October 4, 2019

Paula D. Cunningham, State Director
AARP Michigan
309 N. Washington Square, Suite 110
Lansing MI 48933

Dear Ms. Cunningham:

I am pleased to submit the State of Michigan’s application to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Michigan is one of the most rapidly aging states in the nation. Approximately 3.7 million Michigan residents – 37% of Michigan’s population - are age 50 and over. The percentage of residents age 65 and over, now at approximately 15 percent, is expected to jump to nearly 22 percent by 2050. The percentage of seniors age 85 and over is expected to more than double, from 2.2 percent in 2015 to 4.8 percent in 2050.

Active aging is a life-long process, and making communities more Age-Friendly is a commonsense policy approach for responding to demographic aging.

Opportunities exist for the State of Michigan and Michigan communities to become more Age-Friendly across the various domains that influence health and quality of life for people of all ages.

In an age-friendly state, people can age in place in their homes and communities, living there comfortably throughout their lifetimes. Being an age-friendly state recognizes the need across the generations for satisfying work and volunteer opportunities; a wide range of safe and accessible housing options; the availability of health care and other services; safe and affordable transportation; outdoor spaces such as parks and recreational facilities; and access to information and communications technology. Being an age-friendly state creates opportunities to attract and maintain employers and provides appeal for all ages, not just older adults.

Our state looks forward to partnering with AARP and the World Health Organization in this important placemaking initiative to improve the health and well-being of our state.
Currently, 8 municipalities in Michigan - Auburn Hills, East Lansing, Grand Rapids, Highland Park, Jackson, Lansing, Royal Oak and Southfield - have already joined the Age-Friendly Community Network, and numerous other communities throughout Michigan are in the planning stages of joining the network.

With this application, Michigan will be the first state from the Midwest to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States. I look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of our residents to ensure that Michigan is a leader among states in healthy and active aging for all.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan