

AARP: Community challenge grant program accepting 2021 applications

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MADISON, WI – AARP Wisconsin is inviting community organizations and local governments across the state to apply for the [2021 AARP Community Challenge](#) grant program, now through April 14. These grants will fund “quick-action” projects that spark change across Wisconsin and the entire country.

Now in its fifth year, the program is part of AARP’s nationwide Livable Communities initiative, which supports the efforts of cities, towns, neighborhoods and rural areas to become great places to live for people of all ages. Grants can range from several hundred dollars for small, short-term activities to several thousand, or tens of thousands for larger projects.

“We are thrilled to bring this grant opportunity back to Wisconsin in 2021 and we encourage all eligible organizations to apply,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. “We’ve seen tangible results from the AARP Community Challenge grant program supporting communities in Wisconsin as they make quick changes and inspire long-term progress.”

“Building momentum to make communities nationwide more livable for all residents is a priority for AARP,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer. “When we heard from mayors, local leaders and community members about the value of getting quick wins to create long-term change, we developed the Community Challenge grant program to answer that call.

“Previous grants have led to impressive results. This year, in response to pressing needs and important social movements, we are bolstering our support for projects that focus on diversity and inclusion as well as those that aid in the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic,” LeaMond said.

Since 2017, AARP has awarded 560 grants through the Community Challenge to nonprofit organizations and government entities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The program provides direct support to all community types, with nearly 40% of past projects benefitting rural communities, 20% going to suburban locations and 40% improving urban places. Granted projects have demonstrated an ability to garner additional funds or support from public and private funders, encourage replication, overcome local policy barriers, and receive greater overall awareness and engagement.

AARP will prioritize proposals that are inclusive, directly engage volunteers and aim to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- **Ensure a focus on diversity and inclusion** while improving the built and social environment of a community.
- **Support local recovery from the coronavirus pandemic** with an emphasis on economic development, improvements to public spaces, and transportation services.
- **Create vibrant public places** that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities.
- **Deliver a range of transportation and mobility options** that increase connectivity, walkability, bike-ability, wayfinding, access to transportation options and roadway improvements.
- **Support a range of housing** options that increase the availability of accessible and affordable choices.
- **Increase civic engagement and demonstrate the tangible value of “Smart Cities”** with innovative and tangible projects that bring residents and local leaders together to address challenges and facilitate a greater sense of inclusion.

In addition to these outcomes, AARP welcomes submissions that describe other local needs and innovative ideas for addressing them. The Community Challenge is open to 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits and government entities. Other types of organizations are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The application deadline is 7 p.m. Central Time on April 14, 2021. All projects must be completed by Nov. 10, 2021. To submit an application and view past grantees, visit www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge.