2025 AARP Community Challenge
Grants to make communities more livable for people of all ages

AARP is currently soliciting applications for 2025 funding. All applications must be submitted through the online application portal at AARP.org/CommunityChallenge by March 5, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. PT.

No emailed or paper applications will be accepted.

In 2025, the AARP Community Challenge is accepting applications across three different grant opportunities. You can read more about the different funding opportunities at AARP.org/CommunityChallenge.

Please click on the link of the application below that you would like to view:

Learn more at AARP.org/CommunityChallenge   Questions? Email CommunityChallenge@AARP.org

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Flagship Grant Application

BASIC INFORMATION

1. **Common name of Applicant Organization:** * Charlotte County Office of Emergency Management
   (MAX: 60 characters)

   Legal Name of Applicant Organization: Charlotte County Office of Emergency Management
   (If your organization's legal name is different from its commonly used name, is too long to fit in the common name field, DBA, please enter it in full here. NO max character limit.)

2. **Organization Mailing Address:** *
   Address: 26571 Airport Road
   City: Punta Gorda   **State:** Fl   **Zip:** 33982

3. **Organization's Project Manager Contact Information:** *
   Name: Ashlyn Gamble   **Title:** Emergency Management Specialist
   Phone: 941-833-4004   **Email:** ashlyn.gamble@charlottecountyfl.gov

4. **Organization Tax Status.** * Please check the one that applies:
   NOTE: *Please ensure your organization's legal name, non-profit status and federal tax identification number match what is on record with the Internal Revenue Service.*

   ☐ 501(c)(3) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*
   ☐ 501(c)(4) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*
   ☐ 501(c)(6) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*
   ☐ A municipality
   ☑ Another unit of government
   ☐ Fiscal Sponsor

   NOTE: *To expedite the process in the event of an award, please provide details about your Fiscal Sponsor. This information will help streamline our review and ensure a timely disbursement of funds.*

   Fiscal Sponsor Organization Name: _____

   Fiscal Sponsor Point of Contact Name (First/Last): _____

   Fiscal Sponsor Address: _____

   City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

   Fiscal Sponsor Tax Status:

   ☐ 501(c)(3) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*
   ☐ 501(c)(4) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*

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☐ 501(c)(6) nonprofit *(Nonprofit organizations must be recognized by the IRS to receive funds.)*

☐ A municipality

☐ Another unit of government

☐ Other *(Considered on a case-by-case basis. AARP can NOT provide funds to any for-profit company, nor individuals.)*

Please Describe Other: _____

5. Organization Federal Tax Identification Number: * 59 - 6000541

6. Organization Online Presence:

Website: * *(if none, enter n/a)* WWW. charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/public-safety/emergency-management/

X *(formerly Twitter)* Handle: * *(if none, enter n/a)* _____CCOEM_____

@ Facebook Page Name: * *(if none, enter n/a)* @ Charlotte County Emergency Management

7. Has your organization applied for an AARP Community Challenge previously? *

☐ Yes – Selected more than once

☐ Yes – Selected once

☐ Yes – Not selected

☑ No – did not apply

8. How did you hear about this grant opportunity? *

☐ The AARP State Office in my state

☐ The AARP Livable Communities e-newsletter

☐ An email from AARP Livable Communities

☐ A national organizational newsletter or conference

☐ Toyota Motor North America

☐ Microsoft

☐ A local event or newsletter

☐ Word of mouth in the community

☐ Social Media

☐ A grant finder tool

☑ Internet search

☐ State or local government entity

☐ Other: _____

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Flagship Grant Application

COMMUNITY DETAILS

9. **Community where this project will be delivered:** *
NOTE: *This information is for AARP's internal analysis only and will not be used in award information, etc.*

City: Port Charlotte/ Punta Gorda   **County:** Charlotte County **State:** FL   **Zip:** 33982

10. **Would you describe this community as:** *

☐ Rural
☑ Suburban
☐ Urban

11. How many residents do you estimate will directly benefit from the project per year?* *(e.g., how many people will visit the library annually, how many people will visit the plaza in downtown, how many people will use the transit system in that neighborhood, etc.)*

Number of Residents: *(numbers only)* 206,134

Please estimate the percentage (%) of those residents that are age 50 or over: 53.6 %

Please explain: 40.6% of the population is 65 and older per census data. The estimate of people between 50-60 is approximate 13%

12. **This project will primarily reach residents living:** *

☐ In individual home(s)/housing complex(s)
☐ In one neighborhood
☐ Across more than one neighborhood
☐ Primarily in one neighborhood, with residents from across the community also benefitting *(e.g., benches in a park would be 'neighborhood level' but are in a community-wide space)*
☑ Across the whole community *(e.g., city, county, unincorporated area)*
☑ Across a region
☐ Across the whole state
☐ Other

Please describe Other:

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PROJECT DETAILS

13. **Project Description.** * Please provide a description of your project in 2,000 characters or less (including spaces). Please also include any benefits of your project specifically for people 50-plus.

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NOTE: **This grant can NOT be used for the following activities:**

- Partisan, political or election related activities
- Planning activities, assessments or 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 or mechanical equipment (such as a car, truck, bus, snow mobile, snow grooming machine or tractor)
- 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

14. **Project Short Summary.** * In under 250 characters (including spaces), please describe your project and the impact it will have on the community. Please include relevant benefits for older adults. Think of it as a one or two sentence summary you would include in a press release.

> _For example:_
> _This project will turn overgrown vacant lots into community gardens with raised flower beds, accessible paths and accessible seating._

_____

_____

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15. **Project Timeline. *** AARP Community Challenge projects should be quick-action in nature and able to be completed by December 15, 2025. Please provide a brief project timeline using the month boxes below. *Be sure to include time to receive any municipal approvals, land-use agreements, request for proposals/ contractor bidding process and approvals, impact of potential weather (heat, cold, rain), supply chain lead time, etc*.

NOTE: *We anticipate that grantees will receive selection notifications in May and payment in June/July. Projects must be completed by <u>December 15</u> and After-Action Reports are due <u>December 31, 2025</u>. Please see the <u>Your Questions Answered</u> webpage for more information on the grant cycle timeline.*

June: Aquisition and setup: Procure technology and software for tool. Configure and test tool. Develop intial training materials.

July: Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach: Host kickoff meeting with community leaders and develop outreach strategy.

August: Community Workshops: Conduct workshops to introduce the tool to the public and gather initial feedback. Integrate tool into ongoing resilience efforts.

September: Targeted Outreach for older adults: Work with senior centers and community groups to ensure older resident have access to tool.

October: Expansion of outreach: Target additional at risk populations and conduct additional workshops focusing on preparedness. Refine public feedback.

November: Final outreach and prepardness campaign. Present findings and start to explore long term integration of tool into resilience planning.

December: *Complete Grant. Submit After-Action Report.*

16. **<mark>Land-Use Approvals.</mark> *** Do you have landowner permission(s), required municipal/state/federal permit(s) or approval(s), environmental impact study(ies), or other documents that will be required prior to project commencement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☑ In Progress
- ☐ Not Applicable

Please explain:

17. **<mark>Upload one attachment if needed.</mark>**
NOTE: *This is not required, but you may share one document, i.e., designs, map, photos, letters of support, or supporting materials. Please combine multiple items into one file.*
Maximum file size: 25 MB

18. **Project Type: ***
NOTE: *Proposals for the 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** or services

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19. **Project Category. *** Please select the category below that best describes your project, along with the primary corresponding sub-category.

    NOTE: *We understand there is some crossover between categories and that several might apply to your project. Please select the main category that aligns most closely with your primary goal.*

☐ **Create vibrant public places** in the community through solutions that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities for residents (especially those 50-plus)

   ☐ Activities, trainings or programs to engage residents (particularly people 50-plus) in vibrant public places (e.g., public plaza events, open street events, trainings on public space access, etc.)

   ☐ Public space activation with a focus on the needs of those 50-plus (e.g., public plaza improvements, parklets, street trees, alleyway activation, accessible seating and games in public places, seating along Main Street corridors, signage in neighborhoods)

   ☐ Public art installations that make a space more inviting for multigenerational use, including to decrease social isolation for people 50-plus (e.g., murals and sculptures that are connected to a broader plan for multigenerational use for the public space)

   ☐ Park enhancements to serve all residents with emphasis on people 50-plus (e.g., accessible park equipment improvements, new structures, dog parks)

   ☐ Community gardens for all residents (especially for people 50-plus) (e.g., building accessible community garden beds)

   ☐ Accessibility of amenities (e.g., increasing accessibility features of park equipment)

   ☐ Public safety interventions (e.g., proper lighting, landscaping, block revitalization/maintenance)

   ☐ Other (please only select if your project does not fit into one of the above categories and please describe in detail) _____

☐ **Deliver a range of transportation and mobility options** for residents (especially those 50-plus) through solutions that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability and access to public and private transit.

   ☐ Activities/events/training programs to engage people (with an emphasis on people 50-plus) in transportation options (e.g., open streets events)

   ☐ Bikeability, especially for people 50-plus (e.g., bike sharing options, temporary bike lanes, bike audits)

   ☐ Public or private transit access, accessibility and safety for residents (with an emphasis on people 50-plus) (e.g., adding transit shelters, activating and improving transit stops, increasing accessibility features of transportation options for people of all abilities)

   ☐ Micro-mobility enhancements/management for residents (with an emphasis on people 50-plus) (e.g., parking and training on scooters, e-bikes for older adults, etc.)

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☐ Expansion and enhancement of existing transportation options (especially for people 50-plus) (e.g., adding volunteer-led transportation programs, enhanced coordination of existing transportation resources, new on-demand transportation services)

☐ Improved wayfinding throughout the community (e.g., signage and markings that are visible for all ages)

☐ Trails (e.g., completing and connecting trails, signage, improving accessibility for all abilities, especially people 50-plus)

☐ Other (please only select if your project does not fit into one of the above categories and please describe in detail) _____

☐ **Support a range of housing options** for residents (especially people 50-plus and their families) in the community through solutions that increase the availability of accessible and affordable choices.

    ☐ Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes, missing middle housing, and manufactured housing, particularly those with accessibility features, education and policies

    ☐ Innovative home maintenance, repair and support services to support residents' ability to live independently and age

    ☐ Lifelong housing and accessibility for older adults

    ☐ Homeowner legal and financial documentation (e.g. community education about wills, estate planning, property taxes, etc.)

    ☐ Interventions to support housing stability, including evictions and homelessness

    ☐ Resources about housing options, safety and services for residents (with emphasis on those 50-plus)

    ☐ Other (please only select if your project does not fit into one of the above categories and please describe in detail) _____

☐ **Increase digital connections** and enhance digital literacy skills of residents (especially those 50-plus).

    ☐ Activities to train residents to increase digital navigation skills and distribute electronic devices to address the digital divide (with a focus on people 50-plus) (e.g. tablets, laptops)

    ☐ Public place improvements that will increase the availability of high-speed internet (with a focus on people 50-plus) (e.g., outdoor classrooms, benches and seating with Wi-Fi, creation of computer lab in public housing or library, publicly accessible telehealth facilities, etc.)

    ☐ Digital connectivity activities to prepare residents (especially those age 50-plus) to respond to disasters for residents (especially those age 50-plus)

    ☐ Other (please only select if your project does not fit into one of the above categories and please describe in detail) _____

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☑ **Support community resilience** through investments that improve disaster management, preparedness and mitigation for residents (especially those 50-plus).

    ☐ Improvements to public places that will improve the area's ability to withstand extreme weather events, reducing the impact of extreme weather events on people age 50 and older (e.g., rain gardens to address stormwater run-off, converting vacant spaces into community areas that can be used by older adults, etc.)

    ☐ Public space improvements to support recovery in an area after extreme weather events (with a focus on people 50-plus)

    ☑ Other (please only select if your project does not fit into one of the above categories and please describe in detail) _____

        This immersive visual education tool enhances community resilience by helping residents, including those 50+, understand and prepare for flood risks through realistics simulations.

20. **Project Deliverables. *** Please specify the individual deliverables of your project. Quantify and provide as much detail as you can about any **physical structures (such as benches, lighting, signage, etc.), events, dates, addresses, communications, people reached, volunteers involved, etc.** within 300 characters (including spaces) for each deliverable.

Before you enter your answers, PLEASE READ the examples below and review Attachment D.

Deliverable 1: _____

Quantity: _____

Deliverable 2: _____

Quantity: _____

Deliverable 3: _____

Quantity: _____

Add more deliverables as necessary. Minimum of 3 deliverables required. Maximum of 10.

Deliverable 1: Hire firm and aquire immersive technology tool.

Deliverable 2: Engage the community and solicit feedback on sea level rise, storm surge concers, and adaptation strategies. Facilitate a discussion regarding these topics to obtain feedback to prioritize communities adaptation solutions.

Deliverable 3: Develop and promote education/outreach activities to Charlotte County residents.

Deliverable 4: Develop a report to measure the impacts of this tool and identify mitigation activities.

Deliverable 5: Present Recommendations to Local Mitigation Strategy working group and interested parties.

Deliverable 6: Provide a written After Action Report and submit to AARP in December 2025

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For example:

    I.   *The Organization will purchase and install structures with LED lighting with custom side panels at (ADDRESS)*
        a.   *Quantity: 3*

    II.   *The Organization will purchase and install ADA compliant benches that will seat a minimum of two people at (ADDRESS)*
        a.   *Quantity: 7*

    III.   *The Organization will purchase and install AARP branded signage at (ADDRESS)*
        a.   *Quantity: 15*

    IV.   *The Organization will purchase and install accessible raised garden beds made of materials suitable for outdoor use*
        a.   *Quantity: 10*

    V.   *The Organization will hold event on (DATE) (event examples: workshops, hackathon, trainings)*
        a.   *Quantity: 1*

    VI.   *The Organization's goal is to have community members to be trained at workshops on 50+ issues, with at least half of attendees being age 50 and older.*
        a.   *Quantity: 250*

    VII.   *The Organization will hold a (kick-off, ribbon cutting, etc.) event on November 1, 2025.*
        a.   *Quantity: 1*

    VIII.   *The Organization has a goal of attendees at event, with at least half of attendees being age 50 and older.*
        a.   *Quantity: 400*

    IX.   *The Organization will engage volunteers over the course of the project – including painting accessible benches made of outdoor materials, installation, and the kick-off event, with half being age 50 and older.*
        a.   *Quantity: 70*

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please complete each section with 2,000 characters or fewer (including spaces).

21. **Organizational Livable Communities Activities. *** Please describe: 1) How your organization has been involved in past work to make this community more livable to date. *(Learn more at [What is a Livable Community](#)?)* and 2) How this project will support existing efforts to make this community more livable for all (with a focus on people 50-plus).

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22. **Community engagement.** * Please describe: 1) How residents and local organizations have been engaged in the area's livable communities' activities to date. *(Learn more at <u>What is a Livable Community</u>?)* and 2) How you will involve them as you execute this grant (with a focus on people 50-plus).

_____

_____

23. **Older Adults.** * How will your project benefit residents age 50 and over?

_____

_____

24. **Role of volunteers.** * Will volunteers play a role in the implementation of the Community Challenge project?

☐ Yes

☑ No

If yes, please explain how volunteers will be involved in implementing the project:

_____

      a. Will volunteers age 50 and older play a role in implementing the project?

      ☐ Yes

      ☑ No

      Please explain:

      _____

25. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** * Will your project focus on, benefit or engage a specific multicultural or historically marginalized population of older adults and their families in the community change efforts?

☑ Yes

☐ No

If Yes, please select the one or two who will be primarily impacted below.

☑ African American/Black

☑ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Asian American/Pacific Islander

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native

☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+)

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☑ People with Disabilities

☐ Other Not Listed: _____

Please describe how the effort benefits or engages this population (including any emphasis on people 50-plus and their families).

_____

26. **Addressing Disparities.** * Will your project improve or address existing disparities (including racial or economic) experienced in the community (especially for people age 50 and older)?

☑ Yes

☐ No

Please describe: This project aims to reduce economic and social disparities by improving access to resources, infrastructure, and community support for older adults particularly in underserved areas.

27. **Veterans and Military Families.** * Will your project have an emphasis on veterans and their families of all ages (including those age 50 and older)?

☐ Yes

☑ No

Please describe: _____

PROJECT BUDGET

28. **Liability insurance requirement.** * If selected, organizations will need to carry and maintain comprehensive general liability (and professional liability, if applicable) in an amount not less than one million dollars ($1,000,000) and workers' compensation insurance in an amount as required by applicable law covering all personnel engaged in the execution of the grant. **Do you acknowledge this liability insurance requirement?**

☑ YES

☐ NO

29. **Grant Amount and Budget.** * Please include the total grant request and specify all expenses that will be covered by this grant.
    NOTES:
    - *AARP reserves the right to award less funds than requested – applicants should be prepared to discuss how they would scale down their proposal if asked.*
    - *The AARP Community Challenge will typically only award grants that spend 0-15% on indirect, overhead, and staff costs. However, AARP reserves the right to award compelling projects that go beyond this range.*
    - *Project marketing, branding, etc. can and should be included in project budget. Please budget for any*

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> banners, stickers, etc. you'll need to purchase for your project to align with the AARP's branding requirements.

- Details on the requirements for insurance, limits on indirect costs and branding are described on the [Your Questions Answered](#) website.

Enter whole numbers only in the amount field. No $ dollar sign or cents.

TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED: * $ 25,000 _____ *(maximum of $25,000)*

Contracted services costs, if any: $ 25,000 _____ **Additional Information:** _____

Materials & supplies, if any: $ _____ **Additional Information:** _____

Travel expenses, if any: $ _____ **Additional Information:** _____

Marketing, branding, or outreach, if any: $_____ **Additional Information:** _____

Liability insurance, if any: $ _____ **Additional Information:** _____

Indirect, Overhead, and Staff costs, if any: $ _____ **Additional Information:** _____

30. **Matching/Supporting Funds and In-Kind Support.** *Matching funds are NOT required.* Please detail any matching/supporting funds or in-kind support the organization will receive to contribute toward this project. Include volunteer/donated work as in-kind support.

    PRIVATE (INCLUDING NONPROFIT)

    Matching Funds/Supporting Funds: $ _____ **Describe In-Kind Support:** _____

    PUBLIC

    Matching Funds/Supporting Funds: $ _____ **Describe In-Kind Support:** _____

31. **Livable Newsletter Consent. *** I consent to AARP sending an invitation to the email address I provided above, to subscribe to the free, weekly AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter. I will receive an email to confirm my choice to receive the e-newsletter and can express that choice by clicking "Confirm" or, if I choose not to receive the e-newsletter, I do not need to respond. I understand that I may unsubscribe at any time. (If you are already a subscriber or want to subscribe right now by visiting [AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe](#), select " Already a subscriber" below.)

    - ☑ YES, I consent.
    - ☐ NO, I do not consent.
    - ☐ Already a subscriber.

32. **Other 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

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of your 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 Project Information with other potential funders. 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. We will alert you before this Project Information is given to potential funders. **Do you give AARP permission to share this Project Information with other organizations that might be interested in funding your project?**

☑ YES

☐ NO

An opportunity for other possible AARP funding. Please note that 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.

NOTIFICATION

When you SUBMIT this application, you will receive a confirmation email within the hour. Please make sure to check your spam folder if you do not see it. If you do NOT receive a submission confirmation, you have NOT submitted successfully. Please go back and make sure you completed ALL required questions and did not go over the text box character limits.

All applicants will be notified of their selection by email in May 2025. To receive funding, selected applicants must execute and return a binding Memorandum of Understanding and completed financial forms to the AARP National office in a timely manner.

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.

By submitting an application to AARP, the applicant agrees that:

- The decisions of AARP regarding the eligibility of applicants and the validity of entries shall be final and binding.
- All submissions will be judged by AARP, whose decisions and determinations as to the administration of the award and selection of award recipients are final.
- AARP has the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel, or suspend the award.
- All projects and applications shall not violate any third-party rights.
- Except where prohibited by law, participation in the AARP Community Challenge constitutes the Applicant's consent to AARP's use of the organization's name and corporate logo, street address, city, state, zip code, county, and names,

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likenesses, photographs, videos, images, and statements made or provided by the Applicant's representatives regarding the award for promotional purposes in any media without further permission, consent, payment or other consideration in perpetuity.

- For the *Flagship* and the *Demonstration Grant*, the organization agrees to carry and maintain comprehensive general liability and professional liability in an amount not less than one million dollars ($1,000,000) and workers' compensation insurance in an amount as required by applicable law covering all personnel engaged in the execution of the grant.

- For the *Capacity-Building Microgrant,* the organization agrees to carry and maintain comprehensive general liability insurance in an amount that's appropriate to cover the potential liability of the project as determined by the organization.

- All promotional materials (such as newsletters, press releases), events and signage related to the funded project will include a statement indicating that support was received from AARP and Community Challenge supporters as required by AARP.

- The organization is required to capture photos, videos and/or stories from the project. As the organization captures photos, videos and/or stories from the project, if an identifiable individual appears in the photos, videos and/or stories, the organization is responsible for having him/her sign the AARP General Release. (This document is provided to grantees with the Memorandum of Understanding and other required paperwork). In addition, the organization should not include any element in photos or videos provided to AARP that may violate third party rights, such as artwork and trademarks in text and logo other than those owned by the organization and AARP. The organization may be asked to send work-in-progress photos to AARP upon request. Following the grant period, grantees are required to respond to periodic requests for updates from AARP.

- The submission of the After-Action Report at the conclusion of the project is required by the deadline. Failure to submit the required report will result in the removal from the AARP website until the time of submission, and non-completion will disqualify an applicant from future AARP Community Challenge grant programs.

- AARP and its affiliated organizations, subsidiaries, agents and employees are not responsible for late, lost, illegible, incomplete, stolen, misdirected, illegitimate, or impermissible submissions or any other error whether human, mechanical or electronic.

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13) Please provide a description of your project in 2,000 characters or less (including spaces). Please also include any benefits of your projects especially for people 50-plus.

Charlotte County Office of Emergency Management is applying for the AARP Community Challenge Grant to enhance preparedness and resilience against storm surge and sea level rise. Recent hurricanes—Ian (2022), Idalia (2023), Debby (2024), Helene (2024), and Milton (2024)—caused significant tidal surges that elevated water levels along the coastline, the Gulf of Mexico, Myakka River, Peace River, and Charlotte Harbor. These events led to widespread flooding and damage in low-lying areas exposing vulnerabilities that compound risks for our residents. In total there were 5,896 homes that sustained damage from hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024.

To address these challenges, we seek funding to acquire immersive software that simulates water inundation scenarios based on sea level rise and storm surge models. This tool will provide realistic aerial and ground-level visuals of potential flood impacts, tailored to specific locations in Charlotte County. By illustrating storm surge levels up to 15-18 feet, the software will empower residents with knowledge to make informed decisions about preparedness and evacuation. For residents aged 50 and older, the software will offer a powerful visual aid to increase understanding of flood risks, ensuring they are better equipped to protect themselves, their homes, and their communities.

Proposed activities include deploying the software as part of community workshops (geared towards those 50+), engaging residents in identifying preferred mitigation strategies for public spaces, and producing a report to measure the tool's impact on awareness and planning. These efforts will prioritize the unique needs of older residents, helping them stay informed and resilient before, during, and after disasters. By fostering preparedness and promoting actionable solutions, this project aims to build a safer and more resilient future for Charlotte County's residents, especially its older population.

14) Project Short Summary: In under 250 characters, please describe your project and the impact it will have on the community. Please include relevant references to older adults. Think of one or two sentences you would include in a press release.
Charlotte County seeks funds for immersive flood risk simulations to improve community preparedness, mainly those 50+. The tool aids emergency planning, education, and workshops, helping users visualize risks, stay informed, and make safer choices.

21) Please describe: 1) How your organization has been involved in the past to work to make this community more liveable to date. 2) How this project will support existing efforts to make this community more liveable for all (with a focus on people 50 plus)

Charlotte County Office of Emergency Management has long been dedicated to enhancing community resilience and livability by implementing preparedness initiatives, public education campaigns, and disaster response coordination. Past efforts include storm surge awareness programs, evacuation planning, and partnerships with local organizations to support vulnerable populations, including older adults. Additionally, the county has facilitated hazard mitigation projects aimed at reducing flood risks and strengthening infrastructure against extreme weather events. Other projects include having colored bands on stop signs to identify what evacuation zone the sign is in to signify familiarity. The County has an established long-term recovery committee that aims efforts at enhancing the community post disaster. Charlotte County is constantly adding recreation centers, tailoring events towards those who are 50+ like senior games, canvas paintings, card games, walking fitness and pickleball. The family service center which houses aging and adult services to include veterans also houses non-profit partners who focus on our low socioeconomic older adult citizens.

 This project will build upon these efforts by introducing an innovative, immersive flood risk simulation tool. By providing realistic visual representations of storm surge impacts, the initiative will enhance residents' understanding of their risks and improve preparedness decision-making. The tool will be integrated into community workshops and outreach efforts, ensuring it complements existing resilience-building strategies while prioritizing accessibility for older residents. This initiative aligns with Florida's statewide goal of promoting whole-community awareness and supports Charlotte County's objectives to enhance emergency management coordination, public education, and community participation in disaster preparedness and mitigation.

22) Community engagement. * Please describe: 1) How residents and local organizations have been engaged in the area's livable communities' activities to date. and 2) How you will involve them as you execute this grant (with a focus on people 50-plus).
Charlotte County Emergency Management has actively engaged residents and local organizations in preparedness efforts through public meetings, training programs, and disaster response exercises. The county collaborates with homeowner associations, senior centers, and community groups to share emergency information and encourage participation in resilience planning.

For this project, engagement efforts will focus on involving residents—especially those aged 50 and older—in interactive workshops where they can explore flood risk scenarios using the simulation tool. Partnerships with local organizations, including senior advocacy groups and emergency response volunteers, will ensure broad outreach and inclusivity. Feedback from community members will be incorporated to refine the tool's effectiveness and ensure it meets the needs of older adults in Charlotte County.

23) How will your project benefit residents age 50 and over?

This project will significantly benefit residents aged 50 and over in Charlotte County, home to one of the largest retiree populations in the United States. Many of these residents may be unfamiliar with the specific flood and storm surge risks in their community, having relocated from areas with different weather patterns. This interactive tool will empower residents to visualize the potential impacts of various flood levels and storm surges within their local areas, enhancing their understanding of these critical hazards.

Furthermore, this age group may have limited access to social media compared to younger populations, potentially hindering their access to timely emergency information. This visual tool can be effectively utilized by news outlets and county officials through more traditional channels, ensuring that crucial information reaches this older demographic.

The Need In under 500 characters (including spaces), please describe the unique challenge that you are trying to address or solve through this grant.

Charlotte County faces challenges in conveying the localized impacts of storm surge, making it difficult for residents to understand their specific flood risks. Without clear, visual tools, many rely on generalized maps that lack site-specific detail. This project will develop an interactive storm surge visualization tool to provide accurate, location-based insights, empowering residents and decision-makers to better prepare for future flooding events.

21. Charlotte County has long prioritized livability for residents 50+, focusing on disaster preparedness, resilience, and accessibility. Our **Disaster Guide** and **Special Needs Registry** ensure older adults receive critical emergency information and priority assistance. We provide preparedness workshops, facilitate the distribution of emergency kits, and coordinate with senior centers and health care facilities to support older residents during disasters but also normal operations.

Recognizing the severe risk of **storm surge**, we are seeking funds to launch a **storm surge modeling project** to identify at-risk areas and improve evacuation planning. Public awareness campaigns and strengthened shelter coordination help protect older adults. Our **CERT program** trains residents 50+ in disaster response, empowering them to assist our communities. Additionally, we have improved **age-friendly infrastructure**, enhancing public transportation featuring curb-to-curb ADA accessibility with an on-call system, and walkability.

This project will expand **storm surge preparedness** by increasing risk assessments, outreach, and evacuation planning for older residents. We will maintain **the Special Needs Registry**, assist in distribution of **preparedness kits**, and establish **neighborhood support networks**. Infrastructure improvements, including **storm-resistant walkways and shaded rest areas**, will further enhance mobility and safety.

By integrating **storm surge preparedness** into Charlotte County's **existing livability efforts**, this project will improve safety, resilience, and quality of life for residents 50+, aligning with AARP's mission to create **disaster-resilient communities for all ages.**