



Membership Application

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities** and the **World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**

- If you have questions while completing this form, please email livable@aarpp.org.
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 12/21/2016

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Lakeland

STATE: Florida

POPULATION SIZE: 102,507

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 25,961 or 26.65% of total pop of 97,422, Census 2010

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Howard Wiggs, Mayor

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 228 S. Massachusetts Ave., Lakeland, FL 33801

Section 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]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

Lakeland Vision is a non profit organization that seeks to improve the community and address issues identified as priorities for the metro Lakeland area. Lakeland Vision has historically worked with the City of Lakeland to align goals and objectives for community growth, mobility and quality of life. Lakeland Vision and its director agreed to host a Senior Council effort started in 2011. A study was done and a plan proposed for priorities dealing with seniors aging in place, transportation, housing and health. The Senior Council became a designated task force under Mayor Wiggs in 2014. Lakeland Vision seeks to bring various partner entities together to implement the AARP survey and any subsequent action plan.

Section 3: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ENGAGEMENTS and COLLABORATIONS

1) 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.

Our community currently offers many programs geared towards our aging population both through the city and other community organizations. Our adopted 10 year growth management or “Comprehensive Plan” for 2010-2020 includes policies relating to Healthy Communities and Seniors as per the Future Land Use Element, Objective 15 and associated policies toward a walk and bike friendly community, housing, safety and other age friendly principles. The city of Lakeland is also designated as a Bike Friendly and Walk Friendly community as well as a Healthy Community. Our development code was amended to allow accessory dwelling units (granny flats) in a large area of the city with a compatibility review; ADUs can serve both young and older adults with a small, affordable housing option. In just the last year two health fairs for seniors and other age groups have been offered one Faith in Action in partnership with the Senior Council which included various presentations on fitness, health issues, legal resources and other, followed by a neighborhood level community health fair in northwest Lakeland which has a higher African American population. City Recreation offerings include: tennis, golf, aquatics, shuffleboard at the Lake Parker Park shuffleboard courts, senior shape up, walking clubs, quilting and sewing classes, senior ballroom dancing, yoga, tai-chi and various exercise classes at the Kelly and Simpson Park Recreation Centers. City programs are supplemented by private classes such as swim and silver sneaker fitness programs at the north and south Lakeland YMCAs. We also have cultural programs including Platform Art, Polk Museum, community theatre, monthly food truck rally second Thursdays, monthly First Fridays downtown for music and activities, weekly art, shopping and music every Wednesday in the Dixieland Market/Forum, forums and support group meetings for Alzheimers caregivers with respite care offered at local venues in north and south Lakeland, antique car shows downtown, gardening classes at the local libraries and many other offerings. Our education programs include CATT/RATH Senior Scholars classes, Polk State Lifelong Learning Program, and those offered through Continuing Care entities such as Florida Presbyterian Homes (FPH), Better Living for Seniors, monthly meetings for seniors in the Faith in Action group and offerings through various community houses of worship. Lakeland Chamber of Commerce works with groups like SCORE which are comprised of retired business executives who can mentor upcoming entrepreneurs. Transportation options for the aging population include volunteer transportation through Elderpoint Ministries or Volunteers in Service to the Elderly (VISTE) as well as door-to-door transportation provided by the the Lakeland Mass Transit District operating as the “Citrus Connection” also offering fixed route services throughout metro Lakeland, in Winter Haven and offering special services to veterans. The local TPO (MPO) has also established a focus on senior mobility within its neighborhood audits and long range transportation planning. Meal services for seniors include Meals on Wheels, VISTE deliveries, Catholic Charities Senior Center as well as various food banks offered by churches, Elderpoint, and homeless services of meals, housing, dental and other as offered by Lighthouse Ministries and Talbot House. The Polk Health Plan offers health care services to the working poor at clinics in Lakeland as does Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine (LVIM). Both VISTE and Elderpoint Ministries assist with transportation, nutrition, home care, and home repair needs such as handicap ramps. Lakeland plans to become more age-friendly by diversifying our offerings and our audience, continuing to look for ways to offer choices for transportation, housing, social interaction/civic engagement and supporting local health care. The Council has also explored how we might, as a community, continue to improve communication and dissemination of information to our older residents, caregivers/family and members of the “baby boomer” generation planning to retire in the next decade. Lakeland hopes to become more age friendly by diversifying offerings and looking for new or expanded opportunities for intergenerational engagement.

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

We plan to hire a part time staffer to assist in community engagement beginning with the dissemination of the AARP survey as offered online or as a hard copy taken to groups such as 55 and over mobile home communities, continuing care communities like at Carpenter's Home, FPH, and at Oakbridge, engaging participant members of VISTE, Faith in Action, Catholic Charities Senior Center and so forth. We already have some seniors who sit on our Senior Council as well as providers, elder attorneys, transit and others such as Area Agency on Aging representatives. The strategies may include a speakers bureau giving a talk to civic groups like Rotary and Kiwanis on aging issues, reaching out to those who are 60 and over to take our survey and information about our programs and distribute them to their audiences. We might consider supporting panel talks on aging such as those offered in the last year or two through Polk Vision and/or perhaps coffee talks and sharing at local retirement communities to get direct interaction with more seniors. We want to consider drafting a strategic communication plan with local public information professionals including use of social media and government television at the city and county levels. We want to work with businesses, non-profits, AARP volunteers, SCORE and others to expand our reach and message about age friendly issues.

3) 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.

As the above should indicate, in Lakeland there are many groups that help make up a relatively large grass-roots effort to focus on aging issues and ensure that we are doing our best to be an age friendly community. We formed the Lakeland Senior Council at the urging of a city commissioner as supported by Lakeland Vision and city staff who agreed that the aging demographics warranted a plan to help Lakeland be prepared to be an age friendly community for the coming decades. The Senior Council, from the beginning, had a diverse spectrum of members representing nursing homes (Valencia), CCRPs (FPH & Carpenter's Home), Elder Attorneys (Darby Law Group), Transit (Citrus Connection), city planning and parks and recreation staff, senior services (VISTE and Elderpoint), senior groups such as Better Living for Seniors, Faith in Action, Polk County Senior Services, CATT/RATH Senior Connexions Center, Catholic Charities and health care (Dr. D. Haight, former Polk Co Health Dept Director and Community Healthcare Coordinator for LRH). We work together to identify areas of need and potential collaboration between all of our resources that will create solutions to help Lakeland prepare for and better serve the needs of our aging population. Some version of the Senior Council, a new executive group, is most likely to work closely with the part time staff person dedicated to implementation efforts for promoting age friendly policies, programs and actions, with the full senior council convened periodically, e.g., twice a year for updates on our progress and discussion of future direction. We note that the CATT-Rath Center is a resource center located in Lakeland for seniors 50+, providing education classes, advisors on health, insurance, and finance, fitness classes, and support groups. Better Living for Seniors of Polk County (BLFS) that is a chamber of commerce for the aging industry and BLFS provides an educational seminar to its members at every meeting, helping ensure that all of our aging industry professionals are at the highest standard. SCORE is the retired executive group mentioned previously. While Lakeland has been very fortunate to have a number of groups that work to promote healthy and secure aging, we have searched somewhat for a new champion to lead the way, and where appropriate to align efforts regarding specific objectives.

Section 4: NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

Your answers to the following questions will help us complete your membership in the global age-friendly network and better enable us to understand how to support the network.

4) How do you hope to contribute to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

We believe that Lakeland has already begun to contribute to and receive benefit from the AARP Age Friendly/Livable Communities Program through our participation in the September 2016 Statewide Symposium held in Sarasota, Florida (9/29/16-9/30/16). Just as in this forum we were able to exchange insights with others from around the State as gleaned from years of local work with seniors, our participation in this program will allow us to continue to share our successes and lessons learned with those who may have different experiences to teach us as well.

5) What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

Lakeland views the opportunity to become part of the AARP/WHO program as a means to access state, national and international informational resources and best practices that can help our community learn and improve upon our local endeavors. A network of information should allow all the parts to have a stronger base to grow and move forward; Lakeland wants to contribute to and learn from the AARP and WHO sponsored network for Age Friendly/Livable Communities.

6) Please provide a digital (JPG, PNG or PDF) file or link of a logo or other image that represents your community.

The image resolution should be at least 72 dpi. As an example of an image, here's ours >



Lakeland will send its logo via separate e mail as instructed, to accompany this application (sent to livable@aarp.org.)