



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: 9/18/2019

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: North Brookfield

STATE: Massachusetts

POPULATION SIZE: 4,761

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 19.8%

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Dale Kiley, Chairman of the North Brookfield Board of Selectmen

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 215 North Main Street, North Brookfield, MA 01535, United States

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 contact information]

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

The Director of the Senior Center/Council on Aging helps to provide community resources for senior citizens by developing and advocating for social, health, and recreational programs that maintain or enhance the quality of their lives. The Council on Aging consists of eight volunteer board members and the Senior Center includes two additional staff. The Director works with both groups under the leadership of the Board of Selectmen to develop policies and deliver services to seniors in the community. The Director works to educate the community about seniors' needs. The Director builds community awareness around Senior Center programs/activities, also encouraging non-seniors to visit the center and participate.

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.

Click here to enter text.

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.

The North Brookfield Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The Center provides a wide array of programs and services for seniors including health and wellness screenings for podiatry, hearing, manicure and blood pressure clinics, health education, community fitness programs, nutrition-based services, food distribution program, information and referral services, transportation services, and recreational programs. The Senior Center and the Friends of the North Brookfield COA recently received a grant to provide over 3,000 congregate meals through Tri-Valley Elder Services and our on-site home cooked meals program. The Center recently expanded our referral services to include legal assistance. Our seniors also work on community service projects such as new member welcome bags and knitted hats for various members in town including first responders, schoolchildren, veterans, nursing home residents, NICU infants, and women's shelters. Other community resources to promote healthy aging include a Council on Aging walking club. The Town's Playground Committee is currently working to redevelop a park/play area within the Town Common also known as the North Brookfield Commons Master Plan. The overall vision is to improve the deteriorating area into an inclusive public gathering space for community events, games, and activities featuring improved basketball courts, multipurpose athletic fields, little league field, youth play structures, performance center, picnic area, new street trees, and more. The park is approximately 700 feet from the Senior Center and is part of the walking club's travel route. Senior Center staff will work with the Project Team to coordinate the installation age-friendly and ADA-accessible exercise equipment and resting benches. The Town's Downtown Development Committee (DDC) is working on an Economic Development Plan and overseeing the development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. We will collaborate with the DDC to ensure that seniors needs, particularly pedestrian improvement projects for senior mobility are prioritized. Lastly, our town is anticipating Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award funding that will be used for housing repairs focused in the town center area for low-to-moderate income housing, which has historically benefitted our community's senior population in past CDBG awards.

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

Community engagement efforts will follow a standard public process similar to how we typically engage and involve members of the community in all of our projects. This process will involve a combination of surveying, canvassing at local events to gather input and involvement, focus groups and/or listening sessions, and public meetings. Our first step to engaging and involving older adults will involve follow up activity. This past summer, the Senior Center hosted a community forum in collaboration with the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC) to discuss healthy aging needs, concerns, and resources. The event was attended by 25 various town staff and boards/committee members including the Highway Department and Animal Control. Once we are in the planning phase, we will reconvene these boards and staff including residents to gather community input on needs and priorities. We will also focus our efforts on community education by hosting sessions to teach the community about what it means to be age friendly. This will include a combination of meetings and/or workshops with various community members including emergency management and businesses to build awareness around the services or practices they

can adopt to better support older adults in town. We will work with our partners and project advisors at MHAC, Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, Alzheimers Association, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, AARP Massachusetts and others to obtain proper training materials and resources as we engage with different groups in town.

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.

We recognize that due to the high level of current projects and programmed initiatives in town, there is potential for overlapping community visions or initiatives. To address this, our community recently held a “mini Town Meeting” in which all boards and committees were invited to discuss their current and planned projects to the Board of Selectmen and the rest of the community. The public meeting was initiated by our newly established Downtown Development Committee (DDC) to help build awareness and ensure transparency across all projects, setting the basis for information sharing in town. We will maintain this level of open communication and dialogue between all boards and committees. The DDC meets regularly every two weeks in the Police Station and we hope to use their presence as an anchor for information sharing and civic participation. We will work collaboratively with our Selectmen, DDC, and local boards to make sure that healthy aging needs and best practices are prioritized at every opportunity.

Section 4: NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

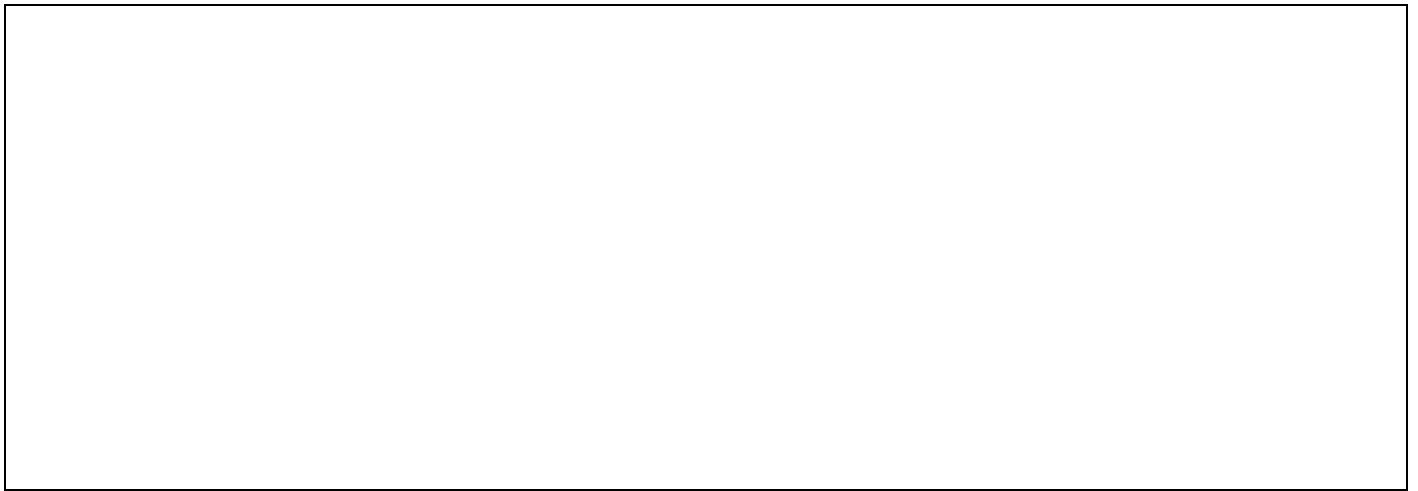
- Your answers to the following questions will help us complete your membership in the global age-friendly network and better enable us to understand how to support the network.

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 the first community in the Central Massachusetts region to formally commit to joining the AARP Age-Friendly Network and WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities, we hope to serve as a model for similar rural communities, especially our neighboring communities in the western sub-region such as Brookfield, West Brookfield, and East Brookfield. We understand that older adults living in rural communities face certain challenges related to accessibility of key services and leisure activities, availability of home and community-based programs, appropriate housing, tax burdens, and social isolation. We hope that our membership and action planning process can serve as a best practice/case study for communities that may experience similar challenges and/or constraints to becoming livable for residents of all ages. By gaining a better understanding of what residents want and require as they age, we can more efficiently establish new or tailor existing services and build or improve facilities that fit those specific needs, to increase the quality of life. Not only will the project improve livability for all members of the community, it will also serve as a best practice model for other communities in the Central Massachusetts region.

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?

Similar to other regions around Massachusetts, the Central region of the future will be home to many more seniors, as baby boomers age into the older age brackets. As the trend continues, municipal budgets are decreasing, housing options are narrow, healthcare costs are steadily rising, programs and services attending to seniors require improvements; and while local leaders are faced with making critical decisions, many communities feel unprepared for an aging population. Over the past year, our town has seen a significant shift in participation and services at the Senior Center with a paradigm shift that is reflected both regionally and nationally, from nutrition based services to an increased need for information and referral services. Our food distribution program provided healthy foods to 662 duplicated participants. The health and wellness programs saw a significant increase with over 1,200 duplicated event attendance. Our Outreach Services saw the biggest percentage increase in services providing resources and referrals. In contrast to the increased and steady participation, the Senior Center also recently experienced overall budget cuts resulting in limited staffing capacity. We recently attended 2 healthy aging forums hosted by our Regional Planning Agency and we learned through both regional and state partners that joining the Age Friendly Network would provide us access to planning resources and grant funding opportunities in order to improve current operations and programming. We are excited about the opportunity to be part of, and learn from a larger network of communities with a shared vision of livability and community vitality. We hope to contribute a rural perspective into this process and serve as a case study model for similar rural communities.



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.

