



GRANTMAKERS IN AGING LAUNCHES THREE-YEAR PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE OF RURAL AGING

Washington, DC (December 9, 2015) -- To improve the experience of rural aging, [Grantmakers In Aging](#) (GIA) is launching an important new initiative titled [Creating a Sustainable Network for the Rural Aging Movement](#) -- a three-year project aimed at developing ways to connect and support key players concerned with rural aging, share knowledge, and expand the resources and services available to older adults in rural areas.

Rural areas are home to a higher proportion of older residents (about [17 percent](#)) than suburbs or urban areas, and rural older adults often experience higher rates of [poverty](#). Organizations tasked with serving rural older adults often operate with limited resources and may face obstacles to sharing their knowledge and resources. The Creating a Sustainable Network for the Rural Aging Movement project will develop a strategy and network to address this isolation and stimulate more cohesion and collaboration.

"Rural communities have many assets, including strong personal and family connections, institutions, and traditions of coming together to help friends and neighbors," said [John Feather, PhD](#), CEO of Grantmakers In Aging. "At the same time, isolation and a lack of formal services can challenge older adults in rural areas, and even age-friendly models of service delivery that do exist are not always easily adaptable to these smaller communities. This project seeks to help the people on the ground come together to bridge some of these gaps."

[Grantmakers In Aging](#) is the only national association of funders working to improve the lives of the nation's rapidly growing older population.

Addressing the challenges of rural aging

Across America, millions of older adults share a desire to maintain their independence and to age in place, continuing to live in their own homes and communities, near the people and communities they know and care about. But this can be considerably more challenging in rural areas, where more than 7.5 million people over the age of 65 live. Many older adults in rural areas have little access to formal supports and face difficulty accessing health care, services, transportation, and appropriate housing.

The project will build on existing strengths in rural communities. Institutions such the federal [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL), the [Area Agencies on Aging](#) (AAA), state, county, and local government, academic centers, and faith communities are all critical to rural aging, but so are less traditional community resources, such as staff in local grocery stores, banks, and even post offices. The project will seek to engage these and other organizations as a way of creatively enlarging the pool of available local assets.

Recognizing that the rural aging movement has already generated research, data, literature, and best practices but lacks a centralized and readily available place to share them, the Creating a Sustainable Network for the Rural Aging Movement project will also identify these materials, develop others, and disseminate this information broadly.

The project is supported by a three-year grant from the [Margaret A. Cargill Foundation](#).

Specific project activities will include:

- Building an infrastructure to bring together key representatives in the rural aging movement, including face-to-face and virtual meetings.
- Identifying the most useful information and materials on rural aging that are already available, identifying gaps, and creating and sharing new resources as needed.
- Establishing a broad-based, partners-in-funding group comprised of government, civic organizations, United Ways, Area Agencies on Aging, philanthropy, and other key players.
- Creating a practical technical assistance guide to telehealth and other new technologies and programs to bring needed resources to rural communities.
- Launching a "Rural Aging in America" website and associated Learning Community, and adding briefing materials on rural aging to GIA's own website.
- Producing a short video and several infographics on the challenges and important work being done in rural aging.
- Developing a messaging tool, "Talking about Rural Aging," to share messages and strategies that have been effective in raising the profile of rural aging.

About Grantmakers In Aging (GIA)

Grantmakers In Aging is an inclusive and responsive membership organization comprised of all types of philanthropies with a common dedication to improving the experience of aging. GIA members have a shared recognition that a society that is better for older adults is better for people of all ages. For more information, please visit GIAging.org.

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