



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.
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 12/14/2018

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Wausau

STATE: WI

POPULATION SIZE: 39,302

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 20.8 (2010 Census)

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Robert B. Mielke

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 407 Grant St.

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:

The City of Wausau's Planning, Community and Economic Development Department oversees many aspects of City policies, programs, and services that affect seniors in Wausau. The Department also oversees the Wausau Community Development Authority which directly operates a 36 unit senior living facility and nearly 200 public housing units for qualified households. The Department leads the City's development strategy which specifically denotes the goals increasing housing choice and other "missing middle" housing types that are popular with both empty nesters and young professionals. The Department leads the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan through the adoption of policies and programs that fulfill the goals and objectives identified in the plan- and currently is leading an entire re-write of the '60's era City Zoning Ordinance with the direct goals of integrating mixed uses, reducing parking requirements, improving transit oriented development, implementing age friendly code provisions, and incorporating aspects of universal design.

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.

Programs in the community that are targeted toward older people include a range of senior housing options, North Central Health Care services (a quasi public health services organization and skilled nursing facility), and Marathon County Health Department programs. Wausau offers a variety of state, county and local supportive services and programming linked through the central Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) and there are many nonprofits that this partnership with AARP will allow the City to improve cooperation. In addition to increased collaboration with the various existing programs, the City commits to analyzing and development public policy which is specifically targeted to making Wausau a more age friendly community. Planning staff is currently working on a complete streets policy to ensure that street designs meet the needs of all people. The City has both programmed and passive public spaces, including many all ages friendly activities on our central public square, the 400 Block and along our new all access urban waterfront. Wausau's downtown where much of the speciality shopping and restaurants/entertainment are located is accessible by transit and is a very walkable district. The City has a large farmer's market that runs through the winter along with speciality grocery stores with healthy food that are available by transit service for those that do not live within walking distance. The City's Live It Up Wausau downpayment assistance program is designed to promote neighborhood cohesion by providing downpayment assistance and housing renovation funds, improving neighborhood stability. The City recently received recognition from Places for Bikes as the second most bike friendly City in the nation and the City's re-write of the existing zoning ordinance has great potential to incorporate universal design policies and best practices into the new code. The City currently promotes aging in place by allowing retrofits, such as accessible ramps on homes, to encroach into the required setbacks. The Health Eating Active Living Coalition (HEAL) of the Marathon County Health Department already organizes regular walk audits to suggest improvements to make streets more all-ages friendly. The City is in conversations to expand transit service hours and days of operation to include weekends. These efforts will be ongoing, and the City's age friendly action plan process will undoubtedly reveal more action steps to become more age friendly.

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

The City is currently updating our zoning code, and are exploring ordinances regarding universal design requirements, building accessibility, and site plan accessibility requirements. The City has brought in many different stakeholders during the process of updating our zoning code, including charrettes and focus groups, and there are many more meetings that will be open to the public during this process. The City intends to develop a strategic plan to achieve age friendly status after joining the age friendly communities network, and this process will involve seniors, following the guidance provided in the AARP Roadmap to Livability. There are several groups that the City will engage to provide input on the planning process, such as the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and North Central Health Care, which operates many of the senior programs and facilities in the area. The City has several citizen's advisory committees that focuses on issues related to livability and aging, including active transportation, transit, housing, sustainability and the environment. These committees are open to citizens of all ages, and often engage the public.

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 City already works closely with other organizations, both informally and formally through regional committees. For example, Planning staff serves on the Transportation Planning Committee and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), so we can coordinate transportation efforts regionally. As the only block grant entitlement community in the area, Wausau works with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the State WHEDA and WEDC to implement housing and economic development initiatives that improve livability. Wausau has identified age friendly objectives in the recently updated Comprehensive Plan, providing a high level framework for striving to become more age friendly and livable. The Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is inherently collaborative and encourages the communities in the metro area to work together on transportation projects, and encourages each local community to adopt a complete streets policy. Within the City, a Development Team which includes the department heads from all City departments meets weekly to discuss projects and policies that are in the City's pipeline and affect the City's competitiveness which will be a standing meeting to discuss the implementation of the age friendly community action plan along the Wausau Common Council Economic Development Committee which has endorsed the AARP process.

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?

Wausau is located at the border of the Wisconsin Northwoods, a popular destination for vacationing and retirees. The median age in Wausau in 2017 (39.2) is already higher than the national median of 37.8. As those the population in our region ages, many of them may look to move closer to medical and health services. Wausau has been making improvements to livability for over a decade, which improves the quality of life for people of all ages. We hope we can share our experience in accommodating an aging population and making Wausau a great place for seniors. Some successes in Wausau related to becoming age friendly includes the development of new “missing middle” housing, improvements to active transportation options, revitalization and investment in our historic and walkable downtown.

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 North Central Wisconsin Regional Livability Plan projects that by 2030, the proportion of population over 65 in the counties north of Wausau will increase from 21% to 32%. The Central sub-region, which includes Wau
ages, many of
to appeal to t
entertainment
many retirees
experiences in
recreation, transportation, and social engagement. It can also be the details that make programs and policies successful, so sharing experiences an
Additionally, our participating in the Age Friendly Communities network will be a signal to people looking for a community that is age friendly.



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.

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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 >