



*“Working Harder To Make Aging Easier”*

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**For More Information:**

Marla Fronczak  
630-293-5990 #103

**Agency on Aging of Northeastern Illinois Gathers 150+ Community Leaders from Eight Counties to Strengthen Systems That Help Seniors Lead Healthy and Meaningful Lives**

**West Chicago, IL** - The Agency on Aging of Northeastern Illinois completed a series of strategic thinking and planning sessions with community leaders from DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties intended to harness their expertise and magnify their collective impact. By bringing awareness to a number of key areas - including transportation, health care, nutrition, mental health, technology and socialization – communities can respond to the rising numbers of seniors by offering the best array of services and opportunities that enrich the experience of aging.

Since 2,000, the number of seniors across Illinois has increased 34%; but in the eight collar counties, the number of seniors in the same time period has increased 78% (to 654,647).

“Planning for an aging population is an investment in the wellbeing of all Illinois residents as it benefits people of all ages and abilities,” said Marla Fronczak, executive director of the Agency on Agency. “Our communities work best when everyone has the opportunity to participate and contribute because don’t we all want to age well?”

Over 150 leaders participated from the physical health, mental health, senior living, municipal and county government, business, and nutrition sectors in discussions to help older adults stay informed and engaged in their communities. The group considered ways in which the government, nonprofits and the business sector can work together to strengthen community supports for older adults to age in place.

In particular, a focus of these discussions was on how to strengthen social structures for older adults by spurring innovative solutions and fostering community partnerships. Some of the macro issues included the financial implications of living longer, the movement of lower income households from Chicago into the collar counties, and changes in assistive and adaptive technology.

“These community leaders recognize how important it is to their community, and to society as a whole, to support and value our aging parents, friends and neighbors. Each of their organizations is a support beam for a strong building that we intend to make stronger!” said Dr. Tania Schwer, a member of the Agency’s Advisory Council.

The Agency on Aging of Northeastern Illinois is a nonprofit organization responsible for developing and coordinating a network of services for older persons and their caregivers throughout its eight-county area. The agency informs and advises on the needs of older persons living in the area and acts as an advocate on their behalf. It serves individuals 60+ years and their caregivers, with special attention to vulnerable populations, those with disabilities, veterans, minorities, low-income and limited English proficiency. It has awarded over \$285,000,000 in grants under the federal Older Americans Act to community based organizations in its 44-year history. To learn more about the Agency on Aging and the services it provides, visit [ageguide.org](http://ageguide.org).

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P.O. BOX 809 □ KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS 60901-0809 □ 815/939-0727  
□ FAX 815/939-0022 800/528-2000 E-Mail: [info@ageguide.org](mailto:info@ageguide.org) WEBSITE: [www.ageguide.org](http://www.ageguide.org)  
FIELD OFFICE: 245 W Roosevelt Road, Bldg. 6, West Chicago, IL 60185 630/293-5990 FAX: 630/293-7488  
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