



Membership Application

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and 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

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 6/7/2019

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Unified Government of Athens Clarke County

STATE: Georgia

POPULATION SIZE: 128,000

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 15%

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Kelly Girtz

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 301 College Ave., Suite 300, Athens, GA 30601

Section 2: COMMUNITY CONTACT for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and 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]

Please describe the named person's role in the city or community's age-friendly initiative:

Blaine Williams is the County Manager for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County. The authority and responsibility of the Manager are dictated by the Athens Clarke County Charter. The Manager directs the staff of the Unified Government to effectively perform all the responsibilities of the government under his or her control and to fulfill the mission of Athens-Clarke County.

The person named above agrees to be subscribed to the [AARP Livable Communities Weekly e-Newsletter](#), which is one of the primary ways we share useful news and resources. To add additional subscribers, type their names and email addresses into below. Once this application is processed, a subscription confirmation message will be sent so the individual can confirm that they want to subscribe. To subscribe today, follow the link above or visit AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe.

Allison.Wright@accgov.com;kelly.girtz@accgov.com

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.

Envision Athens: The Athens-Clarke County (ACC) community underwent a visionary, ambitious, and multi-layered strategic planning process intended to be the focal point of community discussions for at least the next decade and spur transformational community change. Key institutional partners convened and collaborated in this process, including the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Northeast Georgia in Athens, University of Georgia, Athens Housing Authority, the City of Winterville, Georgia Power, Athens Technical College, Piedmont Athens Regional, and St. Mary's Hospital. Additionally, ACC enjoys a healthy and collaborative relationship with the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA), which is a non-profit organization that "seeks to enrich the lives of older persons" in the Greater Athens Area. In 2018, over 14,700 individuals in our areas were served by ACCA. Located near downtown Athens, ACCA is a significant community partner and is the County's key service provider for meals, health and wellness programs, caregiver support, and transportation services, just to name a few. To ensure a well-rounded focus on policies, programs and services, it should also be noted that the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Georgia is one of 119 lifelong learning institutes affiliated with the Bernard Osher Foundation. Further, through the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget process, the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission is committed to a funding strategy to allow older adults to ride public transit for free to ensure they have adequate and consistent transportation options. Finally, ACC will utilize existing priorities created in the Envision Athens Plan, as well as targeted community partners to address and support initiatives that moves our community toward becoming more Age-Friendly.

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

In early 2019, the Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department partnered with the Athens Community Council on Aging to provide recreational programming at the Lay Park Community Center for older adults. The Unified Government will engage and involve older people in this process through our Public Information Office, utilize the connections we have with the Athens Community Council on Aging, and the ACC Mayor and Commission work sessions. It should also be noted that in 2017, the Unified Government was a major partner and stakeholder in the Athens Wellbeing Project, led by the University of Georgia's College of Public Health, Geography, and School of Public and International Affairs. The purpose of the Athens Wellbeing Project (AWP) is to assist our community leaders and institutions by providing a comprehensive snapshot of our community's unique needs and assets in Athens-Clarke County. The nature of the AWP collaboration allows for increases in efficiency and more effective use of public funds to conduct the necessary needs assessments. For the senior research stratum, a list of nine retirement communities were involved and composed the sampling frame: Arbor Terrace of Athens, Athena Gardens, Columbia Brookside, Iris Place, Denney Towers, Lakewood Hills Senior Village, Morningside of Athens, Talmadge Terrace-Lanier Gardens, and Whispering Pines Assisted Living. As mentioned, community dwelling older adults will be informed and engaged in the process through the help of our partners at ACCA and OLLI, who through their individual outreach efforts, are able to reach a significant portion of ACC's older adult population.

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 current mechanisms and plans our community has in place to facilitate collaborative planning is the Envision Athens community plan which is developing a common vision and strategic action plan to guide the County forward, the 2018 Athens Clarke County Comprehensive Plan, the Young Urban Builders Program through the Athens Land Trust, as well as the Community Development Block Grant Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development Department. As referenced in the Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan, one of the key strategies is to “create quality housing for older adults using innovative techniques like accessory dwelling units.” The Young Urban Builders program was started in 2018 as a way to address youth unemployment and perform owner-occupied rehabilitation in the West-Broad Neighborhood, where a large number of minority older adults reside. During the application period for the 2019 Community Development Block Grant application process, the Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development Department goals that all applicants must consider are: to enhance quality of life for: individuals with mental illness, substance abuse, use disorders, individuals with disabilities, formerly incarcerated and seniors. The strategies to accomplish these goals are to provide supportive services, promote physical and mental health of vulnerable populations, which often includes older adults, we are striving for foster public infrastructure improvements that improve the lives of low and moderate residents of Athens-Clarke County.

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 States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

As a university community, social, economic, and community services hub for NE Georgia, the Unified Government and our community partners will be a significant asset to the Global Network of Age Friendly Communities because of our strong commitment to providing high quality services across a regional spectrum regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, etc. Additionally, with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, School of Gerontology, Athens Community Council on Aging and the Unified Government's commitment to this particular demographic, we are always open to the research, application and adoption of best practices. Further, we are a community that can always be viewed as partner agency within the network that has likely tried what other communities may be considering and willing to take the lead on initiatives that benefit not only older adults in Athens-Clarke County, but the Age-Friendly network as a whole.

5) What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

The initial idea of joining the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities comes at the direction of the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission. During the development of the 2018 work plan during the annual Mayor and Commission retreat, the Commission directed staff to begin the process of applying to join the Network. There was overwhelming excitement amongst the Commission about this initiative and we are extremely hopeful and optimistic that we will be accepted. It should also be noted that the Mayor and Commission voted to create the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which will proactively seek to engage older adults.

6) Provide a digital file or link of a logo or other image that represents your community and for which you have reprint rights. 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 a JPEG, PDF or PNG of your logo by email attachment to livable@aarp.org.

