

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AARP Community Challenge Flagship Grant: FY 23 Public Places

City of New Haven Departments of Elderly Services and Community Resilience

February 23, 2023

Funding request: \$20,000.00

The City of New Haven Departments of Elderly Services and Community Resilience seeks funding from AARP to help aid in creating vibrant public for senior citizens to enjoy by installing accessible seating at the three senior seniors and nearby community parks. The project will have a primary focus on the three New Haven Senior Centers located at 26 Atwater Street, 197 Dixwell Avenue, 411 Townsend Avenue and nearby green spaces.

As we have learned from over two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, vibrant, outdoor public places with accessible amenities are essential to the health and wellbeing of senior citizens and other groups at higher risk of serious infection from COVID-19. Many senior citizens are slowly reemerging into their community spaces and looking forward to spending time outdoors.

Accessible seating will benefit our communities by:

- Providing accessible outdoor community spaces at Senior Centers and nearby community parks to decrease social isolation among senior citizens and build more connections between these community facilities and their surrounding neighborhoods.
- Improving the built environment of Senior Center facilities and nearby community parks to create safe public spaces, which research shows may be associated with better physical and mental health for residents.

Funds will be used to:

- Benefit seniors and older residents across New Haven by enhancing the three Senior Center facilities and nearby community parks with the installation of ADA accessible seating. In addition to serving our aging population, these senior centers serve a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse group of residents.
- Survey areas of installation for accessible seating and contract with an ADA Specialist Contractor.
- Support comprehensive research that accessible outdoor seating for senior citizens, people with disabilities, and all city residents can improve the quality, safety, and vibrancy of public spaces.
- Partner and collaborate with local government agencies, community-based organizations, healthcare settings, residents, and other stakeholders.