



To: Members of the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging
From: Mary Kay Browne, Director of Special Projects (marykay@mcoaonline.com)
Re: Notice of Upcoming Direct Grant Opportunities for MCOA Members

There are several exciting direct grant opportunities **coming up in November** -- MCOA will release several Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for COAs to consider. Notice of the RFP's will be sent to you via MCOA's Weekly Briefs. These funding opportunities will help COAs offer new services and increase their capacity to serve older adults. Please read the summaries of these opportunities, immediately below.

Grants will be made through an open competitive application process and are subject to available funding. Grant opportunities are available to all COAs who are up to date on MCOA dues through the current state fiscal year. You will have between 8 -10 weeks to review the RFP, talk with your regional peers to learn of their interest in collaborating with you on a regional basis, and develop your proposal.

Direct Grant Opportunities from MCOA in CY2018:

Assistive Listening Devices: One RFP will help COAs meet their ADA access requirements by offering financial aid so a COA can purchase Assistive Listening Devices to improve communication access for hard of hearing adults to center activities and services. MCOA funding will cover 75% of the total cost of equipment purchased; the COA must pay 25% of the total cost.

New Walking Clubs with a Go4Life Exercise Class and Matter of Balance Component: One RFP will seek up to 20 new communities who want to set up new walking clubs with a Go4Life exercise class and Matter of Balance class components. Grant funding of up to \$800 per site may be provided to support club development costs proposed by the COA. The funding will not continue beyond 1 year; applicants must have a plan for how to sustain the activities in year 2 and beyond.

Caregiver Respite and Support Services: One RFP will seek 20 communities to participate in a major new 3-year project to provide more respite for caregivers of people living with dementia. Caregivers need access to affordable respite, both in-home and in their communities, by trained trustworthy staff and volunteers. MCOA will provide funding to 20 communities to 1) establish a memory café and 2) lead in engaging community groups to recruit volunteers to serve as respite companions. We want to build up numerous respite companion teams to serve people the volunteers know within their social, civic, or religious circles.

Caregivers also need to learn a lot about dementia; the 20 communities participating in the project will also receive priority for the recruitment, training and deployment of “Dementia Ambassadors”, a new corps of community outreach educators trained and supervised by the Alzheimer’s Association, who will be able to both meet 1:1 with caregivers in the COA offices and conduct community education sessions across town. The Dementia Ambassadors will be trained in how to educate community members about brain health, their risks for dementia, legal planning issues such as health proxies and powers of attorney, and other relevant topics.

Aging Mastery Program Reminder: On behalf of all MCOA members, MCOA purchased a statewide Aging Mastery Program (AMP) license from NCOA. This means that every COA may offer AMP as often, and whenever, you wish to do so. However, each COA must buy the participant kits with local funds directly from NCOA. Your program costs include participant kits (\$60/kit), light refreshments, and participant rewards (\$5 or \$10/person), plus a graduation ceremony (cost varies if offering a meal).

Local staff who organize and lead the sessions invest about 3-4 hours/week managing all aspects of this program, including recruiting participants before the start (typical group size is 20-30 participants), lining up guest educators for each topic, moderating workshops, preparing snacks, tracking points with participants. **You may offer this great program at your Center at any time; to do so, send an email to Mary Kay Browne at marykay@mcoaonline.com ; she will send you details for how to buy the program kits and facilitator tools from NCOA.**

MCOA DIRECT GRANTS DESCRIPTIONS - CY2018

Purchase Assistive Listening Devices at a Steeply Discounted Price

We aim for all Councils on Aging to use assistive listening devices to ensure participants in senior center activities can hear the main speaker, be it during a face to face encounter with the outreach worker in the elder’s home or in the outreach worker’s office, or during an group class with an instructor, or during a large group event where a speaker or movie audio track is featured. According to a Johns Hopkins University 2011 report, nearly two-thirds of adults over age 70 have a hearing loss. Often in a noisy or crowded room it is almost impossible for an individual who is hard of hearing to distinguish one voice among many. MCOA is committed to helping Senior Centers make their centers Welcoming Places for All – including adults who are hard of hearing. To that end, MCOA will help COAs buy assistive listening devices (ALD) at a steeply discounted price. An eligible entity may apply for the opportunity to purchase ALDs at 25% of the retail cost.

Two solutions to help people who are heard of hearing are 1) amplification via PA system and 2) delivering sound more clearly via an Assistive Listening Device (ALD). The ALD helps people hear voices, audio within a movie broadcast, and sounds that come through a PA system. How do ALDs work? The ALD captures the speaker’s voice or the audio source near its origin and re-broadcasts it via a transmitter. The person who is listening uses a personal receiver with attached earphones (or ear buds). Their

receiver tunes into the signal. The ALD cuts out reverberation from poor room acoustics, bypasses the sounds between the speaker and the listener, and eliminates the background noise in the area.

Building a New Keep Moving Walking Club:

Centers may apply for mini-grants (\$800) to help launch a new walking club with a Fit4Life and Matter of Balance class components. [Note: COA recipients of Keep Moving grants during 2014 - 2017 are not eligible to apply.] This seed grant may be used in multiple ways including, but not limited to, the following: to hire a fitness instructor to lead a fitness class aimed specifically at helping currently sedentary or frail adults to become walkers, print walking route maps, pay a stipend (e.g. \$50/month gift cards) to a club leader who will lead the walks, to subsidize transport for the walking group to their indoor or outdoor walk routes.

Learning from the walking clubs' experiences from recent years, to make a new Keep Moving walking club successful, COAs should: host at least 2 exercise classes and 2 walks per week, rain or shine, on indoor and outdoor routes; vary the route to sustain the group's interest ; consider organizing a drawing from the names of people who attend all sessions in a week, to incentivize and celebrate their persistence; include time or distance tracking and use a Journal (available from MCOA's Keep Moving web page); and gather the group members for social activities from time to time – have a picnic or a cup of coffee after the class/walk to build up the group's social cohesion

We encourage all COAs, and especially COAs with active walking clubs, to hold a Go the Distance Annual 1-Walk Challenge in June 2018. It's a fun community event that can celebrate both the value of walking for maintaining independence and good health AND your town's walkability. A full set of tools for organizing a Go the Distance 1-Mile Walk Challenge – with sample work plan, press release, and certificate of attendance – is available on www.mcoaonline.com.

Caregiver Respite and Support Services:

One RFP will seek 20 communities to participate in a major new project to provide more respite for caregivers of people living with dementia. Caregivers need access to affordable respite, both in-home and in their communities, by trained trustworthy staff and volunteers. MCOA will provide seed funding for 20 communities to establish a new memory café and also to lead in engaging leaders of multiple community groups to recruit volunteers to serve as respite companions for people within the respective social, civic, or religious circle. The respite companions will be offered training in how to organize activities during their social time with a person living with dementia. Caregivers of people living with dementia need to have access to reliable, regular respite from trusted sources – their personal health and wellbeing can become seriously impaired due to the stress burden. Our motto? "Respite companions are friends in deed during your time of need!"

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community education sessions across town. The Dementia Ambassadors will be trained in how to educate community members about brain health, their risks for dementia, legal planning issues such as health proxies and powers of attorney, and other relevant topics.

Frequently Asked Questions about RFPs:

1. Eligibility questions regarding the status of your COA's annual dues may be directed to Shari Cox via email at Shari@mcoaonline.com or via phone at 413-527-6425.
2. Contracting
 - a. MCOA uses "Cost Reimbursement" contracts, meaning that the local grantee must incur allowable program costs before submitting invoices for reimbursement from MCOA.
 - b. MCOA can mail reimbursement for costs incurred only to the appropriate fiscal agent that is identified on the application and in the formal contract. In most instances, the COA/municipality is the applicant for MCOA direct grants. Sometimes, a Friends of the COA or other non-profit may be the applicant for a MCOA direct grant; also, sometimes these entities may serve as a fiscal agent for the local COA (e.g. they provide timely cash-flow/payment for the local project costs.) When this occurs, the COA Director and Fiscal Agent can discuss the contracting details with our Fiscal Manager.
3. Invoicing:
 - a. MCOA would like grantees to submit monthly invoices; we require invoices be submitted at least every 90 days.
 - b. Invoices may be mailed to Shari Cox, Fiscal Manager, at MCOA, 116 Pleasant Street, Suite 306, Easthampton, MA 01027 or emailed to Shari at: Shari@mcoaonline.com.
4. Reporting Program Activities and Outcomes :
 - a. All MCOA grantees must report out on grant activities and participant outcomes on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Your specific reporting elements and schedules depend upon the program.
 - b. Please add the project reporting due dates into your calendar along with a "task start date" that is 2 weeks prior to each report's due date.
 - c. All **final** project reports from grantees are due to MCOA within 15 days of the end of the contract period. MCOA may hold your final reimbursement check until a final project report is filed.
5. Contract Contingencies:
 - a. These MCOA Direct Grants are made possible through funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, or the MA Service Incentive Grant from Elder Affairs, or Massachusetts Blue Cross Blue Shield. All costs for these specific opportunities must be incurred during the 2018 calendar year. Full reimbursement for projects will be contingent upon receipt of funding from the sources.

Additional Information and Opportunities to Ask Questions

Typically, a webinar will be held after the release of the RFP for interested applicants to ask questions. The details of the webinar – date and time -- will be included in the RFP. To ensure a fair selection process, the webinar is the only time competing bidders may ask technical questions of MCOA staff.