



## Membership Application

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

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE:** August 28, 2015

### 1) COMMUNITY DETAILS

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY:** Salem

**STATE:** Massachusetts

**POPULATION SIZE:** 41,340 (2010 census)

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 19% (2010 census)

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** Salem City Hall, 95 Washington Street, Salem, MA 01970

### 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.*

[Redacted contact information]

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

Jason Silva, the City's Director of Operations is responsible for overseeing the Departments of Public Services; Parks, Recreation and Community Services; and Engineering. He is also responsible for the coordination of many capital improvements and other projects within the City. His role and responsibilities put him in a unique position to lead the strategic coordination of multiple departments and implement important initiatives.

In conjunction with volunteer leaders, Jason has worked to facilitate and coordinate the beginnings of Salem's age-friendly initiative. A working group of department heads, organizations, older residents and other stakeholders has been formed and held two meetings. Since he collaborates with many of these departments and stakeholders as part of his normal job function, he spearheaded the effort to form the City's age-friendly working group, chairs meetings and will continue to work with committee members and volunteers to move this process forward.

**(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.**

Salem is a growing city; it is projected that 30% of future growth will come from older adults. Its assets include being a waterfront community known for its rich maritime history and its infamous 1692 witchcraft trials. Today Salem is a vibrant pedestrian-friendly city, where its residents and over 1 million tourists annually can easily visit historic architecture, world famous museums and eclectic mix of shops and dining options. Salem is a walking city, has bike paths, both bus and commuter rail service. Some transportation is provided for seniors through the Council on Aging and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority paratransit service, "The Ride". The City has a growing Latino population adding to its diversity. A new Salem Community Life Center, which will incorporate, enliven and replace the current Senior Center, is projected for completion in 2017. The timing is excellent in terms of integrating the activities and culture of this new building into the Age-Friendly strategic plan. Presently North Shore Elder Services is the Area Agency on Aging providing a wide range of home care and other senior services to Salem residents. The Salem Council on Aging/Senior Center offers local resources such as social services support, health care services, fitness classes, social activities, meals and some transportation. Eligible residents can participate in the City Senior tax work-off program, a benefiting both the City and its vulnerable seniors. Many municipal departments have services that target the needs of older adults. At the same time, many older adults do not use the Senior Center and city services. There is a lack of adequate communication of current programs and services available to older adults. As noted transportation services exist. However, limits on availability and eligibility make improving transportation an important aspect of becoming more age friendly. Housing is adequate for low income seniors but Salem lacks housing options for middle and higher income older citizens who wish to downsize and live in Salem. The plans to become more age friendly will include a communication plan, greater transportation options, adequate housing, and establishing a centralized community volunteer program that will serve the needs of older adults, particularly those who are socially isolated, and provide opportunities for older adults to get involved in the community.

### **4) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll has assigned Jason Silva, director of Municipal Operations, to be the city liaison to work with city department heads and volunteers to spearhead Salem's Age-Friendly community initiative. A working group has been formed and two meetings have been held. This group includes department leaders, organizations, and older residents. Its role is to provide information on what is presently available for older adults in Salem, what is needed to improve services, as well as specific recommendations to achieve an Age-Friendly community. Two public listening sessions have been held to obtain input from residents. The two sessions were led by Mayor Driscoll; they were widely publicized and well attended. Additional public listening sessions will be held in Fall 2015. An Age-Friendly Survey has been developed, distributed and made available on the city's website. The City of Salem, in partnership with Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS), is in the process of interviewing a broad representation of over 150 older adults in Salem to help determine interests and needs. A report on housing and transportation needs by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council has recently been completed. "Mass in Motion" has completed a map on parks and open space in Salem including the availability of such facilities as toilets and benches. All of this information will be used to identify needs, areas of improvement and specific projects. Older residents are involved in all of these activities and will participate in developing and implementing a strategic plan for an Age-Friendly Salem.

### **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.**

The Salem Age-Friendly Community Working Group is chaired by a representative from the Mayor's office. Members include directors of the Department of Public Services, Health Department, Council on Aging, and Salem "Mass in Motion program; the Chief of Police; assistant director of the Housing Authority; associate director of Planning and Community Development; president of the Explorers Life-Long Learning Institute; board chair of North Shore Elder Services; director of North Shore Community Health Services; representatives from Jewish Family and Children's Services (JF&CS) and five senior citizens who are community leaders. Others will be added to the committee as need arises. The next steps are to compile the data received from this working group, the two listening sessions held in June and the two planned in the fall. A final report from JF&CS on the 150+ individual interviews will provide much valuable information. We will utilize recent reports on housing, transportation, and parks and recreation facilities in the city. Once all the data is compiled, a strategic plan will be prepared and implemented to assure that Salem is an Age -Friendly community for all its citizens. The JF&CS Program Coordinator will provide input and support throughout this process.