



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR

June 28, 2017

Ms. Jo Ann Jenkins
Chief Executive Officer
AARP
601 E. Street
Washington, DC 20049

Dear Ms. Jenkins:

On behalf of the State of New York, I am writing to express my administration's commitment to partnering with AARP and the World Health Organization (WHO) to become the first age-friendly state in the nation. My administration is promoting adoption of specific elements of community design that align with the age-friendly required domains to support wellness and livability throughout the state.

New York has made great strides toward establishing age-friendly designation. Over the past six years, diverse state agencies—along with the private sector and local stakeholders—have taken proactive steps to recognize the value of the elements of an age-friendly community and embed them in community planning and development in a more systemic way. The activities described below demonstrate the state's efforts to create livable communities for all ages:

1. Last year, I held 10 regional Sustainable Development and Collaborative Governance conferences (<https://www.ny.gov/programs/sustainable-development-collaborative-governance>), which brought together community development experts, local elected officials, and business leaders to share successful stories and strategies within the community development model for regional economic growth. Representatives from age-friendly certified communities spoke at the conferences about the program's benefits to their communities. The conferences promoted cross collaboration among state agencies, local governments, and community partners to maximize the collective impact of each agency's efforts to improve livability.
2. I awarded \$10 million in grants to 10 downtown areas for revitalization and modernization through my Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) (<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-launches-100-million-downtown-revitalization-initiative>). Many elements of age-friendly communities and smart growth were incorporated within these applications to enhance the attractiveness and livability of the downtown, including the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at

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different levels of affordability and type, commercial and retail main street businesses, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces. Cities and municipalities are creating policies that enhance quality of life through the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, and transit-oriented development. Local and community support for planning and investing in revitalization of downtown areas will help create age-friendly communities. I have proposed another \$10 million for 10 more local projects in the 2017-2018 state executive budget to continue and build upon the momentum created by phase I of this effort.

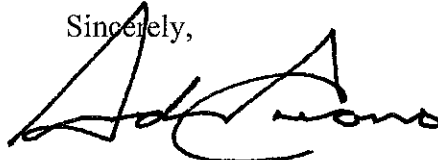
3. The New York State Office for the Aging, in partnership with the New York State Department of State, is developing the Livable New York Initiative (<https://aging.ny.gov/LivableNY/index.cfm>) to advance the efforts of the state's communities to implement model housing, transit, and mobility alternatives, and to institute new and innovative building and community designs, energy ideas, and creative planning and zoning strategies. This work resulted in the development of a technical assistance resource manual, which includes more than 100 articles and replicable projects related to the initiative's focus areas: housing, planning, zoning, smart growth, universal design, development, energy alternatives, green building, mobility, and transportation, as well as links to community tool kits for planning, coalition building, and community development.
4. The New York State Department of Health Prevention Agenda is the state's blueprint to improve the health of New Yorkers in five priority areas and reduce health disparities. The Prevention Agenda is based on the understanding that 80 percent of health is attributable to factors outside of health care, such as economic, social, and environmental conditions, as well as behaviors such as physical activity, food choices, and alcohol and tobacco use. I have asked our state agencies to work with the ad hoc committee that leads the prevention agenda to adopt a *Health Across all Policies* approach to ensure that decisions made in all sectors address the determinants of health. These efforts will help us achieve our public health goals as well as our goals for healthy aging.

AARP has been a partner in each of these initiatives as we strategically systematize the elements into all of our short-term and long-term state and local planning. My administration has reorganized its economic development programs into a regional infrastructure that leverages private sector investments and the elements of age-friendly communities in economic development projects to improve population health and make New York the best place to grow up and grow older.

There are many other systems change initiatives underway in New York in the health care, housing, transportation, community planning, and outdoor space domains that significantly contribute to better health and physical activity, social inclusion, and civic participation, all of which strengthen the fabric of communities. Joining with AARP and WHO to expand and strengthen these efforts statewide is an achievable goal—one that will yield both short- and long-term benefits for the Empire State.

I look forward to working with you to make New York State the first age-friendly state in the union and ask for your support in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Cuomo', written in a cursive style.

ANDREW M. CUOMO

cc: Beth Finkel, State Director, AARP NY
Jo- Ivey Boufford, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee to Lead the Prevention Agenda
Paul Francis, Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services
Greg Olsen, Acting Director, New York State Office for the Aging
Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health