

# FINANCING HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS:

A TOOLKIT FOR PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSIONALS



NATIONAL RECREATION  
AND PARK ASSOCIATION





**Cover image:** Momoyo Crane (center front) has attended City of Olympia (Washington) Parks, Arts and Recreation’s Women’s Fitness class at the Olympia Center for more than 25 years. *Photo courtesy of Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation.*

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# Introduction

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support the delivery and dissemination of arthritis-appropriate evidence-based interventions (AAEBIs). AAEBIs are beneficial, evidence-based physical activity and education programs for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions. Physical activity in a community-based setting has been shown to be effective in managing the symptoms of arthritis and enhancing the health, well-being and quality of life of people with arthritis and other chronic conditions.<sup>1</sup>

NRPA expanded access to AAEBIs for adults with arthritis through funding from CDC over a five-year period. NRPA employed several strategic and innovative approaches, including the following activities:

- Increased training, technical assistance, education and marketing to local park and recreation agency staff participating in the program
- Established connections between healthcare systems and community-based organizations, such as park and recreation agencies
- Established patient referral mechanisms that healthcare organizations provide to evidence-based physical activity programs at local park and recreation agencies
- Piloted virtual evidence-based physical activity programs
- Supported peer networking, cross-sector collaboration, and sharing resources among participating park and recreation agencies

Since 2013, NRPA has supported park and recreation professionals implementing evidence-based physical activity programs to enhance the quality of life for the 58 million adults with arthritis in the United States. Agencies have implemented four main AAEBIs, including the Walk With Ease (WWE), Active Living Every Day (ALED), Fit & Strong! (F&S!) and Enhance®Fitness (EF) programs. Through this agreement, NRPA has worked directly with 330 park and recreation agencies across 49 states and one U.S. territory, reaching nearly 25,000 individuals and creating community-wide impacts.

This funding helped establish AAEBIs at park and recreation agencies in 49 states in rural, urban and suburban settings — growing the number of park and recreation agencies offering AAEBI programs to more than 330 and reaching nearly 25,000 people.

Funding for AAEBIs and other evidence-based physical activity programs is limited despite research showing they have a demonstrable and meaningful impact on the health and well-being of participants.<sup>1</sup> It is important that park and recreation agencies find sustainable funding to continue these classes to expand access to these programs and grow their reach and impact. At the same time, park and recreation agencies that want to start delivering health and wellness classes need new funding to make the classes available to older adults in their communities.

The aim of this toolkit is to serve as a resource. At NRPA, we want to provide community-based organizations with the tools necessary to either continue funding health and wellness classes or help organizations secure funding to start these classes at park and recreation agencies or community-based organizations.

## How to Use the Toolkit

This toolkit provides you with insights, tips and resources to help secure funding. We present a case study of a program that successfully established connections with an insurer to reimburse evidence-based physical activity classes for older adults, which can serve as a model and resource for other programs and agencies. We offer tools on how to create partnerships

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, April 16). Physical Activity Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/physical-activity.html>

with other park and recreation agencies to seek out joint funding. And, we provide tips on how to communicate with potential funders and partners about the benefits of health and wellness classes for older adults. You can tailor these tools to meet your organization's needs. We also share relevant resources from other organizations working in this area.

## Funding Health and Wellness Programs for Older Adults

Community-based organizations need steady and reliable funding from a diverse group of partners to ensure health and wellness classes for older adults are sustainable. Unfortunately, park and recreation agencies and community-based organizations have limited budgets and funding.<sup>2</sup> Staffing, resources and competing priorities can determine if they are able to offer classes. This situation has been exacerbated for many agencies during the pandemic because they're facing additional budgetary challenges. Reduced budgets and new pressures brought on by the pandemic can prevent agencies from offering health and wellness classes for older adults. Many agencies have the interest and potential to expand class offerings to more older adults in their community, but they need the resources.

The biggest source of funding to park and recreation agencies are appropriations like local, state and federal taxes. Advocating for public investments in evidence-based programs at all levels of government during the annual budgeting process is an important way to ensure park and recreation agencies have sustainable funding. This toolkit deals with two other types of funding that park and recreation agencies can explore, which can be a complement to public investments. Potential options include grant funding and receiving reimbursements for classes from health insurers. Both sources of funding offer benefits and challenges.



An aqua fitness class participant in Lakewood, Colorado, enjoys a luau theme day during Aqua Fitness Fun Week.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL BAYLIS, CITY OF LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

<sup>2</sup> National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). (2021) 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/2021-agency-performance-review\\_final.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/2021-agency-performance-review_final.pdf)

# Benefits and Challenges of Different Funding Models

Funding Source	Benefits	Challenges
<b>Grant funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants can serve as catalytic funding, while finding more sustainable options.</li> <li>• There is potential for fast turnaround in funding, depending on the grant funder.</li> <li>• Applications and grants often can be submitted and managed by existing park and recreation staff.</li> <li>• There are often multiple philanthropic funders that support adult physical activity classes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funding restricts the use of money. Depending on the funder, this can create a challenge to cover the full costs of the classes.</li> <li>• Funding depends on grant cycles. Reapplying each grant cycle does not offer sustainable financing for the long term or allow long-term planning.</li> <li>• Depending on the funder, grants can be a small amount of money.</li> <li>• Grant management can be time consuming and take staff away from programmatic work.</li> </ul>
<b>Reimbursement from health insurers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reimbursement from health insurers brings in non-traditional funding revenue and can diversify the program's budget.</li> <li>• Reimbursements from health insurers can provide park and recreation agencies additional flexible revenue.</li> <li>• Once contracts are established, it can be a sustainable source of funding for classes.</li> <li>• If managed by an external organization, processing insurance claims takes minimal time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can take a long time to negotiate contracts with a health insurer.</li> <li>• Working with health insurers requires specialized training and resources to manage claims and meet compliance requirements.</li> <li>• Contracting and processing claims can be administratively burdensome for the agency overseeing the contract.</li> <li>• Participants in classes will have different health insurers and park and recreation agencies will need to contract with all of them to receive reimbursement.</li> <li>• It might not be beneficial to contract one-on-one, depending on the reimbursement rate and the number of clients.</li> </ul>



The Get Fit Mobile program delivers regular physical activity to citizens in Prince George's County, Maryland, to help reduce the risk of chronic disease.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

## Understanding Health Insurance in the United States

Health insurance in the United States is complicated. Chances are that participants in your health and wellness programs have health insurance from different sources. Even two people with the same health insurer could have different plans and benefits. Here's a high-level overview of the different types of health insurance.<sup>3</sup>

Government	Health Insurance Marketplace	Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	Uninsured
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medicare</li> <li>Medicaid</li> <li>Department of Defense TRICARE</li> <li>Veterans Health Administration</li> <li>Indian Health Service</li> </ul>	Individuals or families purchase health insurance plans on a state or federal marketplace.	Individuals or families are enrolled in health insurance that is tied to a job and part of a group plan.	This includes people who are not eligible for health insurance, cannot afford a plan, face barriers to accessing health insurance, or choose not to enroll in health insurance.

Health and wellness programs serving older adults likely will have a large proportion of their participants on Medicare. Four out of five adults 65 and older are on Original Medicare; however, enrollment rates vary widely by state and region.<sup>4</sup> Original Medicare does not currently cover fitness programs.<sup>5,6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. (2021). Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population>  
<sup>4</sup> Freed, M., Damico, A., and Neuman, T. (2021, January 13). A Dozen Facts About Medicare Advantage in 2020. KFF. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/a-dozen-facts-about-medicare-advantage-in-2020/>  
<sup>5</sup> U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Medicare). (2021). Your Medicare Coverage. Retrieved from [https://www.medicare.gov/coverage?coverage\\_search=fitness](https://www.medicare.gov/coverage?coverage_search=fitness)  
<sup>6</sup> Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network. (2021). Medicare Frequently Asked Questions: HMO, PPO, POS: What do all these acronyms mean? Retrieved from <https://www.bcbsm.com/medicare/help/faqs/works/hmo-ppo-pos.html>



A group of older adults participate in a low-impact fitness class at the City of Tualatin, Oregon, Juanita Pohl Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

The participants in your program who have Medicare Advantage or private health insurance purchased in a health insurance marketplace or from an employer-sponsored health insurance plan may be eligible to have fitness classes covered. But there are many different insurers and types of health insurance plans, which impact how people get care and what benefits and services are covered. Different types of health insurance also impact reimbursement for programming. The following are types of private health insurance plans:<sup>7</sup>

- **Health Maintenance Organization (HMO):** HMOs funnel healthcare through a patient's primary care physician (PCP). An HMO plan requires the member to choose a PCP within their health insurance network. Seeing a specialist or receiving other care within the health insurance network requires a referral from the PCP.
- **Point of Service (POS):** A POS plan is very similar to an HMO. Like an HMO, healthcare is funneled through the PCP, but it allows the person to see doctors and receive services outside of the health insurance network, in some situations.
- **Preferred Provider Organization (PPO):** This health insurance plan allows the insured person to see specialists out-of-network and get healthcare without a referral.
- **Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO):** EPO is often seen as a hybrid between an HMO and a PPO. EPO only covers care that is in-network, but it often does not require patients to receive a referral from their PCP.
- **High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP):** HDHP can be an HMO, PPO or EPO, but these plans tend to have low premiums but high out-of-pocket costs, which often are paid for by Health Savings Account funds, which are pre-tax money that can be used for healthcare.
- **Medicare Special Needs Plan (SNP):** These plans are for people on Medicare Advantage mentioned above, but serve people with specific diseases or health issues. These plans are administered by private insurers and tend to be like HMOs. People need referrals from PCPs for specialists to care and receive care in-network, but the networks have specialists and care to meet the needs of patients with specific health conditions.<sup>8</sup>

Navigating the landscape to receive reimbursement can be challenging given the different ways people can get their health insurance and the different types of private health insurance that exist. We'll provide you with more tips and resources in this toolkit.

7 Aetna. (2021). "HMO, POS, PPO, EPO and HDHP with HSA: What's the difference?" Retrieved from <https://www.aetna.com/health-guide/hmo-pos-ppo-hdhp-whats-the-difference.html>

8 Medicare. (2021). Special Needs Plans (SNP). Retrieved from <https://www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/types-of-medicare-health-plans/special-needs-plans-snp>

# Benefits of a Collaborative Approach

Securing new funding for park and recreation agencies can be complicated. It requires dedicated staff time and expertise. Most agencies do not have the resources to contract with health insurers and fundraise for grants.

Receiving insurance reimbursement can require upfront costs and full-time staff with an understanding of how to work with insurers, which can be complicated. Before the first insurance reimbursement claim is received, the park and recreation agency will need to contract with an insurer, follow compliance laws, and have the software and other tools to submit health insurance claims. Given the upfront costs, it might not be worth the time and effort for a community-based organization with a small adult physical activity program to contract individually with a health insurer. The reimbursement rate might not cover the staff and operational costs that are required to partner with an insurer — let alone cover the cost of the classes.

Grant funding also has its challenges. Securing grants often requires dedicated staff who work on fundraising to identify funding opportunities. It takes time and regular engagement to cultivate relationships with donors. Once grants are awarded, grant managers need to monitor activities and funds and report on activities.

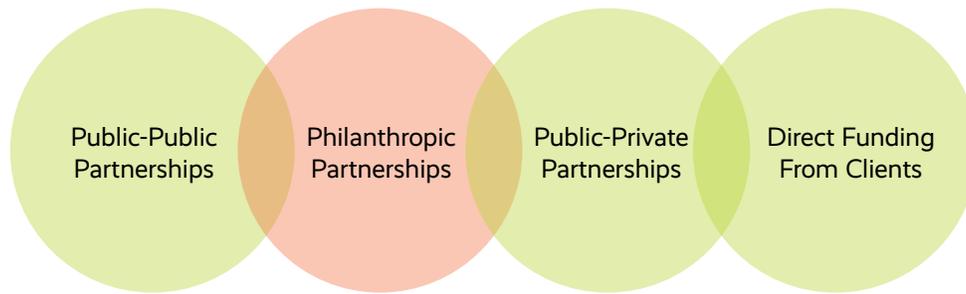
One potential solution to deal with these challenges is to collaborate with other park and recreation agencies and local community-based organizations. Collaborating with other local partners means that every organization does not need specialized staff in grants management or in health insurance contracts, compliance and claims. Instead, staff time and operations costs would be centralized at one park and recreation agency or community-based organization that manages the relationship with the funders. That organization would oversee grants, contracts and reimbursements. The partners would share in the overhead costs to cover the agency's expenses, which would come out of grant funding or an overhead fee as part of reimbursements from the insurer. The organization managing the grant or contract would disburse funds to other park and recreation agencies in the partnership. Operations costs would be shared by all participating programs — reducing duplication and inefficiencies.

An additional benefit of partnering with other park and recreation agencies is it increases the number of people reached. This model appeals to funders, too. Insurers have said that contracting with one park and recreation agency for health and wellness classes would likely not be worth the effort given the small number of participants in classes and that not every person attending the class would be enrolled in their health insurance plan. Thus, reducing the incentives for health insurance companies to contract with them. A collaborative approach with other park and recreation agencies and community-based organizations makes it appealing to insurers by reaching a larger number of participants from a wide variety of locations. Similarly, having health and wellness classes hosted by partner organizations throughout a state or region would appeal to many large grant funders, because they would have a larger geographical reach and their funds could potentially have greater impact.

Partnering on funding allows park and recreation agencies to share resources and costs while making it possible to engage more funders and bring in a diverse type of funding because agencies can share the costs of resources and staff. A collaborative approach opens the possibility of bringing in health insurance funds and grants to a park and recreation agency with just one class. In this model, that agency would not need to use staff time to fundraise, contract with insurers or process reimbursement claims. Instead, that agency could benefit from the partnership resources.

Starting a funding partnership may seem daunting. This toolkit provides an example of a program that created a successful collaborative partnership for evidence-based physical activity classes. Additionally, this toolkit provides resources for other park and recreation agencies to start a funding partnership for evidence-based physical fitness classes for older adults.

# Different Types of Funding Partnerships



- **Public-Public Partnerships:** These are partnerships between at least two government agencies collaborating to achieve a shared goal. For example, a public health department and a park and recreation agency can sign a memorandum of understanding to perform joint work. Funds can come through joint budgeting or one government agency can receive funding from another government agency. For example, a local park and recreation agency can receive federal grant money.
- **Philanthropic Partnerships:** This is a collaboration between an agency/organization with a public charity or private foundation to accomplish a shared mission. Funds usually come through grants in this type of funding partnership. Grant funding can be restricted and used only on the project, or it can be unrestricted, which can give the organization discretion on what funds can be used on a specific project or for other means.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** This type of funding partnership is when a private-sector company contracts with a public government institution. A health insurer contracting with a park and recreation agency to offer health and wellness programming is an example of a public-private partnership.
- **Direct Funding From Clients:** Health and wellness programs often bring in additional revenue from charging clients moderate fees for services to participate in programming.

## Spotlight on a Joint Approach to Working With Health Insurers

### Background on Sound Generations

Sound Generations<sup>9</sup> is a nonprofit social care organization serving older adults and adults with disabilities in King County, Washington. The organization supports approximately 54,000 people annually and is Washington state’s largest provider of comprehensive services.

### Sound Generations Support for Adult, Evidence-Based, Physical Activity Classes

In the 1990s, Sound Generations partnered with an HMO to provide physical activity classes for older adults to respond to the high rates of inactivity in this population. Sound Generations has been the sole source licensor of Project Enhance<sup>10</sup> since 1999. Project Enhance is a community health promotion program designed for older adults. Project Enhance has two nationally recognized programs: Enhance®Fitness and Enhance®Wellness. EnhanceFitness is a low-cost, evidence-based, group-exercise and falls-prevention program for older adults of all fitness levels and abilities. The aim of this program is to have participants become more active, energized and empowered to sustain independent lives.

<sup>9</sup> Sound Generations. (2021). Retrieved from <https://soundgenerations.org>

<sup>10</sup> Project Enhance. (2021). Retrieved from <https://projectenhance.org>

## Sound Generations' Partners

Because Project Enhance is a community health program, it works to implement EnhanceFitness in community-based organizations. The program has served diverse populations at sites, such as park and recreation agencies, senior centers, YMCAs, churches, and affordable housing and retirement communities.

## Sound Generations' Work With Health Insurers

Sound Generations manages the contract negotiations and processes health insurance claims for Washington Medicare Advantage Plan, including negotiations at local park and recreation agencies in Washington state that offer EnhanceFitness. Sound Generations also actively seeks opportunities with other plans to support partner sustainability, increase class access, and improve participant health outcomes. Sound Generations' goal is to make receiving insurance reimbursement as easy as possible for EnhanceFitness sites. The sites do not have to deal with navigating the complexity of contracting with health insurers. This approach allows EnhanceFitness providers in Washington to receive reimbursement for classes while using minimal staff time. This approach also allows this health insurer to contract with one agency instead of multiple adult fitness providers.

## How Their Model Works

Sound Generations works directly with the health insurer on behalf of all EnhanceFitness providers in Washington, to negotiate contracts. EnhanceFitness sites use a data portal (called EF ODES, developed and managed by Sound Generations), for EnhanceFitness program management and reporting functions. EF ODES includes participant identification and monthly attendance data that the health insurer requires for reimbursement. The sites' use of this database allows Sound Generations to handle the required reporting on behalf of the sites. Sound Generations then processes the health insurance claims with the insurer. The health insurer disburses funds to Sound Generations, which they disperse to each of the EnhanceFitness sites. Sound Generations receives a processing fee from the health insurer as a proportion of the reimbursement amount that covers staff time to manage the reimbursement work. This covers Sound Generations staff costs and tools they use to manage the program.

Key to the success of this approach is that Sound Generations can provide the human and technical resources to work directly with the health insurer on behalf of EnhanceFitness programs across Washington state. Sound Generations' administrative staff, finance department, information technology (IT) department and the project director manages the contract with the health insurer and processes the site reimbursements.

Specific activities Sound Generations staff engage in include:

- Negotiating with health insurers to establish rates
- Developing and managing the online data entry system that allows sites to track the data elements (participant's identity and monthly attendance) necessary for reimbursement reporting
- Using data in the program database to match participants in fitness classes with their health policy to submit claims for reimbursement
- Meeting insurance compliance requirements monthly
- Monitoring reimbursement from the insurance company
- Disbursing payments to sites



Older adults learn ways to sustainably incorporate physical activity into their daily lives by participating in an Active Living Every Day class at the Juanita Pohl Center in Oregon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

# Is a Collaborative Approach Right for Your Park and Recreation Agency?

The checklist below should serve as a tool to determine if your park and recreation agency has the current resources in place to begin outreach directly with health insurers. It might be a good idea to reach out to other park and recreation agencies to discuss using a similar approach as Sound Generations, if you check one or more of the “No” boxes.

RESOURCE CHECKLIST	Yes	No
Does your agency have existing relationships with health insurers or government health agencies?		
Do you or your staff know how to navigate contracting with health insurers and how to process insurance reimbursement claims?		
Do you currently have staff in place who have the time and bandwidth to support contracting, ensuring compliance and processing reimbursement claims?		
Does your park and recreation agency offer many adult physical activity classes that could bring in sufficient revenue to fund operational costs?		
Would receiving reimbursement for adult physical activity classes cover the human resources and technical costs necessary, in addition to the cost of the classes?		
Could your current IT department securely maintain participant identity and attendance data?		
Does your evidence-based physical activity program have a large number of participants who would be appealing to an insurer?		

Sound Generations has worked directly with insurers to receive reimbursement for classes; however, this collaborative model also can be replicated with partnerships looking to receive grant funding. Applying jointly to funders offers the same benefits. Many funding partnerships will want to diversify their funding by working to secure grant funding and contract with health insurers, so programs have different types of funding to ensure the sustainability of their programming.

## How to Begin Reaching Out to Other Park and Recreation Agencies

If you decide a funding partnership is the right model for your agency, the first step is to reach out to other park and recreation agencies to see who else is interested in partnering to fund health and wellness programs for older adults. Other organizations, such as an Area Agency on Aging, public health departments, senior centers and libraries, also offer health and wellness programs for older adults and would be worth engaging. Connecting with these local agencies in your area is another source for potential partners.

You should focus on partnering with other agencies in your state. This will be helpful for logistical reasons — such as health insurers only operating in certain states or grant funding that might be focused on a specific region. In addition, it will help make it easier to coordinate meetings.

Start by leveraging your network. Reach out to colleagues you know at other park and recreation agencies in your state. Ask them if they would like to connect and explore creating a partnership to fund health and wellness programs for older adults. But you should not stop there. NRPA also offers ways for you to find and connect with other park and recreation agencies in your state.

# Impact Map: Evidence-Based Physical Activity Programs

To date, 330 park and recreation agencies across 49 states and American Samoa offer evidence-based physical activity programs, reaching nearly 25,000 participants. To identify other park and recreation agencies in your state that also offer health and wellness programs for older adults, go to NRPA's Impact Map.<sup>11</sup> The map at the bottom of the page will help you locate park and recreation agencies in your state that have delivered evidence-based physical activity programs. The Impact Map provides the agency name, website and contact information of these park and recreation agencies. You can use this information to reach out directly to the agencies.

You also can see which park and recreation agencies are interested in exploring joint funding opportunities by posting on NRPA's community board — NRPA Connect.<sup>12</sup> NRPA Connect helps you collaborate with park and recreation agencies in your state that do not currently have an evidence-based physical activity program, but would be interested in joining efforts to find funding for the classes.

The language below can serve as a template for a post in NRPA Connect. Alter the language to fit the type of partners you are seeking to collaborate with on funding opportunities.

Dear Colleagues,

I'm looking to partner with other park and recreation agencies in (insert state name) to identify and secure grant funding and explore reimbursement from health insurers to fund health and wellness programs for older adults. I believe a collaborative approach can help us be more successful in securing funding than if we did this on our own. Please respond to this post by (insert date) with your name, park and recreation agency, and title. I will reach out to you directly to schedule a time to discuss this further.

Best regards,

(Insert name, title, contact information)

## Tips on Forming Partnerships

A collaboration can bring in funding that an individual agency could not do on its own. There is power in numbers. Partnerships have diverse skills, resources, perspectives and connections. Collaborations can spotlight the strengths of each partner. Sharing resources can make work more efficient. And by working together, you can show potential funders the reach and impact that so many partners can achieve collectively. Effective partnerships harness the power of all members to secure diverse and stable funding.

Ineffective partnerships often have challenges from the beginning. They face pitfalls that can make partnerships burdensome or ineffective. You can avoid forming an ineffective partnership by being deliberate about how you collaborate with partners. Below explore a few tips:

<sup>11</sup> NRPA. (2021). Evidence-Based Interventions. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/healthy-aging-in-parks/evidence-based-interventions>

<sup>12</sup> NRPA. (2021). NRPA Connect. Retrieved from <https://connect.nrpa.org/home>

## Spend Time on Recruiting

The strength of the partnership is its members. It is important that the partnership has a strong membership base. Often when forming a partnership, the main organizer posts an initial announcement, those interested respond, and then recruitment stops. The partnership needs to be a large enough group to accomplish the goals. And it needs members who are dedicated and committed to move the work forward — especially before there is funding to support an agency's staff time and resources.

Members should include park and recreation agencies and community-based organizations that have similar funding goals for health and wellness programs for older adults. Aim to have agencies from a wide range of organizations in your state — to show geographic diversity.

You can recruit members by using your own networks and using NRPA's tools. Also, recruit at conferences and through other groups and networks. Ask each newly recruited member to suggest organizations that might be interested in joining the partnership. Explain to new members what you are hoping to achieve. Take the time to expand members. This will help the partnership carry out work and attract funders.

## Establish Goals Early On

An essential part of the early phase of building a successful partnership is to ensure members agree on the goals and objectives. Different partners will see the partnership as serving different purposes. It is important to have discussions early on about the scope of the work and determine what the group hopes to achieve. Having these discussions at the beginning of forming the partnership will help you plan an engagement strategy that aligns with your work. And, it will help members have a clear understanding of what the partnership is working on.

Often people come to partnerships with different goals. Successful collaborations have a process to decide what the goals are and devise a plan to achieve the goals. Partnerships that are ineffective often try to do too much or do not have a clear plan for what they hope to achieve.

The partnership must decide what type of funding it will pursue. Will the partnership focus on contracting with health insurers, pursue grant funding or another type of funding? The type of funding you pursue will impact your strategy, the type of products you develop, and how you engage with funders. Having discussions early on about what type of funding the group wants and goals for how much funding the partnership would like to secure will help focus time, energy and resources to be most effective.

## Create Clear Management Structures

A pitfall in many partnerships is that the members discuss ambitious plans, but do not determine who will manage the work and implement the activities. If this happens, the activities will not get carried out and the partnership will fall apart.

Partnerships have members with diverse knowledge and expertise, and provide an opportunity for partners to share the workload. But the partnership also needs strong leadership. Effective partnerships have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. A partnership can have ambitious goals, but without a clear management structure and someone overseeing the work, it will not achieve the objectives.

If you are looking to have a collaborative model like Sound Generations, you will want an agency in the lead that will negotiate with insurers, fundraise with donors, and manage the contracts and awards. This will require staff and resources. It is important to have discussions at the beginning of forming the partnerships to understand what management will look like, how that will be funded and what roles other partners will play. If you decide to take a joint approach to work, you will need to determine which agency is responsible for each activity in your plan and how to fund that work accordingly.

Early discussions when forming the partnership should set goals and objectives with a plan for how your partnership will secure funding. The plan should set expectations for which people and agencies will carry out the activities.



Older adults participate in a Walk With Ease class, a low-impact walking program, hosted by the Prince George's County (Maryland) Department of Parks and Recreation.

## Fund the Work of the Partnership

It is important to talk about funding at the beginning of forming the partnership. Money matters. Partnerships usually are supported by people volunteering their time at the beginning. While this might be required at the inception of the partnership, it cannot continue for the long term. Successful partnerships ensure the work has the financing to continue.

Unsuccessful partnerships often rely on members volunteering their time and resources. Unfortunately, with staff having full workloads, it usually means the partnership does not receive the attention it needs to meet the goals and objectives. That is why partnerships need to have discussions about what funding is needed early on in forming the partnership.

Before receiving funding, the partnership should discuss what staff will be needed to manage the work and what that will cost. The partnership should then build overhead into budgets to manage the partnerships. This should be reflected in reimbursement rates from insurers or in grant applications. Making sure that the program overseeing the work has the funds to implement the activities is essential for the survival of the partnership.

Each partnership must decide how it wants to manage the funding for health and wellness programs. Different programs will take different approaches to how work is distributed and managed. It is important for all programs to have conversations about funding the work early on. This will help the partnership ensure that it has the staff necessary to secure and manage funds and support evidence-based, physical activity classes.

Investing time in the beginning to recruit and decide how the partnership will function will set the partnership up for success. This will translate into bringing in funds and ensuring the sustainability of the work. The project charter on the next page is a resource to help guide discussions and establish how your partnership will work.

## Project Charter

If you are considering working collaboratively to engage health insurers or grant funders, it is important to define the purpose, roles, resources and composition of the group at the beginning. This will help you make sure the scope of the collaboration is clear and defined from the onset. This will help in the long-term outreach and engagement with donors as well as the management.

The charter form on page 14 is intended to provide high-level guidance. It can be altered or adapted to fit your group's needs as you think about collaborating with funders. The charter should be revisited, revised and updated as changes occur.

<b>Group name:</b>		
<b>Purpose of the partnership:</b>		
<b>Goals of the partnership:</b>		
<b>Scope: What type of funding will the partnership pursue and what type of funding will you choose not to pursue?</b>		
<b>Timing: How long will you commit to working on the funding partnership?</b>		
<b>Membership: What are the requirements to be a member of the partnership? Which park and recreation agencies and community-based organizations are engaged in the partnership?</b>		
<b>Organization leading the group:</b>	<b>Who at the organization is responsible for management of the collaboration?</b>	<b>Who else is managing the project?</b>
<b>Communications and meetings: How will partners meet? How often will partners communicate and meet (e.g., How often will strategic partnership meetings be held? Are there mechanisms for communication between meetings?)?</b>		
<b>Context: Who is the team accountable to? With what other groups does it connect with and why?</b>		
<b>Key deliverables</b>	<b>Milestones and timelines</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
<b>Potential challenges and risks: What could prevent the group from securing funding? How could the group address these challenges?</b>		
<b>Assets:</b>		
<b>Gaps:</b>		
<b>Other/Comments:</b>		

# Making the Case

## How to Develop a Messaging Framework

Using compelling and consistent messages when communicating with prospective funders is essential to ensure your work gets funded. Before reaching out to a prospective donor or health insurer, you need to understand what matters to them. The audience always should be at the center of any messaging framework. Different audiences have different reasons and motivation for supporting your work. Messages should be tailored to make the case to each individual funder. Consider the audience you are trying to reach, why they should care about this issue, and what messages will best make the case to get funders to support health and wellness programs or other initiatives at park and recreation agencies.

### Audience

The reasons why a health insurer will contract with a park and recreation agency for a health and wellness program is different from why a philanthropic donor will provide grant funding to support these classes.

To identify your audience, think about the following questions:

- Who has the potential to fund health and wellness programs at community-based organizations?
- Who can influence funding decisions?
- Who can advocate for community-based organizations to receive additional funding for health and wellness programs?
- Are there any groups that would oppose community-based organizations receiving funding to support health and wellness programs?<sup>13</sup>

Once you have identified your audience, you need to understand their point of view. What do they value; what are their problems, frustrations and pain points; what are the barriers they face; and what information matters to them (costs, health outcomes, emotional appeals, etc.)? These insights should guide the development of messages that can communicate the right message to each potential funder and partner.

Fill out the table below for each target audience.

### Audience Mapping

<b>Audience</b>	<b>What do they value?</b>	<b>What are the challenges they want to solve?</b>	<b>What barriers do they face in funding your program?</b>	<b>What information matters to them?</b>	<b>What resources can we leverage to address our shared challenges?</b>

<sup>13</sup> Note: It is just as important to develop messages that make the case to those who could prevent you from getting funding as it is to develop messages for a potential partner. You could risk losing potential partnerships if you do not address any opposition that could block partnerships.

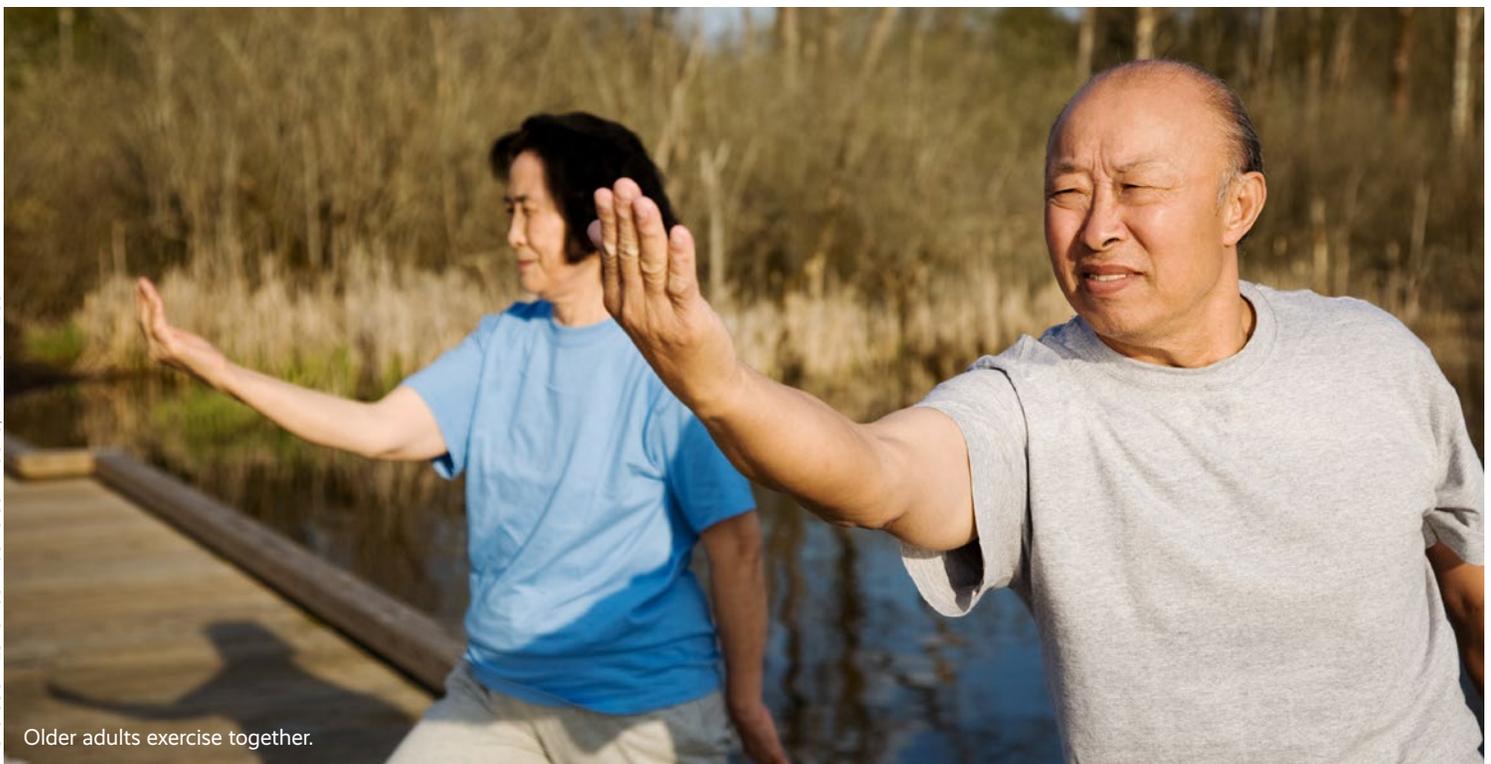
## Structure of a Messaging Framework

Once you have identified and mapped your audience, start to draft your messages. The messaging frameworks will aim to communicate to each audience, “why health and wellness programs at community-based organizations should receive their funding and support.” The messages should be framed in a way that addresses the audience’s values, pain points and barriers. This will be followed by proof points, which present evidence to support the message. The evidence that is used should be based on the type of information that will resonate most with the target audience. For example, using data on the impact park and recreation agencies have in making the community healthier is useful data to include when developing messages for a public health agency, but a health insurer would likely want to see data about individual user experience and cost reductions.

The messaging framework consists of four components: problem, solution, impact and call to action.

- **Problem:** What challenges is this funder/payor currently facing that could be addressed by supporting health and wellness programs at community-based organizations?
- **Solution:** How does funding health and wellness classes help them address their problems?
- **Impact:** What are the positive outcomes of health and wellness programs at community-based organizations? Examples could include access to classes in their community, reduced falls/injuries, savings to the health system, improved service delivery or improved quality of life. It also is important to connect the data with personal stories that share the meaningful impact that these programs have on the lives of individuals. Seek out feedback from participants in your classes to get their input on how participating in the program has had a positive impact on their physical and mental health, well-being and community connections. Consider adding quotes or personal stories with data points that show the human connection to the programming.
- **Call to Action:** What do you want them to do? This is where you will position what you are asking of them.

Once you develop messages and proof points, the language can be used in fact sheets, proposals, donor materials, slide decks or other outreach materials. You should view the messages and proof points as a living document that will need to be updated to reflect changes in evidence and data.



Older adults exercise together.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUPRIJONO SUHARJOTO, DREAMSTIME.COM

## Sample Messages and Proof Points

We provided messages and proof points for public health agencies, health insurers and donors to serve as a starting point. The language in the framework can be tailored to meet your specific needs. The messages and proof points can be incorporated into the messaging framework you create or tailored to fit your specific audiences.

### Public Health Agency

**Problem:** The leading causes of death and disability in the United States are related to the conditions of people's daily lives, in which they are born, grow, live, work and age. These factors are especially true in contributing to poor health outcomes in older adults.<sup>14</sup>

- Most older adults are inactive with less than 40 percent of adults 65 and older reporting regular activity compared to approximately half of adults ages 35 to 54.<sup>15</sup>
- Two out of three older adults have at least one chronic condition. Older adults with a chronic condition are at an increased risk of being inactive compared to those without a chronic condition.<sup>16</sup>
- Nearly half of people 65 years and older have been diagnosed with arthritis.<sup>17</sup>
- Older adults are at increased risk for loneliness and social isolation with about one in four adults 65 and older being socially isolated. This puts them at an increased risk of premature death from all causes.<sup>18</sup>
- The United States is seeing an unprecedented growth in older adults. Our country will have 71 million people who are 65 years and older by 2030. As this population ages and makes up a larger share of the population, we need more services in the community that are tailored to their unique needs.<sup>19</sup>

**Solution:** Community-based organizations are an essential part of the public health infrastructure. They provide critical health and wellness services that advance health equity, improve health outcomes and enhance overall quality of life. Physical activity programs for older adults offered at community-based organizations help prevent and manage chronic diseases, improve physical and mental health and foster much-needed social connections.

- Community-based organizations expand health and wellness services to those who have limited access to physical activity, healthy food, healthcare and social resources.
- Community-based organizations can help improve the physical health and mental well-being of older adults by connecting people to health and wellness programs.
- Being physically active has a tremendous positive effect on older adults. It can reduce premature death and improve the quality of life by supporting healthy aging and positive physical and mental health.<sup>20</sup>
- There is a well-known link between the physical activity associated with park and recreation programs and reductions in chronic diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.<sup>21</sup>
- Health and wellness programs — either in person or remote — offer a chance for older adults to connect with each other and serve as a way to combat loneliness and isolation.

14 CDC. (2021). Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm>

15 Ackermann, R. T., Williams, B., Nguyen, H. Q., Berke, E. M., Maciejewski, M. L., and LoGerfo, J. P. (2008). "Healthcare cost differences with participation in a community-based group physical activity benefit for medicare managed care health plan members." *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 56(8), 1459-1465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01804.x>

16 CDC. (2021). Adults Need More Physical Activity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/inactivity-among-adults-50plus/index.html>

17 CDC. (2021). Arthritis Related Statistics. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data\\_statistics/arthritis-related-stats.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/arthritis-related-stats.htm)

18 CDC. (2021). "Loneliness and Social Isolation Linked to Serious Health Conditions." Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

19 CDC. (2021). Promoting Health for Older Adults. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/promoting-health-for-older-adults.htm>

20 CDC. (2021). Adults Need More Physical Activity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/inactivity-among-adults-50plus/index.html>

21 NRPA. (2021). Parks and Chronic Disease Management. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/fact-sheets/parks-chronic-disease-management>



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH SUBURBAN PARKS AND RECREATION

In Centennial, Colorado, South Suburban Parks and Recreation's active adults head out on an adventure as part of the trips and tours program.

**Impact:** Support for health and wellness programs for older adults at community-based organizations can help alleviate pressure on America's healthcare system by keeping older adults healthy through physical activity and socialization in group classes.

- Park and recreation agencies provide critical services for millions of older adults. Today, 70 percent of park and recreation agencies offer programs specifically for older adults.<sup>22</sup>
- An analysis of physical activity interventions specifically tailored toward older adults found that participants' strength, physical health and wellness improved after participating in the interventions.<sup>23</sup>
- Physical activity helps older adults maintain the ability to live independently and reduces their risk of falling or fracturing bones.<sup>24</sup>
- Participating in joint-friendly physical activity at a park and recreation agency can improve arthritis pain, function, mood and quality of life for people with arthritis.<sup>25</sup>

**Call to Action:** Community-based organizations play an essential role in improving the health of people in our communities, serving as a trusted and affordable community-based organization providing critical evidence-based programming. We need to make sure community-based organizations partner with health departments and receive strong support and funding to continue these essential services.

- Older adults are using community-based organizations today to exercise and improve their health. If we work together, we can make these classes more consistently available, affordable and convenient for more older adults who need them.
- Partner with community-based organizations to ensure they have the financial resources and support needed to continue providing public health services to older adults.

22 NRPA. (2021). Park Programming and Better Health Fact Sheet. Retrieved <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/fact-sheets/park-programming-better-health>

23 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (2017, November). *Wellness Prospective Evaluation Report on Six-Month Follow-Up Survey Outcomes and Estimated Operational Costs*. Retrieved from <https://downloads.cms.gov/files/cmml/comunity-basedwellnessrevention-sixthmonthoutcomes-operationalcostrpt.pdf>

24 CDC. (1999, November 17). *A Report of the Surgeon General: Physical Activity and Health Older Adults*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/olderad.htm>

25 CDC. (2018). Physical Activity for Arthritis. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/physical-activity-overview.html>

## Health Insurer

**Problem:** With an aging population and an increase in chronic conditions, the healthcare system is facing the challenge of controlling the growing healthcare costs without decreasing access to quality services.

- Eighty percent of health outcomes are not tied to healthcare but are related to the conditions of where and how people live their lives.<sup>26</sup>
- Health expenditures are projected to rise over the next 25 years. For older adults, healthcare expenditures are projected to increase more than three times as fast as the U.S. gross domestic product.<sup>27</sup>
- Ninety percent of our country's healthcare costs go to treating chronic conditions.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2013, medical costs for arthritis were \$140 billion in total, or \$2,117 per adult with arthritis.<sup>29</sup>
- Inactivity has financial implications — costing \$117 billion annually for related healthcare costs.<sup>28</sup>

**Solution:** Community-based organizations ensure older people have access to health and wellness programs in their own communities in an affordable and accessible manner, which have been shown to bring hospitalization and healthcare costs down in just a 12-month timeframe.<sup>30</sup>

- Evidence-based physical activity classes for older adults can improve physical health and mental well-being if they are made available and affordable to individuals.
- Supporting community-based organizations is a way to provide older adults with health and wellness classes in their community while creating an opportunity for social engagement.
- Community-based organizations can make a significant contribution to reducing healthcare costs by making sure older adults have access to classes that keep them physically active and healthy.
- Park and recreation agencies exist in every community. Enhancing your members' access to health and wellness programs is an effective strategy to encourage your members to become more physically active and healthy.
- Surveys following participants' involvement in evidence-based physical activity programs reflected very positive responses to questions about their social, mental and physical health, which yielded a marked improvement on every area of health and well-being compared to their responses prior to participating in the program.<sup>31</sup>

26 Manatt, P. and Phillips, LLP. "Medicaid's Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health." (2019, February 1). Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Retrieved from <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2019/02/medicaid-s-role-in-addressing-social-determinants-of-health.html>

27 Ackermann, R. T., Williams, B., Nguyen, H. Q., Berke, E. M., Maciejewski, M. L., and LoGerfo, J. P. (2008). "Healthcare cost differences with participation in a community-based group physical activity benefit for medicare managed care health plan members." *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 56(8), 1459-1465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01804.x>

28 CDC. (2021). Health and Economic Costs of Chronic Diseases. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>

29 CDC. (2021). Arthritis Cost Statistics. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data\\_statistics/cost.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/cost.htm)

30 Ackermann, R. T., Williams, B., Nguyen, H. Q., Berke, E. M., Maciejewski, M. L., and LoGerfo, J. P. (2008). "Healthcare cost differences with participation in a community-based group physical activity benefit for medicare managed care health plan members." *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 56(8), 1459-1465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01804.x>

31 NRPA. (2020). Conclusions from NRPA's Mental Health Survey Pilot: Spring 2019 to 2020, Evidence-based Exercises.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRPA

Older adults take part in a fitness class at the Juanita Pohl Center in Oregon.

**Impact:** Health and wellness classes can improve an individual’s health and tackle the major drivers of healthcare costs by providing convenient and accessible options for older adults to lead an active and healthy life.

- Health and wellness programs help older adults reduce their risk of falling or fracturing bones.<sup>32</sup>
- Research on older adults who participated in community, evidence-based, physical activity programs showed that during a 12-month period, they had significantly fewer hospitalizations, lower adjusted specialty costs, and nearly \$2,000 lower total healthcare costs than those who did not participate in the classes. Costs continued to be lower in the second year.<sup>33</sup>
- Four of the five most costly chronic conditions in older adults can be prevented or managed with physical activity.<sup>34</sup>
- We are able to offer evidence-based programs to prevent and treat chronic conditions for an affordable price. The average health and wellness class at our organization costs \$(insert cost at your program) per user, per class.

**Call to Action:** Partnering with community-based organizations to support health and wellness programs for older adults presents an opportunity for even more of your members to live healthy and active lives. At the same time, organizations have the potential to help reduce financial costs that are associated with inactivity through utilizing evidence-based, physical activity programs for older adults.

32 CDC. (1999, November 17). *A Report of the Surgeon General: Physical Activity and Health, Older Adults*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/olderad.htm>

33 Ackermann, R. T., Williams, B., Nguyen, H. Q., Berke, E. M., Maciejewski, M. L., and LoGerfo, J. P. (2008). “Healthcare cost differences with participation in a community-based group physical activity benefit for medicare managed care health plan members.” *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 56(8), 1459-1465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01804.x>

34 CDC. (2021). *Adults Need More Physical Activity*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/inactivity-among-adults-50plus/index.html>

## Donors (Philanthropic, Foundations, High Net-Worth Individuals, etc.)

**Problem:** Physical inactivity is a major problem facing older adults that impacts both their health and quality of life.

- Too many older adults face isolation and sedentary lives that compromise their physical health and mental well-being and puts them at an increased risk of premature death.<sup>35</sup>
- Inactivity increases with age; more than a quarter of adults age 50 or older report no physical activity other than work.<sup>36</sup>
- Older adults face the dual challenge of chronic conditions and inactivity. Older adults with chronic conditions are at an increased risk of being inactive. Older adults who are inactive are at a greater risk of developing a chronic condition.<sup>37</sup>
- Arthritis has a profound impact on people, the economy and our country. In 2013, medical care costs and lost wages for adults with arthritis equaled one percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.<sup>38</sup>

**Solution:** Parks play an essential role in keeping older adults active, managing chronic disease and improving community connections.

- Physical activity is medicine for older adults. Park and recreation agencies are equipped to provide that medicine.<sup>39</sup>
- Community-based organizations are a resource in every older adult's community, offering them access to age-appropriate physical activity classes and the ability to form meaningful connections with other participants.
- Older adults can stay active and participate in health and wellness programs in their own communities at community-based organizations.

**Impact:** Participants in community adult physical activity classes report improvements in their physical and mental health following attendance in the classes.<sup>40</sup>

- Park and recreation agencies provide critical services for millions of older adults. Today, 70 percent of park and recreation agencies offer programs targeted toward older adults, and the average agency serves more than 160 older adults annually.<sup>41</sup>
- Studies have shown that physical activity helps manage many of the chronic diseases that older adults have an increased risk of developing.<sup>42</sup>
- For individuals with arthritis, walking can help reduce pain and joint swelling as well as improve their mobility and quality of life.<sup>43</sup>
- Physical activity helps older adults maintain the ability to live independently and reduces their risk of falling or fracturing bones, while also offering connections with other older adults in their community — either in person or remotely.<sup>44</sup>

**Call to Action:** To realize the full benefits of health and wellness programs for older adults, we must ensure community-based organizations have robust funding for these activities to continue.

- You have an opportunity to invest in community-based organizations now. Supporting health and wellness programs for older adults would allow even more people to live healthy lives.
- Your support for health and wellness programs at community-based organizations will help ensure older adults have access to a critical health intervention to keep them healthy and connected with their peers.

35 CDC. (2021, April 29). "Loneliness and Social Isolation Linked to Serious Health Conditions." (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

36 Watson, K.B., Carlson, S.A., Gunn, J.P., et al. (2016). "Physical Inactivity Among Adults Aged 50 Years and Older — United States, 2014." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*; 65:954-958. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6536a3.htm>

37 CDC. (2021). Adults Need More Physical Activity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/inactivity-among-adults-50plus/index.html>

38 CDC. (2021). Arthritis Cost Statistics. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data\\_statistics/cost.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/cost.htm)

39 Taylor, D. (2014). "Physical activity is medicine for older adults." *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 90(1059), 26-32. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1136/postgrad-medj-2012-131366>

40 Acumen, LLC, and Westat, Inc. (2017, November). *Wellness Prospective Evaluation*. Baltimore. Retrieved from <https://downloads.cms.gov/files/cmimi/community-based-wellness-revention-sixthmonth-outcomes-operational-costrpt.pdf>

41 NRPA. (2021). Park Programming and Better Health Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/fact-sheets/park-programming-better-health>

42 Watson, K.B., Carlson, S.A., Gunn, J.P., et al. (2016). "Physical Inactivity Among Adults Aged 50 Years and Older — United States, 2014." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*; 65:954-958. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6536a3.htm>

43 Callahan LF et al. (2011). Evaluation of group and self-directed formats of the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease program. *Arthritis Care and Research*, 63(8): 1098-1107.

44 CDC. (1999, November 17). *A Report of the Surgeon General: Physical Activity and Health, Older Adults*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/olderad.htm>

# Funding Resources

Aetna, Anthem, Cigna, Humana and United Healthcare are the five largest health insurers in the United States. These five plans insure approximately 100 million people. Consider looking for funding from their foundations. They provide grant funding that could serve as an entry point to connect with health insurers.

Foundation	Mission	Contact	Other Relevant Information <sup>45</sup>
<a href="#">Aetna Foundation</a> <sup>46</sup>	Aetna Foundation awards grants to local nonprofits across the United States to nurture innovations that can inspire healthier lifestyles.	860-273-6382	Aetna Foundation accepts applications for this program through an annual request for proposals.
<a href="#">Anthem Foundation</a> <sup>47</sup>	Anthem Foundation promotes the organization’s commitment to improving lives and communities. Through strategic partnerships and programs, the foundation is addressing the disparities and social drivers that will help create a healthier generation of Americans.	<a href="mailto:anthem.foundation@anthem.com">anthem.foundation@anthem.com</a>	Anthem Foundation funds public health-related initiatives that address disparities and social determinants that can positively affect conditions identified through its <b>Healthy Generations program</b> . <sup>48</sup> One focus of this program is to support healthy active lifestyles for individuals with disabilities to reduce healthcare disparities and improve access to care.
<a href="#">Cigna Foundation</a> <sup>49</sup>	Cigna Foundation’s mission is to improve health, well-being and peace of mind.	<a href="mailto:Foundationgrants@Cigna.com">Foundationgrants@Cigna.com</a>	The foundation focuses on different topics each quarter. In the second quarter, it provides grants for prevention, treatment and research for chronic diseases, including wellness programs promoting exercise, fitness and healthy lifestyle choices.  The foundation has a history <sup>50</sup> of funding health and wellness programs for older adults.
<a href="#">Humana Foundation</a> <sup>51</sup>	The Humana Foundation aims to promote more healthy days and encourage greater health equity.	<a href="mailto:humanafoundation@humana.com">humanafoundation@humana.com</a>	

<sup>45</sup> This data was current as of October 2021. Foundations’ strategies and focus may change after this time.

<sup>46</sup> CVS Health. (2021). Aetna Foundation. Retrieved from <https://cvshealth.com/social-responsibility/aetna-foundation>

<sup>47</sup> Anthem. (2021). Anthem Corporate Responsibility. Retrieved from <https://www.anthemcorporateresponsibility.com/anthem-foundation>

<sup>48</sup> Anthem. (2021). Healthy Generations. Retrieved from <https://www.anthemcorporateresponsibility.com/healthy-generations>

<sup>49</sup> Cigna. (2021). Cigna Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.cigna.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/cigna-foundation>

<sup>50</sup> Cigna. (2021). Press Releases. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.cigna.com/latest-press-release>

<sup>51</sup> The Humana Foundation. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.humanafoundation.org>

<p><b>United Health Foundation</b><sup>52</sup></p>	<p>The United Health Foundation focuses on developing and supporting innovative and evidence-based activities that help the health system work better. The foundation identifies meaningful partnerships and initiatives that have the potential to be scaled — leading to improved access to care, better health outcomes and healthier communities.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:unitedhealthfoundationinfo@uhg.com">unitedhealthfoundationinfo@uhg.com</a></p>	<p>Updates on grant opportunities can be found at the <a href="#">foundation news</a>.<sup>53</sup></p>
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## Where to Go From Here

NRPA has provided you with tools and information to help you on your journey to securing funding for health and wellness programs for older adults. Here are next steps to help you in the initial stages of forming a funding partnership.

1. Complete the resource checklist to see where your association is in the financing journey.
2. Reach out to NRPA members, community-based organizations and your network about forming a funding partnership.
3. Form an exploratory group to discuss forming a funding partnership. If you decide to pursue a funding partnership, use the tips and project charter to ensure the goals, objectives and management are clearly defined.
4. You will need to decide if the partnership will pursue grant funding, contract with health insurers for reimbursement or pursue other funding options. Examine the benefits and challenges of different funding types to determine which type(s) best suits your funding needs. If you plan on pursuing grants, consider looking for funding opportunities at the major health insurers' foundations.
5. Tailor communications to highlight your partnership's strengths to potential funders. Use the tips to create a messaging framework and tailor the messages and proof points to highlight your work to public health agencies, health insurers and donors.
6. After you have taken these steps, start reaching out to potential funders to discuss collaborations and funding opportunities.



<sup>52</sup> United Health Foundation. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/what-we-do/building-healthier-communities/our-foundations.html>

<sup>53</sup> UnitedHealth Group. (2021). Keyword search for "undefined." Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3d4zNfD>

# Additional Resources

There are additional resources available on how to navigate identifying funding opportunities, contracting with insurers and supporting partnerships.

- [The Administration for Community Living](#)<sup>54</sup> has resources on health promotion programs.
- The Aging and Disability Business Institute's<sup>55</sup> "[Getting Started](#)" section provides several resources, including:
  - [Contracting Toolkit](#)<sup>56</sup>
  - [Cross-Sectoral Partnerships: Incentives for Hospitals and Health Systems](#)<sup>57</sup>
  - [Community-Based Organizations and Health Care Contracting: Building & Strengthening Partnerships](#)<sup>58</sup>
  - [How to Build a Business Case for CBO Services](#)<sup>59</sup>
  - [Readiness Assessment](#)<sup>60</sup>
  - ["Five Key Factors for Successful Health Care & CBO Partnerships"](#)<sup>61</sup>
  - [Embracing the Culture of Accountability: How We Measure Success in Achieving Our Mission](#)<sup>62</sup>
- The Department of Health and Human Services has a [Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide](#).<sup>63</sup>
- [Cigna's benefits](#)<sup>64</sup> can serve as a marketing example.
- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention page on arthritis](#).<sup>65</sup>
- The National Council on Aging provides several resources, including:
  - A step-by-step guide on planning, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of evidenced-based programming
  - ["Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Programs"](#),<sup>66</sup> which reviews community programs that meet criteria for evidence-based programs funded through the Older Americans Act Title III-D
  - [Key Components for Professionals](#)<sup>67</sup>: Sustainability
  - [Massachusetts Healthy Living Center of Excellence Sustainability Plan](#)<sup>68</sup>: Here you can find a plan on how to implement evidence-based disease management programs for older adults and how to partner with medical providers and community-based social service agencies.
- [USAging website](#)<sup>69</sup>

54 Administration for Community Living (ACL). (2021). Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://acl.gov/programs/health-wellness/disease-prevention>

55 Aging and Disability Business Institute. (2021). Getting Started. Retrieved from <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/resources/getting-started>

56 Aging and Disability Business Institute. (2020). Contracting Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/adbi-resource/contracting-toolkit>

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# Acknowledgements

## About NRPA

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this vision by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DAWN CRIBB, DEKALB COUNTY RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

A group participates in the DeKalb County (Georgia) Senior Olympics Track and Field event Buck Godfrey Stadium in Decatur.



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