



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

November 6, 2015

Mr. Hank Greenberg
State Director AARP Maryland Chapter
200 Saint Paul Place
Suite 2510
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Mr. Greenberg:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you today on behalf of Montgomery County, Maryland, to express our interest in pursuing the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative. I have worked hard as the County Executive since 2008 to ensure that older residents of our County are represented and valued by all County government departments and the wider County community. Along with the County Council, I have championed seniors as a vital and important part of our County's success. Given that by 2030 the senior population, age 65 and older, is expected to reach 230,000 individuals, an increase of over 130% from 2000, it is critical that our very diverse senior community has access to all of the available and necessary resources. As stated in the attached Montgomery County "*Senior Agenda*," endorsed by me and adopted by the County Council in 2012, the County continues to work on becoming "a community for a lifetime—a place for older adults to live safe, healthy, and vital lives."

My actions as County Executive have shown me to be a strong supporter of older adults in our County. In May 2008, I convened a "Directors' Retreat on Promoting Vital Aging in Montgomery County," to address the questions of what the County government currently does well to promote vital aging and where the County government needs to improve now and in the future. Following the Retreat, in 2009, I created the "Subcabinet on Senior Vital Living" to advise me—in collaboration with our Commission on Aging—on needs of our older residents and to be accountable for addressing these needs. This "Senior Subcabinet" has served as the primary vehicle within County government for advancing our age-friendly mission. One of the first charges I made to the Subcabinet was to plan and conduct a "Senior Summit" which was held in November 2008. The Summit drew over 350 attendees comprised of County seniors, caregivers, public and private providers of senior services ("the Aging Network"), the Senior Sub-cabinet, faith community representatives, the business sector, academia, and community stakeholders. These participants worked collaboratively to prioritize the most critical needs of older adults in eight categories (employment, safety, communication, home and community based services, health and wellness, civic and social engagement, housing and transportation). An action plan was developed from the Summit proceedings to address these needs moving forward. This work has become known as the "Senior Initiative," a multi-year, cross departmental effort to improve coordination, community outreach, and promotion of programs designed for older adults. This initiative identified and planned for, both the short and long-term needs of the senior population.

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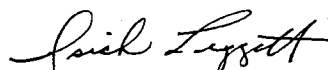
Between 2009 and 2015, the Senior Initiative, implemented through the Senior Sub-cabinet, has comprised eight separate workgroups. These workgroups embody the core principles of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Initiative. The workgroups cover the areas of communication and outreach, housing and zoning, transportation and mobility, health and wellness, civic and social engagement, home and community support services, safety, and employment. County government department leaders chair the workgroups, and membership is comprised of government, private, and not-for-profit stakeholders. While each workgroup has its own chair, committee, goals, and ongoing agenda, all are working together under the leadership and coordination of the Sub-cabinet chairpersons to ensure that Montgomery County seniors are able to age in the community with safety, dignity, and vitality. The Senior Subcabinet meets regularly throughout the year. Additionally, the chair of the Commission on Aging serves as a member of the Senior Subcabinet.

Since 2008, my commitment to the Senior Initiative has led to many age-friendly changes to the County. For instance, we now offer increased transportation to senior centers, provide more meals to low-income senior housing sites, and have a greater variety of senior health and wellness programming. I personally reach out to the senior community regularly through visits to senior centers, town hall meetings, senior housing and visits with seniors throughout the County.

Furthermore, this month, an electronic survey is being shared with our residents to obtain their input about age-friendly features and needs in our County. This survey has also been made available in paper format and translated in several languages. Several focus groups with older adults are also currently being conducted to obtain additional input from seniors who typically would not be forthcoming with feedback. All this information will be utilized for our upcoming December 3, 2015 "**Summit on Aging in Montgomery County.**" We are planning on having 400 participants at this interactive day-long event. A planning group comprised of older adults, the Commission on Aging, the Vital Living Network and County staff is organizing this event. The agenda for our Summit will focus on developing a strategic plan for the next three years of my administration and recommendations for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2017 budget cycle.

As a result of our ongoing work and continued commitment to older adults in Montgomery County, I see tremendous value in working with the AARP Network to obtain the status of an Age-Friendly Community. We have been engaged in the critical cycle of identifying need, planning for services and programming, delivering needed services and programs, setting clear outcomes and monitoring progress, making adjustments and improvements and then beginning the cycle all over again. Given our journey, our many investments and our progress, our conversations with Ms. Jeanne Anthony, Senior Project Manager, AARP Livable Communities, have been reflective of our effort over many years. We are confident of joining and beginning our work for the third quadrant. This designation will fit hand-in-hand with my desire to incorporate age-friendly planning into all aspects of my administration. My colleagues and I look forward to joining the Age-Friendly Initiative, as it will further enhance our already strong commitment to making Montgomery County an Age-Friendly Community.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett
County Executive

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Attachments: Senior Agenda
Senior Initiative
Application Form