

To: Members of the Massachusetts Councils on Aging
From: Lynn Wolf, MCOA Communications Manager and Mary Kay Browne, Director of Special Projects
Date: December 10, 2019
Re: Grants for Training COA Personnel to Lead Walk with Ease and Matter of Balance Programs

MCOA is looking to significantly increase the capacity of our network to offer effective Falls Prevention programs. To do so, we are offering grants for training your personnel to become program leaders for the Walk with Ease Program and/or the Matter of Balance program.

After your personnel are trained and certified as program leaders, they must offer the program at least twice in both calendar year 2020 and 2021. The programs must be advertised to adults in your neighboring towns via local media and posted on the HLCE schedule so medical personnel will know the courses are available in your region.

Details about the Opportunity:

- We are offering to fund the training cost for up to 50 leaders for the Walk with Ease program and up to 80 leaders (aka coaches) (40 pairs) for the Matter of Balance program.
- This opportunity is available to COAs who are both members of MCOA and up-to-date on MCOA dues through the current fiscal year.
- Applications must be submitted by January 15, 2020. All applications must be completed online at www.mcoaonline.com/falls-prevention
- Sites will be notified of their award by January 31, 2020.
- Training for the Matter of Balance program is in person with a Master Trainer. The training sessions will last 8 hours. All MOB Coaches are given A Matter of Balance Coaching Certification.
- The cost to train 2 personnel will be paid by MCOA (a \$300 value). The training for new MOB Coaches will be set up for COA personnel in 5-6 regions of the state; locations will be contingent upon grant awardee locations. MOB Coaches Trainings will be held in late January/early February, with contingent snow dates.
- In addition, MCOA will pay for each sites' course materials that are provided to their older adult participants, up to 40 participants per site per year.
- Training for Walk With Ease is a 2-3 hour online course; MCOA will pay the cost for the training fee and Guidebook (a \$101 value). Personnel may take the training any time after January 10, 2020. Please note that you must also have CPR certification to become a Certified Walk With Ease Trainer.

Details about the Programs:

The Walk With Ease Program is an effective, evidence-based program that helps people with arthritis or other related conditions reduce pain, and increase their balance, strength and walking pace. Walk With Ease Program Leaders help arthritis pain sufferers build confidence in their ability to be physically active

and show them how they can make physical activity part of their everyday lives. Leaders learn how to train others about the relationship between arthritis, exercise, and pain, and how to develop and implement a personal walking plan with realistic goals. Leaders are trained in how to share proven strategies and resources about how to maintain a long-term exercise routine. Leaders of the Walk with Ease program receive an Arthritis Foundation Certification, a Manual filled with exercise illustrations, health education information and other resources. The Walk with Ease program includes 6 weeks of 3-sessions per week. Group sizes ideally range from 10-15.

The Matter of Balance program is an effective program that reduces the fear of falling and increases activity levels among older adults. Many older adults experience a fear of falling. People who develop this fear often limit their activities, which can result in physical weakness, making the risk of falling even greater. The MOB program includes 8 weekly 2-hour sessions for a small group of 8-12 participants led by trained facilitators (the MOB Coaches).

Two MOB Coaches are required to teach MOB. Applicants need to identify 2 individuals who they will enroll in the MOB Coaches' Training. They may be either paid or volunteer personnel of your center. Or, you and a neighboring COA may join forces to provide personnel and collaboratively alternate hosting the programs at your sites. The coaches' job entails organizing the classroom with supplies and refreshments, presenting the class according to the directions, training, and materials provided, encouraging interactive discussion about the concepts and skills presented, demonstrating proper form via exercises, and promoting a solution-oriented environment among the participants.

What qualities and experience are necessary to be a good MOB Coach? Good communication and interpersonal skills, a comfort in leading small group discussions, an interest in and/or experience in working with older adults, life experiences in coping with a disability or fears of falling a plus, the ability to perform range of motion and low-level endurance exercises, and the ability to carry up to 20 pounds. All MOB Coaches must attend 2.5 hours of update training each year; training will be provided by the Healthy Living Center for Excellence, and is free.

Application Instructions:

To apply, complete the application online at: <https://mcoaonline.com/falls-prevention>. See the full application for all questions. A highlight of questions includes:

- Identify by name the people who will be your program leader(s).
- While many of you may decide to apply for 1 of the programs, you may apply for and be considered for funding for both programs. Indicate your preference on the application.
- Applicants will have to commit to a schedule of when they will offer the programs; both programs must be offered at least 2 times before the end of calendar year 2020.

General questions about the application process itself or your COA's eligibility may be directed to my attention, via lynn@mcoaonline.com, or to Shari Cox at shari@mcoaonline.com. Applications must be completed by January 15, 2020; award letters will be issued by January 31, 2020.