

MULTISECTOR PLANS FOR AGING

*Important Roles and
Opportunities for Funders*



**GRANTMAKERS
IN AGING**

MULTISECTOR PLANS FOR AGING:

Important Roles and Opportunities for Funders

Grantmakers In Aging is a membership association of funders working to mobilize financial, social, and intellectual capital to improve the experience of aging, now and in the future. We see Multisector Plans for Aging (MPA) as a promising strategy for funders who share our vision of a just and inclusive world where all people are fully valued, recognized, and engaged at all ages.

This brief will examine the fundamentals of the MPA movement and discuss how funders can and should get involved to help advance this essential work.



WHAT IS AN MPA?

A Multisector Plan for Aging (MPA) has been [described](#) as a “blueprint” for coordinated action on aging. More specifically, an MPA is [defined as](#) a cross-sector, state-led strategic planning resource that can help states transform the infrastructure and coordination of services for their rapidly aging populations.

An MPA (which some states call by other names, such as “master plan” or “action plan”) is developed to guide the restructuring of state and local policy, programs, and funding toward aging well in the community. It is often led by a governor with other executive and legislative leaders, and should reflect extensive input from the community, including people of all ages and abilities.

This work offers clear benefits for a range of stakeholders, starting with older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers, but also including people of all ages in industry, philanthropy, academia, social services, and government. (See [Benefits of Creating an MPA](#))



EIGHT STRATEGIES TO GENERATE SUPPORT FOR AN MPA

An MPA is created through an iterative and collaborative process that involves extensive input from people across the public and private sectors. Generally, the process has three distinct phases: building the political will, developing the plan, and implementing it. The guiding principles in this process are transparency and inclusion, equity, and person-centered planning.

Because every state is unique, every MPA will be unique and must also be dynamic and responsive – “a living document,” in the [words](#) of California Governor Gavin Newsom, whose state implemented its MPA in 2019.

This document will not discuss every step involved in creating a plan, but the following [eight “building blocks”](#) can help practitioners generate buy-in and momentum. These points are outlined in a brief called [Getting Started with a Multisector Plan for Aging](#), created by the Center for Health Care Strategies and funded by The SCAN Foundation. The eight building blocks are:

1. Recruit champions dedicated to advancing an MPA.
2. Leverage public and private resources to make the case for an MPA.
3. Communicate strategically to gain broad support for an MPA.
4. Leverage data to identify unmet needs and establish metrics for success.
5. Engage state agencies serving older adults and people with disabilities.
6. Identify and align common goals across stakeholders.
7. Collaborate with and build on existing age-related initiatives.
8. Identify events that highlight the need for an MPA.

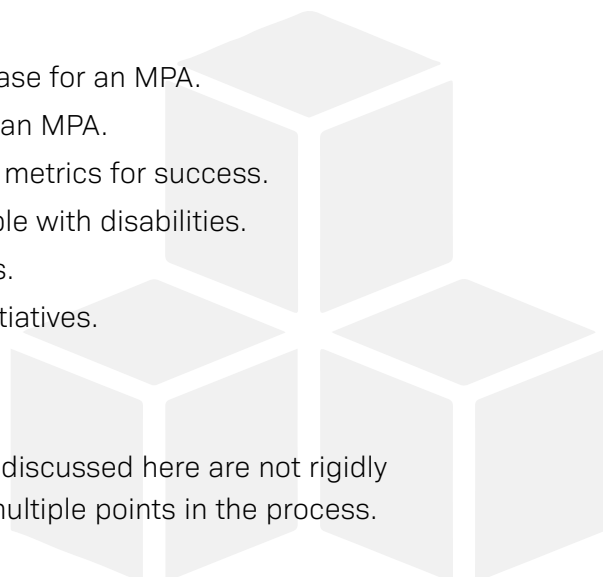
The process of developing an MPA is fluid and the steps discussed here are not rigidly chronological, so many of these ideas can be useful at multiple points in the process.

RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A key technical assistance provider to several foundations engaged in MPA work is the [Center for Health Care Strategies](#) (CHCS). A policy design and implementation partner devoted to improving outcomes for people enrolled in Medicaid, CHCS supports partners across sectors and disciplines to make more effective, efficient, and equitable care possible for millions of people across the nation.

In collaboration with The SCAN Foundation and West Health, CHCS has created a toolkit for [developing](#) and [implementing](#) an MPA as well as other MPA-related resources, all of which substantively inform the content of this brief.

CHCS also created [Involving Family Caregivers to Shape Multisector Plans for Aging](#), with support from The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and supports the MPA learning collaborative discussed later in this brief. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.

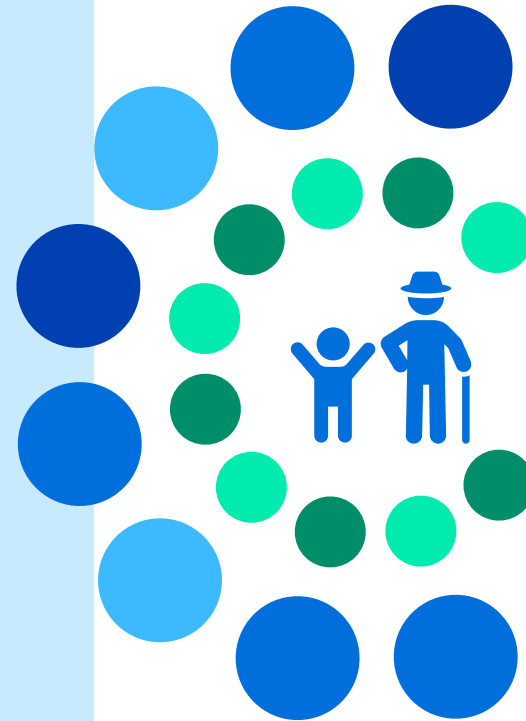


THE CONNECTION WITH AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Age-friendly communities—sometimes described as great places to grow up and grow old—have been a priority for many in aging and philanthropy since the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the global initiative in 2006. The age-friendly movement focuses on eight domains: housing; transportation; respect and social inclusion; social participation; outdoor spaces and buildings; community and health care; civic participation and employment; and communication and information.

An MPA gives communities, particularly states, a way to codify past age-friendly successes and then expand on them, by engaging more partners, breaking down administrative and operational silos, drawing upon a wider array of funding sources, and tracking the impact of a coordinated effort (using metrics that are laid out in the plan) to improve wellbeing in later life.

From a funding standpoint, the ultimate age-friendly goal of an MPA is two-fold: to make existing supports for aging more sustainable, and to leverage funding streams from outside of aging to benefit people as they age.



OPPORTUNITIES

MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDERS

Momentum is building for the MPA movement and in many places, funders are central to those efforts. The SCAN Foundation, West Health, and the Center for Health Care Strategies are analyzing MPA legislation, development, and implementation progress in states across the country. A recent snapshot can be found [here](#).

Funders are uniquely positioned to support the process of developing an MPA and can engage at any stage. Here are some noteworthy opportunities for funders to elevate aging as an issue and share their expertise and the work of their grantees through an MPA, paired with examples of focused and creative funding that are already driving progress. (For additional options for funders, please see [Appendix A: State Multisector Plan for Aging \(MPA\) Fundable Activities](#).)



OPPORTUNITY: SUPPORT AND AMPLIFY ADVOCACY

Advocates, sometimes called champions, are invaluable in securing and sustaining support for an MPA. This role can be played by funders directly, or by organizations and individuals, who may be far more effective when bolstered with the kind of organizational, financial, and moral support that funders can provide.

This can include funds for events, advocacy materials, travel expenses, office space, and salary support as well as communications, including surveys and supplementary consulting and/or training (media, organizing, advocacy) to help a champion grow with the role.

- RRF Foundation for Aging [supported](#) the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group to lead the Illinois Aging Together campaign advocating for legislation toward greater equity and a strategic plan for aging in Illinois. (Co-funding from Chicago Community Trust).
- In Colorado, NextFifty Initiative funded a Senior Policy Advisor on Aging [position](#) in the Governor's office in 2018. This was in response to the first recommendation made by the Strategic Action Planning Group working on the state's MPA.
- Reframing Aging is a long-term social change endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the many ways older people contribute to our society. Reframing aging principles can be effective in advocating for and drafting an MPA.

In New York City, the Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation invested in [LiveOnNY](#) (a coalition of aging service providers) to deliver training to aging advocates, in partnership with the [National Center to Reframe Aging](#). The New York Community Trust (NYCT) also funded LiveOnNY and the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging at Hunter College to develop a Reframing Aging-informed policy agenda. As a result, 40 percent of the New York City Council members elected in 2022 used recommended language and had issued positions on aging before assuming office.

Now, the Samuels Foundation, the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, The John A. Hartford Foundation, and the New York State legislature are supporting LiveOnNY in training more advocates throughout New York State and applying Reframing Aging principles to the state's MPA.

Polling can quantify public demand for an MPA and paid and earned media, as well as foundations' own communications, can amplify the message to elected officials.

- The 2018 *We Stand with Seniors...Will You?* campaign conducted polling on aging issues that was publicized during the California gubernatorial election.

The campaign also distributed a persuasive communications [tool-kit](#) with key messages, sample emails, sample social media, and blog posts. Funded by West Health and The SCAN Foundation.



OPPORTUNITY: FUND AND FACILITATE CONSUMER AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Uniting around high-level goals can be a big job when the list of stakeholders is long: consumers, family caregivers, aging and disability advocates, direct-care workers and unions, health care providers, faith leaders, private industry, and nonprofit and community-based organizations.

Funders can help by supporting public, ongoing, inclusive “listening sessions” and other events. Funders can also help build consensus by convening, and coordinating the work of, major players in the state.

- In New York, Health Foundation for Western and Central New York (HFWCNY) [built](#) a large coalition of foundations, community-based organizations, advocacy organizations, health systems, state agencies, and even libraries to support the state’s plan for an MPA.

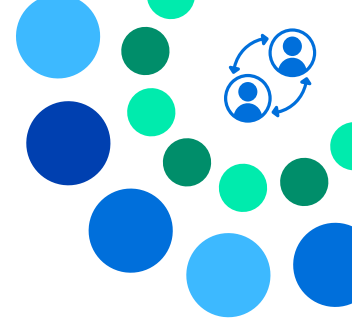
The coalition publicly pledged support in a [letter](#) to the Governor. Funders signing included GIA members AFAR (American Federation for Aging Research), The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, National Council on Aging (NCOA), SAGE USA, and The John A. Hartford Foundation.

HFWCNY also created [Community Priorities for New York’s Master Plan for Aging](#), which compiled input from coalition members’ leaders.

- In Massachusetts, Tufts Health Plan Foundation (now known as Point32Health Foundation) supported [ReiMAGine Aging: Planning Together to Create an Age-Friendly Massachusetts](#). The state used the resulting action plan to streamline and coordinate the work of major statewide partners including AARP Massachusetts, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, Healthy Living Center of Excellence, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, and the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, as well as the Governor’s Council to Address Aging.

Some funders may choose to take on aspects of the champion role, using their communications platforms to address political leaders directly.

- In 2019, before California had committed to an MPA, The SCAN Foundation distributed an infographic titled [California Needs a Master Plan for Its Diverse Aging Population](#) that called on Governor Gavin Newsom by name.



OPPORTUNITY: ADVANCE EQUITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH DATA COLLECTION



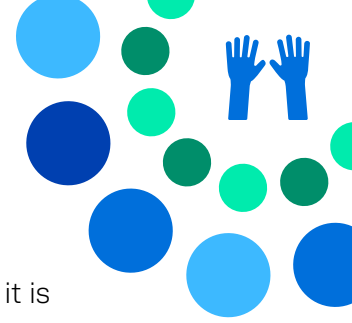
Data that show current and future unmet needs and project demographic changes can help demonstrate the need for an MPA. Funders can promote equity and accountability by supporting efforts to collect and analyze data (racial, sociodemographic, geographic) to inform, establish, and track progress toward the plan's goals.

- The [Elder Index](#) is a measure of the income that older adults need to meet their basic needs and age with dignity in every county of the United States. Funded by RRF Foundation for Aging, The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation, and The Silver Century Foundation, the Index was developed by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) convenes the Equity in Aging Collaborative and leads dissemination and implementation efforts.
- The [Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report](#) is designed to help residents, agencies, providers and governments understand the older adults in their cities and towns. The report was funded by Tufts Health Plan Foundation (now known as Point32Health Foundation) with research led by the Gerontology Institute of the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston.
- In Vermont, needs assessment work for the MPA is supported by public funds: a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Equity grant to the Vermont Department of Health.

Ongoing collection and analysis of data can help evaluate MPA success, facilitate accountability, inform the direction of a regularly evolving plan, and cultivate partnerships between government and academic institutions.

- The [California Data Dashboard for Aging](#) uses key indicators on each of the state's MPA goals. Created through a public-private partnership between West Health Institute and the California Department of Public Health, with funding from foundation partners. California worked closely with stakeholders to identify data sources and select appropriate measures. In 2022, the [California Aging and Disability Research Partnership](#) was founded to better align state government and the university system with the goals of strengthening the evidence base for equitable aging, and informing key performance indicators and data sources to track MPA progress.
- [IMAGE:NYC](#) is a data visualization project that maps over 150 sociodemographic characteristics with overlays of available resources, services, and amenities for adults 65+ in New York City. Funded by The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation and the SC Group and created by The New York Academy of Medicine and the City University of New York, IMAGE is being used to identify unmet needs and track progress toward greater equity. The map has been adapted by two counties in New Jersey through funding from Rutgers University and could be scaled statewide to support an MPA with additional resources.

OPPORTUNITY: LIFT UP AND SCALE PROMISING PRACTICES



MPAs are an evolution of previous age-related initiatives—not a replacement. Thus, it is critical to connect with existing requirements and initiatives such as state plans on aging; age-friendly initiatives; dementia-friendly communities; Olmstead Act and Older Americans Act provisions; long-term services and supports reform; and local, county, or state aging commissions.

The MPA process presents an opportunity to scale up and even customize age-friendly projects that funders have supported over time.

- The [Age-Friendly Health Systems](#) initiative aims to better address the unique health care needs of older adults while reducing the strain this rapidly growing demographic places on health systems, through an innovative treatment framework.

In 2022, The John A. Hartford Foundation [funded](#) development of a prototype Age-Friendly Health Care Package specifically for use in Multisector Plans for Aging. The forthcoming package will combine three signature lines of work: Age-Friendly Health Systems, the Geriatric Surgery Verification program, and the Geriatric Emergency Department Collaborative/Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation program.

Some funders may not have adequate size or reach to do public advocacy, but do have experience in the aging services sector and knowledge of models and approaches with deep roots in their state. The power of convening, and of resources pooled through regional affinity groups, can extend their reach.

- In Minnesota, the [Finish Strong Funders Network for Aging Services](#) is a network of the [Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging](#), united in their belief that “Minnesota must ensure aging is strategic priority.” Finish Strong and the Council are working together to develop a Multisector Plan for Aging in the State.

Numerous funders supporting this work include GIA members Bader Philanthropies, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Stevens Square Foundation, Northland Foundation, and the Morgan Family Foundation.

- Supported by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Maryland Philanthropy Network has gathered more than 100 stakeholders in a Multisector Plan for Aging Workgroup to urge Maryland’s Governor to commit to an MPA and the network’s Aging Innovations Group is [hosting](#) an April 2023 summit on the topic.
- In Nashville, Tennessee, The West End Home Foundation will [frame](#) its 2023 Innovations in Aging Symposium to engage grantees around multisector planning efforts.

OPPORTUNITY: PROMOTE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Funders can support MPA initiation and implementation by pooling resources and executing memoranda of understanding (MOU) with state governments.

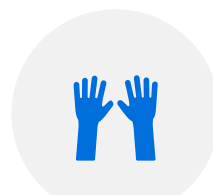
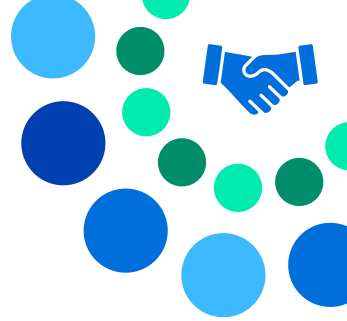
- In 2019, a group of California foundations established a joint fund and have provided \$3.1 million in contributions to support MPA initiation and implementation over the last four years. Through an MOU between the funders and the California Health and Human Services Agency, the joint fund has paid for consultant contracts to execute functions such as project management, facilitation, convenings, writing, policy and program analysis and technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement.

This funders group includes GIA members Archstone Foundation, the Gary and Mary West Foundation, Metta Fund, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, and The SCAN Foundation, as well as the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation and the San Diego Foundation.

A key MPA concept is breaking down silos by engaging state agencies and other organizations with portfolios that do not traditionally include aging. By going beyond the “usual suspects” to work with departments including labor, transportation, housing, insurance, technology, emergency services and more, states can unlock new opportunities and bring new expertise and funding to support people across settings and life stages.

- In California’s Master Plan, Initiative 87 addresses the needs of older people who are coming out of prison, and calls for the state to “provide re-entry services to older adults that increase employment and engagement and address inequity...”

California’s first MPA annual report describes [Returning Home Well](#), a public-private partnership between the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and a network of 200 community-based service providers to offer housing, wraparound services, and financial assistance to those receiving expedited release due to COVID-19. The partnership is led by the Amity Foundation and supported by multiple funders, including GIA member the Ford Foundation.



BENEFITS

BENEFITS OF CREATING AN MPA



- *Build bridges across government agencies and departments to support cross-sector planning and implementation.*
- *Facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders to help identify shared values, mutual goals, and opportunities to improve person-centered supports and services.*
- *Promote equity and combat bias and discrimination through policy and funding priorities as well as messaging and communication campaigns.*
- *Raise awareness among policymakers and the public about how aging and disability-related policy impacts people at all stages of life, including retirement planning, family caregiving, and living with disabilities.*
- *Establish statewide priorities to quickly respond to unanticipated and urgent events, such as emergencies, pandemics, and budget deficits or surpluses.*
- *Create academic, research, and other partnerships that bring aging and gerontology experts to the forefront of policy influence and ensure evidence-based planning.*
- *Incorporate an aging and disabilities lens across state priorities beyond traditional health care and community services to include climate change, the digital divide, rural health, mental health, and employee-friendly business policies.*

WHAT'S NEXT

Each state must customize the MPA process to maximize its own strengths and address any shortfalls. This may seem daunting, but help is available.

Funders interested in an MPA can find like-minded colleagues in Grantmakers In Aging's [MPA Funders Community](#). This active Community offers regular calls, webinars, and other programming, and is open to GIA members and those eligible for membership who are exploring, initiating, or implementing state, regional, or local Multisector Plans on Aging. (Learn more here or contact GIA Director of Programs Emily Hinsey at ehinsey@GIAging.org.)

The American Society on Aging (ASA) is partnering with The John A. Hartford Foundation, West Health, and The SCAN Foundation throughout 2023 on a blog series and programming to mobilize the aging network to participate in and [champion](#) MPAs.

The [Multisector Plan for Aging Learning Collaborative](#), led by CHCS, offers an educational opportunity for states that includes:

- Peer-to-peer exchange for sharing best practices and lessons;
- Access to a network of experts, including those who have helped advance MPAs in other states; and
- Technical assistance to support buy-in for an MPA across stakeholders.

Made possible through a \$1 million investment and in partnership with West Health, The SCAN Foundation, and the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, the Learning Collaborative launched in 2022 with 10 states: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Vermont.

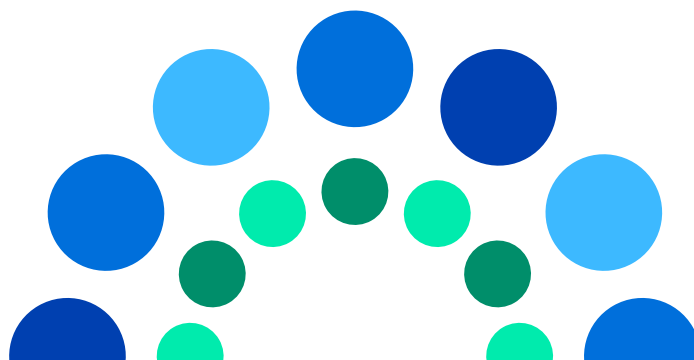
This level of activity and commitment signals real opportunity for traction for funders in all these states. CHCS will be announcing another cohort of 10 states later in 2023.

A major long-term goal of the MPA movement is to seek a coordinated national plan for aging, with commensurate funding. The federal government is a large and important source of policy, regulation, and resources.

Here, too, there is exciting [progress](#). The [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023](#) (which sets the federal government's main spending for the year) included \$1 million in first-time funding for the Interagency Coordinating Council on Healthy Aging and Age-Friendly Communities, to enable coordination of federal programs that empower older adults to remain independent. The 2025 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and White House Conference on Aging present additional opportunities to leverage state momentum to advance a federal MPA strategy.

GIA and our partners will be working with policymakers to advocate for a national MPA and will update our network with ways to get involved.

A thoughtfully designed and implemented Multisector Plan for Aging can codify the best existing programs and services while creating new connections and synergies. The anticipated results include greater equity, increased inclusion, and improved readiness and capacity to care for all members of society at every stage of life - a phenomenal return on investment.



APPENDIX A: STATE MULTISECTOR PLAN FOR AGING (MPA) FUNDABLE ACTIVITIES

CATEGORY	ACTIVITIES
<p>CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host public (in person and/or virtual) consumer listening sessions and focus groups for input on the plan's priorities ▪ Co-host listening sessions and focus groups in partnership with community-based organizations to incorporate lived expertise from historically marginalized and underserved communities ▪ Conduct analysis of the qualitative data gathered through listening sessions to identify the key themes ▪ Create a report of the key themes from listening sessions
<p>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host roundtables or events to engage legislative and executive leaders ▪ Sponsor an in-person convening to kick-off a state MPA development process ▪ Develop and host an equity workgroup as part of the subcommittees ▪ Hire meeting convener or facilitator to plan, host, and coordinate stakeholder engagement or a kick-off meeting ▪ Sponsor project management support for subcommittee meetings of interest (e.g., LTSS, transportation, workforce)
<p>STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a public-facing website to share updates, upcoming events, and opportunities for feedback ▪ Create communications materials for public awareness of the state MPA ▪ Create targeted communications tools or documents customized for diverse communities, including multiple language translations ▪ Create leave-behind materials and one-pagers for state policymakers ▪ Develop strategic communications plan ▪ Create brand and brand materials toolkit
<p>DATA ANALYSIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buy-in phase: Analyze data and future projections to demonstrate the need for an MPA ▪ Development phase: Data analysis and data gap analysis to understand current needs and gaps of aging individuals ▪ Data analysis to inform the measurement and evaluation of a plan's strategies and goals ▪ Form a research subcommittee to engage researchers and academic partners ▪ Gather and analyze demographic data (including race/ethnicity and SOGI) to identify and address disparities ▪ Create a public data dashboard for transparency into MPA's progress towards goals
<p>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hire an external consultant to coordinate project management for MPA development activities

*Estimated costs for these activities will vary based on scope, size, state, and duration. Updated 3/9/2023. For additional details or information, please contact Grantmakers In Aging.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GIA would like to thank The SCAN Foundation and West Health for supporting the creation of this resource in 2023. This brief draws extensively on the work on Multisector Plans on Aging published by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS).

ABOUT THE SCAN FOUNDATION

The SCAN Foundation is an independent public charity dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. Our mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. Learn more at thescanfoundation.org.



ABOUT WEST HEALTH

Solely funded by philanthropists

Gary and Mary West, West Health is a family of nonprofit and nonpartisan organizations including the Gary and Mary West Foundation and Gary and Mary West Health Institute in San Diego, and the Gary and Mary West Health Policy Center in Washington, D.C. West Health is dedicated to lowering healthcare costs and enabling seniors to successfully age in place with access to high-quality, affordable health and support services that preserve and protect their dignity, quality of life and independence. Learn more at westhealth.org.



ABOUT GIA

Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) is the only global membership organization focused on aging and philanthropy. GIA serves as a network and resource for funders and a champion for aging-related issues and investments. GIA mobilizes social, financial, and intellectual capital to catalyze change and improve the experience of aging, now and in the future. As the hub of the aging philanthropy ecosystem, GIA creates opportunities for funders to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another. Our vision is a just and inclusive world where *all* people are fully valued, recognized, and engaged at *all* ages.

GIA brings funders together from across sectors and geographies to share promising practices and to apply an aging lens to intersecting priority areas such as financial security, physical and mental health, workforce development, mobility, housing, livable communities, and the arts. To learn more, please visit GIAging.org.

