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: 4/3/2019
NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Woodstock
STATE: Illinois
POPULATION SIZE: 25,526
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 15%
NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Dr. Brian Sager, Mayor
OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 121 W. Calhoun Street, Woodstock, IL 60098

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.

Please describe the named person’s role in the city or community’s age-friendly initiative:
Terry has lived in the community and been employed by the City in public interaction roles for over 25 years. As such, she has developed trusting relationships with leaders in business, non-profits and education throughout the community, and will assist in identifying and encouraging participation in awareness of the Age-Friendly Community designation and formation of a proposed Community Elders Advisory Board to implement the WHO Community Network goals. As the Grants/Communications Manager, Terry works closely with the City Manager and the Mayor. She has a strong orientation to City-wide priorities and pursues funding opportunities to assist in successful production of those projects with greatest overall benefit. She is then in a position to publicize the results and make those efforts widely known. This combination of roles offers a unique perspective on community needs, as well as the resources and influence to help guide the City’s public image through promotional, informational and educational means.

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.

Terry is already subscribed to the newsletter. Roscoe Stelford, City Manager, rstelford@woodstockil.gov; Darrell Moore, City Planner, dmoore@woodstockil.gov; Krista Coltrin, Economic Development Coordinator, kcoltrin@woodstockil.gov
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.

Please see attached comprehensive listing of Woodstock’s Age-Friendly Attributes. The City embraces the opportunity to influence design of infrastructure and equipment to become more age-friendly in the livability domain areas of Transportation, Housing and Health Services as the senior demographic continues to expand. These categories require substantial collaboration and financial cooperation from other entities with control over those domain services. The Age-Friendly Community distinction will help provide credibility and validation for the City’s efforts towards those improvements. Woodstock currently excels in the livability domains for Outdoor Spaces, Social Participation and Communications. The City already manages the staff and budgets for this community’s recreational and cultural offerings, as well as many avenues for sharing information about those programs and benefits. The City’s budget includes a Recreation Department that offers many age-targeted classes and events at the Woodstock Recreation Center, Woodstock WaterWorks aquatic center, and throughout the City-owned parks and conservation areas. The City further supports, as full City Departments, both the Woodstock Opera House and Stage Left Café, and the Woodstock Public Library. These venues offer affordable, or free, age-friendly programs in all artistic disciplines and educational topics year-round, many geared specifically to older audiences. They also provide communications vehicles, both printed and electronic, to fully inform and educate the public, including the comprehensive CITY SCENE publication that is mailed to every home three times per year.

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

Plans include the formation of a Community Elders Advisory Board to identify and implement age-friendly improvements. A brief survey (see attached summary) already sent out to City contacts confirmed interest from a number of community stakeholders willing to participate in this proposed initiative. Already in existence are City-led regularly-scheduled senior-focused programs, including Seniors at the Café, and Coffee with the Chief. These audiences will be encouraged to provide input into the types of programs and services they and their friends feel may be needed or desired. The Age-Friendly Community Network designation will be widely publicized as a highly positive “point of difference” for those considering Woodstock as a place of residence or business, and to engage participation from those already here. Using a “3 E’s” theme will be suggested: Educate, Engage, Entertain. When people are Educated, they understand and accept the importance of change; they can then be encouraged to Engage their talents to help make those changes; and then, rewarded with opportunities to Entertain, which positively reinforces the work being done. The Age-Friendly distinction shows forward-thinking concern for a growing number of residents and willingness to make beneficial changes using limited resources. As individuals age they can often become less vocal or assertive about their needs. The Age-Friendly designation will show the City’s willingness to respond to concerns and will encourage elder community members’ active participation in determining how taxpayer supported funding is spent to meet these needs.

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.
This is a small community but one that is very close-knit and communicative. While there is a regional daily newspaper available, Woodstock benefits enormously from its own excellent weekly newspaper, The Woodstock Independent, that keeps all community members intimately connected to local happenings. With this degree of personal insight, many of those involved in organizational leadership are peers and friends who are comfortable sharing both resources and needs. The Grants/Communications Manager was recently invited to represent the City in a new Chamber of Commerce Ambassador group. This role offers highly visible public interaction opportunities to encourage working closely, and strengthening relationships, with other community leaders representing their organizations. This position also seeks out grant opportunities for the City that achieve high success rates based on funding collaborative projects developed with other area agencies. The City’s Economic Development Department further provides a monthly forum, Business Owners Meeting, that is regularly attended, and information shared in this setting can provide insights into senior needs and patterns of behavior. As mentioned, the Library, Opera House and Recreation Center are already City-managed facilities, so information is shared with, and about, those patrons on a daily basis. Relationships with County Government, education and conservation groups are a ready strong, and City management is working to increase connections with the medical community, which has been in transition the past year, as well as regional transportation entities. The latter is greatly aided by our Mayor’s recent appointment to the Chicago-area Regional Transportation Authority Board. In addition, our Mayor has led a three-year long county-wide task force of government and social service organizations to address issues of homelessness, resulting in the forthcoming development of a dedicated year-round shelter. Under this Mayor’s leadership, Woodstock is experiencing extremely positive growth, due to the efforts of a very active and forward-thinking City Council that embraces the Age-Friendly Community Network concepts.
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?

Woodstock is the McHenry County Seat, a thriving Chicago Collar County on Metra rail, 1 hour NW of Chicago. We are a rural ag-based historic community, in a beautiful natural setting, with a strong arts and culture orientation that creates a small city vibrancy. As a tourism destination, we also employ a substantial marketing budget that offers ongoing exposure to Chicago and Rockford markets. Woodstock therefore offers a uniquely wide range of strengths, and opportunities, to illustrate the types of programs and services communities can provide for their residents in the Age-Friendly arena. We have a base of “traditional” Midwest family residents, with a population that is 30% Hispanic. We also attract a large number of artists and creative thinkers, including talented Millennials moving back to the community, actively involved with performing at the Opera House and Stage Left Café; this includes one young woman who just received the highest number of votes among a strong field of newly-elected City Council candidates. Woodstock has been a role model community by initiating recycling and showing ongoing ecological conservation support. We will demonstrate to other communities what can be accomplished in Age-Friendly municipal policy, programs and services with limited staff and budgets.

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 ADU “Granny Flat” Academy presentation, sponsored by AARP and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) and held at Woodstock Public Library in January, was extremely eye-opening. The room was packed and all attendees excited and engaged with the topic. This demonstrated incredible interest and need in the community and motivated staff’s investigation into this social trend. Research revealed the frightening statistics of 10,000 people in the US turning 65 every day, and a person diagnosed with Alzheimer’s dementia every 65 seconds. With these factors prominent in personal experience for many of us here at City Hall, it quickly became obvious that this was an area of growing need that could offer Woodstock the opportunity to assume a leadership role and change the lives of many for years to come. Follow-up discussions with community leaders in this age group confirmed the potential benefits and receptivity to the program. The AARP website offers tremendous resources for communities to address the issues we will all face in our imminent future; it now seems irresponsible not to take advantage of this network. An Age-Friendly Communities Committee has been formed by MMC, and Woodstock has been asked to participate. This shows some of the benefits to AARP resulting from Woodstock being a new member of the Age-Friendly Community Network.
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:

Will be emailed.