



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: 8/29/2019

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Saratoga County

STATE: New York

POPULATION SIZE: 230,163 (2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimate)

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 57,370 (2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimate)

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Kevin Tollisen, Chairman,
Saratoga County Board of Supervisors

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

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.

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

Meg O'Leary is a Health Planner within Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCPHS). Meg will oversee coordination of the interdisciplinary/interdepartmental age-friendly advisory committee. She will be responsible for securing a location for meetings, sending out meeting date invitations and reminders, drafting and distributing agendas, drafting minutes of meetings, etc. In addition, she will assist the committee with research and other tasks that help the committee complete their assessment and identification of effective strategies to improve the age-friendliness of our county, as well as the drafting of reports.

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.

Add other email addresses?

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.

Saratoga County values its older citizens and their contributions to our community, and creating a community that is welcoming and supportive of their special needs is and has been a priority as reflected by the fact that our County Board of Supervisors has declared 2019 the “Year of the Senior.” Our lead county agency for older people is the County Office for the Aging, which offers information, referrals and assistance to senior citizens and their caregivers. Saratoga County Public Health is charged with overseeing public health initiatives and services within Saratoga County, ranging from immunization clinics, health education, assessing the overall health of the community and areas for improvement, to assisting in policymaking, including health issues related to older residents. Saratoga County Department of Social Services provides an array of supportive services to elderly citizens. A particular strength of Saratoga County is its efforts to preserve green space and encourage outdoor recreation, all of which receive their primary oversight through our County Planning Department. For example, our county adopted a Green Infrastructure Plan, which provides a strategy for conserving greenways, providing access to nature, preserving agricultural lands, and directing development to avoid sprawl. There are approximately 3,000 acres of County-owned forest land that is open to the public for passive recreation. In addition, three municipalities have made the Climate Smart Communities Pledge (City of Saratoga Springs, Town of Clifton Park, and Village of Schuylerville), and the City of Saratoga Springs has also adopted a Complete Streets Policy. There are numerous senior housing options throughout the county, and efforts are underway in the Town of Corinth, through members of its business and non-profit sectors, to construct more senior and affordable housing in its what is a more rural area of our County. The Academy for Lifelong Learning, SUNY Empire State College, offers free programs open to the public aimed particularly at senior citizens, including Lunch & Learns, Storytellers program, and AARP driver education program, and other social activities. As this summary indicates, there are numerous senior services, programs, and elderly-friendly policies in Saratoga County. However, we also recognize that, as our senior population continues to grow rapidly, we need to make a more concerted effort to consider how we can best invest future and use existing resources to improve quality of life of our residents, with special consideration for the particular needs of seniors and caregivers.

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

Saratoga County’s older citizens are already well represented in civic society. However, we want to ensure that we have input from a broad section of the elderly community. Therefore, as we convene an interdisciplinary/interdepartmental advisory committee to evaluate our county’s age-friendly status and steps to advance age-friendliness, we will seek representation not only from county agencies involved with senior citizens (e.g., Office for the Aging), but also reach out to other groups and citizens with special knowledge and experience in different aspects of aging. Moreover, all of our meetings will be open to the public, and we will use every opportunity and multiple forms of media to inform the wider community of our meetings and their purpose and encourage attendance and participation by any who express interest. We intend to have at least twenty five percent of the committee members be residents of the County, which shall include older residents.

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 plan to create a collaborative, interdisciplinary/interdepartmental advisory committee to assess the needs in our County as it pertains to being age-friendly from which we intend to develop a strategic plan that will suggest ways in which age-friendly concepts and priorities can be included in all decision-making across county government. We also plan to utilize existing mechanisms already in place to facilitate collaborative planning, such as the Saratoga County Planning Board's provision of technical assistance to local legislative boards, planning and zoning board of appeals, and building inspectors, attorneys, and planners involved with land development process. Similarly, Saratoga County Public Health will utilize existing government and community partner workgroups associated with our Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan process, as well as its community-wide coalitions (e.g., Prediabetes, Suicide, Mental Health and Substance Use, and Maternal Infant Child Health), to incorporate age-friendly planning concepts and priorities in other activities and areas of health happening around our county.

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?

Upon completion of our community assessment and strategic planning, we intend to issue a report, which we will share with the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

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?

Saratoga County has the fastest-growing older adult population in New York State (González-Rivera et al., 2019). In fact, Saratoga's older adult population increased by 55% in the past ten years (increasing from 26,055 in 2007 to 40,355 in 2017) (González-Rivera et al., 2019). As a result, older adults now account for 18% of Saratoga's overall population (González-Rivera et al., 2019). The vast majority of those older adults are 65-84 years in age, meaning that Saratoga's older adult population is likely to remain a large portion of our population for many years to come (González-Rivera et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the population of residents under the age of 65 has remained relatively flat over the same 10 year period, which suggests government and other parts of society will have to find creative ways to address future workforce, caregiving, and social service needs. Therefore, Saratoga County recognizes the need to make our communities more livable for residents as they age, identify ways to improve health across the lifespan to extend vitality into older ages, and ensure that programs and policies are in place to ensure that our aging population can thrive.

Work Cited: González-Rivera, C. Bowles, J. & Dvorkin, E. (2019). New York's older population is booming statewide. Center for an Urban Future. Retrieved from: <https://nycfuture.org/research/new-yorks-older-adult-population-is-booming-statewide>

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@aarps.org.

