendly assets and future aspirations of older adults (age 65+) and "emerging" elders (age 50+) pertaining to eight domains of community life: transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, outdoor spaces and buildings. We will utilize multiple methods and several sampling strategies to achieve project aims including: quantitative, qualitative and community-based participatory research (CBPR). CBPR is an "applied collaborative approach that enables community residents to more actively participate in the full spectrum of research (from conception – design – conduct – analysis – interpretation – conclusions – communication of results) with a goal of influencing change in community health, systems, programs or policies" (National Institutes of Health, 2013). CBPR will allow us to engage with Sarasota's providers and older adults through a process of collaboration, relationship building, mutual learning, and data collection and analysis. In turn, this process will strengthen the overall assessment, planning and action steps.

5. Cross-sector Collaboration:

The project will include significant collaboration throughout the community. Core partners for the project include the University of South Florida, Sarasota-Manatee, AARP, and the USF Policy Exchange Center on Aging, representing substantial gerontological expertise in community aging. As a conduit to facilitate input among the relevant departments and provisions per domain throughout the county, Sarasota County Health Department staff will also provide important support for the project. In addition, the county-wide project will include the broad-based collaboration of numerous key providers and others interested in aging. Specifically, the project will proceed in phases, beginning with the establishment of an Advisory Committee comprised of the area's key stakeholders in aging, lay older adults (65+), and aging adults (age 50+). Extant data will be collected from experts and other relevant parties regarding community assets per each domain. Concomitantly, the positive approach of appreciative inquiry will be employed to assess older adults' and emerging elders' perspectives on aging in community by domain via multiple methods including surveys, focus groups and interviews. The second phase of the study will include synthesizing data and conducting community forums to prioritize identified issues and ideas.