

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2024/2024-challenge.html>

Grant Opportunities

In 2024, 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).

1. 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 ranging from \$500 to \$50,000 with an average grant amount of \$11,900 (83 percent of grants have been under \$20,000). 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 by expanding high-speed internet and enhancing digital literacy skills of residents;
- Supporting Community Resilience through investments that improve disaster management, preparedness and mitigation for residents;
- Improving Community Health and Economic Empowerment to support residents' financial well-being and improve health outcomes.

2. 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 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! Bike Audits: Implement bike audit assessments to enhance safety and bikeability in communities (especially for people age 50-plus), with support from the [League of American Bicyclists](#) and using the [AARP Bike Audit Tool Kit](#).
- NEW! HomeFit® Modifications: Implement education, simple home modifications and/or easy home safety and accessibility solutions to make "lifelong homes" (especially for people age 50-plus), with support from the [RL Mace Universal Design Institute](#) and using the [AARP HomeFit Guide](#).

- 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](#).

3. Demonstration Grants

This grant opportunity supports projects that encourage the replication of promising efforts that benefit residents (especially those age 50 and older). While there is not a defined budget range for this category, similar projects have tended to fall between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and will not exceed \$50,000. Applications will be accepted in the following categories:

- NEW! Enhancing digital connectivity to prepare and respond to disasters for residents (especially those age 50-plus), the importance of which is discussed in the [AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit](#).
- NEW! Facilitating equitable engagement to reconnect communities that have been 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 choice design competitions that increase community understanding of the benefits of a variety of housing options including [accessory dwelling units](#), [Missing Middle Housing](#), [tiny homes](#) and other housing solutions (especially for people age 50-plus), and encourage implementation of policies that enable greater choice in housing.

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 OPPORTUNITIES section above and the following Organization Type, Mission Focus and Project Type criteria to be eligible:

1. Organization Type:

The program is open to the following types of organizations:

- 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits (Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)

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 (such as a car or truck)
- 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

- 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 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations or government entities to serve as fiscal sponsors of grants.)
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2. Mission Focus:

AARP evaluates each project based on its consistency with the AARP mission to serve the needs of people 50-plus.

3. 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
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Grant Selection Process

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

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).

In addition to the criteria provided, AARP will also evaluate each project based on its consistency with the AARP mission to serve the needs of people age 50-plus.

Application Requirements

- Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements
 - Applications must have been submitted through the AARP Community Challenge online portal with all pertinent information by March 6, 2024, 5 p.m. (ET) / 2 p.m. (PT).
 - Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed
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Grant Selection Notification

Grant recipients and unselected applicants will be notified by email in May 2024. Selected applicants must execute and email a binding Memorandum of Understanding and completed vendor forms to AARP by June 12, 2024. Noncompliance with this deadline may result in disqualification or delayed funding.

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.