



Township of South Orange Village

Sheena C. Collum
Village President

July 20, 2018

Stephanie Hunsinger
State Director AARP NJ
303 George St., Suite 505
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Ms. Hunsinger,

Oh behalf of the Village of South Orange, New Jersey, I am pleased to submit this application for admission to the World Health Organization's and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative.

Recognizing the increasing number of residents over 60 and the desire to keep long-term residents in our community, South Orange began to explore ways to incorporate our existing age-friendly efforts into municipal policy, and expand services where we could. South Orange prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive community that attracts people of all backgrounds. We are on the commuter line to New York City, are home to Seton Hall University and have a performing arts center in our downtown. We have two official senior residences and through recent development and construction of low-rise apartment buildings that increased housing options, we have attracted many new, older residents who come here to retire near family and take advantage of our location, our arts community and our walkable downtown. South Orange is becoming a great place for people to stay as well as destination to retire.

In 2016, we joined forces with our neighbor, Maplewood, a town with which we share several municipal services. Together we launched a joint program "SOMA Two Towns for All Ages." Through this initiative, we are taking a proactive approach to foster healthy aging and enable residents to age in place. This age-friendly initiative engages all stakeholders in the community - government, businesses, schools, non-profits and faith-based organizations - to build a community that serves the needs of residents of all ages. To ensure programs and services in our two towns meet these important goals we have made a commitment to be responsive to the needs of older residents; to combine the resources and interests of both towns to promote and support healthy, engaged and vibrant aging; to recognize the role older adults play in our communities and their contributions to the fabric of our diverse community; and to realize that improvements that benefit the older population also benefit the rest of our community.

We have developed a strong framework to build upon in addressing the World Health Organization's eight domains of healthy aging. We look forward to joining this global network of communities that share our commitment to giving older residents the opportunity to age in place as active, respected and engaged members of their communities. With our partners, we will contribute to the network and look forward to the challenges and the examples set by being part of this growing endeavor.

Sincerely,

Sheena C. Collum
Village President, South Orange, NJ