

LeadingAge and Affordable Housing Members: Partners in Providing Quality Housing to Older Adults

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LeadingAge Board Chair Stephen Fleming at the Senior Housing NOW Rally, May 8, 2019, Washington, DC.

LeadingAge[®]

Affordable housing provides service-enriched homes for older adults with very low incomes. It's an essential element of the long-term services and supports (LTSS) system.

Affordable housing providers are a valuable part of LeadingAge and are uniquely situated to partner with other types of providers to holistically serve older adults.

LeadingAge wants to be certain members who provide affordable housing are aware of all the services and resources we have to offer.

The following guide offers a quick overview of the benefits that affordable housing providers enjoy as LeadingAge members.

These benefits include access to:

- Top-notch advocacy in the nation's capital on issues that matter most to affordable housing providers and residents;
- A wide variety of services and resources designed to help you continue offering the highest quality affordable housing as communities strive to integrate services that help residents age in community;
- Myriad opportunities to share your concerns and best practices with LeadingAge affordable housing and housing plus services experts and other providers;
- Access to a variety of educational opportunities to help you address new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities in the affordable housing and housing plus services field; and
- Cutting-edge research focusing on financing models for housing plus services.

Like all LeadingAge members, affordable housing providers also benefit from an ever-expanding collection of LeadingAge services, resources, and tools to help you:

- Enhance the leadership and management skills of executives at all levels of your organization;
- Bring evidence-based best practices and programs to addressing the needs of residents and enhancing the infrastructure of your affordable housing settings; and
- Thrive in the HUD-regulated environment; understand Medicare and Medicaid and how they affect you and serve affordable housing residents; and gain support for your efforts to develop a high-quality workforce.

Finally, LeadingAge membership offers providers in all segments of the aging services field an unprecedented opportunity to participate in a community of professionals with a well-earned reputation for working together to solve problems and create new opportunities to better serve an aging America.

What Do Affordable Housing Members Gain from LeadingAge Membership?

As LeadingAge members, affordable housing providers enjoy the following unique benefits:

1. Advocacy to Preserve and Expand Affordable Housing Nationwide

The legislative and regulatory arenas impact most every corner of affordable housing providers' work, including the ability to operate in a stable funding environment with timely access to the resources needed to maintain quality housing for generations, administer their programs in ways that retain accountability but also recognize the burdens generated by over-regulation, expand their portfolios to meet the nation's shortage of affordable homes for older adults with very low incomes, and fully merge into a well-financed housing plus services model.

LeadingAge maintains a consistent focus on how policy changes impact affordable housing policy and operations. We track legislative and regulatory developments affecting affordable housing providers, monitor changes in operational guidance, and work with affordable housing providers to chart our advocacy agenda.

All of our conversations with members of Congress and congressional staff are grounded in the message that affordable housing providers are needed now more than ever and their communities must be able to fully embrace the housing plus services model as a way to help improve resident health and decrease health care costs.

Our legislative priorities are grounded in our goals to preserve existing homes, significantly expand the supply of affordable housing, and establish federal support for meaningful housing plus services programs:

- **Section 202 Expansion-** LeadingAge is seeking annual funding of at least \$600 million to build new homes under HUD's Section 202 program. We led the charge to fund new Section 202 homes in 2017, after six years of no money for new Section 202 homes, and we are boldly requesting funding that would closely match the Section 202 program's new homes appropriation of 15 years ago.
- **Affordable Housing Preservation-** Each year, LeadingAge works for sufficient funding from Congress to preserve existing Section 202 homes, including those with rental assistance contracts from Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance and Project Rental Assistance Contracts. Sufficient and timely annual renewal funding, in addition to tools like the expansion of HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration to include Project Rental Assistance Contracts ("RAD for PRACs") in 2018, will help sustain existing HUD-assisted homes for generations to come.
- **Housing Plus Services-** We are eager to better understand how Medicare and Medicaid funds might be used to support funding for programs that use affordable senior housing as a platform for coordinating health, wellness and supportive services and programs to help older adults remain healthy, age in their community, and reduce their use of costly health care services. We requested that HUD and HHS be required to work on this effort jointly. And, building on research showing clear benefits to residents when a Service Coordinator is present in their community, we have requested an expansion of funds so more affordable housing communities can have a Service Coordinator.
- **Low Income Housing Tax Credits-** The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is an important tool to expand and preserve affordable housing for older adults. We recognize the need for a strong LIHTC program to ensure the success of the RAD for PRAC program. We support proposals to expand state LIHTC allocations by 50 percent. We also support expanded protections to ensure nonprofit ownership of LIHTC-financed communities after the tax credit compliance period has ended. Another priority of ours is to secure a basis boost for communities that serve a significant number of extremely low income households.

LeadingAge serves as the eyes and ears of its affordable housing members in Washington by tracking policy issues in the Administration, particularly at (HUD). Currently our work focuses on several areas:

- **Payments-** Timely and adequate payments are the lifeblood of affordable housing providers. We work with HUD to assure accurate payments to housing providers and timely communications about funding payment and availability issues.
- **Communication-** We are working with HUD to improve its communication with providers and regional offices, and to clarify and streamline policy guidance. We work closely with HUD officials in Washington, DC, and the regions, to find ways to ensure that HUD-policy guidance is interpreted consistently and articulated clearly.
- **Notices and Regulations-** We proactively engage with HUD to ease regulatory burdens for program sponsors and consistently respond to HUD's draft notices and regulations. We are vigilant about notifying members of postings to the HUD "drafting table," collecting and composing comments to relevant HUD guidance published in the Federal Register or on Regulations.gov, including expected changes to the 4350.1 Asset Management Handbook and implementation of RAD for PRAC.
- **Inspections-** As HUD undertakes a significant revision to its inspection protocols, we quickly communicate with affordable housing members the detailed information we receive from HUD officials, and provide feedback to HUD on how our members' might be impacted by these changes while urging inspection reforms that make sense for resident, HUD, and providers.
- **Service Coordination-** We work with HUD to ensure timely payment for providers who participate in the Service Coordination grant and demonstration programs, and support members in identifying issues and trends needing process improvement for which we will advocate with HUD.
- **Section 202 Notices of Funds Availability-** As HUD develops its Section 202 NOFAs, we will work with HUD to encourage timely and effective Section 202 NOFAs in support of expanding the supply of affordable housing.

2. Services, Resources, and Tools for Affordable Member

LeadingAge provides myriad opportunities for for affordable housing providers to learn about new trends in the field and participate in forums to share their own experiences. These opportunities include:

- **Offering Access to Listservs, Networks, and Advisory Groups-** Affordable housing members participate in LeadingAge's Housing Listserv, Fair Housing Listserv and Affordable Housing Advisory Group, as well as conference networking events, such as the annual Housing Celebration Reception, designed to connect them with peers within their field and across a variety of professional disciplines.
- **Issuing the monthly newsletter, Senior Housing Report,** which covers the landscape in housing operations and congressional affairs work and highlights key research in the affordable housing and housing plus services fields.
- **Technical Operational Assistance-** Affordable housing members have direct access to LeadingAge staff who can assist with issues related to HUD payments, inspections, fair housing, and other pressing topics.
- **Action Alerts-** Advocating for our policy agenda is critical to the success of our members. We provide affordable housing members with timely action alerts to help educate Congress about how a potential funding or policy bill would impact providers and residents.
- **Promoting Workforce Solutions-** Recruiting and retaining staff at all levels is a challenge all aging services providers face. The LeadingAge Center for Workforce Solutions provides tools, presentation materials, promising practices, and other resources for all LeadingAge members, including affordable providers.
- **Helping Members Understand the Impact of Managed Care on their Residents-** The LeadingAge Center for Managed Care Solutions and Innovations provides a wealth of information and education opportunities for affordable housing providers to better understand Medicare Advantage and Medicaid Managed Long Term Services and Supports. These programs serve many older individuals.

- **Holding Town Hall Conversations-** Working in partnership with LeadingAge state affiliates across the country, we held 34 Town Hall Conversations between March and October 2018 to identify the key issues and concerns that keep LeadingAge members up at night. The information we collected was incorporated into LeadingAge's 2019 policy priorities, which will be updated to reflect a new round of Town Halls in 2019. We plan to continue asking members, including affordable housing members, to share their challenges and ideas with us.

3. The LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston

Conducting Housing Plus Services Research- The LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, a research partnership between LeadingAge and the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, maintains a research focus on housing plus services, among other topics.

Financing Services in Affordable Housing- The LTSS Center [explored](#) opportunities to support delivering services in affordable housing communities through Medicare and Medicaid. LeadingAge is pursuing next steps with Congress, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, managed care plans and other health entities, and other partners to develop financing solutions.

Value of Housing Plus Services Programs- The LTSS Center evaluates housing plus services programs to understand the benefits to different stakeholders. For example, the LTSS Center and its partners [found](#) that the Support and Services at Home Program (SASH) in Vermont slowed the growth in Medicare expenditures by almost \$1,500 annually for certain participants.

Tools to Support Housing Plus Services Programs- The LTSS Center develops tools to help housing communities develop and implement housing plus services programs. One example is the [Housing and Health Partnership Toolkit](#), which helps housing and health care entities understand more about each other and how they can leverage each other to support their shared population. Other examples include case studies of housing plus services programs, which provide information on how programs have been implemented and supported, facilitators for successful operation, and challenges to anticipate and overcome.

These resources and more can be found on the [LTSS Center website](#).

4. Learning Opportunities

Annual Meeting- The LeadingAge Annual Meeting & EXPO brings together over 5,000 aging services providers and features more than 150 concurrent sessions on a variety of topics relevant to those operating and working in affordable housing settings, including dementia, health and wellbeing initiatives, technology innovations, service-enriched models, workforce solutions, and operational issues.

With its extensive programming and networking opportunities, the Annual Meeting offers affordable housing providers a unique opportunity to gain insight into evidence-based practices and programs from across all segments of the LTSS system.

Leadership Summit- The Leadership Summit is strategy-focused education and networking event with an emphasis on the policy issues impacting the LeadingAge membership. The education program features high-level discussions around mission critical topics as well as scheduled Lobby Day visits to congressional offices on Capitol Hill.

The Leadership Summit offers executive teams of affordable housing organizations the learning space to grapple with and lend their voice to a wide range of challenges and emerging opportunities facing all segments of the aging services field. Topics include market disruptors, partnership trends, and emerging service delivery models.

Online Learning- Our centralized source for online education, The Learning Hub, provides a full suite of expert-led topics of interest to aging services professionals. Content specific to affordable housing providers includes bed bugs, mental health, dementia and ageism. In addition, regular virtual housing policy updates are scheduled and offered exclusively to LeadingAge members.

With over 70 tools and resources available in a mix of lengths and price points, the Learning Hub gives busy professionals the ability to choose the level of investment and pace of learning that fits their schedule and budget.

Leadership Programs- Our year-long Leadership Academy program provides a foundation of leadership theory and practice through its multiple program components, including exposure to innovative organizations and seasoned LTSS leaders. In addition, our 3-month Leadership Educator Program incorporates classic leadership theory and non-traditional education methodologies to prepare participants to design and facilitate shared learning opportunities for a variety of settings and audiences.

An important purpose of both programs is to help forge a network of peers with a broadened perspective of the LTSS continuum and enhanced leadership capacity to help address the growing needs of an aging America.

5. Access To Experts In The Affordable Housing Field

A key benefit for all LeadingAge members is the access they enjoy to a highly respected national team that brings unparalleled expertise to the issues facing providers of aging services. Several members of that team have expertise and experience addressing issues that matter most to affordable housing and housing plus services providers. We invite you to call on them at any time to ask questions, seek advice, and offer your opinions about issues affecting the work you do.

Our team includes:



Robyn Stone: Our senior vice president for research and co-director in the LTSS Center @UMass Boston is an internationally recognized authority in the areas of long-term care policy and quality, chronic care for the disabled, aging services workforce development, low-income senior housing, and family caregiving. Robyn has held senior research and policy positions in both the U.S. government and the private sector.



Alisha Sanders: Our director of housing and services policy research in the LTSS Center @UMass Boston focuses on evaluating and advancing strategies and policies that link affordable housing settings with health and supportive services and enable lower-income older adults to age successfully in their homes and communities. In former roles, Alisha advocated for improved housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and other low income populations.



Colleen Bloom: Our director of housing operations came to LeadingAge from a member provider of affordable housing. She innovated an education program on the origins and distinctions between the various senior housing programs at HUD – content which was later adopted into a major revision of the HUD operational handbook. As a former front-line operator, she brings unique insights to the interpretation of HUD regulations and has a true heart for helping LeadingAge members with technical assistance and regulatory compliance.



Linda Couch: Our vice president for housing policy educates members of Congress on the pressing need to expand, improve, and preserve affordable housing programs critical to meeting the affordable housing needs of older adults with very low incomes. A lobbyist and policy analyst with a deep background in HUD's public and assisted programs, she uses research and member experiences in her advocacy.