



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: 1/17/2020

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: *County of Summit*

STATE: *Ohio*

POPULATION SIZE: *541,372*

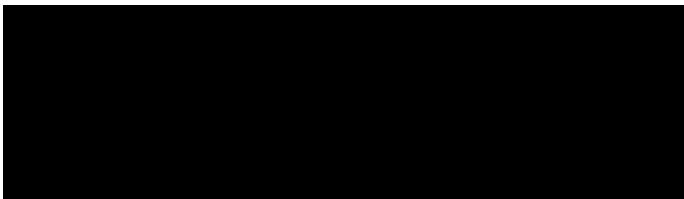
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: *22.84%*

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: *Ilene Shapiro, County Executive*

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: *175 S. Main St. 8th Floor, Akron, OH 44308*

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.



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

As the community contact for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities initiative, Colleen will coordinate community-level age-friendly efforts in Summit County. In this role, Colleen will act as a project manager, overseeing the macro-level work of the group. The County plans to involve multiple local organizations who will contribute to the five-year process of becoming an Age-Friendly Community.

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.

Andrew Barry abarry@summitoh.net

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.

Currently, older adults represent more than 22% of the County's population and data indicate this population segment will continue to grow. Summit County is a collaborative community that thoughtfully considers the needs of special populations, including older adults, when planning and looking to the future.

Throughout Summit County, a number of government and non-profit entities work together to meet the needs of older adults. The Summit County Department of Job and Family Services is a government agency that assists older adults in applying for various benefits, including Medicaid, long-term care and SNAP. Additionally, the State of Ohio mandates that each County DJFS operate an Adult Protective Services unit that is responsible for investigating suspected cases of neglect, abuse or exploitation of adults aged 60 and over. The Summit County APS unit works collaboratively with many other government entities and non-profit organizations as part of an interdisciplinary approach to addressing the needs of older adults. Additionally, Summit County DJFS produces and distributes a county-wide resource guide filled with a range of free or low-cost resources and services available to older adults. Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities is another crucial service provider for older adults in Summit County. This private, non-profit organization serves as a central access point for those looking to utilize long-term care management and other essential services. Direction Home connects older adults in Summit County to congregate meal sites, senior centers, assisted living waivers, care coordination, PASSPORT, Ohio Home Care Waiver and many other services.

VANTAGE Aging is another private, non-profit organization that provides vital services to older adults in Summit County. VANTAGE currently offers workforce, behavioral health, and home wellness programming, along with Meals on Wheels and RSVP, a volunteer program. Other integral community organizations actively providing services to Summit County older adults include: METRO, Summit County Consumer Affairs, Summit County Probate Court, Summit County Public Health, Summit County Sheriff's Office, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Family and Community Services and many more. Additionally, philanthropic organizations like Akron Community Foundation, GAR Foundation and United Way of Summit County provide needed support to many of the non-profits serving older adults.

Many of the aforementioned organizations also participate in the Senior Independent Living Coalition (SILC) initiative. This initiative originated out of the county's Social Services Advisory Board. The mission of SILC is to improve the quality of life of older adults in Summit County by; being an advocate for seniors and their families; educating the public and elected officials about issues of interest to older adults; and speaking with one voice on behalf of those they serve.

To make Summit County more age-friendly, the community as whole should focus on the following key areas: aging at home; financial assistance; health as a right; centralized information; physical, mental and economic safety; affordable and accessible transportation; and sustainable employment. Action in these key areas will empower Summit County older adults to thrive in our community.

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

Summit County and its partners will utilize a community participation approach to becoming more age-friendly. This means there will be opportunities in all phases of the age-friendly process for older adults and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and thoughts. Summit County encompasses 31 unique communities of varying sizes, from the 5th largest city in the state to a village of just a few hundred people. Our goal will be to reach as many older adults in as many communities as possible to ensure our data collection is representative of the diverse individuals we serve. We expect to explore a variety of community outreach and data collection methods. A review of other Age-Friendly Communities revealed many utilized surveys, focus groups, tele-town halls and other methods. We will determine which of these will work best in our community. We will also create an Age-Friendly Advisory Council composed of residents and relevant community stakeholders.

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.

Summit County is an exceptionally collaborative community where organizations rarely work in silos. The County expects active participation from a number of other entities that work with older adults. We expect to work especially close with Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities. This organization is currently assisting the City of Akron in its Age-friendly work and will play a similar role in Summit County's work. We have existing relationships with the other major organizations that serve our older adults like METRO, VANTAGE Aging, Family and Community Services and others, and expect each to play a role.

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?

Summit County hopes to share important lessons of collaboration with the other members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly State and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities. No single government entity or non-profit can take on such an endeavor by itself. Summit County is confident the existing structures that currently enable positive systems-level change in the community will be well positioned to do the same as it begins the Age-Friendly process.

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?

According to the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University, Summit County’s seniors will make up more than 30% of the total population by 2030. While Summit County currently maintains a strong social service system, more can be done to strengthen this system to ensure it can handle increased utilization. Along with its many partners, Summit County seeks to proactively prepare for this shift by engaging in the Age-Friendly process. Further, Summit County completes an annual poll to identify perceptions and trends in the community. The 2019 poll identified programs and services to assist senior citizens as the second most important funding area. Accordingly, we will use the Age-Friendly initiative to guide action in this area of importance.

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@aarp.org.

