

# I Membership Application

4<sup>th</sup>1<sup>st</sup>ARP<sup>4</sup>.  
Real Possibilities

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly 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](mailto:livable@aarp.org).
- If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 10/17/2017**

## Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS

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

**STATE:** Ohio

**POPULATION SIZE:** 21,371 people living in the City of Oxford.

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60:** 7.6%

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT:** Dr. Kate Rousmaniere, Mayor of the City of Oxford, Ohio.

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:** Oxford Municipal Building, 101 E. High St. Oxford, OH 45056

**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:**

Oxford Village Network (OVN) is an all-volunteer, grassroots advocacy group affiliated with Oxford Seniors Inc. and Miami University Scripps Gerontology Center. OVN Co-Chairs are Jessie Leek and Ann Garrison Whelpton; they have agreed to be Co-Facilitators of the Age-Friendly Oxford primarily responsible for carrying out the community level work for the Age-Friendly Oxford initiative. Ann Whelpton holds a master's degree in Education from Miami University in College Student Personnel and Guidance and Counseling. She has lived in Oxford for 46 years working in student development for Miami University and the Talawanda City School District. Ms. Whelpton has served as President of United Way and boards of other community groups. She has experience in partnership development, grant writing, counseling, case management and co-founded Oxford Village Network. Jessie Leek holds a master's degree in Gerontological Studies awarded by Miami University. She has taught gerontology courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She is trained as a qualitative researcher. Prior to her work at Miami University, Ms. Leek has held leadership positions in non-profit organizations including those serving older adults. Ms. Leek moved to Oxford four years ago for retirement and joined Oxford Village Network to help advocate for older adults in the Oxford community. Under their combined leadership OVN has been actively working on age-

friendly initiatives for four years focusing on the areas of housing, transportation, engagement and wellness. OVN's roles have been to advocate for older adults, generate information on aging and local resources, and encourage partnerships and collaboration to address unmet needs such as affordable housing, transportation options for non-drivers, and greater access to in-home care. Jessie Leek and Ann Garrison Whelpton will co-facilitate the various phases of this five-year process.

### **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 Oxford, Ohio area is a safe and picturesque community with a small regional hospital, many activities associated with a large state university, Miami University, and a thriving senior center. The community's strengths related to livability for older adults are many. \* Oxford Seniors, Inc. is a 580 member multi-service senior center with many programs and services for older adults. These include adult day care, congregate meals, home delivered meals, benefits counseling and outreach, transportation, health screenings, and social, wellness, cultural, arts and travel programs. \* Miami University offers enrichment for older adults through its Institute for Learning in Retirement, tuition-free classes for retirees and senior citizen discounts for a wide variety of events in the arts, athletics, recreation, and lecture series. Miami's Scripps Gerontology Center, one of Ohio's Centers of Excellence in Cultural and Societal Transformation has made significant commitments to the Oxford area's age-friendly work. Scripps has conducted an initial community needs survey, provided OVN with a graduate assistant and supported the active participation of faculty and graduate students on OVN's Steering Team and working committees. \* The City has recently completed safe sidewalks and walkability improvements, provides a building and space for Oxford Seniors, Inc., is in the process of building a large recreational trail system through and around the City, and has adopted policies of conservation for neighborhoods concerned with encroaching student housing. As part of a Creating Healthy Community By Design Initiative, a Walkability Audit was conducted on September 25, 2017.\* Some of OVN's deliverables to date include two large community forums on Livability for older adults, partnerships with the City of Oxford and Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center on a Housing Needs Assessment in 2014, creation of a community resource directory for older adults, lectures, working with Butler County Regional Transit Authority on increasing use of public transportation and connecting the City with a national developer of senior housing potentially interested in building in the Oxford area. \* Oxford is home to The Knolls of Oxford, a continuous care retirement community including independent living, assisted living, rehabilitative care, and long-term care. These characteristics make Oxford a desirable place to retire and grow older, yet there are significant challenges for older adults living in our community. The local economy and culture are driven by the needs and interests of the transient student-age population and visitors. Senior housing needs are not fully addressed. Our remote location in Butler County makes access to regional and county resources, in-home care and non-student retail needs difficult. The Oxford area is a car dependent community making nondrivers subject to isolation. Those facing the most intensive struggles include those needing in-home assistance, their family care-givers who need respite and support, those of moderate and extreme financial need who require different housing options, those who are alone and/or do not drive and those who need employment in retirement. Actions needed are: HOUSING—A focused, creative, strategic response to housing needs for older adults is needed in order to attract a senior housing developer, access Ohio Housing Finance Authority tax credits, utilize limited land and increase housing stock for older adults. For those choosing to remain in their existing

Homers, a home modification initiative would be beneficial. Formation of a housing alliance may be useful. TRANSPORTATION - Expanding routes of existing public transportation, exploring a rural ride share program, supporting Oxford Seniors' existing transportation program, promoting multi-modal transportation and conducting senior driver education and car fit programs are some of the targeted activities for the future. IN-HOME CARE AND CARE-GIVER SUPPORT — Hiring and sustaining in home care services is difficult in the Oxford area. There is a shortage of such service providers in this area. Locally, this is compounded by the driving distances and expenses incurred commuting to Oxford. Creating a pool of local qualified caregivers, creating a local job-training program for caregivers, and finding incentives such as travel stipends are needed to attract existing care-giving services to this area. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT - Oxford area's retirees and older adults have ample opportunities for civic and social engagement in the community, but not all feel connected and isolation is an ongoing concern as people age. Awareness of and accessibility to activities and resources can be improved. Oxford has no local newspaper, surrounding rural townships have inconsistent internet service and some older adults do not retrieve information easily via the internet. Regular, coordinated communication by both traditional and new technology mechanisms are needed. Transportation and companionship to aid older adults in getting involved is important. The large student presence in Oxford provides unlimited potential for intergenerational programs to help with connectivity and inclusion for both the elderly and student populations.

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

The City of Oxford is home to 1,620 residents over the age of 60. To involve older adults in the Age-Friendly Oxford Area initiative, three existing organizations for older adults will be called to action. Oxford VillAGE Network has 220 members, Oxford Seniors, Inc. has nearly 600 members and The Knolls of Oxford is home to 200 residents. These organizations each offer newsletters, events, e-mail list serves, frequent programs and speakers, and provide an excellent communication network for older adults and their families. Oxford VillAGE Network and Oxford Seniors, Inc. have an existing local partnership network (see attached list). This local partnership network must be expanded to reach older adults not represented by the above mentioned partners. Inclusion of local health and human services agencies and businesses such as pharmacies will be part of the strategy. Communication between partners will need to be routinized. A wider partnership network connecting with County, Regional and State partners is also critical to connecting Oxford's older adults to Oxford's Age-Friendly outreach.

## **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.**

\* Strategic partnerships, communication and working strategically are the desired foundation of any mechanisms that are in place or will be put in place to facilitate the Age-Friendly Oxford Initiative. \* The partnership between Oxford VillAGE Network, Oxford Seniors, Inc. and Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center is in place and is advancing the initiative. A recent affiliation with Miami University's Town Gown Initiative Team will connect Age-Friendly Oxford with a major new initiative working on university/community issues.\* In addition to following AARP/WHO model the Age-Friendly Oxford Initiative will use the Collective Impact Model for Change. This change model includes creating a common agenda, involving stakeholders, leveraging resources, and effective communication throughout multiple levels of an organization. \* The partnership with the City will be formalized through this membership in the AARP/WHO Network. This partnership will serve to address planning and infrastructure needs (depending upon resources available) and legitimize the initiative's quest for funds and resources. \* OVN's current steering team and four committees will be adapted to meet the best practices for a Task force and work groups and domains according to the **WHO and AARP** Age-Friendly model. The OVN Steering Team is currently comprised of ten individuals eight of whom are age 50 or over. \* Once accepted into the network, an updated communication strategy and supporting technology will be put in place to keep all involved informed about and current with the initiative.

#### **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?**

Oxford is a small town in a rural setting, home to a major public university and is a community that lends itself well to collaboration and change at a grassroots level. Oxford's university environment has the potential for greater utilization of university faculty and staff expertise, as well as more intergenerational programs with students. Our use of the Collective Impact Model is unique. The Age-Friendly Oxford initiative would aim to serve as a model for cities and communities facing the same challenges, or those seeking to redevelop areas in which Oxford has strengths,

#### **5) What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?**

As noted in Section 2, Oxford Village Network (advocacy), Oxford Seniors, Inc. (service providers), and Miami University Scripps Gerontology Center (research and teaching) have worked together for four years to increase awareness and communication regarding the needs of older residents. Good progress has been made learning about issues of aging, available resources, and desired solutions. Citizen involvement and a respected advocacy presence in the community now exist. Over the past year, OVN operationalized a working partnership with Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center and formalized a partnership with Oxford Seniors, Inc. These three working partners believe the time is right to move from advocacy to impact. Expanded partnerships with those who influence planning, policy and infrastructure are now needed to address challenges related to housing, transportation, and employment. After researching numerous national models of age-friendly initiatives it was recommended by OVN, Oxford Seniors, Inc. and Scripps Gerontology Center that the WHO/AARP Network is the best match for the Oxford community. AARP/WHO Network's body of research, process, technical support, resources, partners AND focus on improved livability for ALL ages provide the best path forward. The City of Oxford recognizes the Age-Friendly work done to date as well as the opportunities ahead for improving livability for its older adults through participation in the WHO/AARP Network.

**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 >



*Click here to add a link to where we can find your logo. Or, send us your logo by email attachment to [livable@arp.org](mailto:livable@arp.org).*