

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

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The Learning Network for Active Aging

Active for Life National Program

RWJF Grant ID: 053981

June 1, 2006- May 31, 2009

Total amount of the grant: \$370,000

Goal of the project as described in the proposal:

This proposal addresses the establishment of the Learning Network to share learnings from Active for Life[®] and other related programs on strategies for enhancing active aging. Secondary objectives are to: 1) identify basic components of a Learning Network and 2) determine best administrative structures and mechanisms for implementing a learning network.

May 31, 2009

Final Narrative Report

1. What measurable goals did you set for this project and what indicators did you use to measure your performance? To what extent has your project achieved these goals and levels of performance?

Measurable goals set for this project and indicators used to measure performance

Great strides have been made in reaching the project goals to share learnings from Active for Life[®] (AFL) and other related programs on strategies for enhancing active aging. The primary goals set forth in the planning and implementation of the Learning Network (LN) were to: 1) increase awareness of the intersection between active aging and smart growth principles, 2) establish a functional website to serve as an interactive resource and clearinghouse, and 3) foster collaboration and networking with other related programs. Secondary goals of the project were to 1) identify basic components of a learning network and, 2) to determine best administrative structures and mechanisms for implementing a learning network.

Details about specific goals, objectives, and accomplishments are listed below.

Goal 1.1. Increasing Awareness- A primary goal and focus of the LN was to increase awareness of active aging principles and smart growth to community and health professionals. First, project staff identified key elements and resources related to the project focus that would be the most useful and effective resources for community and health professionals. The main elements identified included the latest and most sound evidence-based research, best practices, toolkits, and other useful resources such as cost-calculators, online webinars, checklists, etc.

To increase awareness of these resources and tools available made on the interactive website, project staff laid out a plan to market the LN with three main objectives: a) assignment of key staff to attend national and professional meetings where presentations and discussion groups would be held to increase awareness, b) dissemination of media such as flyers, articles, newsletters, press-releases, etc. at meetings and discussion groups, through key partners, and via internet based resources such as list-serves, emails, and websites, c) collaboration with local and national partners.

Accomplishments-

- National conferences and professional meetings- Expanded reach by disseminating media such as LN publications and through networking at these meetings. Collectively, staff has attended approximately over 20 professional meetings with distribution of flyers (approx. 100-200 flyers per meeting).
- Presentations at professional meetings—Abstracts were submitted and accepted for presentation at 16 professional meetings where staff presented information about the LN and current successes and challenges at the time. Additionally, invitations were extended to LN staff to give LN presentations at 3 professional meetings. An estimated 20 to 100 participants were in attendance at each of these given presentations. These presentations were key in providing an opportunity to share findings and lessons learned in implementing and maintaining the LN, as well as a great way to promote the LN to professionals.
- Dissemination of LN Media— Flyers, articles, newsletters, press-releases, peer-reviewed publications, online modules, were the main media used to increase awareness of the LN, its

resources and tools. The LN has been highlighted in eight prominent newsletters, and three peer-reviewed publications.

- LN participants/members- Interested individuals are tracked in the LN database and through contact lists. There has been a great response to the LN and the number of interested individuals has reached more than 500 individuals of various professional interests (researchers, architects, community planners, social service and healthcare workers, etc).
- Through collaboration with local and national partners, the LN has been advertised via flyers, presentations, word-of-mouth, and has been listed as a direct link with accompanying descriptions of the LN on partner websites and pertinent LN fact sheets and flyers available for downloading/viewing. The LN has been a primary sponsor for Community Coalition meetings, aging consortiums, and Lunch and Learn seminars.

Goal 1.2. Establish A Functional Website- The main mode of disseminating information was through an interactive LN website designed to be easily accessible and user-friendly. The LN website would provide active aging and smart growth information, best-practices, evidence-based research, tools and useful resources as indicated in the grant proposal. In planning the website, project staff identified four main functions to be implemented in the website: 1) principles of active aging principles and smart growth defined, 2) news with latest research, tools, policy and implications in active aging and smart growth research, 3) serve as a clearinghouse for active aging and smart growth related research, and 4) interactive website using technological tools such as webinars, list-serves, modules, forums, etc.

Throughout development of the website, feedback from was used to curtail the website to the needs and desires participants expressed in discussion groups and from surveys.

Accomplishments-

- The LN team worked together with LT Web Design to produce the LN website (www.lnactiveaging.org). After eight months of planning and programming, the site went live in May 2007. The sight is easily accessed, easily used, easily navigated, easily updated, interactive, attractive, and ADA compliant.
- *Site Design-* Innovative open-source technology with the Plone software for the website. It is cost efficient (free), easy to administrate, has high functionality and can be adapted more easily than proprietary software. This software is a great resource and model for other learning networks.
 - Professionally designed banner, layout, features and functions. Added a calendar component and updated list of future meetings and conferences, site search, site map, accessibility, and log-in functions.
 - Able to train staff to use CMS for increased efficiency, maintenance and updates to the web site.
- *Site Content-* The site is user-driven and includes interactive features such as the forums, user friendly resources and links, news about new resources and information.
 - Development of new online curriculum modules, titled “Building Capacity to Evaluate Evidence-Based Health Promotion (EBHP) Programs for Older Adults: A Multi-Component Blueprint for Program Evaluators” as part of the educational activities of the RWJF Active for Life and Building Healthy Communities initiatives.

- Development of online forums for information sharing among members. Although use of these forums never fully went underway, an understanding of how to best implement these forums and manage them will serve as useful information for other learning networks.
- Selectively expanded the number of categories available for resources to benefit users, as well as having also increased the amount of resources and tools made available on the LN website. Added information for users included FAQ's, a relevant glossary and list of related research programs.
- Astonishingly, there was little user interest in webinars. Project staff utilized an alternative, more cost-effective measure, by linking to partners existing web-based, content related educational courses and presentations.

Goal 1.3. Collaboration/Networking- A key component of the LN was building relationships through networking and collaboration with key partners. Evaluation of the project was done through communication with principal contacts and users about what types of material and technical assistance activities would be most useful as well as materials and learning's they would be able to share.

Accomplishments-

- Leveraged resources to utilize workshops and product development by partner organizations.
 - Major focuses included: promotion of the EPA's Aging Initiative for the Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging awards program; partnered with NCOA for "Best Practices Report"; contractors UIUC and HAN have completed their work and the products are available on the LN website.
- Through collaboration with community partners, project staff aided in identifying steps involved in developing a building healthy communities for active aging coalition.
- Project staff was able to accomplish goals more efficiently by meeting with key people and content experts on topics such as website content, project feedback and sustainability plans at national level conferences.

Secondary goals of the project:

Goal 2.1. Identify basic components of a learning network. A learning network provides a very practical approach for communities to learn from one another through mentoring and information sharing, and will serve to increase collaboration between government agencies, academia, non-governmental and for-profit organizations.

Accomplishments

- A learning network model was created through identification of the resources invested to the process and activities, and by bridging research and practice through an innovative approach of e-collaboration and networking.
- Identified multiple strategies for promoting healthy environments for older adults.
- Learned innovative ways to build on learning's already available, simplified access to information, reduce duplication of efforts, locate effective research-based information, resources and tools, highlight best practices, identify and share effective programs, find support, recognize environments that support healthy living, describe challenges and barriers, link new and experienced professionals, disseminate research translation, focus on sustainability, plan future programs, and develop policy.

Goal 2.2. Determine the best administrative structures and mechanisms for implementing a learning network.

Accomplishments

- The LN model serves as a blueprint that can be used by other learning networks or similar projects. Although not all aspects of creating a learning network may be appropriate for every organization, they can adopt those components that are.

2. Did the project encounter internal or external challenges? How were they addressed? Was there something RWJF could have done to assist you?

The challenges encountered were primarily related to project implementation taking longer than expected. Major challenges identified included: having to work with multiple partners, utilizing Open Source Software, personnel illness, and contract time lines. The effect on the project was both positive and negative. Momentum was lost at critical times, disabling the ability to collaboratively with partners, to leverage our resources and to develop additional products. Challenges were coped with it by adapting the work plan and requesting additional project time. RWJF assisted through their involvement in LN partnerships and by allowing us a no-cost extension.

3. Has your organization received funding from other foundations, corporations or government bodies for the project RWJF has been supporting?

While funding from other entities was not received, resources were leveraged by collaborating on projects with partners including the National Blueprint, the EPA, International Council on Aging, CDC Healthy Aging Network, our CDC funded Prevention Research Center, and Administration on Aging evidence-based activities.

Did the project receive funding after RWJF's funding ended that allowed your organization to continue the work? Please describe the funding and the project's continuation.

While funding has not been received to continue the work, the web content and activities will be sustained through the Active Aging Community Center sponsored by Human Kinetics and which sustains activities from the National Blueprint on Aging and the International Council on Aging as well. In addition, content developed by partners such as the Healthy Aging Network, the National Coalition on Aging, and the Environmental Protection Agency are co-branded with the Learning Network will continue to be accessible through their web-sites and other resources.

4. When considering the design and implementation of this project, what lessons did you learn that might help other grantees implement similar work in this field?

The most valuable lessons learned were the importance of collaboration with key partners and leveraging of resources to increase the breadth and reach of evidence-based information about active aging and building healthy communities. Additionally, web-based materials without drivers to the web are underutilized. It takes an active web master to keep the site looking fresh. The Active Aging Community Center will bring needed resources to continuing the initial goal of advancing research and practice on active aging and smart growth principles.

5. What impact do you think the project has had to date? Who can be contacted a few years from now to follow up on the project?

The LN website was created to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of research findings to communities and professionals working to assist older adults in their pursuit of healthy, active lives. The scope of this project has expanded considerably since its inception. Through collaboration with partners, the LN team participated in developing tools, consensus statements and a national award program recognizing Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging. These collaborations have also increased the breadth and reach of evidence-based information about active aging and building healthy communities. This work should provide resources to interested communities which will help them translate evidence-based research including Active for Life programs into practice.

Dr. Marcia G. Ory, Regent Professor, at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health can be contacted about the project in the future.

6. What are the post-grant plans for the project if it does not conclude with the grant?

The post-grant plans for the project include continued access to web content and activities. The Active Aging Community Center sponsored by Human Kinetics (which sustains activities from the National Blueprint on Aging and the International Council on Aging) will now serve as the website administrator.

7. With a perspective on the entire project, what have been its key publications and national/regional communications activities? Did the project meet its communications goals?

National and regional communications activities, included discussion groups, professional presentations, and peer-reviewed publications. Project staff made at least four major presentations about the project at the following organizations annual meetings: Gerontological Society of America, 2006, Dallas, TX; the National Council on Aging, 2007, Chicago, IL; the American Public Health Association, 2007 and 2008, Washington, D.C. and San Diego, CA. Additionally, presentations were made to regional groups such as the League of Women Voters of Arlington meeting, in April 2008, Arlington, TX.

The project did meet its communication goals through presenting information on a local and national level, disseminating materials via the internet, peer-reviewed publications in journals, newsletter articles, and collaboration with key partners expanding the reach.

Final Bibliography
Learning Network for Active Aging
RWJF Grant ID: 053981
June 1, 2006 – May 31, 2009

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Articles

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Park, C.H., Malavasi, L., Liles, C., Park, E., Rogers, M., Senior J., Zhou L.J., Ory, M., Chodzko-Zaico, W. National Blueprint Report: strategies for integrating physical Activity into wellness programming for Older Adults. *The Journal on Active Aging*, March/April 2008: 66-68

Ory M.G., Liles, C., and Lawler, K. Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging: Setting the Stage for Community Action (*to be submitted 2009*)

Smith, M. L., Wade, A., Mounce, C., Prochaska, J. D., Wade, C.R., Horel, S., & Ory, M. (2009). *Successful evidence-based programming for older rural participants: Geographic variations*. To be presented at the *American Public Health Association Annual Conference*, November 7-11, 2009, Philadelphia, PA.

Smith, M. L., Wade, A., Mounce, C., Prochaska, J. D., Larsen, R. A. A., & Ory, M. (2009). Characteristics and benefits for older women in an evidence-based falls prevention program. To be presented at the *American Public Health Association Annual Conference*, November 7-11, 2009, Philadelphia, PA.

Smith, M. L., Ory, M., Wade, A., Mounce, C., Wade, C.R., & Prochaska, J. D. (2009). Successful evidence-based programming for older racial and ethnic minority participants: Implications for program implementation and dissemination. Poster to be presented at the *American Public Health Association Annual Conference*, November 7-11, 2009, Philadelphia, PA.

Ory, M., Smith, M. L., Wade, A., Mounce, Larsen, R. A. A., C., Prochaska, J. D., & Parrish, R. (2009). Falls prevention as a pathway to successful aging: Statewide implementation and dissemination of an evidence-based program. Symposium presentation to be presented at the *American Public Health Association Annual Conference*, November 7-11, 2009, Philadelphia, PA.

Reports (including evaluation reports, fact sheets and issue briefs)

Learning Network for Active Aging one-pager, first published version, Learning Network for Active Aging, 2006. Also appears at: www.inactiveaging.org/resources/learning-network-for-active-aging-resources

Building on Best Practices: Consensus Report on Physical Activity Programming the National Blueprint on Aging and Active for Life, Learning Network for Active Aging, November 2007. Also appears at: www.inactiveaging.org/news/building-on-best-practices-consensus-report-on-wwww.inactiveaging.org/resources/PA-Best-Practices-Report.pdf/view
www.healthyagingprograms.com/resources/PA_Best_Practices_Report.pdf

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Learning Network for Active Aging one-pager, second published version, Learning Network for Active Aging, 2007. Also appears at: www.inactiveaging.org/resources/learning-network-for-active-aging-resources

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Survey Instruments

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Website

www.inactiveaging.com The Learning Network website was created to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of research findings to communities and professionals working to assist older adults in their pursuit of healthy, active lives. During the second year, the web site was redesigned to be more easily accessed, easily used, easily navigated, user friendly, easily updated, interactive and ADA compliant. The site is user driven and includes interactive features such as the forums, story forms, structured interviews, user friendly resources and links, news about new resources and information, using open-source technology with the Plone software for our website. Main pages accessed from the home-site include: About Us, Contact, Links, Forum, News, Connect with Us, Resources, What’s New, Meetings/Conferences, and Calendar. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/about The Learning Network website “About Us” page includes a brief description of LN Partners and a link to the LN management team individual bibliographies.

College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/contact-info The Learning Network website includes a new page with an easy to use form that users may use to contact our staff. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/links The Learning Network website “Links” page provides web links for LN Partners. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/forum The Learning Network website “Forum” page provides users with the opportunity to participate in a variety of topics related to the LN, active aging, smart growth, etc. It is a forum for discussion on building healthy communities and managed by LN staff. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.com/news The Learning Network website “News” page includes a frequently updated list of the latest research and resources (reports, links, tools, media, etc.) focused on topics related to Active Aging and Smart Growth for communities and professionals to use. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/connect The Learning Network website “Connect with Us” page provide users with information on joining the LN and the link to join. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.com/whats-new The Learning Network website “What’s New” page includes a frequently updated list of the latest select resources (reports, links, tools, media, etc.) focused on topics related to Active Aging and Smart Growth for communities and professionals to use. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.com/resources The Learning Network website resource page includes a new list of selected resources (reports, links, tools, media, etc.) focused on topics related to Active Aging and Smart Growth for communities and professionals to use. Resource topics include: aging in America, best practices, community-based participatory research, cost analysis, evaluation, fitness assessment, getting started, intergenerational, livable communities, nutrition, physical activity and health, Learning Network resources, and other helpful informational links (i.e. FAQ, glossary, research programs, grant support, BHCAA awards). College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/resources/learning-network-for-active-aging-resources The Learning Network website includes a new page with products produced by the Learning network, as well as co-produced products. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions The Learning Network website includes a new page with frequently asked questions and answers we receive for communities and professionals. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/resources/glossary The Learning Network website includes a new page with a glossary. This page was added to provide users of the LN with an understanding of common terminology and the accompanying definitions that is used when discussing Active Aging and Smart Growth. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/resources/research-programs The Learning Network website includes a new page with descriptions on several related aging programs focused on research. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/resources/submission-for-building-healthy-communities-for The Learning Network website added a new page to promote the Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging award program sponsored annually by the EPA. This page provides information regarding application submission and previous winners, as well as links to the main site. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/meetings-conferences/conf2008 The Learning Network website “Meetings/Conferences” page includes a list of selected upcoming conferences and meetings that those involved in Active Aging and Smart Growth may be interested in. These are also updated on the new calendar function on the web site. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/sitemap The Learning Network website has added a new page with a site map which enables users to have another way of finding what they are looking for within the web site. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/accessibility-info The Learning Network website includes a new page with descriptions on several related aging programs focused on research. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.inactiveaging.org/login_form The Learning Network website now includes a “log in” function for users to create their own user name and password, allowing them the ability to participate fully in the forums. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

<http://www.easyforyou.info> The EASY (Exercise And Screening for You tool/website) was developed by an expert panel of interdisciplinary researchers and clinicians with experience in establishing physical activity programs for older adults. The tool provides older adults and professionals with recommendations for safe and appropriate activities in

light of known risk factors. It offers a comprehensive approach in matching individuals to an appropriate exercise program, identifying potential risk factors associated with exercise, providing safety tips and encouraging communication with medical providers. The screening tool can be either downloaded or accessed as an online, interactive form with the six EASY questions. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

www.activeforlife.info Active for Life® website was developed by the directors and staff at the Active for Life® National Program Office. The website provided tools, resources, information for aging adults and physical activity. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life® National Program Office.

Presentations

Ory, M.G., “The Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging: A Multi-Level Approach to Bridging Research and Practice,” at the Gerontological Society of America’s annual meeting, November 19, 2006, Dallas, TX. Proceedings of the meeting available at: http://www.agingconference.com/2006/conference_program.cfm

Ory, M.G., “Creating Healthy Communities: A New Recognition Program,” at the National Council on Aging, March 2007, Chicago, IL. Proceedings of the meeting available at: www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=247

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Ory, M.G. “Translating Research to Practice: Lessons Learned from Active for Life.” Zuckerman College of Health. University of Arizona. Tucson, AZ. June 2007.

Pillemer, K.A., Ory, M.G., Haymowitz, E., and Goldman, D. “Integrating Aging Research and Interventions: Translational Research in Community-Based Partnerships.” Presentation to the 60th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, San Francisco, CA. November 2007.

Ory, M.G. “Learning Network for Active Aging: Challenges and Successes to Date” at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, November 2, 2007, Washington, D.C. Presentation available at: www.inactiveaging.org/resources/learning-network-for-active-aging-resources ; Proceedings of the meeting available online at: http://apha.confex.com/apha/135am/techprogram/paper_159181.htm

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Products

2007 Commitment Award for Excellence in Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging. United States Environmental Protection Agencies, Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2007-20008.

Learning Network for Active Aging banner. This newly designed banner is used for the LN web site and publications. Produced February 2008.

“Introduction to Health Promotion Programs for Older Adults Series” online modules 1-5. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/mainmenu.htm

“Making the Case for Health Promotion and Older Adults” online module 1. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/module1.htm

“What is Evidence-based Health Promotion?” online module 2. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/module2.htm

“Assuring Program Quality: The Importance of Reach and Adoption” online module 3. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/module3.htm

“Assuring Program Quality: The Importance of Fidelity” online module 4. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/module4.htm>

“Assuring Program Quality: The Importance of Maintenance” online module 5. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2008. Appears at: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/captivate/module5.htm>

Online Learning Modules 6-8 in the Health Promotion Programs for Older Adults Series. This three-part mini-series is on "making effective presentations" and is in addition to the first 5 modules, which were presented on in July 2008. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2009. Modules 6-8 are yet to be posted but modules 1-5 appear at: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/content.asp?sectionid=135>

"Evidence-based Health Promotion for Older Adults: NCOA's Online Training Modules" Poster. NCOA Healthy Aging Programs, and the Learning Network for Active Aging, 2009.

EASY (Exercise And Screening for You tool). Developed by an expert panel of interdisciplinary researchers and clinicians with experience in establishing physical activity programs for older adults. The tool provides older adults and professionals with recommendations for safe and appropriate activities in light of known risk factors. It offers a comprehensive approach in matching individuals to an appropriate exercise program, identifying potential risk factors associated with exercise, providing safety tips and encouraging communication with medical providers. The screening tool can be either downloaded or accessed as an online, interactive form with the six EASY questions. College Station, TX: Learning Network for Active Aging, Active for Life National Program Office. Found at: <http://www.easyforyou.info>