

AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Tool Kit

Getting Started



Cities, towns and other localities in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities program commit to improving their age-friendliness and submit to a rigorous membership assessment cycle.

Communities interested in joining the network are encouraged to contact their state AARP office. AARP state offices also work to identify cities, towns and counties AARP believes can commit to a continual cycle of improvement in the eight domains the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified as influencing the health and quality of life of older adults.

THE 8 DOMAINS OF LIVABILITY

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

INITIATING THE EFFORT (Years 1-2)

1. Obtain the political commitment of the community's elected officials

This includes acquiring a written pledge by the community executive (the mayor, county commissioner, etc.) to commit to a continual cycle of improvement. This letter, along with a membership application, should be sent to the community's AARP state office or the AARP representative the community has been working with. AARP will then advise the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

2. Organize stakeholders

A successful age-friendly initiative is based on broad collaboration. An ideal group of stakeholders would include representation from non-profit organizations, businesses, government agencies and community partners and, of course age-50+ residents.

3. Conduct assessments to identify needs

AARP has developed a survey that can be adapted by communities to help assess available resources and what residents view as important for successfully aging in place. The survey is designed to capture information consistent with the eight domains of a livable community.

4. Establish an advisory committee that includes older adults

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION (Years 3-5)

AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Program Cycle

STEP 1: ENTERING THE NETWORK

The purpose of the AARP Age Friendly Communities is to serve as a catalyst to educate, encourage, promote, and recognize improvements that make cities, towns, and counties more supportive not only of their older residents but for residents of all ages. Our intent is to provide American cities, towns, counties with the resources they need to become more age-friendly, tapping into national and global research, models, and best practices.

AARP's Value Added

- Providing an understanding or definition of the issue/need for change (framing the issue);
- Providing an understanding of economic and social benefit of a more livable community;
- Resources on AARP.org/livable – Future Livability index (all phases)
- Success Criteria
- Streamlined admission into Network

STEP 2: PLANNING PHASE (Year 1-2)

This step has four elements:

- Establishment of mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-Friendly city cycle
- A baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the city.
- Development of a 3-year city wide plan of action based on assessment findings
- Identification of indicators to monitor progress

AARP's Value Added

- Decision making and organizational guidance
- Access to network of communities /Best Practices
- Assessment and survey Tools, identification of key community indicators
- Volunteer network to support/organize aspects of effort

STEP 3: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION (Year 3-5)

On completion of the planning phase, and no later than two years after joining the Network, cities will submit their action plan to WHO for review and endorsement. Upon endorsement by WHO, cities will then have a three-year period of implementation.

At the end of the period of implementation, cities will be required to submit a progress report to WHO outlining progress against indicators developed in Phase 1.

AARP's Value Added

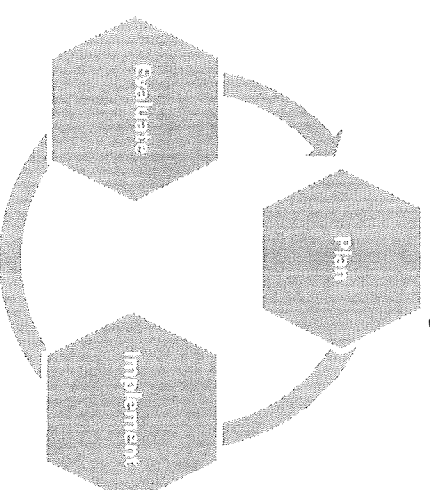
- Evaluation tools
- Organized training and networking events
- Resources on AARP.org/livable
- Access to network of communities /Best Practices
- Volunteer network to support/organize aspects of effort

STEP 4: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS (Year 5+)

Upon completion of phase 3, cities will be able to continue their membership to the Network by entering into further implementation cycles.

AARP's Value Added

- Access to network of communities /Best Practices
- Volunteer network to support/organize aspects of effort
- Resources on AARP.org/livable



A continuous cycle of improvement