



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: 12/12/2018

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Acushnet

STATE: MA

POPULATION SIZE: 10,607

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 21.97%

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Michael Cioper,
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 122 Main Street, Acushnet, MA 02743

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:

Ms. Heather Sylvia has served as the Town of Acushnet's Council on Aging Director since June of 2009. This position is responsible for performing professional, administrative and supervisory work in developing and implementing the programs and services of the Council on Aging to meet the needs of and enhance the quality of life of the town's senior and at-risk populations. Ms. Sylvia, along with the COA Board of Directors, was responsible for developing and distributing a Needs Assessment Survey in May 2018 as a starting point for the Age Friendly initiative. Funding for this project was provided from the Massachusetts Council on Aging. By June 20, 2018 the Council on Aging had received 198 survey replies through the mail and Survey Monkey. Ms. Sylvia and the COA Board of Directors will primary be charged as the community contacts for Acushnet's Age Friendly Initiative, programs and coordination of services .

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 Town of Acushnet already offers residents a very active and engaging Senior Community Center (COA). Open Monday – Friday, the COA averages about 350 participants per week for at least one program. Through a partnership with Coastline Elderly Services, 60 home delivered meals are also brought to homebound residents on a daily basis. After being accepted into the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities, a committee will be appointed by the town select board to plan an age-friendly initiative, to work on a livable community project and to advise town officials about aging in Acushnet. This ad-hoc committee will be designated for a specific time and/or to implement the age-friendly initiative that will encompass the eight domains of livability. This will be an advisory group whose purpose is to advise the town more broadly about aging-related issues including recommendations on policy and infrastructure changes. As a citizen-initiated committee they will not have formal ties with local government but members will benefit from attempting to foster a good relationship with elected officials and municipal staff. The committee will be provided with the results of the Community Needs Assessment survey, which was completed in June 2018, as a way to help begin to identify factors and areas where evidence-based, cost-effective practices can be implemented to help the aging in place concept both for those with and without dementia.

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

An age-friendly community is one in which older adults encounter a welcoming attitude from policy makers, service providers and the general population so that everyone feels truly accepted and valued in the Town of Acushnet. The more town officials and the community in general discuss how our seniors are living and the supports needed, the more likely it is that new initiatives will develop and be embraced. It is key to give aging residents a sense of purpose and the opportunity to participate in activities that allow them to feel like contributing members of their community. Volunteer opportunities for residents are already available in multiple town departments including the Finance Committee, Historical Commission, Beautification Committee and more. Staying engaged is especially important to seniors who wish to remain living independently. Social networking sites such as the town of Acushnet’s website or Facebook allows these individuals to get out into the community even if they can’t – or don’t want to – physically. Many town departments are currently hosting Facebook pages in order to keep residents informed and engaged. The Town of Acushnet will also encourage older adults to participate in the survey and committee process including submitting their opinions and suggestions for improving accessibility of public areas, support for health and wellness in the community, and increasing social engagement opportunities. By empowering volunteers, they will grow and thrive.

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 Town of Acushnet has many community partnerships in place aimed at promoting resident health and wellness. They include but are not limited to: 1.) Sunday Strolls hosted by the Save Buzzards Bay Coalition held in partnership with Southcoast Health as a way to get residents outside, get some gentle exercise and also a chance to talk with a Southcoast Health Doctor and Coalition Educators, who attend the walks. 2.) A partnership with Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals to distribute 20,000 Deterra drug activation pouches to help combat the abuse of prescription drugs, including pain medications. 3.) Title III funding through Coastline Elderly to offer no cost fall prevention exercise classes to the aging residents on a weekly basis. 4.) Funding from the MA Council on for a 50+ Job Seeker Networking Group that meets monthly at the Senior Community Center. In addition, the Town of Acushnet already has several interdepartmental programs in place to benefit residents as they age. They include, but are not limited to: 1.) The Acushnet Public Library, in partnership with the Council on Aging, offers home delivery services to those Acushnet residents who are no longer able to drive. 2.) The Town of Acushnet uses CodeRED to send emergency notifications by phone, email, text and social media to keep citizens informed of emergencies such as evacuation notices, utility outages, water main breaks, fire or floods, chemical spills, or other emergency situations. 3.) The DPW provides literature and social media information to residents regarding “how to keep your driveway clear during snowplowing season”, including detailed instructions with pictures. 4.) The Acushnet Emergency Management Department offers annual educational seminars to elderly residents both at the Library and Senior Community Center. Topics in the past have included “preparing a disaster kit” and “what to expect when you bring your animal to the warming center during an emergency.” 5.) The Town of Acushnet, in conjunction with the Animal Control Officer, has established an Animal Gift Fund for the purpose of aiding the animals of Acushnet in an emergency situation.

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?

The Town of Acushnet hopes to bring new ideas and initiatives to the other communities embarking on the age friendly process as collaboration and information sharing between towns and cities is paramount to everyone’s success. We all have the same goal of improving quality of life of older people in their communities and by provide shining examples of age-friendly practices for others to learn from we will all be successful in our endeavors.

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?

In 2017, for the first time in history, the number of adults age 65 and older exceeded the number of children under age five, according to World Health Organization data. Of this group, 90% would like to remain in their community for as long as possible. In order for this to be accomplished, now is the time for the Town of Acushnet to embark on the journey of becoming “age friendly.” An age-friendly community is barrier-free, designed for diversity, inclusive and cohesive. By finding common ground now, rather than later, with advocates in the disability, transportation, and health promotion fields, Acushnet’s development projects will have the potential to be able to diversify funding, improve political impact, and avoid duplication of effort. To be effective in supporting our older adults, Acushnet’s leaders must actively listen to a wide range of voices with an emphasis on diversifying and developing uniquely local solutions in creating focused community partnerships for older adults.

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 >



www.acushnet.ma.us