



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: 5/8/2018

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Town of Wenham

STATE: Massachusetts

POPULATION SIZE: 3,800

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 30%

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Jack Wilhelm

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: Wenham Town Hall, 138 Main St., Wenham, MA 01984

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:

Peggy Cahill, a Community Educator and Project Coordinator and James Reynolds, the COA Director and Outreach/ADA Coordinator for the Town of Wenham are spearheading the Age Friendly Community effort. They will co-direct the towns effort to establish a volunteer Chair and Advisory Board and develop the strategic plan to facilitate this collaborative effort.

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.

Wenham is a town with a rich history that will be celebrating its 375th anniversary in 2018. The first township of Wenham appears to have belonged to the Agawam Indians and the name Wenham is from a parish in Suffolk County, England, from which early settlers arrived. The first Meeting House was built and located to encourage settlement in the middle of the Town. The 1800's saw Wenham as primarily an agricultural society. Situated within Wenham's geography is Wenham Lake, known for its role in the harvesting of ice, a very important industry lasting into the 20th century and prized around the world. Town assets include being a historic New England locale with several icons of history: the Wenham Museum's Claflin-Gerrish-Richards House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the earliest dwellings on the North Shore; and the Wenham Tea House, originating in 1912 as a women's exchange and place for the townspeople to gather. Wenham is primarily a residential community where residents live in quiet, peaceful neighborhoods. Celebrating the rich history and stories of the townspeople is the cornerstone of how the community plans to thrive and become more age friendly in 2018. To mark the 375th town anniversary, an intergenerational history project between long-time Wenham residents and social studies students at Hamilton Wenham Regional High School will capture and record oral histories of life in Wenham through the Depression era. A video documentary will be recorded for public celebration and the town archives. The concentrated effort to become more age friendly in Wenham aligns with the town's current outreach and engagement activities being led by top elected town officials and staff. For the past two years, the town has prioritized becoming more responsive to residents. Multiple public forums have been established, such as the Citizens Leadership Academy, which reaches out to engage residents in learning about the inner workings of town government. The Academy creates a platform to gather more input from residents. As voices are heard, needs and priorities of residents are better understood. Key findings from this forum guide the town's strategic planning efforts. Other ongoing town initiatives that align and intersect with the age friendly movement include: updates to the open space and recreation plan (statewide program) that serves all citizens, and affordable housing needs assessment and action planning. There is a history of volunteerism in Wenham. An influx of new, energized volunteers has recently emerged at the Wenham Village Improvement Society, Wenham Museum and COA Board. This upsurge in civic engagement lends itself to moving the age friendly agenda forward, and will serve as a springboard for spreading the word about the age friendly initiative to the larger community. SeniorCare is the Area Agency on Aging (ASAP) providing a wide range of home care and other senior services to Wenham residents such as Meals on Wheels, Caregiver support specialist, options in home counseling and outreach program, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The Wenham Council on Aging has strategically expanded its outreach to underserved adults in the past three years and currently offers local resources such as social services support, financial planning, health care services, fitness classes, lifelong learning programs, dementia-specific educational events, aging mastery programs, caregiver support groups, and social activities. Residents are encouraged to participate in the Town Senior tax work-off program, benefiting both the Town and its older adults. In the past two years, the town made a concerted effort to dramatically increase participation in the tax work-off program, from three people to ten, and has also increased the amount individuals are eligible to receive to the maximum allowed by the state. The COA owns and operates its own van to assist with transportation to medical appointments, social outings, and provides unlimited services to supermarkets, hair appointments, banks and more. The van service, which is responsive and flexible, covers a wide geographical catchment area in order to afford individuals access to both nearby locations and destinations further afield such as Salem, Danvers and Peabody. Van transportation is donation only (not fee for service) with \$3.00 per ride recommended, but not required. This program is self-sustaining as van donations cover the cost of fuel and provide the local match funding required to purchase new vehicles through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Community Transit Program Grant Program. The donation system also makes transportation accessible to adults across all socioeconomic and income strata. There are limits on evening and weekend availability of this service and there is better access to the commuter rail and bus services in the surrounding towns, making transportation an important area for examination in becoming more age friendly. The town

recognizes the need to expand transportation options and will be looking for feedback from residents as part of the planning process and for setting out goals in this area. The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority paratransit service, "The Ride" is available to Wenham residents and offers transportation to all of greater Boston. Seeking to enhance emergency medical response service to their residents, the Town of Wenham fire department is projected to provide basic life support medical care through a pilot program in 2018. Also, during the recent holiday plant delivery in 2017, a survey of needs from the fire department was distributed to 120 households of individuals age 85 and over. The timing is excellent in terms of identifying unmet needs and integrating more municipal departments in the age friendly effort. The COA distributes a monthly newsletter to 750 households. Although there has been an overall increase in number of older adults served through current programs and services, some older adults do not use the COA and town services. There is an uncertainty about the efficacy of communications about current programs and services available to older adults and how to reach those who are isolated. Based on feedback received during upcoming public forums, the town's plan to become more age friendly will be more clearly defined. Preliminary ideas for how the town intends to become more age friendly include some of the following elements: a clearly articulated communication plan, greater transportation options, resource development for more adequate support of individuals aging in place, expanded community education and lifelong learning events, intergenerational exchanges and opportunities for older adults to get involved in the community in a meaningful way.

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

Jim Reynolds, Wenham COA Director, Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator, and Peggy Cahill, Community Educator & Outreach Coordinator, will assume the initial role of liaison working with town department heads and volunteers to spearhead Wenham's Age-Friendly community initiative. In November 2017 a town planning meeting was held with Patricia Zaido, the community champion and leader of Salem's age friendly efforts. Ms. Zaido was an excellent resource to guide Wenham's team by sharing best age friendly practices and strategies for involving older adults through her years of experience in Salem. As Wenham enlists the support of the next generation of individuals currently involved as volunteer leaders, we will be identifying our own champions to help spearhead this age friendly effort. To begin, Wenham held its first public listening session on January 24, 2018. Approximately 25 older adult Wenham residents attended, including community leaders from the public library, Wenham Museum and Seniorcare. Input was gathered to evaluate strengths of the town, challenges and areas needing improvement, and recommendations for moving forward with age friendly community building. The session was publicized to 120 households through in person delivery, to 750 households through COA distribution, and posted in public places such as the library, police station and town hall. Participants in the listening session recommended a regular community forum be established for flow of age and dementia friendly information and communication. A letter summarizing the listening session in February, 2018 was mailed to all participants with notification of a second listening session held in April, 2018. These two listening sessions were well attended by enthusiastic residents who are eager to engage in making Wenham a more age friendly community. To conduct a needs assessment, an Age-Friendly Survey has been developed and will be mailed to residents through the COA, made available on the town's website, and possible distribution at future Listening Sessions. The town of Wenham, in partnership with UMass Boston Gerontology Institute, will engage in a process of conducting more in-depth interviews (in person or by phone) with a broad representation of another 15-20 older adults in Wenham to help determine interests and needs. Once all the data is compiled from surveys and interviews of residents, information will be used to identify specific projects, needs, and areas for improvement. A strategic plan will be prepared and implemented to assure that Wenham is an Age -Friendly community for all its citizens. Older residents will be involved in all of these activities and will participate in developing and implementing this strategic plan for an Age-Friendly Wenham.

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.

Step One: COA Coalition Building to facilitate cross sector collaborations. Wenham Council on Aging was the host site for a series of three Age & Dementia Working group meetings beginning in August, 2017. The initiative, spearheaded by Ms. Cahill, community educator, in collaboration with Wenham COA, brought together stakeholders, local organizations, and leaders across sectors who were interested in learning together and sharing information about the MA age-friendly initiative and WHO age friendly designation process. The working group held a total of three meetings which included many leaders in the MA Age & Dementia Friendly initiative: Emily Kearns, Dementia Friendly Mass Coordinator; Valerie Spain, AARP Age Friendly Lead; James Fuccione, Senior Director Healthy Aging Collaborative; Martha Rappoli, Director of Day by Day Adult Day Care in Gloucester; Colleen Bullard, Day by Day Activity Director; Sheila Taylor, Director of Ipswich Council on Aging; Scott Trenti, Director of SeniorCare (local ASAP lead for Age & Dementia friendly initiative in north shore area); and other SeniorCare staff. The group identified what is presently available for older adults in north shore communities, including Wenham, noting community strengths, challenges, and specific needs to improve services and enhance quality of life for the older adult population. The group also established a framework with specific recommendations for moving forward with achieving Age-Friendly community designation. Additionally, sharing ideas about gaps in north shore communities led to new insights and a greater impetus to move forward with developing more vital, progressive community initiatives.

Step Two: Create and facilitate Community Leadership Team in Wenham to meet quarterly (target start date: March/April 2018) The team is likely to include at least one representative from each of the following departments/organizations: Wenham police, fire department, town administrator's office, public health nurse, board of health member, recreation department, board of selectmen, housing authority (Enon Village), the Maples and the Boulders (private independent retirement communities, 55 and older), COA board, Hamilton Wenham public library, Wenham museum, post office, Hamilton Wenham Regional school district, Gordon College Center for Balance, Mobility and Wellness, Seniorcare, Wenham Village Improvement Society (WVIS), Wenham Issue Social Services Help (WISSH), and several at large community members.

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?

Wenham hopes to spearhead innovative age and dementia friendly special projects that can serve as a replicable model for other small towns. The intention is to increase community engagement, bring the generations together, expand outreach to undeserved or isolated adults, use videography to showcase stories, and involve older adults more fully in the community to have their voices heard and the richness of their lives and stories celebrated. Wenham is an early adopter of this program, expanding the age friendly footprint in the north shore area, and would be the first small town on the north shore that has taken the age friendly model of larger communities and developed it within a much smaller community.

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 2016, Jim Reynolds, Director of Wenham COA took a lead role in initiating a multi-agency collaboration between Beverly Council on Aging, SeniorCare's Director of Homecare, SeniorCare case management and development staff, and Peggy Cahill, Community Educator. These partnerships worked effectively to organize a large community education workshop event. The event, widely publicized by all the agencies involved and facilitated by Peggy Cahill, was well attended, with up to 125 attendees. Participants included individuals who were aging, care partners, social workers, geriatric care managers, activity staff, college students and a wide range of community professionals from organizations throughout the north shore (Salem, Beverly, Wenham, Hamilton, Ipswich, Gloucester, Rockport, Essex and more) Participants voiced a universal need for more events of this kind, where individuals and organizations could come together to share progressive ideas for community engagement programs for the aging population. Working to change the narrative of aging from despair to hope through the arts was at the heart of the conversation, and seen as an integral part of building inclusive communities for older adults and those living with dementia on the north shore. The event was a catalyst for Wenham COA to offer a three part dementia education series at Hamilton Wenham Library. This popular series clearly met a growing need for more information and resource sharing for those coping with dementia. Wenham COA intends to continue with educational events tailored to the topic of dementia in 2018. Also, the COA has been hosting a monthly caregiver support group for six months in collaboration with a caregiver support specialist/ social worker from Seniorcare and a nurse from a local homecare agency. All of these efforts, and the findings from the working group meetings, have spurred Wenham to join the AARP & WHO Age Friendly networks.

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 >



Click here to add a link to where we can find your logo. Or, send us your logo by email attachment to livable@aarp.org.