



**AARP
COMMUNITY
CHALLENGE**

Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages
aarp.org/CommunityChallenge

2025 AARP Community Challenge

*A grant program to make communities **more livable** for people **of all ages** with **tangible improvements** that jump-start long-term change*

AARP invites you to submit applications for quick-action projects that can help your community become more livable for all residents, especially those age 50 and over.

Applications must be submitted online through aarp.org/CommunityChallenge and are due by March 5, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. PT.

All projects must be completed by December 15, 2025.

AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

AARP Livable Communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and counties nationwide to become more livable for all. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; affordable and accessible housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents, especially those age 50 and older, to participate in civic and community life.

AARP has offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is working with local leaders in the more than 900 communities that are part of the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](https://aarp.org/NetworkofAgeFriendlyStatesandCommunities). Our vision is for a future in which all communities—urban, suburban and rural—are great for people of all ages.

AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

It takes time to build great communities, but quick actions and tangible improvements can help spark long-term progress. To support this, in 2017 AARP launched the AARP Community Challenge to fund projects that build momentum for change.

Since then, the AARP Community Challenge has invested \$20.1 million through 1,700 grants that have demonstrated the ability to:

- Improve communities with **tangible changes**
- Leverage **additional funds** and support from public, private and philanthropic funders

- Advance change and **overcome policy barriers**
- Lead to new relationships and greater **awareness and engagement** with the effort

AARP is currently soliciting applications for 2025 funding.

AARP will host an online Public Question & Answer Webinar for applicants January 29, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. ET / 11:00 a.m. PT. [REGISTER](#) for the webinar.

Applications are due by March 5, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. PT, and all projects must be completed by December 15, 2025.

Applications must be submitted online through aarp.org/CommunityChallenge. See Attachment A for the sample application.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY AREAS

In 2025, the AARP Community Challenge is accepting applications across three different grant opportunities. Each opportunity will receive a consistent approach to scoring (see the **Scoring** section below).

➤ **Flagship Grants**

In AARP's flagship Community Challenge grant program, grants have ranged from *several hundred* dollars for smaller, short-term activities to *tens of thousands* of dollars for larger projects. Since 2017, AARP has funded projects with an average grant amount of \$10,000-12,000 and 92% of grants being \$20,000 or less. In 2025, Grants will not exceed \$25,000. AARP also reserves the right to award compelling projects of any dollar amount. We are accepting applications for projects that benefit residents (especially those age 50 and older) in the following categories:

- Creating vibrant **public places** that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities;
- Delivering a range of **transportation** and mobility options that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability and access to public and private transit;
- Supporting a range of **housing** options that increases the availability of accessible and affordable choices;
- Increasing **digital connections** and enhancing digital literacy skills of residents;
- Supporting **community resilience** through investments that improve disaster management, preparedness and mitigation for residents.

➤ **Capacity-Building Microgrants**

Combining \$2,500 grants with additional resources, such as webinars, cohort learning opportunities, up to two hours of one-on-one coaching with leading national nonprofit organizations and AARP publications, this grant opportunity will accept applications for projects that benefit residents (especially those age 50 and older) in the following categories:

- **NEW! Disaster Preparedness Training** – Implement disaster preparedness training programs and resources for residents (especially those age 50-plus), with support from [SBP](#) and using the [AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit](#).

- **Walk Audits** – Implement walk audit assessments to enhance safety and walkability in communities (especially for people age 50-plus), with support from [America Walks](#) and using the [AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit](#).
- **Bike Audits** – Implement bike audits to enhance safety and bikeability in communities (especially for people age 50-plus), with support from [League of American Bicyclists](#) and using the [AARP Bike Audit Tool Kit](#).
- **HomeFit® Guide Modifications** – Implement education, simple home modifications and accessible safety solutions to create and maintain “lifelong homes” (especially for people age 50-plus), with support from [RL Mace Universal Design Institute](#) and using the [AARP HomeFit® Guide](#).

➤ **Demonstration Grants**

This opportunity funds projects that encourage replication of promising local efforts. Grants tend to fall between \$10,000-\$20,000 and will not exceed \$25,000. This grant opportunity will accept applications for projects that benefit residents (especially those age 50 and older) in the following categories:

- **NEW! Enhancing pedestrian safety** by creating safer streets and sidewalks (with a focus on people age 50-plus) with funding support from Toyota Motor North America.
- **NEW! Expanding high-speed internet (broadband) access and adoption** (with a focus on people age 50-plus) with funding support from Microsoft.
- **Reconnecting communities divided by infrastructure** (with a focus on people age 50-plus), as highlighted in AARP’s award-winning [Before the Highway](#) article series.
- **Implementing housing design competitions** that increase community understanding and encourage implementation of policies that enable greater choice in housing (with a focus on people age 50-plus), using the [AARP Housing Design Competition Tool Kit](#).

See **Attachment C** for examples from previous AARP Community Challenge funded projects.

Eligible Organizations may apply for more than one grant opportunity and may submit multiple applications.

ELIGIBILITY

Each project must satisfy the guidelines as described in the **GRANT OPPORTUNITY** section above **and** the following Organization Type, Mission Focus and Project Type criteria to be eligible:

- **ORGANIZATION TYPE:** The program is open to the following types of organizations:
 - **501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(6)** (*Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.*)
 - **Government entities**
 - **Other types** of organizations considered on a case-by-case basis.
Funds will not be provided to any for-profit company, nor individuals. However, AARP does allow for IRS recognized tax-exempt nonprofit organizations or government entities to serve as fiscal sponsors of grants.
- **MISSION FOCUS:** AARP will evaluate each project based on its consistency with the AARP mission to

serve the needs of people 50-plus.

- **PROJECT TYPE:** AARP Community Challenge grants may be used to support three project types. Project types described below will be prioritized over those that support ongoing programming or events.
 - **Permanent physical improvements** in the community
 - **Temporary demonstrations** that lead to long-term change
 - **New, innovative programming** pilots or services

PROJECTS THAT ARE INELIGIBLE

The following projects are **NOT** eligible for funding:

- Partisan, political or election-related activities
- Planning activities and assessments and surveys of communities without tangible engagement
- Studies with no follow-up action
- Publication of books or reports
- Acquisition of land and/or buildings
- Purchase of a vehicle or mechanical equipment (such as a car, truck, bus, snow mobile, snow grooming machine or tractor)
- Sponsorships of other organizations' events or activities
- Research and development for a nonprofit endeavor
- Research and development for a for-profit endeavor
- The promotion of a for-profit entity and/or its products and services

SCORING

Eligible projects will be assessed on:

- **IMPACT (45 points)** – The project addresses a clear need that brings positive change and demonstrates the ability to overcome barriers and accelerate, grow and/or sustain the community's efforts to become more livable for residents (especially those age 50 and older).
- **EXECUTION (30 points)** – Applicants demonstrate capacity to deliver the AARP Community Challenge project on time and within the awarded budget, effectively engage residents and key stakeholders, and leverage volunteers (especially those age 50 and older) in the execution.
- **ADDRESSING DISPARITIES (15 points)** – The project addresses disparities for people of color and/or other historically marginalized groups, including community members of all ages (especially those age 50 and older), abilities, incomes, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and other backgrounds.
- **INNOVATION (10 points)** – The project demonstrates creativity or unique design or engagement elements which will contribute to its impact on residents (especially those age 50 and older).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements.
- Applications must be submitted through AARP.org/CommunityChallenge with all pertinent information by March 5, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. PT.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

GRANT SELECTION

Grant recipients will be selected by an AARP panel of experts on aging, community development and livable communities. Projects will be judged on the degree to which their goals make an immediate change that leads to longer-term impact and meet all other selection criteria.

GRANT SELECTION NOTIFICATION

Grant recipients and unselected applicants will be notified by email in May 2025. Selected applicants must execute and email a binding Memorandum of Understanding and completed vendor forms to AARP by June 11, 2025. Noncompliance with this deadline may result in disqualification or delayed funding.

2025 TIMELINE

Dates	Key Activity
January 29, 2025 2:00 p.m. ET / 11:00 a.m. PT	Public Question & Answer Webinar for applicants. REGISTER HERE.
March 5, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. PT	Deadline for applications. APPLY HERE.
Mid-May, 2025	Selected and non-selected applicants will be notified of their status via email.
June 11, 2025	Deadline for MOU (memorandum of understanding) and vendor forms to be completed and returned by selected applicants to AARP.
June 25, 2025 (tentative)	Public announcement of selected grantees to public and date upon which projects can begin.
December 15, 2025	Deadline for project completion.
December 31, 2025	Deadline for After-Action Report.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

An Opportunity for Other Possible AARP Funding:

By submitting a proposal for the AARP Community Challenge initiative, you and your organization give AARP permission to reach out to you and others at your organization about other possible AARP funding opportunities that your proposal may be eligible for based on the AARP Community Challenge criteria. However, please note that AARP is not obligated in any way to consider your proposal for any additional AARP funding.

Note Regarding Other Potential Funders:

AARP might be contacted by other potential funders that could be interested in funding projects that were not funded through the AARP Community Challenge. The potential funders may have additional process steps and funding requirements than those of the AARP Community Challenge. If requested, AARP would like to send your contact information, organization name and a short description of the proposal, including the community where the project would take place (“Project Information”). Please note that these projects will be subject to any potential funder’s own terms, conditions and review. Please indicate in your application whether or not you give permission to AARP to share your Project Information with other potential funders. We will alert you before this Project Information is given to potential funders.

SUBMISSION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

If you submit this application, you agree on behalf of yourself and your organization to release AARP and its affiliates and their respective officers, directors, employees, contractors, agents and representatives from all liability associated with submission and evaluation of your organization’s application.

By submitting an application to AARP, the applicant agrees that:

- The decisions of AARP regarding the eligibility of applicants and the validity of entries shall be final and binding.
- All submissions will be judged by AARP, whose decisions and determinations as to the administration of the award and selection of award recipients are final.
- AARP has the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel, or suspend the award.
- All projects and applications shall not violate any third-party rights.
- Except where prohibited by law, participation in the AARP Community Challenge constitutes the Applicant’s consent to AARP’s use of the organization’s name and corporate logo, street address, city, state, zip code, county, and names, likenesses, photographs, videos, images, and statements made or provided by the Applicant’s representatives regarding the award for promotional purposes in any media without further permission, consent, payment or other consideration in perpetuity.
- For the *Flagship* and the *Demonstration Grant*, the organization agrees to carry and maintain comprehensive general liability and professional liability in an amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) and workers’ compensation insurance in an amount as required by applicable law covering all personnel engaged in the execution of the grant.

- For the *Capacity-Building Microgrant*, the organization agrees to carry and maintain comprehensive general liability insurance in an amount that's appropriate to cover the potential liability of the project as determined by the organization.
- All promotional materials (such as newsletters, press releases), events and signage related to the funded project will include a statement indicating that support was received from AARP and Community Challenge supporters as required by AARP.
- The organization is required to capture photos, videos and/or stories from the project. As the organization captures photos, videos and/or stories from the project, if an identifiable individual appears in the photos, videos and/or stories, the organization is responsible for having him/her sign the AARP General Release. (This document is provided to grantees with the Memorandum of Understanding and other required paperwork). In addition, the organization should not include any element in photos or videos provided to AARP that may violate third party rights, such as artwork and trademarks in text and logo other than those owned by the organization and AARP. The organization may be asked to send work-in-progress photos to AARP upon request. Following the grant period, grantees are required to respond to periodic requests for updates from AARP.
- The submission of the After-Action Report at the conclusion of the project is required by the deadline. Failure to submit the required report will result in the removal from the AARP website until the time of submission, and non-completion will disqualify an applicant from future AARP Community Challenge grant programs.
- AARP and its affiliated organizations, subsidiaries, agents and employees are not responsible for late, lost, illegible, incomplete, stolen, misdirected, illegitimate, or impermissible submissions or any other error whether human, mechanical or electronic.