



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: 5/2/2019

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Sisters

STATE: Oregon

POPULATION SIZE: 2700

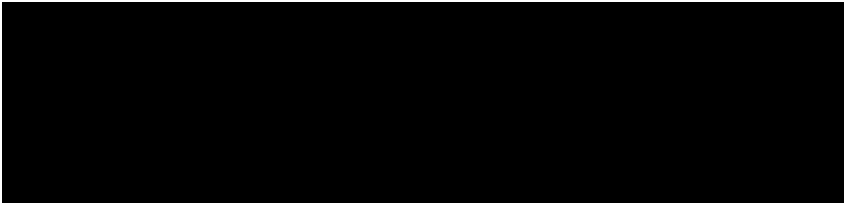
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 27%

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Chuck Ryan, Mayor

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 520 East Cascade, PO Box 39, Sisters, OR 97759

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:

Member of the AFSC Board of Directors, acting Secretary. Ms Eckford will act as liaison between AFSC community partners and volunteers and the City of Sisters City Manager, Cory Miskey. Ms. Eckford will also monitor the Age-Friendly Global Network to bring new ideas to AFSC partners and share local information that might be of interest to members of the Global Network . AFSC President, Mr Rendall Broomhead will be alternate contact.

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](#).

Age Friendly Sisters Country agefriendlysisisters@gmail.com; Rendal Broomhead sauniatu_rvb@yahoo.com

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.

Sisters, Oregon is a small city located at the base of the Cascade Mountains, the gateway to Oregon's High Desert. While our in-city population is 2700, the larger community of Sisters Country supports a dispersed population of approx. 10,000 people who have chosen to settle where small town values flourish. The nearest large town, Bend, is 25 miles away and has 95,000 residents. The population of Sisters Country is the fastest growing in Oregon, in significant part due to its reputation as a desirable retirement area. Data in 2016 indicates the 65+ population over 27 percent. In 2017, local aging residents held a series of meetings to explore the gaps that currently exist in services for seniors. Many current residents want to stay in Sisters Country for the long term, but it is clear from our research that the lack of transportation options, affordable housing shortages and limited access to health care services often require that people move to larger metropolitan areas to access services or be closer to younger family members. After identifying the major service gaps, Age Friendly Sisters Country (AFSC) was formed. A 501c3 nonprofit, AFSC's mission is to actively support the work of community members of all ages who wish to see Age Friendly policies adopted and implemented. Currently, Sisters offers its aging adult residents an array of services that help them participate as active community members. The programs outlined here target: health and safety of aging area residents; social participation, respect and social inclusion; and access to outdoor spaces and mobility.

1. The SAGE room (Senior Activities, Gatherings, and Enrichments) at the Coffield Center provides a meeting space and activity center that offers exercise classes, ping pong, games, art and music enrichment. There is a senior resource library and during monthly drop-in days, local service providers offer counseling on aging in place. *AFSC is currently working with Sisters Parks and Rec (SPRD) to secure funding for a new vehicle. Using the Coffield Center as a transportation hub, this van will provide regular in-town transportation to shopping, the post office, the Library and medical offices.
2. Sisters does not have an Urgent Care facility so our local fire department fills an important need. FireCorps volunteers provide regular blood pressure checks, and smoke alarm installation and battery checks and replacement. They also offer home safety checks to minimize falls and educate on the importance of wildfire/emergency preparedness. EMT's are on call 24/7 to assist in health emergencies. *Establishing an Urgent Care facility has been identified as a major community goal. Discussions are underway with regional health care providers, the County and community leaders to find a way to repurpose some existing, but underutilized medical office space to provide Urgent Care on weekends.
3. AFSC (Age Friendly Sisters Country) sponsors community suicide prevention training seminars. Oregon has the 16th highest suicide rate in the nation. Suicides 65+ are increasing at an alarming rate with the highest risk among men over 75. The OPR method (Question, Persuade, Refer) is professionally facilitated and seminars are available free of charge to anyone who wants to learn the warning signs of suicide and develop successful intervention skills. Outreach to targeted groups, particularly veterans and home healthcare providers, is ongoing. *Recent suicides of two local high school graduates have focused attention of this painful and often hidden tragedy. A local support group, "Fortitude", is launching a suicide prevention program that will train students to be peer leaders and create a safe messaging campaign around hope and help. Fortitude want everyone "from 3 to 93" engaged in efforts to prevent suicide and raise awareness.
4. Creekside Park is a busy year-round venue for community events and recreation, but the ADA restroom is located on the other side of Whyucus Creek in Creekside Campground, accessible over an historic covered bridge. The City of Sisters has approved \$12,000 from City funds to build new ADA ramps to the bridge, providing expanded access to these public parks for seniors and others with mobility challenges. Construction will be completed by October 2019.

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

Age Friendly Sisters Country (AFSC), a nonprofit incorporated in 2019, focuses on issues facing older adults. Based on the 3 Environments and 8 domains of the Age Friendly model, the Mission of AFSC is to "create, encourage, and sustain partnerships that foster active, inclusive living for people of all ages and abilities." The formation of AFSC was in direct response to the needs and concerns of Sisters' aging adults, voiced loudly and often at community forums, the Sisters Horizons Vision workshops and public town hall meetings. AFSC provides active and committed individuals a framework in which to apply for grants, receive grant funds and donations, and develop partnerships with local, county and state service providers and regional medical and philanthropic organizations. Board members and team leaders are active seniors who are committed to making Age Friendly improvements in housing, transportation, health services and communication and willing to use their skills, expertise, social networks and experience to find resources that help achieve the goals of the Age Friendly model. Advocacy for aging and older adults is a primary commitment of AFSC. * Every year, Sisters has a variety of community events that would not be possible without the volunteer efforts of local residents, and seniors play a huge part. Older volunteers devote countless hours to the Sisters Quilt Show, the Sisters Rodeo, the Sisters Folk Festival and other annual events. The Sisters Trails Alliance recruits active older volunteers to adopt, build and maintain forest hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. Seniors volunteer as guides and teachers in Adaptive skiing, biking and hiking events. They pick up trash on Earth Day. Older adults fill advisory board positions, serve on Housing, Planning and Parks Boards, volunteer in mentoring programs, give hours of service to the Library. All these activities integrate older adults into the social fabric that keeps our town vibrant.

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.

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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?

We will provide Member communities with information about how the Sisters Country Horizons Action Plan was developed. As the City of Sisters continues to refine and implement its Action Plan, we will share updates, successes and setbacks with the Global community. AFSC (Age Friendly Sisters Country) will share information about its process of creating and sustaining partnerships that foster active, inclusive living for people of all ages and abilities. We will use the AARP /WHO Global Network to find creative ideas from other member cities and communities and keep the momentum growing as we create a more age friendly community in Sisters.

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?

In May 2017, a guest article in our local newspaper penned by an older resident voiced concerns about service gaps for Sisters' growing population of seniors. When her husband suffered a major health emergency, she didn't know where to turn. Citizens4Community (C4C) took up the call and sponsored a series of events to encourage discussion and problem solving about these concerns. In Nov 2017, Portland State University's Dr Margaret Neal, presented a Town Hall meeting about the WHO Age Friendly Initiative, which she had helped create in Portland, Oregon. A followup Community Conversation in April 2018 was attended by more than 120 participants. Service gaps were identified and strategies for addressing community concerns were discussed and recorded in a final document. This became a core assessment tool as our community moved toward commitment to becoming Age Friendly. In February 2019, Sisters City Council adopted the Sisters Country Horizons Community Vision Action Plan. The nonprofit Age Friendly Sisters Country (AFSC) was incorporated in March 2019 and will act as an advocate and resource contact for partners involved in the ongoing work of becoming an Age Friendly community. We sincerely thank all the concerned and active participants in this process, and especially thank Joan for writing that first newspaper article.

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.

