



## 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](mailto:livable@aarpp.org) or call 202-434-2430
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 11/4/2016

### Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY:** The Town of West Springfield

**STATE:** Massachusetts

**POPULATION SIZE:** 28,391

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 21.3%

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** William C. Reichelt,  
Mayor, Town of West Springfield

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** 26 Central Street, Suite 23, West Springfield, MA 01089

### 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:**

West Springfield Council on Aging Director Laurie Cassidy, has spearheaded the Age Friendly Initiative within West Springfield. She is a passionate Aging Professional with 25+ years of experience working as a long term care Ombudsman. She served in the capacity of Area Agency on Aging Director for Greater Springfield Senior Services for many years and has been employed as our current Council on Aging Director for more than 6 years. She is a member of the West Springfield Commission on Disabilities and is the President of the Professional Women's Chamber of Commerces. Laurie has worked with our Health and Police Departments to craft processes by which all residents can pre-report conditions so that in the event of an emergency their needs would be first considered. Laurie crafted the first 50+ Job Fair in Western Mass three years ago – garnering over 500 attendees. Laurie is stratetgic and is excited for West Springfield to be recognized as 'Age Friendly' for all ages and all abilities in the community.

### **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 partners with Wingate at West Springfield to offer a free Reflection Support Group for Caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer’s Disease or other related Dementias. The West Springfield Council on Aging partners with Police, Fire & Health Departments on Fire Safety Initiatives, Lost Citizen Reporting and TIP Sheets. Lost Citizen Reporting is an early identification program that allows anyone of any age to be registered with the police so that in the event of an emergency/missing person there is no wait period to searching for that person. Parents of autistic children, persons with head injuries, persons with dementia, Alzheimer’s or any other related illness can avail themselves of this service. The TIP Sheet is a way for community members to alert first responders of their physical/mental limitations so that in the event of an emergency we can geo-cache and locate those persons who may need relocating if necessary. Our community partners with Forastierre Funeral Home to offer a free Grief Relief Support Group for the public – addressing losses of any age. Our community offers minivan transportation services and a free Medical Escort Service for persons who need assistance to/from doctors appointments. We partner with the former Lutheran Social Services, now known as Ascentria, for SNAP Education Classes. We partner with Attain Therapy + Fitness in order to provide guests with low cost strength and balance training. Our Park & Recreation Department recently upgraded the entrance of Mittineague Park, increasing parking/handicapped parking and gardens – including raised garden beds. Our community’s Garden Club has created a Youth Garden Club to engage our youth to participate in beautifying our Town.

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

Our community will use social media, marketing initiatives, surveys, focus groups and our Town’s cable channel to inform, update and encourage all residents to engage and participate in this exciting initiative. We will engage our Commission on Disabilities, Housing Authority, local assisted living facility and local nursing home/rehab center. Our community has large and diverse refugee/immigrant populations so we will work to engage our new residents to share their thoughts, ideas and suggestions. We will engage all department heads as so much of the Age Friendly Initiatives stretch across multiple areas of our society. We will engage local businesses and banks; offering Dementia Training – a critical and necessary component to educating the Town about cognitive impairment and how that can affect/effect communication.

**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.**

The implementation of Age Friendly West Springfield will be Mayor Reichelt appointing community members to a newly developed Age Friendly West Springfield Committee. Committee membership will be comprised of Department Heads, business leaders and community partners to study, implement and incorporate measures for an Age Friendly West Springfield. Those measures will increase the community's understanding of issues affecting older adults, persons with limited abilities and all persons with cognitive impairment by studying and striving to meet the 8 Domains of Livability. Committee Members will be from various backgrounds including youth and adult services, disabled, building, health, etc. The committee will review and become familiar with the World Health Organization's checklist of essential features of Age Friendly Cities. The committee will review and learn how West Springfield's statistics fairs in relation to the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Community Profile. The committee will review and learn how West Springfield scores in relation to AARP's Livability Score versus state averages. We will begin by working on the following Strategies: (1) Craft a Proclamation to declare West Springfield's interest in Age Friendly Communities. (2) Increase Marketing efforts to educate consumers and businesses on all that West Springfield has to offer. Marketing materials will be disseminated through social media, website and on the public cable channel. (3) We will work to dispel ageism in our community – including studying whether or not to rename our Senior Center. (4) We will provide dementia training to first responders, banks and other businesses in Town. (5) We will work to promote the West Springfield Police Department's Lost Citizen Report.

#### **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 are excited for this opportunity and hope to contribute to the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities by sharing lessons learned and assisting other communities in their quest to become Age Friendly. We know the value of collaboration and will work together, sharing accomplishments reached. The Age Friendly Network has great growth potential – equivalent to the expected aging population growth. Through collaboration we hope to grow and become stronger together. We know the value of social media and are willing to use it to spread education, information and availability of West Springfield as an Age Friendly Community that is great to live, work and play in.

#### **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?**

The Age Friendly West Springfield Initiative became more of a reality for our community when we began looking at the core elements of Age Friendly Communities and realized our community is already coordinating several components that fit into Age Friendliness: 1. West Springfield is currently working on a Complete Streets Initiative. 2. West Springfield has an active Council on Aging that collaborates with other Departments in West Springfield, local nursing home, local assisted living facility, local Boys and Girls Club, Sunshine Village, Work Opportunity Center, Forastiere Funeral Home, Attain Therapy + Fitness and countless local businesses in order to provide guests with the best possible experience. 3. West Springfield is coordinating an effort between the Council on Aging and Fire Department to make sure residents have their homes/property clearly numbered/identified to assist with EMS Services, Postal Services and deliveries. 4. West Springfield is coordinating an effort with the Council on Aging and the Police Department to employ the Lost Citizen Report - an effort to engage all citizens to register anyone of any age with cognitive impairment so that in the event a person is missing the process to look for that person is speeded up. 5. West Springfield has begun to improve its multiple Parks - providing people of all ages the opportunity to enjoy the Town's green spaces. 6. West Springfield employs social media and encourages citizens to participate in all levels of government by volunteering within our community. These, and other projects within our community help position us to better participate in the Age Friendly process.

**6) Please provide a digital 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 >



We are unable to paste a copy of the Town of West Springfield's Seal. We will email a jpeg file of our seal for your records.