



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 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: 04/20/2016

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Saco

STATE: Maine

POPULATION SIZE: 19,201 (2014)

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 23% : 4,362 (2015)

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Roland Michaud

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 300 Main Street, Saco ME 04072

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.

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

Don Sharland and Jean Saunders are community members charged with leading a grassroots volunteer effort to make the City of Saco an Age Friendly Community. We plan to conduct an assessment of available resources currently existing for seniors in the community, seek input from the various community stakeholders who comprise and serve our senior population, and conduct a community survey and conversation to identify the needs of our aging population and how we can best respond to those needs. From the information gathered, we will be able to identify the areas of opportunity for improving the lives of the aging population including both short-term and long-term goals, with continued evaluation.

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.

The City of Saco currently has special programming for seniors through the Parks and Recreation Department's SENIORity Program. This programming is hosted at the Community Center and provides fitness classes, social activities, meals, and educational sessions. The City also has a Senior Volunteer Tax Abatement Program. Seniors who meet the age and income requirements, can qualify for this program. Using the Tax Abatement Program, qualified participants can receive up to \$750 tax reduction on real estate taxes after the volunteer has completed 100 hours with the City. Currently in Saco, there are ten assisted living facilities, two nursing homes, one affordable senior housing facility, as well as five low-income senior senior facilities. The City hopes to be more age friendly by providing an acre of land to a developer for a "housiminium" development to assist those looking to downsize their homes. This project is currently underway at 32 Market Street. Saco currently meets the transportation needs of seniors who do not drive with two types of service: a fixed route transportation service operating on a schedule, and a specialized transportation service provided by not-for-profit organizations through volunteers and discounted taxi fares for seniors. It is our hope to improve transportation options by exploring alternative transportation options, as well as implementing a volunteer-based transportation service similar to the program in Cumberland, Maine.

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

By conducting focus groups with seniors in the community, as well as completing community-wide survey, we hope to understand what the groups identify as needs. An inventory of all available resources currently in the community, as well as beyond our city limits, will be conducted to ascertain what services currently exist. The results of the focus groups, inventory of available resources, and community survey will be reviewed by a steering committee dedicated to developing an action plan to make Saco an Age Friendly Community. The steering committee will develop subgroups charged with developing goals and implementation strategies. Potential subgroups, include: Transportation, Social Inclusion, Advocacy, Housing, and IT. Through the analysis of existing programs and a needs assessment, we will be able to build upon existing services and identify any gaps that need to be addressed.

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.

Through the inventory process, focus groups, and community survey; a database of community resources and services will be developed and accessible by the aging population. We will be able to direct seniors to resources and coordinate services utilizing a volunteer base. We will also seek to compile and maintain a central calendar of events and services throughout the community in one central location. By utilizing volunteers, we will be able to serve all economic sectors of our community and will not be dependent upon the ability to pay.

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 by following the WHO guidelines for what constitutes an Age Friendly Community, namely addressing the sectors of (1) Outdoor spaces and buildings, (2) Transportation, (3) Housing, (4) Social Participation, (5) Respect and Social Inclusion, (6) Civic Participation and Employment, (7) Communication and Information, (8) Community Support and Health Services; we will identify the needs within Saco and address those needs through our proposed process. We will join the ranks of other cities identified by the AARP as Age Friendly Communities. We believe Saco will become a "Community for a Lifetime" by promoting active aging in our population and while optimizing opportunities for health, engagement, and safety while removing barriers that prevent our residents from staying within their homes and community as they age. We will facilitate these goals by utilizing a multi-generational approach within our community by engaging our school system and across the entire age continuum.

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 United States is experiencing a rapid expansion of the baby boomer population and by 2030 this group will represent nearly 20% of the population and over 85 million Americans will be over the age of 65. The needs of this growing segment of our population will soon exceed the current resources available, action is needed NOW. The goal of most aging adults is to remain in their own homes and within their home community. We hope to be able to coordinate existing resources and implement new services by mobilizing volunteers who are eager to make a difference in their community and improve the functional status of aging adults. "We need to rethink our concepts of aging. We need to think of a completely different way about this new generation of older adults," says Ruth Finklestein, ScD, Senior Vice President for Policy and Planning at the New York Academy of Medicine and Director of Age Friendly New York City. "We tend to treat aging as though it was a disease, rather than a stage of life. We need to work with civic leaders to help them understand the many opportunities that arise from the aging population." In Saco, we plan to exploit this opportunity as we all move forward together in making Saco an Age Friendly Community. These opportunities will be cross-generational to encourage the active participation and engagement of all segments of our population.

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 >



<http://www.sacomaine.org>



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