

Minnesota's Reframe Aging Initiative

Reshaping our work with new, smarter ways of framing (talking about aging) to improve how we support communities and respond to aging.

Americans are living and working longer, redefining what is the norm for later life and contributing to our communities in vital ways. Unfortunately, the way people think and talk about aging is lagging. Outdated narratives and messages about aging continue to be dominant in public dialogue and are holding outdated policies, practices and systems of care in place. The research-based principles of Reframing Aging are a powerful antidote to this toxic way of thinking about aging.

The research tells us that when we expand the public's understanding about aging, society will improve its attitudes about aging, value all older people as equal members of society, and increase support for policies and programs that support all of us as we age. The FrameWorks Institute calls this phenomenon a mindset shift. This shift is a major undertaking, requiring us to disrupt deeply held mental models, and it is critical to expanding opportunities for all of us as we age. Shifting mindsets can take decades, not just months or years. That is why we refer to reframing aging as "A Generation's Work."

Core to achieving a shift in the public's thinking is providing a set of accessible tools and employable strategies for professionals who communicate about aging in healthcare, public health, government, and social services to develop productive messages about aging. The process of using these tools and strategies is called framing, and those who use them are called framers. Framing is the decisions we make as communicators: how to introduce a topic, what to emphasize or leave out, and whether and how to explain an issue. Our framing choices have the power to influence people's understanding of an issue — and to shape how the public responds. Communication experts know that repetition matters – consistent repetition of the tested strategies and narratives to reframe aging are needed to shift the dialogue among opinion leaders and to shift the opinions of those who trust them.

National Center to Reframe Aging

The National Center to Reframe Aging is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. The center is the trusted source for proven communication strategies and tools to effectively frame aging issues. It is the nation's leading organization to reframe aging by cultivating an active community of individuals and organizations to spread awareness of implicit bias toward older people and influence policies and programs that benefit all of us as we age. Led by The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), the National Center acts on behalf of, and amplifies efforts of, the Leaders of Aging Organizations collective.

A Strategy to Reframe Aging in Minnesota

As part of Minnesota's strategies to improve how advocates and professionals communicate to tell a more equitable and complete story about aging the National Center will provide the following services through Minnesota's Reframe Aging Initiative:

1. Provide guidance to help launch a campaign to counter ageism; working to determine a statewide vision for building the movement to reframe aging in Minnesota.
2. Educate key leaders about the concepts to reframe aging and teach them how to consistently apply the communications strategies as effective framers.
3. Provide technical assistance to the key leaders who are providing ongoing effective framing support for its successful implementation.

Launch: MN Leadership Council on Aging Summit

The comprehensive initiative is scheduled to be launched at the December 2023 Summit. This is the perfect venue as the Summit was the setting for Governor Walz's executive order creating the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council.

Workshops: Introduction & Orientation

Up to five in-person or online one-hour presentations led by the Executive Director of the National Center to garner understanding and the need for changing the way our society communicates about aging. One session will specifically address reframing nursing homes and senior care. One session will target students and faculty in academia. One session will be in-person as a keynote at the Minnesota Gerontological Society's annual conference. Workshops will be free for participants.

Virtual workshop 1:	Open to all community
Virtual workshop 2:	Targeted to Age-Friendly Universities
In-person workshop 3:	Open to MGS conference participants
Virtual workshop 4:	Open to all community
Virtual workshop 5:	Targeted to nursing homes and senior care

Workshop: Fundamentals

One in-person, 3-5 hour interactive workshop led by the National Center team and trained facilitators. This workshop is designed to help participants garner an understanding for the need to change the way our society communicates about aging and begin to practice effective framing.

Target participants include members of: Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging, Governor’s Council on an Age Friendly Minnesota, Finish Strong Funders Network, and Minnesota Board on Aging.

Intensive: Core Elements

A four-part on-line, self-paced course complemented with three one-hour interactive application-based training sessions delivered by National Center Facilitators deeply trained in the research and principles to improve communication strategies about aging. This intensive will be available to only up to 20 participants. It is a significant commitment and will include an application process to ensure participation.

Technical Assistance

Provide up to two hours of technical assistance for each of the 20 participants (40 hours) for up to six months post workshop to provide support to reinforce learning, practice skills, and answer emerging questions. Experienced facilitators will assist each participant with “frame checks” of existing documents and communications materials and help to effectively frame new messages.

Partners

Minnesota’s Reframing Aging Initiative consists of a multi-agency partnership including the:

- UMN Center for Healthy Aging & Innovation
- Governor’s Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota
- Minnesota Board on Aging
- Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging and Center for Healthy Aging & Innovation provide coordination.

Budget

Expenses	Amount
National Center Contract (travel, session facilitation, technical assistance, materials)	\$40,650
Administration and expenses (supplies, food, coordination, marketing, printing)	\$21,150
Scholarships	\$2,500

Total	\$64,000
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Revenue	Amount
Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota	\$15,000
Minnesota Board on Aging	\$15,000
Interested funding partners (6)	\$29,000
Registrations	\$5,000
Total	\$64,000

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