



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

July 1, 2015

Michael Festa
AARP MA State Director
1 Beacon Street, Suite 2301
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Festa,

The City of New Bedford is excited about the opportunity to join the AARP/World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities Network. This initiative focuses on many of the areas the city has been working on such as housing, community engagement, transportation, outdoor spaces and social inclusion. The City of New Bedford is committed to ensuring that its older residents have the services and supports they need to remain in the community.

The City of New Bedford is a culturally diverse community and has the second highest population of older adults in the state. Twenty percent (18,765) of our population is age 60 and over, of which sixteen percent are minorities.

For many years, the City has supported elders directly through the services provided by our Council on Aging. We also work collaboratively with community based organizations like Coastline Elderly Services and the Immigrants Assistance Center. The city supports several nutrition congregate meal sites, have approved the use of CDBG funds for an elder benefit specialist and have one of the largest supportive housing programs.

As a result of the Tufts Health Plan Foundation's Healthy Aging report, we have been focused on the health and wellness of our elders. Our recent development of walking and bicycles paths, expansion of our Farmer's Markets and improvement in "green space" within the city are just a few examples. The Age Friendly Cities initiative will help us focus our efforts and explore other areas of opportunity.

As a participant in the Age Friendly Cities Network, the City of New Bedford makes a commitment to:

- Convene an Advisory Council representing New Bedford residents age 50 and older, academic partners, community organizations, and city departments
- Assess the needs of New Bedford residents age 50 and over, create a plan of action with measurable outcomes, and implement the action plan, and
- Commit to measuring progress and reporting outcomes publically

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to partnering with AARP Massachusetts staff and volunteers in our efforts to ensure that the City of New Bedford is Age Friendly.

Sincerely,

Jon Mitchell

