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: 3/13/2019
NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: TOWN OF MARION
STATE: MASSACHUSETTS
POPULATION SIZE: 5,014
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 35.8%
NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: NORMAN A. HILLS, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: MARION TOWN HOUSE, 2 SPRING STREET, MARION, MA 02738

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:

As Director of Marion’s Council on Aging, it is Karen’s responsibility to assess the needs of Marion’s senior population and develop and implement programs designed to meet these needs. She also maintains an effective and constructive working relationship with local organizations and town departments. These responsibilities endow her with knowledge useful to the committee as it moves forward establishing a needs’ baseline. Her work with other town departments position her to liaison with these departments which will be important as we coordinate and integrate our endeavors with the Town of Marion’s Master Plan. Communication with other players will be of paramount importance to this effort.

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.
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.

Examples of current programs/services are as follows: Transportation (medical appointments, grocery shopping, errands, social engagements). Outreach services (Food Stamps, Farmer’s Market Coupons, Community Fund, Fuel Assistance, Tax Work-Off Abatement Program, Coffee with the Police Chief, Daily Assurance Call-In Program, and First Responder Lock Box Program). Health & Wellness (weekly Nursing Clinic, Podiatry Services, Flu Clinics, Visiting Dental Hygienist, Caregiver Support Group, Memory Café, Exercise Classes). Food Service (Coastline Elderly Services meals program, Meals on Wheels, and a weekly gourmet lunch of homemade soups). Recreational/Social Engagement (lectures, 50+ Job Seekers Network, Classic Film Series, AARP Smart Driver’s Class, Bridge, Basket Weaving, Mahjong, Summer Concert Series, rotating Art Gallery, motorcoach excursions to various regional locales and guided hikes with our local Land Trust). It is our hope we can expand the current programs to reach additional seniors and others as well by adding programs such as a book club, developing a network for simple handyman services for elderly residents, partnering with our Town Recreation Department on certain programs and instituting a regular newspaper column spotlighting seniors and their current or prior accomplishments. We are also excited about the creation of an interactive website through the Senior Learning Network as well as making capital improvements to the building and grounds which house our Community Center making it a welcoming and well-designed space for community-based programs. To further that initiative, we recently partnered with Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School’s Horticulture Program to develop and design a landscaping plan for our Community Center.

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

The community has two organizations wholly focused on Marion’s aging population, the Marion Council on Aging and The Friends of the Marion Council on Aging. These two organizations are made up of all age groups and their work focuses not only on developing and running events but also assessing the needs of the aging population via focus groups, studies and outreach to other organizations in the community, such as Marion Recreational Department, Marion Art Center, Sippican Land Trust, Marion’s public library and many other local and regional organizations. Through these partnerships we are able to engage all age ranges of the community and expand our programs to meet the wants and needs of our older population in places where there are already active participants or introduce them to new opportunities. We believe it is important to understand the needs of not only the current elder population but also understand the needs of future elder populations. We plan to organize additional focus groups in the town to help us further understand and be sure we address current areas of need that various age groups perceive to be important relative to aging in place. This outreach and joint promotions help us stay ahead of the needs required as the town’s demographics shift.

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.
In 2013/2014 the Town of Marion embarked on a comprehensive journey to create a “Master Plan” for the community. At that time Marion Planning Board set in motion multiple initiatives to begin the process. The process included the creation of a Master Plan Advisory Board and hiring SRPEDD to draft a community profile for the town. The community profile outlined the six areas for the Master Plan to focus on, Land Use, Economic Development, Housing, Climate Resiliency, Transportation and Circulation, Services and Facilities. All six areas of the Master Plan speak to an age-friendly component. The town has or is planning to put into motion initiatives outlined in the report. Via the Master Plan, town agencies and departments are working together to enhance Marion’s livability for all age groups. One shortcoming uncovered by the community profile was the need for improved walkability and transportation in the community. Partnerships between public and private agencies are working toward improved sidewalks, walking trails and general access to public and town-supported transportation for all age groups.
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?

Looking over the list of AARP’s Age-Friendly States and Communities, the vast majority are cities or large towns. Only a handful, mostly in New England, are very small towns. Marion is a town of some 5,000 year-round residents and most Town officials are volunteers. We have only a few full-time paid staff in leadership roles. Like most small towns, changes must be approved by the entire community through Town Meeting rather than being done by municipal officials. To accomplish our stated goals, we will need to both mobilize volunteers and seek outside funding. If we succeed, we will have learned many lessons along the way which can be used to both encourage and assist other small towns in also joining the Network, and we will be happy to share these lessons.

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 Town of Marion was motivated to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities in order to take advantage of all the resources offered by AARP such as the Roadmap to Livability collection and the inspiring examples in the Where We Live magazine as well as to benefit from the shared experiences of other communities as they have moved through the process of improving the ability of their senior citizens to age in place. In Marion, various organizations have already taken steps to assess areas of need and progress has been made in some of these areas, most notably with the generous donation by VFW Post 2425 of the Benjamin D. Cushing Community Center that now serves the town’s seniors, the Recreation Department and others. Additional plans are being contemplated, and the AARP/WHO Networks present us with a template that will be helpful in keeping the Age-Friendly Committee on track and will enable us to ultimately reach our goals. Also, the possibility of being able to apply for grants to help us see this multi-year project through is obviously important for a small town with limited resources.
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:

Please see copy of image below.