



## 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](mailto: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: 6/16/2020**

**NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: City of Decatur, Georgia**

**STATE: Georgia**

**POPULATION SIZE: 25,000**

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 15%**

**NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Patti Garrett**

**OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 509 North McDonough Street, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031**

### 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.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

Ms. Harvey began her career with the City of Decatur in 2000 when she developed the City's volunteer program. She previously managed the senior community center for Senior Citizen Services of Metropolitan Atlanta. She has overseen the city's holiday gift program for low income children and older adults, A Season of Giving/Christmas Decatur, since 2000. She continues to oversee this program and the dozens of volunteers who help provide gifts to over 600 children and older adults each year. In 2003, she partnered with a nonprofit organization to establish the city's Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project to provide home repairs and yard work for the city's lower income older adults who own their own home. The Project has grown from eight homes worked on by 100 volunteers in 2003 to a 3-day weekend where approximately 1,000 volunteers work on 30 to 40 homes each year. Ms. Harvey is currently Decatur's Lifelong Community Manager and is staff liaison to both the Lifelong Community Advisory Board and the Decatur Youth Council. The mission of the Lifelong Community Advisory Board is to help the City of Decatur to be a community where all people can live a quality life for as long as they choose to live in Decatur.

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](http://AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe).

*Click here to enter text.*

**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 Decatur has a long-standing history of being inclusive of our older residents. In order to help our older property owners stay in their homes, the City partnered with a local nonprofit organization that rallies volunteers and professionals to repair and do yard work at these homes during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project. The project began in 2003 and has grown to a 3-day weekend project that brings out approximately 1,000 volunteers annually. Volunteers work on between 30 to 40 homes each year. In addition, the City oversees a holiday giving program, A Season of Giving/Christmas Decatur. The 2019 holiday season was the 25th year that this volunteer run initiative has provided holiday gifts for Decatur's low income children and senior citizens. Decatur does many things well when it comes to improving and maintaining its Downtown Outdoor Spaces. Sidewalks are wide, smoothed and covered with a canopy of mature trees. Benches mixed with outdoor artwork and mini book libraries provide welcome safe places to sit. Most street corners have dropped curbs and non-slip sections for wheelchairs. The City regularly repairs sections of sidewalks that have been raised by tree roots or sunken by erosion. There are frequent, clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks. With several Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) routes and three stations through Decatur, public transportation is consistent, reliable and affordable including weekends and holidays, with routes and rates published in pamphlets and on-line and stops well-identified. Lyft and Uber drivers are available for users and free transportation for medical purposes is available for all senior citizens through I-Care, a nonprofit organization. Emory University's Cliff Shuttle offers a free shuttle service available to all, not just Emory's staff and students. The Cliff Shuttle takes riders to Emory's campus, the Veteran's Hospital, restaurants and shopping. The city also established a weekly shuttle bus, GO60+ Shuttle, to bring residents age 60 and older who live in the southern portion of our city to downtown Decatur to have access to a grocery store, recreation center, library, pharmacy, Post Office and other services. Roads and sidewalks are well-maintained with sidewalks throughout the commercial areas and in most residential areas. PATH is constructing bike lanes in several routes and cross-walks are boldly painted at all major intersections and mid-block in commercial areas. Numerous activities are provided at the Decatur's two recreation centers that encourage older adult participation ranging from walks to workshops, classes, trips and even Pickleball. The 50+ Walks program encourages older adults to meet weekly at the Decatur Recreation Center for 2-3 mile walks through historic Decatur neighborhoods. The walk routes are predetermined in order to be safe and sidewalk accessible. They also hold regular senior bike rides. The City recently partnered with the Boys and Girls Club to utilize their indoor pool to supplement the City's three outdoor pools. The city also partners with the Decatur Business Association to hold free weekly Blue Sky Concerts on Wednesdays at noon in May and September. This includes a September concert geared specifically to our older residents. The city currently has five independent living senior highrises. Four of these highrises are in the downtown district. The fifth independent living residence is the city's newest and is adjacent to a MARTA station. The city also has one senior living residence that provides a continuum of care.

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

The City has many communication avenues. The Decatur Focus newsmagazine is published 10 times a year and is mailed to every residence and business in the City. The annual Decatur 101 class is held from February to April to provide new and longtime residents with information about the City. Everyone from the City Manager to the Police Chief meets with each class, so they can develop a personal connection. Staff members encourage residents to apply to be appointed to the City's boards and commissions. Lifelong Community Advisory Board members have reinvigorated the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance. There are currently at least four meetings a year. Anyone is welcome to attend, even if they are not a neighborhood leader. Topics include discussions regarding developing intergenerational relationships and ways to encourage neighborhood interactions. The City also utilizes blogs and Open City Hall to offer avenues for people of all ages to be engaged in the community. Currently, the City is working on its 2020 Strategic Plan and the update to the Comprehensive Plan. There are currently roundtable discussions specifically for older residents to provide feedback on improvements they would like to see in the City and how the City can better engage with them. There is a strong commitment to retain our senior residents in our City. The City is also taking steps to make Decatur's housing more affordable, especially for older residents. City Schools of Decatur, with encouragement from the City of Decatur, enacted a senior homestead tax exemption with a five year sunset clause in 2016. This exemption completely exempted all residents age 65 and over from paying any school property taxes. In 2018, the City held an Affordable Housing Summit. This led to the formation of the Affordable Housing Task Force that recently made recommendations to the City Commission regarding steps that can be taken to encourage the availability of more affordable housing.

**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.**

The City will utilize the various avenues mentioned above, such as Decatur 101, Neighborhood Alliance, blogs, roundtable discussions, Decatur Focus, and the updates to the Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. City Management Team members meet monthly to collaborate and to find ways to improve the City's services. Various Decatur staff members also regularly participate in trainings and meetings with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC is also our Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Harvey is an active participant in ARC's Lifelong Communities Partnership.

#### 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?

The lessons that City staff have learned over the years regarding communication, community engagement, and innovation are techniques that we would love to share with other 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?

The City of Decatur prides itself on supporting and creating opportunities for its older residents to enjoy lives well lived. These programs serve to engage, entertain and enrich residents to achieve our goal of maintaining both the physical and mental wellness of our older residents. Decatur programs and policies include but are not limited to ensuring that our older residents have safe and secure housing; creating a multitude of senior interest focused events and activities offering nearby retail and healthcare; and providing pedestrian friendly streets - all to make life and access to services easier. Our values and goals are directly in line with those held by the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Communities and the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. We are excited to have the opportunity to apply for this honorable distinction. It is our hope that by obtaining this designation, we will raise awareness of all that Decatur has to offer. We would be delighted to have more older adults move to our city who seek a welcoming community to call home, while also continuing to have Decatur be a wonderful place to live for our current residents as they age.

*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](mailto:livable@aarp.org).*

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:

