



# Membership Application

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities** and the

- If you have questions while completing this form, please email [livable@aarp.org](mailto:livable@aarp.org).
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 02/26/2019**

## Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY:** City of Akron

**STATE:** Ohio

**POPULATION SIZE:** 198,252

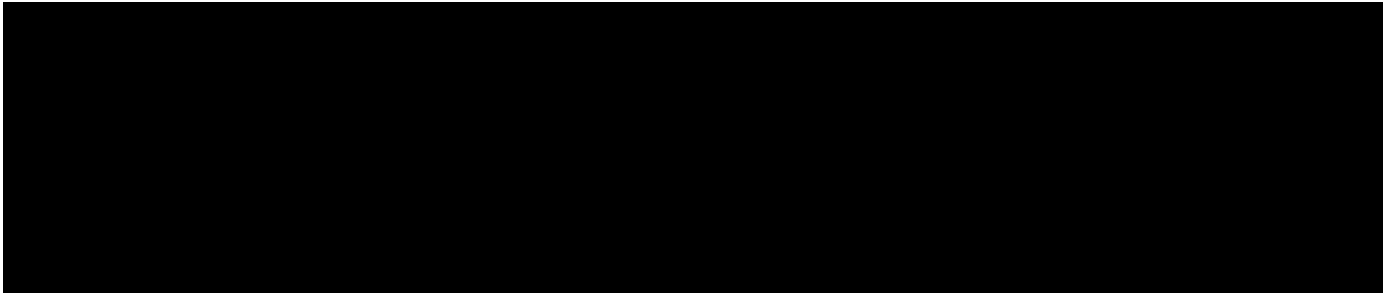
**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 20.6%

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** The Honorable Daniel Horrigan, Mayor of the City of Akron

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** 200 Municipal Building 166 South High Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Akron, Ohio 44308-1653

## Section 2: COMMUNITY CONTACT FOR THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY 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:**

Direction Home Akron Canton has agreed to be the lead agency on the Age Friendly Akron initiative, providing leadership on behalf of Mayor Horrigan’s administration. As such, Susan will serve as the leader of the Advisory Council and the initiative as a whole. Susan will be joined in her leadership by University of Akron Professor and Director Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology, Harvey Sterns, Ph.D. Harvey will co-chair the Advisory Council and lead the University’s engagement with the initiative. Susan and Harvey currently co-chair the Akron Senior Citizen’s Commission, a group of experts and local older adults who have been appointed by Mayor Horrigan to serve on the commission; the commission is tasked with working to ensure that the city of Akron is a great place to live for citizens over the age of 60.

### **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 City of Akron strives to offer programs and services to our older adults that connect them to their community and promote a healthy, equitable, and safe environment in which to live, work and play. The City of Akron's Recreation Bureau offers social, cultural, educational and active programs for adults of all ages with the goal of offering engaging activities to residents of all ages to foster intergenerational engagement and provide an environment where adults will continue to be active and thrive as they age. Current programs and services include an affordable fitness class program that offers a range of classes to safely challenge and meet the interests and needs of each individual participant, conversational Spanish classes, planned trolley trips that provide a safe way to experience new places and learn about what our city and the surrounding area has to offer, art and dance classes, card games, special interest gatherings like book and garden clubs, and dynamic weekend retreats for women. There are also several self-governing senior clubs that are supported by the City of Akron and meet regularly in our Community Centers with activities, entertainment and travel for their members and guests.

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

With the Senior Citizen's Commission composing the core of the Age Friendly Akron Advisory Council, older adults appointed to represent their community by the Mayor will have a key role in the creation and execution of the Age Friendly initiative. Data for the Community Assessment will be collected directly from older adults from across the city through a mailed survey, in-person at community events, and through public meetings and focus groups. A similar approach will be used in the creation of the Action Plan, as older adults from the across the city will be asked to provide their input and review of the Action Plan prior to its completion and submission to AARP and the World Health Organization. The diversity of economics, ethnicities, education, history, and resources found in Akron's 24 neighborhoods mandates that at each level of Age Friendly planning and implementation, the voice of older adults will be front and center in the initiative, if it is to be successful in making Akron more livable for residents of all ages.

**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.**

Several components of Age Friendly Akron will be key to facilitating the collaboration necessary for successful planning and implementation. Direction Home's leadership provides long standing engagement and collaboration with their various community stakeholders and partners in Summit County whose involvement in Age Friendly Akron will be imperative. The University of Akron's willingness to organize and complete the community assessment places one of the city's true anchor institutions into an age friendly leadership role. The University's connection to greater Akron along with its influence as an anchor will only help foster the needed connections between agencies and partners that will foster the collaboration necessary for success. Through engagement of the Mayor's Senior Citizen's Commission, several key community stakeholders will have leadership roles within the initiative from the very beginning. Representatives from the city's Department of Recreation, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Vantage Aging, Summit County Job and Family Services, and Summit County Probate Court comprise a portion of the mayor's commission, meaning that these key organizations have already been working collaboratively on aging issues since 2017. Akron will launch its initiative with an extremely strong core group of organizations, agencies, and city

departments; this is strengthened by the commitment of the city's Planning Department as they have assigned a dedicated staff representative to the advisory group, ensuring an open line of communication between the Advisory Council and Mayor Horrigan's Administration. Key stakeholder engagement at the outset of the initiative should only strengthen the collaborative atmosphere necessary for success.

#### **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 Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?**

**5) What motivated your**

The city of Akron, as a somewhat traditional mid-sized, mid-western city, faces a number of challenges that inevitably will need to be addressed as part of the age friendly initiative and generally are common to other mid-sized cities, especially in the Great Lakes and Mid-Western portions of the country. Akron benefits from a unique circumstance, one that will allow it to contribute greatly to the AARP and WHO network, as the city maintains a long tradition of innovation and invention. This spirit, combined with the engagement of the various research and community organizations, like the University of Akron, will allow our initiative to develop into a testing ground for innovation and implementation of age friendly practices for mid-sized communities across the United States; bringing great benefit to Akron's sister cities within the network. The Akron initiative borrows a great deal of structure from the Columbus/Franklin County initiative situated just two hours south. With the support of The Ohio State University, Columbus/Franklin County is on track to become an incubator for Age Friendly initiatives and opportunities; Akron's close proximity to Columbus and it's similarities in structure will present an opportunity for direct engagement with Columbus/Franklin County that should result in idea sharing and enhanced innovation that should advance Akron's standing within the AARP/WHO network and the opportunity for leadership amongst mid-sized cities, encouraging even greater innovation and sharing.

**community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?**

The city of Akron has undertaken a tremendous amount of development and re-development, both in its downtown core and across its 24 neighborhoods over the previous decade. Enrollment in the AARP and WHO Networks and the corresponding Age Friendly Akron initiative will ensure that the our older adults will benefit from the work being done across the city, and that Akron will be a city that is livable for people of all ages. The opportunities presented to educate, encourage, and promote civic improvements, strongly aligns with opportunities already in place, currently under construction, or are planned for the future. Older adults comprise a significant percentage of our population and are essential to the economy and growth; Age Friendly Akron ensures that their voices are heard and that our older residents are able to remain in their homes, connected to their neighborhoods, safely navigate civic life, and enjoy the city's many public spaces and resources.

**6) Please provide a digital (JPG, PNG or PDF) file or link of a logo or other image that represents your community.**

The image resolution should be at least 72 dpi. As an example of an image, here's ours



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