Section 1: STATE DETAILS

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: January 3, 2022

NAME OF THE STATE: Minnesota

POPULATION SIZE: 5.7 million

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: Approximately 20 percent

NAME AND TITLE OF THE Elected OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Governor Tim Walz

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER:
130 State Capitol, 75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Saint Paul, MN 55155

Section 2: STATE CONTACT FOR THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY STATES

(The State contact is the staff member who is primarily responsible for carrying out the state-level work)

NAME: Daniel Pollock or designee

POSITION: Assistant Commissioner, Continuing Care for Older Adults

DEPARTMENT: MN Department of Human Services.

EMAIL ADDRESS: Daniel.Pollock@state.mn.us

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 651-431-3132

Please describe the named person’s role and department in the state’s age-friendly initiative (minimum 100 words):

On behalf of the Department of Human Services Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Daniel Pollock took the lead in working with AARP MN and partners to work with the Governor’s office in issuing the Executive Order 19-38 to establish the Governor’s Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota. Following that effort, Assistant Commissioner Pollock was instrumental in including Age-Friendly as part of the DHS budget during the 2021 Minnesota legislative session, formalizing the Legislature’s commitment to enroll in the age-friendly network. The approved legislation also allowed for the continuation of the Governor’s Council, and authorized funding for a new age-friendly communities grant program, which will help local governments, tribal nations, and community organizations undertake age-friendly work.
Section 3: STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES, ENGAGEMENTS and COLLABORATIONS

1) Please provide a brief summary of policies, programs, funding and services that are targeted toward older people and how the state plans to become more age-friendly. *(minimum 250 words)*

Minnesota has a strong reputation and track record for supporting older residents and helping Minnesotans age in their homes and communities of choice. This is the result of well-established programs and commitments, and is bolstered by more recent, significant steps toward evolving the State’s approach even further.

On Dec. 11, 2019, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 19-38 to establish the Governor’s Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota. Nine months later, the Council, which includes representatives from nine state agencies and boards and six members from across the state, delivered eight preliminary recommendations to the Governor. The first was to support efforts for the State of Minnesota to enroll in the age-friendly network, with additional recommendations to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion; support communities seeking to become age-friendly; add emergency preparedness as a unique domain of the work; and others.

The Council also worked with MBA and partners to initiate age-friendly legislation, a version of which was passed in June 2021. The final version approved continuation of the Governor’s Council and included funding to, among other things, establish an age-friendly communities grants program and hire and AF MN Council Director. These resources will allow the state to take leaps instead of steps toward age-friendly systems and communities.

Much of the State of Minnesota’s work related to older adults is led by the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA), a 25-member, Governor-appointed board which is part of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the designated State Unit on Aging for Minnesota. Minnesota’s aging network annually supports over 189,000 older Minnesotans and caregivers, providing services and supports to one in six older Minnesotans.

The state is known for having developed some model efforts related to helping older residents age in community, including Live Well at Home® grants, which provide $6 to $8 million each year to help communities develop and maintain culturally competent home and community-based services to allow Minnesotans 65 and older stay in their homes and communities of choice and avoid long-term nursing home use and/or spending down into Medical Assistance. The grants are especially critical in rural areas where fewer services are available. The Minnesota Legislature also established a competitive grants program, administered through the Board on Aging, that provides $1.5 million each biennium focused on dementia and its impacts on caregivers.

2) How will the state engage and involve older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly state? *(minimum 150 words)*

A clear, accurate picture of needs and priorities of older Minnesotans—present and future—is a core tenet of this work. We currently are collecting and analyzing new data, and will use it to inform strategies and plans in several ways—namely, to develop a new age-friendly master plan; criteria and priorities for the new age-friendly communities grants program; and the work of the Governor’s Council.
(More details on this assessment process in question #4.) As such, Minnesotans’ voices will guide the work of our state’s seven Area Agencies on Aging, communities working with new age-friendly grant funding, and state boards and agencies who participate in the Governor’s Council.

3) **Briefly describe the mechanisms the state has or is planning to put in place to facilitate collaborative planning and implementation between different agencies and departments.** *(minimum 150 words)*

The Governor’s Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota provides a structure and opportunity for bringing together agencies from across state government where they have a chance to learn about and weigh in on ways that aging considerations can and should be integrated into their work. Nine boards and agencies are represented on the Council: the Minnesota Board on Aging, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Metropolitan Council (the Twin Cities’ regional planning organization), and the Departments of Employment and Economic Development; Health; Human Services; Transportation; and Veterans Affairs. Additional departments, such as the Department of Natural Resources, may be added in the future. The Age-Friendly Minnesota Council Director (a new position to be hired in coming months) will play a key role in facilitating this work.

Age-Friendly Minnesota also is employing a cross-sector perspective and is working to engage funders, nonprofits, health systems, and other sectors. MBA and the Governor’s Council partner closely with the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging (MNLCOA) in this work, helping to ensure that MNLCOA’s more than 30 members (aging advocates, nonprofit service providers, and others) can help inform and advance the effort with their expertise and within their own networks. This includes identifying and aligning policy agendas. AARP Minnesota is another key partner providing expert input and support.

4) **Briefly describe the mechanisms the state has or is planning to put in place to facilitate engagement with communities to identify unique and disparate needs throughout the state.** *(minimum 150 words)*

Minnesota DHS, MBA, and the Governor’s Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota have already launched the statewide needs assessment in keeping with the age-friendly network’s framework. The assessment is multi-faceted and includes several components:

- **Early-stage research focused on diverse older adults, including tribal elders, from across the state:** A lead partner in this work is Rainbow Research, a small Minneapolis firm with majority BIPOC staff and board and expertise in participatory research with a strong, consistent focus on social justice. The National Resource Center on Native American Aging, housed at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, also is working with the MBA to gather input from the state’s 11 tribal nations as part of this process. (Summer & Fall 2021)
- **Community survey:** The survey asks questions under 10 topics adapted from the age-friendly network’s eight domains of livability. It is being widely promoted, with supplemental targeted outreach to and technical assistance for historically marginalized groups—such as older adults who are BIPOC and LGBTQ, among others—to ensure their participation. (Summer & Fall 2021)
• Long-term care survey: Adapted from the community survey, the long-term care survey has been developed and is being administered with the help of the Minnesota Office of Ombudsmen for Long-Term Care. (Fall 2021)

• Community focus groups: Focus groups are being held throughout the state using questions from the same 10 domains in the community survey. Minnesota’s seven Area Agencies on Aging are taking the lead on conducting focus groups in each region of the state, but materials are available on the Age-Friendly Minnesota website that allow any interested person or organization to conduct their own focus groups. (Fall 2021)

Data will be analyzed in a variety of ways, including by region, to understand needs and priorities in different places. We intend to be able to provide data for particular geographies to cities/counties who request it, as well, so that they may gain insight into needs into their communities.

**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.

5) **How do you hope to contribute to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities/States and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?** *(minimum 150 words)*

Age-Friendly Minnesota has worked to prioritize capturing the voices and experiences of older adults from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and members of other groups who experience disparities, to ensure that we uphold our commitment to making diversity, equity, and inclusion the core of the work rather than an afterthought. Lessons learned and materials developed from this work may be of use to other states who are seeking to do the same.

Other elements that may prove useful or worthy of replication include:
- Establishing an age-friendly council
- Developing age-friendly legislation
- Hiring an age-friendly director dedicated to guiding the work
- Seeking active engagement of funders and the philanthropic sector

6) **What motivated your State to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities/States and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?**

Minnesota has a strong tradition of providing high quality supports and services for older residents. We also took some of the earliest state-level action on systems-wide impacts of impending demographic shifts to an older population. In the late 1990s, DHS initiated a program called **Aging Initiative—Project 2030**, an expansive effort to understand demographic trends and how those trends would impact Minnesota residents and communities. Minnesota was the first state to undertake such an effort. Project 2030 was followed by many updates and most recently in 2017, **MN 2030: Looking Forward** to engage the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS)
network with priorities that support the life span of all Minnesotans. Those were the seeds of today’s Age-Friendly Minnesota initiative. We are committed to proactive, inclusive strategies that prioritize the well-being of Minnesotans of all ages and backgrounds. This is a particularly opportune moment in time as society emerges from COVID-19 and in many ways is looking to establish an improved “new normal.” The State of Minnesota and its partners are eager to undertake collaborative work to strengthen and update our systems and develop policies that value and empower Minnesotans as they age.

7) Please provide a digital (JPG, PNG or PDF) file or link of a logo or other image that represents your state.

The image resolution should be at least 72 dpi. As an example of an image, here's ours >

Age-Friendly MN logo to be sent separately

Click here to add a link to where we can find your logo. Or, send us your logo by email attachment to livable@aarp.org.

I have read and understand the requirements for becoming a member of the Age-Friendly Network of States and Communities, including community assessment; development and approval of an action plan; implementation of the plan; and providing a five-year progress update.

Governor Tim Walz
Print Name Signature