

# ADVANCING STATES



Leadership, innovation, collaboration  
for state Aging and Disability agencies

## **Stronger Together: How the Aging Network Can Collaborate to Address Social Isolation Now & Beyond**

**Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**2021 Home and Community-Based Services Conference**

# Presenters

- **Claire Irwin**, Age Well Live Well Coordinator, Texas Health and Human Services
- **Regina Jenkins**, Director, Glenwood 50+ Centers, Howard County Office on Aging and Independence
- **Rebecca Levine**, Senior Program Manager, engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults, USAging
- **Barbara Scher**, Division Manager, Howard County Office on Aging and Independence
- **April Young**, Senior Director, National Core Indicators – Aging & Disabilities, ADvancing States

# Setting the Stage

## Understanding Social Isolation

# Loneliness and Social Isolation

- Loneliness stems from feelings of being alone; it can engender sadness and emotional distress.
- Social isolation is a lack of social connections.
- Social isolation can lead to loneliness for some individuals.



# Impacts on Health and Wellbeing

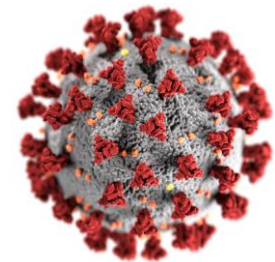
- Social isolation can have negative impacts to older adult physical health, including early mortality, high blood pressure, and heart disease.
- The influence of social isolation on risk for mortality is comparable with well-established risk factors for mortality.  
*(Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review, Perspectives on Psychological Science 2015, Vol. 10(2) 227 –237)*
- Loneliness also has an impact on mental and emotional health, as older adults experiencing loneliness are at increased risk of depression and cognitive decline.

# Growing Awareness of Social Isolation as a Social Determinant of Health

- With research documenting the health impacts of social isolation and loneliness, there is growing recognition that these conditions are social determinants of health.
- Loneliness and social isolation are experienced by adults across the age span.
- Life events/transitions might lead to decreased social connections for older adults. At the same time, life experience can foster resilience.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency have created conditions that increase social isolation while also spurring new initiatives and approaches to addressing isolation and enhancing social connections.

# COVID-19 and Social Isolation: Long-term Services and Supports

- Health and safety guidelines: physical distancing, restrictions on in-person settings
- Closure of in-person community programming
  - Reduced capacity
- Limitations on in-home services
- Transition to virtual service delivery
- Limitations for facility settings





TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

# Texas

Texas is 261,180 square miles and has 254 counties.

## **Populations of five major Texas cities:**

- Houston: 2.3 million
- San Antonio: 1.5 million
- Dallas: 1.3 million
- Austin: 964,254
- Fort Worth: 895,008







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Services

# *Older Adults in Texas*

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- 1.3M age 65 and over have disability
- 551,621 age 60 and over live below the poverty level
- 55.9% of renters age 65 and older experienced a housing cost burden





TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

# Caregivers in Texas

- Majority are the child or spouse of the person they care for
- 90% live within 10 miles of the person they care for
- 99% provide care at least once a week



Note: These percentages are from the sampling of the Caregiver Assessment Questionnaire (n= 7,619 for assessment period 4/1/2018 to 3/31/2020) and not representative of Texas as a whole.

# Caregivers in Texas

*Continued*



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Services



- More than half are not employed
- They are likely to be between the ages of 40 and 64



TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

# *Texas Health and Human Services Commission*

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Texas HHSC is the designated State Unit on Aging for Texas.

## **HHSC oversees:**

- eligibility determination
- system planning and evaluation
- policy development and rule-making
- Ombudsman services
- **aging programs**
  - **Aging Services Coordination**



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# *Aging Services Coordination*

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Provide older Texans with opportunities to age and live well by:

- connecting and coordinating aging services and programs;
- raising awareness of aging issues and available resources;
- creating innovative programs to meet identified needs; and
- building partnerships to enhance and expand existing resources

# *Aging Texas Well: Identifying Needs & Trends*



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Services

## **AGING TEXAS WELL**





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Services

# *Age Well Live Well*

The Age Well Live Well campaign educates and motivates people, organizations, and communities to be healthy, be connected, and be informed of aging issues and community resources. Resources, tips, tools and expertise to help Texans:

- Be Healthy
- Be Connected
- Be Informed





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# *Response to COVID-19*

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- Outreach to stakeholders, partners, and service providers
- Statewide [Mental Health Support Line](#)
- Utilized federal flexibilities to expand benefits and services such as SNAP and home delivered meals
- Adapted programs:
  - Ages United
  - Texercise
- New resources on staying connected and healthy





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# Know Your Neighbor

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Texas Health and Human Services has launched the *Know Your Neighbor* campaign to encourage connection and engagement while remaining safe. Use the resources from the campaign to reach out to your older neighbors.

When you get to know your neighbors, you are not only making new friends, you are helping reduce the risks of isolation and loneliness for older adults.



# *Steps to neighbor engagement*

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Services



- Step 1: Reach out. Use the Know Your Neighbor Template Note to introduce yourself.
- Step 2: Invite. Ask your neighbor to a virtual or socially distanced get together. Use the Being Informed and Staying Connected factsheet for ideas.



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# *Steps continued*

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- Step 3: Engage. Get the conversation started with helpful questions to spark conversation.
- Step 4: Assist. If your neighbor needs help connecting to community resources use the factsheets provided with the Know Your Neighbor materials.





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## *Steps continued 2*

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- Step 5: Tell others. Encourage others to engage with Know Your Neighbor.



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## *Resource highlight*

- Template note
- Know ageism resource
- Be informed factsheet
- Virtual connection resource
- Nutrition resources for healthy food access





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# *Learn more*

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Learn more about Know Your Neighbor by visiting [www.AgeWellLiveWell.org](http://www.AgeWellLiveWell.org) and clicking on "Be Connected".

*Reach out to [AgeWellLiveWell@hhs.Texas.gov](mailto:AgeWellLiveWell@hhs.Texas.gov) with any questions.*



# Responding to Social Isolation in Howard County, Maryland

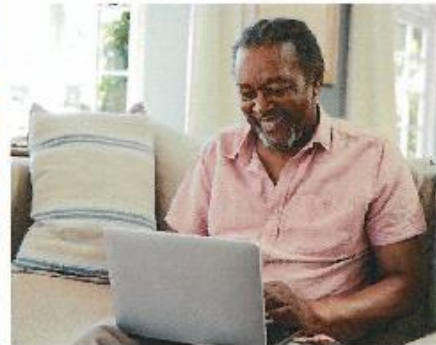
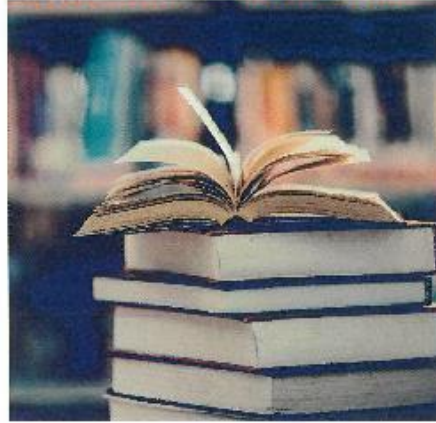
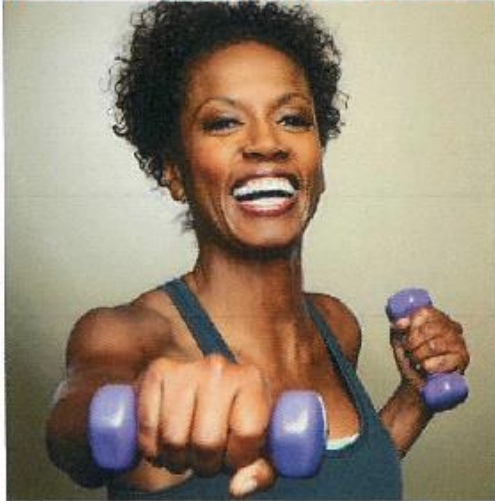
Virtual Senior Centers  
Wellness Calls

# HOW IT BEGAN

- **Building upon a successful model, staff collaborated to streamline and present the best of our programming on this new platform**
- **A team across the office formed and worked to create virtually, what people wanted and needed.**
- **Exercise instructors were asked to volunteer their time to create and present offerings from home.**



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING AND INDEPENDENCE



# VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

## February 2021

 Howard County Office on  
**Aging and Independence**  
Department of Community Resources and Services

Please note that there is a new password  
for all FREE PROGRAMS. The new  
password is Hoco50+

LEARN—LAUGH—READ—COOK—CRAFT—EXERCISE—LISTEN—CONNECT

# VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

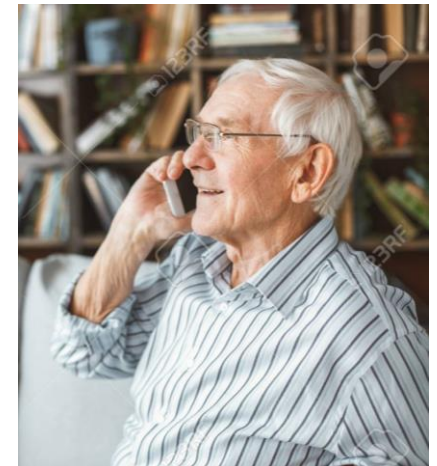
## NEWSLETTER

SENT VIA EMAIL MONTHLY

## WELLNESS CALLS

MADE TO MEMBERS WEEKLY BY STAFF

 Howard County  
**50+ CENTERS**  
Enrichment. Engagement. Connection. Growth.



SCIENCE &  
NATURE

PAID & FREE  
FITNESS

HEALTH &  
WELLNESS

HISTORY



ART/MUSIC

SUPPORT  
SERVICES

COMPUTERS  
TECHNOLOGY

HOME & GARDEN

SCIENCE AND NATURE

NUTRITION

SOCIAL  
ENGAGEMENT

# Addressing Inclusion and Equity

Outreach to vulnerable older adults who had been participants in our Social Day programs by creating targeted programming for that population.

## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING AND INDEPENDENCE



# VIRTUAL PROGRAMS KOREAN AMERICAN SENIOR ASSOCIATION

2021년 4월

To join by phone call 1-650-479-3207 Call-in toll number  
(US/Canada) and enter the meeting number listed under  
the class link.

 Howard County Office on  
**Aging and Independence**  
Department of Community Resources and Services

집에서 프로그램 참여할 기회

Outreach to special populations included specific programming for the Korean Community. A separate newsletter was created in Korean. Staff provided training and assistance to our partners in KASA (Korean American Senior Association

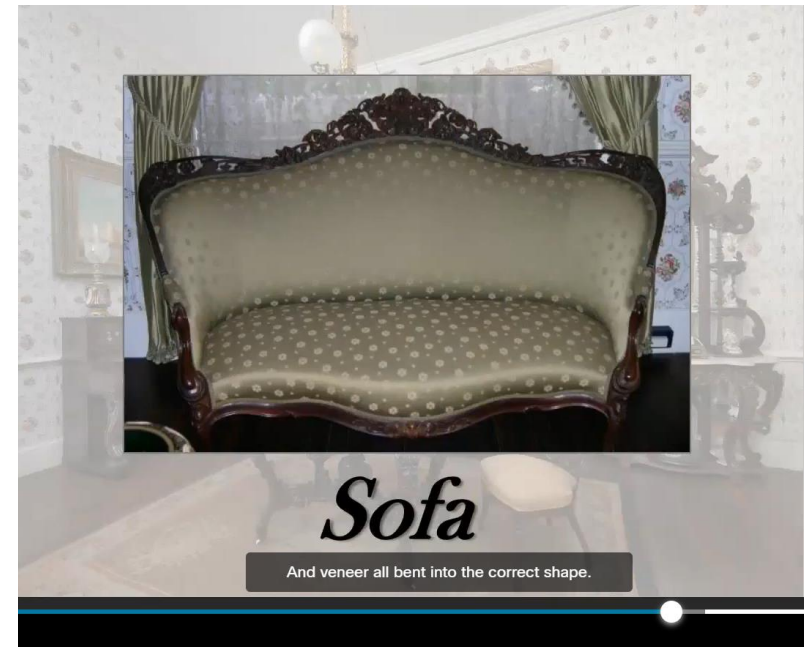
 Howard County  
**50+ CENTERS**  
Enrichment. Engagement. Connection. Growth.



Digital Equity Initiative using CARES dollars, 100 Samsung devices were provided to clients who were qualified to receive a tablet.

# A GLIMPSE AT THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting. The top bar shows four participants: rtaylor, Call-in User\_2, Regina Jenkins, and Chris Ferraro. The main content is a presentation slide with a green background. The slide title is "Having 'That' Conversation" in white text. Below the title, it says "Advance Care Planning With Speak(easy) Howard". At the bottom left of the slide, the names "Tiffany Callender" and "Rashel Taylor" are listed. At the bottom right is the "HORIZON FOUNDATION" logo. The Zoom interface includes a "Press Esc to exit full screen" prompt and a video player control bar at the bottom showing a time of 00:12 / 51:31.



A screenshot of a Zoom meeting. The top bar shows five participants: Burkett, Kathleen, Regina Joffe, Helen Nolt, and Danita Eichenlaub. The main content is a video of a woman in a black shirt standing in a kitchen, preparing food on a counter. There are various fruits and bottles on the counter. The name "Regina Jenkins" is visible at the bottom of the video frame.

# SAMPLES OF CLASSES



<https://youtu.be/FzWQSI0FM0k>

## OUR PARTNERS

- Horizon Foundation
- Howard County Library System
- Baltimore Museum of Industry
- DAR Museum
- Howard County Office on Human Rights and Equity
- Office on Emergency Management
- American Visionary Arts Museum
- National Park Service
- Howard County Health Department
- Local Health Improvement Coalition
- Montgomery County Historical Society





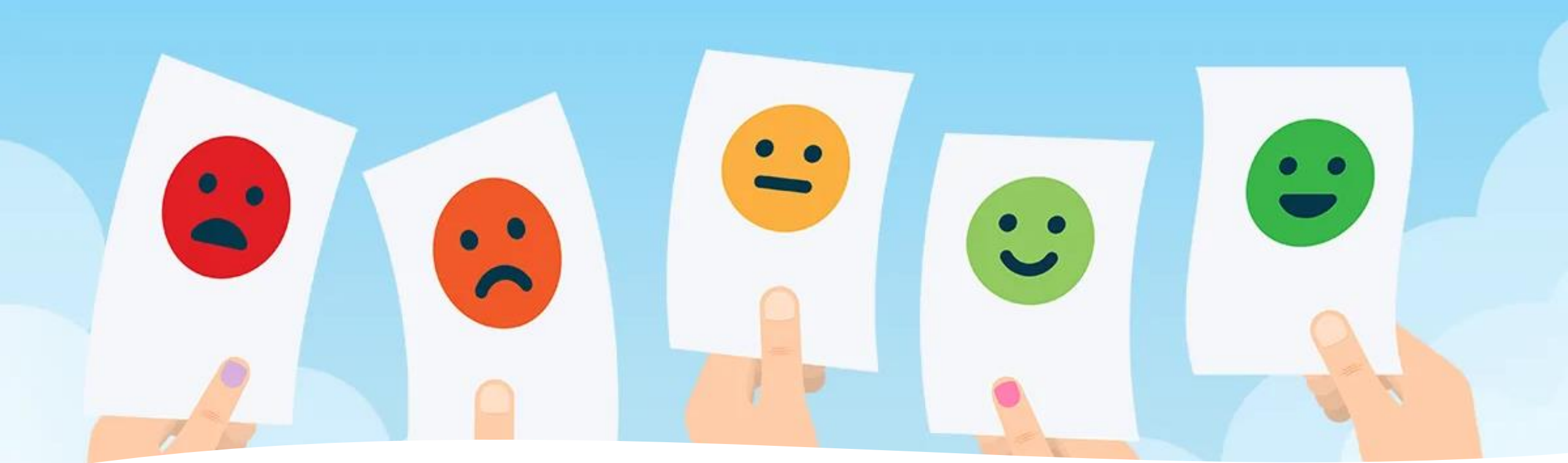
# Key Components & Lessons Learned



Marketing – Technology - Training

Host and Co-host needed for optimum user experience

Recognizing and identifying gaps and needs.  
Collaboration amongst staff.



In a survey of the exercise participants:

## OUTCOMES

82.03 % Indicated a sense of connectedness

89.77 % Indicated a sense of improvement in overall health & wellbeing

86.52 % Indicated in improvement in their attitude and outlook

# Challenges

Platform  
Limitations

Marketing

Digital Inequity

Re-opening of  
centers pulled  
staff from  
virtual



# REPLICATION

Technology

Training

Programming

Funding

# Resources & Closing

# Conversation Tips Toolkit

- Telephone reassurance is a key strategy being widely used to address social isolation among older adults, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic
- The Conversation Tips Toolkit is designed to support reassurance and check-in programs

<https://www.advancingstatesiq.org/>



# About the Toolkit

This toolkit is a collection of tips for people volunteering with older adults. These tips are designed to be shared with volunteers over a period of time to support the abilities of a volunteer.



## **Building Trust**

Tips for building trust and rapport with seniors



## **Engaging Conversation**

Tips for creating engaging conversation



## **Access to Information & Resources**

Tips for accessing information and resources and setting expectations about their roles



## **Caring for Yourself**

Self care tips for volunteers

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# Building Trust

Tips to help volunteers build trust and rapport with older adults.





## **Pay attention to the person**

Minimize distractions. Make calls when you have the time to be present and available.

Listen without thinking about what you will say next.

Try to connect with them on a personal level, interested in what they have to say.

# COVID-19 and Social Isolation: States and Communities Respond

- Resource: Addressing Social Older Adults During the COVID-19 Crisis
- Compilation of state and community response to social concerns

**Resource link:**

[http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasud/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource\\_10142020.pdf](http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasud/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource_10142020.pdf)



Addressing Social Isolation for Older  
Adults During the COVID-19 Crisis

*Updated as of 8/4/2020*

# Resources from engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

December 8, 2021

# Overview of USAging

- National association representing and supporting the network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocating for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs
- Our members help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities

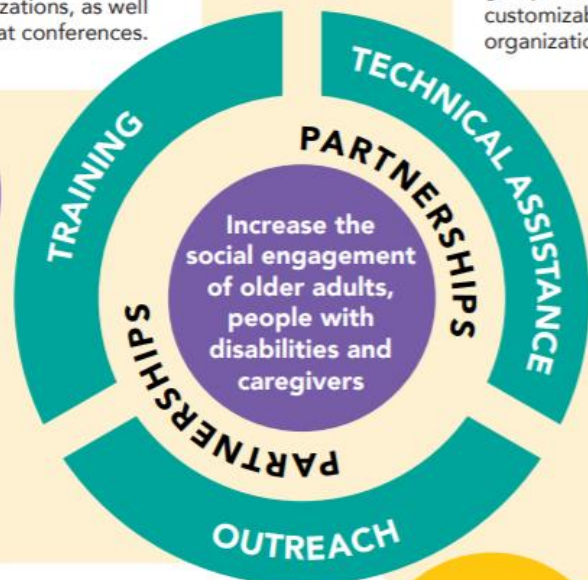
# Overview of engAGED

- Administered by USAging
- Funded by the Administration for Community Living
- Guided by 18 Project Advisory Committee members
- National effort to increase social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers
- Identifies, develops and disseminates resources, replication tools and best practices for the Aging Network

VOLUNTEERISM • INTERGENERATIONAL • COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Training** opportunities include events and webinars hosted by engAGED and in collaboration with other organizations, as well as presentations at conferences.

**Technical assistance** opportunities include an online hub of social engagement innovations, small-group office-hour calls and customizable materials for use by organizations in the Aging Network.



**Outreach** includes the engAGED newsletter, blog posts, social media, and consumer-facing brochures, flyers and fact sheets that can be co-branded with logos and contact information.



ARTS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION • TECHNOLOGY • LIFELONG LEARNING

# How engAGED Can Support Your Work

# Training & Technical Assistance Offerings

- Participates in conference workshops
- Holds annual Virtual Summits
- Offers monthly webinars
- Offers bimonthly office hour calls
- Developed the Innovations Hub, an online database of social engagement innovations

# Outreach

- Produces a monthly newsletter
- Disseminates monthly blogs
- Engages on social media
- Produces an annual consumer brochure
- Updating the engAGED Community Toolkit and consumer flyers and fact sheets



# Resource Spotlight

# Community Toolkit

- Customizable brochure
- Customizable infographics and fact sheets
- Sample articles
- PowerPoint presentation
- UCLA Loneliness assessment

[www.engagingolderadults.org/  
engagedcommunitytoolkit](http://www.engagingolderadults.org/engagedcommunitytoolkit)

## Communities Benefit When Older Adults are Socially Engaged

When older adults are socially engaged in the community, they are able to share their knowledge, talent, skills, experience and wisdom when they:

-  Perform caregiving activities and mentor others
-  Make contributions to the local economy
-  Become entrepreneurs and start small businesses
-  Serve as experienced and resourceful employees
-  Support community organizations through volunteerism



## Older Adults Can Engage in the Community By:

-  Using technology to connect to friends and family
-  Rekindling creative talents or learning new ones
-  Learning something new through classes designed for older adults
-  Participating in intergenerational programs
-  Serving others through volunteering with local organizations
-  Seeking part-time work opportunities, or starting your own business

[Click here to insert a logo](#)

Area to insert Contact Information

engAGED  
The National Resource Center  
for Engaging Older Adults

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90EECC0001-01-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.

## STAYING ACTIVE AND CONNECTED: A Guide to Social Engagement for Older Adults



engAGED  
The National Resource Center  
for Engaging Older Adults

[www.engagingolderadults.org](http://www.engagingolderadults.org)

# Technology Booklet

- Developed in partnership with the Eldercare Locator and OATS
- Consumer-facing booklet to help older adults tap into technology to stay engaged and connected
- Available in English and Spanish and customizable

[www.engagingolderadults.org/  
publications](http://www.engagingolderadults.org/publications)



# Innovations Hub

- Database of social engagement innovations developed to facilitate shared learning and replication

**[www.engagingolderadults.org/hub](http://www.engagingolderadults.org/hub)**

# Contact engAGED

- [www.engagingolderadults.org](http://www.engagingolderadults.org)
- Facebook: [@engAGEDCenter](https://www.facebook.com/engAGEDCenter)
- Twitter: [@engAGEDCenter](https://twitter.com/engAGEDCenter)
- [info@engagingolderadults.org](mailto:info@engagingolderadults.org)