

Press Release



THE ERICKSON SCHOOL
OF AGING STUDIES

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Maryland Department of Aging and UMBC Partner to Strengthen Community Support for Older Adults

BALTIMORE, MD — Maryland Department of Aging Secretary Carmel Roques and University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) President Valerie Sheares Ashby signed an agreement today launching a new partnership to empower local communities in supporting the state's growing population of older adults.

Through this partnership, UMBC's Erickson School of Aging Studies will provide specialized training to equip community leaders across the state with the tools to better serve aging residents, directly supporting the goals of Longevity Ready Maryland.

The partnership will launch with four regional asset-based community development sessions designed to help community leaders, professionals, and advocates around the state identify and mobilize existing local assets—such as organizations, volunteer groups, and community spaces—to create age-friendly environments and enhance longevity-ready support systems.



"To build a truly longevity-ready state, we must empower action at the local level," said **Department of Aging Secretary Carmel Roques**. "By focusing on a community's strengths, we can help local leaders better coordinate available and valuable resources to build more sustainable, effective, and inclusive support systems that allow older Marylanders to thrive. This approach fosters collaboration and encourages residents to be agents of change, which is essential for creating a state where no one is left behind."

"UMBC is thrilled to partner with the Maryland Department of Aging on this important initiative, which uses a proven framework for collaboration to help communities better serve older Marylanders," said **UMBC President Valerie Sheares Ashby**. "This work is central to our mission as a public university, allowing us to apply the renowned expertise of our Erickson School to directly strengthen communities across the state."

UMBC will develop the training curriculum and lead the sessions, drawing on the Erickson School's expertise in aging studies and community engagement. The Department of Aging will support logistics, outreach, and identifying key community partners to plan and participate in the training.

This community-driven approach is a core component of Longevity Ready Maryland (LRM), signed in July of 2025 by Governor Wes Moore. LRM is our state's multisector plan for aging which aims to coordinate efforts across state, local, public, and private sectors to optimize health, promote economic security, and foster social connection for older Marylanders.

Asset-Based Community Development Training Sessions and Registration:

The first training takes place in Frostburg, MD on October 29th, in partnership with Frostburg University, the Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, and Live Together. To register, visit <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/hfjppjm>. Future locations in Prince George's County and the Eastern and Lower shores will be announced at a later date. Stay up to date at irm.maryland.gov/stakeholders.

About the Maryland Department of Aging: The mission of the Maryland Department of Aging is to prepare for the state's growing population of older adults by developing innovative approaches to aging, advancing multisector collaborations, and providing equitable access to resources. Guided by a vision to transform systems so all older adults can lead healthy, financially secure, socially connected, and purposeful lives, the Department works to modernize infrastructure, protect the rights of older adults, and reframe the narrative around aging. Visit aging.maryland.gov to learn more.

About the Erickson School of Aging Studies at UMBC: The Erickson School of Aging Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County is a national leader in the field of aging. The School offers undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare students for leadership roles in the longevity economy, focusing on the integration of research, policy, and practice to improve the lives of older adults. Visit erickson.umbc.edu to learn more.