



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

May 18, 2026

Bandana Shrestha, Director
AARP Oregon
1455 SW Broadway, Suite 1490
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Ms. Shrestha:

In the spirit of partnership, I submit this letter of commitment to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Oregon has a strong history of being welcoming to people across their lifespan and has long been a leader in the age-friendly movement. Portland was the first city in the nation to receive this AARP designation, and now thirteen Oregon communities are part of the network.

This statewide designation would be a significant step reflecting the progress Oregon has made toward creating safe and livable communities for all ages and reflects our state's ongoing commitment to ensuring Oregonians thrive in their communities. Enrollment in the network requires communities to assess their age-friendliness, identify improvement strategies, and implement them over time. This designation will allow Oregon to leverage best practices to help the state support our projected demographics.

The age-friendliness of Oregon

Oregon has a significant system of supports for older adults. We know from AARP's research that aging in place, getting to places independently, and having affordable housing options are very important to Oregon's older adult communities. All of these areas have been focal points for improvements during my administration, and we have made measurable progress.

My work to make housing more affordable and abundant has greatly contributed to Oregonians' ability to age in place. House Bill 2001, passed in 2019 when I was House Speaker, was the first legislation of its kind in the nation to expand middle housing options statewide. And in the most recent legislative session, I championed – and passed – a new law to accelerate the development of affordable housing for seniors and residents of manufactured housing communities.

Beginning this summer, my administration is launching new programs that will rehouse more than 400 older adults experiencing homelessness, repair and renovate more than 1,000 homes of older adults, and produce an estimated 100 to 200 new affordable homes for Oregon's older adults.

Older Oregon workers continue to encounter workplace age discrimination, whether it takes them longer to find that next job or they are fired because they are older. The reality is that people are living longer and working longer but workplace age discrimination threatens the financial security of older workers by pushing them out of the workforce. In 2025, I signed House Bill 3187 into law which updates Oregon's workplace age discrimination law to remove employment barriers and address negative stereotypes so older workers can be part of solving our workforce shortages.

Oregon has been a national innovator in advancing financial security and financial wellness. OregonSaves was the first state-facilitated retirement savings program in the nation, providing workers without employer-sponsored retirement plans to save for the future. Today, nearly 150,000 Oregonians are participating, with over \$400 million saved.

Oregon was an early leader in shifting away from an institutional model of care toward home- and community-based services, enabling people to remain in their homes and communities rather than being forced into nursing facilities. For those eligible for home and community-based services, Oregon has piloted innovations to support seniors staying connected to others and to address loneliness, including technology to hold virtual visits with friends and family, robotic pets for companionship, and music and memory programming to support community peer connections. Through Older Americans Act funding, Oregon is supporting senior centers so they can increase service offerings such as in-person meals and exercise and community support groups.

Developing a community-wide multi-sector action plan

We want all Oregonians to have the opportunity to age with dignity, purpose, economic security, and quality of life. As of May 2025, Oregonians 65 and older outnumber children under 18. This is an historic demographic shift. Responding to this shift will require focus at all levels.

Working together, AGE+, AARP, and the Governor's Commission on Senior Services (GCSS) will launch a community-driven multi-sector plan on aging. The goal is to build a coordinated blueprint for housing, health care, economic development, and community services serving aging Oregonians across the state to ensure we have a plan for meeting the needs of all our population.

Monitoring our progress

Oregon will monitor ongoing progress through accountability to the GCSS, an official state commission composed of 21 commissioners, including volunteers appointed by the Governor and two legislators. The GCSS is dedicated to enhancing and protecting the quality of life for all older Oregonians with a statutory charge to study programs and budgets of all state agencies that affect older adults and people with disabilities, develop a comprehensive plan for delivery of services to older adults, and promote responsible statewide advocacy for older adults.

Bandana Shrestha
May 18, 2026
Page 3

Conclusion

In 2023, roughly 730,000 Oregonians received Social Security retirement payments, injecting more than \$15.7 billion dollars into Oregon's economy. Older Oregonians' contributions to the state's economy are enormous. Oregon's older adults are leaders. They are valuable workers and skilled volunteers, contributing to communities and supporting the next generation. Their contributions to our state's culture and well-being are immeasurable.

The progress noted above is just a small component of how we are already working to make the state age-friendly. It is my intention to continue to lead the nation in finding new ways to create community assets that not only meet people's needs but support them to thrive and continue contributing to their communities.

Joining AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities is an important step along that path. We will keep working to make Oregon a welcoming place for Oregonians of all ages.

Thank you, and I look forward to the conversations ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" being more prominent than the last name "Kotek".

Governor Tina Kotek

TK: rch