



**AARP  
COMMUNITY  
CHALLENGE**

Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages  
[aarp.org/CommunityChallenge](https://aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. WHAT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

The program is open to the following types of organizations:

- 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits
- Government entities
- Other types of organizations, considered on a case-by-case basis

### 2. HOW DO I APPLY?

All applications must be submitted through [aarp.org/communitychallenge](https://aarp.org/communitychallenge) by March 22, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. ET. All applications must be completed through the online portal; no emailed applications will be accepted.

### 3. WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL GRANT SIZE?

Grants have ranged from several hundred dollars for smaller, short-term activities to tens of thousands of dollars for larger projects. Since 2017, our average grant amount is \$11,500 and 76% of grants have been under \$15,000. While AARP reserves the right to award compelling projects of any dollar amount, the largest grant that has been awarded under the Community Challenge is \$50,000.

### 4. MAY I SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION?

Yes, your organization can submit as many applications as you like.

### 5. HOW CAN I SAVE OR PRINT A COPY OF MY APPLICATION?

You can save a copy of your application as a PDF or print the entire application at any time. First, go to “My Account” and click on “My Applications” from the menu on the left-hand side. Then locate the application you would like to print and select “Print” on the far-right side. From there, you have a copy you can hold onto, email or print.

**6. WHEN AND HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED IF OUR APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL?**

Selected grant recipients and unselected applicants will be notified by email in May. Grantees must complete a binding Memorandum of Understanding and completed vendor forms to AARP by June 15, 2022. Noncompliance with this deadline may result in disqualification or delayed funding.

**7. I LIVE IN A SMALL COMMUNITY, IS THIS JUST A PROJECT FOR BIG CITIES?**

No. In fact, 38% of the Challenge projects AARP has funded have gone to rural communities with another 20% going to suburban communities. Communities with populations as small as several hundred residents have received grants.

**8. DOES THE PROJECT HAVE TO TAKE PLACE IN A COMMUNITY THAT BELONGS TO THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY STATES AND COMMUNITIES?**

No. Hundreds of grants have been delivered to NAFSC communities since 2017, but projects can benefit any community so long as they satisfy all other eligibility criteria.

**9. MY ORGANIZATION RECEIVED A GRANT PREVIOUSLY. ARE WE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**

Yes, absolutely.

**10. MY ORGANIZATION APPLIED AND DID NOT RECEIVE A GRANT RECENTLY. ARE WE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY AGAIN?**

Yes. You are eligible to apply again, and several grantees have been selected after previously applying and not receiving a grant. Please carefully review the project examples that are provided in **Attachment C** to help inform your application.

**11. WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS WILL YOU NOT FUND?**

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 vehicles (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

## 12. WHAT IS DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS YEARS?

In 2022, AARP will prioritize projects that support residents age 50 and over, are inclusive, address disparities, and directly engage volunteers. The 2022 AARP Community Challenge is very similar to previous years with some notable additions:

- **NEW CATEGORY – Engagement Under New Federal Programs:** AARP will fund projects that support communities' efforts to build engagement and leverage funding available under new federal programs through laws like the American Rescue Plan Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and more.
- **COMBINED CATEGORY – Other Community improvements:** AARP has moved coronavirus recovery projects from a separate category to one combined with health services and community development.
- **DEEPER FOCUS – Older Population:** In 2022, the program will place added emphasis on projects that engage older volunteers and focus on the 50-plus population, while improving communities for all.
- **EARLIER TIMELINE:** The grant cycle is beginning earlier in the year to maximize time for grantees to complete their projects.
- **APPLICATION WEBSITE:** The Community Challenge is using a new grant management system, OpenWater, to enhance user experience and ease of use.

## 13. WHERE CAN I FIND EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS STANDOUT PROJECTS?

Please view **Attachment C** for examples of projects that AARP has funded in the past. While these projects can help inform your thinking, we are also interested in innovative and fresh ideas!

You can see videos of previous projects, videos of each category, descriptions of previously funded projects, and more at [AARP.org/communitychallenge](https://www.aarp.org/communitychallenge).

## 14. IF MY APPLICATION IS NOT SELECTED, CAN I RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON WHY IT WAS NOT FUNDED?

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of applications we receive, we cannot offer feedback on individual applications.

## 15. CAN WE APPLY WITH A PARTNER?

Yes, you can. On the "Organization Name" line, you can list the main applicant name and add "in partnership with" and list the second name. From there, we only need the information for the primary point of contact.

## 16. CAN CHALLENGE GRANTS BE USED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OR CONSULTANT FEES?

Typically, Challenge grants do not fund indirect costs such as salaries or administrative fees. The majority of Challenge funds will need to go directly to project execution or implementation – we would not pay for a significant portion of administrative overhead, staff time, ongoing program costs or the hiring of a designer or surveyor or facilitator, such as a project planner, graphic designer, landscape designer or site surveyor unless those indirect costs were a very small part (0-15%) of the overall request. If the application demonstrates that these types of activities are part of a broader project which shows a commitment to engage residents with some tangible demonstration, then a larger percentage of paying for a consultant or facilitator may be eligible and warranted.

## 17. CAN CHALLENGE FUNDS BE USED TO SUPPORT ONGOING PROGRAMS?

Challenge grants do not typically support ongoing programming; however, we would fund a tangible, short-term purchase that would benefit a current, ongoing program. For example, Challenge funds wouldn't pay for the staff, training, vehicle upkeep or gas needed to implement a current, year-round food delivery program, but funds could be used to purchase new technology or items such as a new freezer, storage pantry, reusable coolers/delivery bags, tables, benches, etc. Funds could also be used to host a temporary demonstration, civic engagement opportunity or pop-up event related to an ongoing program.

## 18. WHAT ARE YOUR REVIEW CRITERIA?

Eligible projects will be assessed on:

- **IMPACT (60 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), focuses on diversity, inclusion and addresses disparities.
- **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.
- **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 50-plus.

## 19. WHAT IF I AM HAVING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LOGIN OR THE ONLINE APPLICATION?

Please look for the "REQUEST SUPPORT" link in the bottom left of the application log-in screen. From there, you can fill out a help ticket and someone from the online platform's tech support will get back

to you.

## 20. ARE THERE OTHER AARP GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE?

By submitting a proposal for the AARP Community Challenge initiative, you and your organization give AARP permission to reach out to you and others at your organization about other possible AARP funding opportunities that your proposal may be eligible for based on the AARP Community Challenge criteria. However, please note that AARP is not obligated in any way to consider your proposal for any additional AARP funding.

AARP might be contacted by other potential funders that could be interested in funding projects that were not funded through the AARP Community Challenge. The potential funders may have additional process steps and funding requirements than those of the AARP Community Challenge. If requested, AARP would like to send your contact information, organization name and a short description of the proposal, including the community where the project would take place (“Project Information”). Please note that these projects will be subject to any potential funder’s own terms, conditions and review. Please indicate in your application whether or not you give permission to AARP to share your contact information and a description of your proposal. If you select “yes,” 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 sharing the Project Information with potential funders.

## 21. AARP BRANDING

If your application is funded, you will receive detailed guidance about branding, including a package with AARP logo files and pre-approved language. For now, we are looking for a general idea of how you will incorporate the AARP name/logo/message in your promotions. For instance, if you’ll be installing a sign at the site of your project, it should include the AARP logo. If you’ll be putting out press releases or social media posts, those should include verbiage about how the project was funded by AARP. If your project is ultimately funded, you will design and secure your own signage or banners, but we’ll provide plenty of examples and guidance at that time. You may include funding to pay for this signage to your grant request and project budget. You will also be invited to coordinate publicity with your state office.

## 22. I DON’T KNOW MY AARP STATE OFFICE CONTACT. WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

You can go to [states.aarp.org](https://states.aarp.org) to find contact information for your AARP State Office. Click on your state and then you will find it on the next page.

## 23. I DON’T SEE THE ANSWER TO MY QUESTION HERE. WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If your question and answer are not on this page, please email us at [CommunityChallenge@AARP.org](mailto:CommunityChallenge@AARP.org).