



## 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@aarp.org](mailto:livable@aarp.org).
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 7/25/2018

### Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY:** South Orange

**STATE:** New Jersey

**POPULATION SIZE:** 17,001

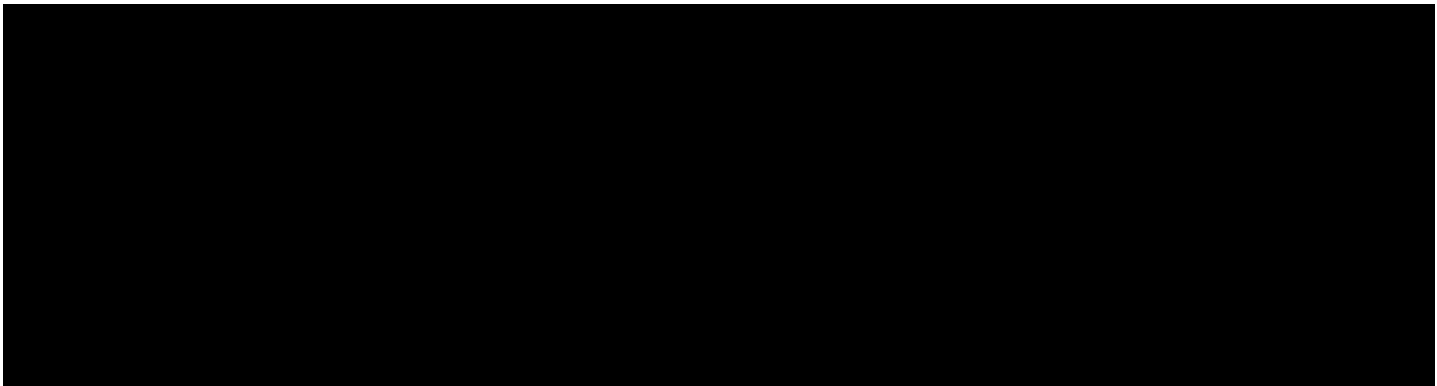
**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 11.18%

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** Sheena Collum, Village President

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** The Township of South Orange Village, 76 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079

### 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.



The Coordinator facilitates the efforts of SOMA Two Towns for All Ages to address the needs of older residents; works with the Seniors Advisory Committees and Management Team to expand the services and offerings to seniors; represents the needs of older residents in the community; advocates for inclusion of older residents in community events; works with municipal departments and community groups to implement programming and service coordination; maintains communication channels including website, bi-monthly newsletter, calendar, eblasts, social media, local press releases and announcements; represents the initiative in the community, at conferences and events. As a South Orange resident and Trustee, Karne Hartshorn Hilton is an active leader in the SOMA initiative and is the town liason with the Senior Advisory Committee.

### **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.**

Recognizing the increasing number of residents over 60 and the desire to keep long-term residents in our communities, South Orange and Maplewood (SOMA) launched "Two Towns for All Ages." Under this new initiative, SOMA is taking a proactive approach to foster healthy aging and enable residents to age in place. Since the initial needs assessment and inception of the program, SOMA Two Towns for All Ages has built a multi-prong communications platform to connect seniors with community events and activities that promote inclusion. We first focused on making people aware of available senior services and programming. To improve senior inclusion, we developed age-friendly guidelines for community events, and work with organizations to implement strategies that make it easier for older residents to attend. We have developed two regular intergenerational events that address unmet needs in the community and highlight the role of seniors as community leaders – Repair Café and an annual Volunteer Fair. We work with local businesses to offer a discount program for seniors. With the help of a transportation consultant, we are working to expand options for seniors by offering a subsidy for private options, held a transportation fair and developed a comprehensive Transportation Guide. Our next areas of focus will be a comprehensive Resource Guide and a Housing Forum, both geared toward helping people age in place. In addition, we continue to work with multiple municipal offices and community groups with overlapping interests, such as walkability. See attached Volunteer Directory, Transportaiton Guide and Classic Card Directory as examples.

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

SOMA Two Towns for All Ages began by hiring a consultant to do an in-depth analysis of the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the community and to develop an Action Plan. (See attached Executive Summary) Nearly 200 representatives of the older community participated in focus groups and community forums. Each town recruited members for its own Seniors Advisory Committee. We created a Management Team with Administrators and representatives from both towns. A Local Steering Committee continues to bring together the voices of the focus groups and stakeholders from the early stages, and solicits new members to join and support the age-friendly efforts. SOMA Two Towns hired a coordinator to move the priorities forward, work with municipal departments and community groups and make the program sustainable.

**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.**

SOMA has a Seniors Advisory Committee in each town, a joint Management Team with the town's elected leadership, administrators and leaders of the senior community, and a Local Steering Committee with a broad representation of community stakeholders with an interest, concern and involvement in the needs of older residents. With this extensive and sometimes overlapping structure, there is ample opportunity for different parties to interact. The Coordinator works with all stakeholders to initiate and accomplish program goals. See current workplan/year 2

#### 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?

South Orange is a thriving community close to New York City that prides itself on its diversity, inclusion and openness. Expanding and ensuring that age-friendliness is part of our community is a natural priority for us. Our community is desirable to new, young families who benefit from the work our current seniors put into it; it is unthinkable that our seniors would no longer be part of our social fabric. We are challenged by our built environment as we are an older town and the majority of our older residents are living in their homes. But, with 2 senior apartment buildings, recent construction of market-rate apartments and a robust commitment to affordable housing, seniors have options to “downsize” and stay in their community. At the same time we are attracting older people to town who want to live near their children and grandchildren and enjoy our walkable downtown, access to trains to New York City, and arts community. We are making great efforts to welcome new seniors into our vibrant community. We believe we can help other communities like ours learn how to address the needs of diverse communities and challenging housing costs, and how to welcome new, older residents.

#### 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 Grotta Fund for Senior Care Healthy Aging Community gave us the resources to organize our unstructured age-friendly efforts. We were able to hire a dedicated coordinator to lead building an infrastructure for our efforts, organize existing programs and move forward. AARP will help us proceed to the next level and continue our work.

#### 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



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an image, here's ours >