



Janet T. Mills  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

October 7, 2019

Lori Parham, State Director  
AARP Maine  
53 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 202  
Portland, ME 04101

Dear Ms. Parham:

I am proud to submit this State Membership Application to join the AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, on behalf of the people of Maine.

Maine is the oldest state in the nation. Adults 60 and older comprise 28% of the State's total population, and our median age is 44.9. Both of these figures are expected to increase substantially in the coming years. In addition, the number of working-age Mainers (ages 20-64) is projected to decline. We know this shift in population will create varying impacts across the State, including possible negative consequences for our economy, transportation, housing and workforce systems if we do not plan ahead. And in addition to confronting and planning for these changes, Maine must also prioritize actions that will enhance the quality of life for Mainers as they age.

Maine has begun another chapter of this important work through the Age-Friendly State application process. I will be appointing key contacts in the Maine Department of Labor, the Maine Housing Authority, the Maine Department of Transportation, and the Maine Department of Health and Human Resources to work together and with stakeholders on an Age-Friendly Steering Committee. The Committee will guide the development and implementation of age-friendly policies and programs. External stakeholders will include older persons, AARP Maine, the Maine Council on Aging, and the Areas Agencies on Aging. We will also have community and municipal leaders included, especially those from our current Age-Friendly Communities within the State. As you know, Maine has more AARP Age Friendly Communities than any other state in the nation, and their insight and participation in this process will be essential.

Our Age-Friendly Steering Committee will be informed by a statewide needs assessment process and regional listening sessions before producing recommendations about our long-range planning and policy initiatives. These recommendations will also identify and endorse ways in which the State can support local and community efforts in their promotion of healthy aging. From those



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recommendations, our Office of Aging and Disability Services will create an age-friendly state plan that addresses housing, transportation, employment, and the social service needs of older adults.

Maine looks forward to sharing our results with the AARP and with the World Health Organization. As the oldest State in the nation, Maine's early experiences can support those of younger states looking for evidence-informed policy and collaboration on aging. This will be in keeping with Maine's state motto, *Dirigo*, which means "I lead." We know that our small steps here in Maine, when successful, can inform and inspire others to do the same.

We look forward to joining with the 60 Maine communities already designated as AARP Age Friendly Communities, an additional 62 self-designated Maine communities, and 830 cities and communities in 41 countries around the world that are working towards becoming more age-friendly under this initiative. We have a desire to thoughtfully plan for our future, to be part of a greater network of places that support the aging community, and to learn and share knowledge and experiences with our partners, locally and globally.

As Maine works toward becoming even more age-friendly in 2020, it is important to note that Maine was recently ranked #1 in the nation as "The Best State in America for Aging" by U.S. News and World Report.<sup>1</sup> We hope to continue this success by becoming an Age-Friendly State and look forward to joining the larger national and world community that is engaged in this important work.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills  
Governor

CC: Daniel Brennan, Director, Maine State Housing Authority  
Laura Fortman, Commissioner, Maine Department of Labor  
Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner, Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Bruce Van Note, Commissioner, Maine Department of Transportation

Attachment: Application for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/aging>