

2021 Dates and Times (each cohort meets twice for 1 ½ hours)

Click the date to register

- [October 22nd and 29th \(Fridays, 9-10:30am\)](#)
- [November 4th and 11th \(Thursdays, 3-4:30pm\)](#)
- [November 29th and December 6th \(Mondays, 6:30-8:00pm\)](#)
- **More cohorts will be scheduled**

Illinois Aging Together is a statewide campaign to advance aging equity. To move the state in this direction, we have developed the Illinois Aging Together Policy Academy to provide education and training to advocates to engage in this campaign.

We are all aging. With our growing aging population, we have a new opportunity to reimagine purpose, value, and connections throughout our lives. To support aging equity across the life course, Illinois should develop a Strategic Action Plan for Aging.

By exploring state-wide trends, policies, and programs in aging in Illinois through the lens of social and health equity, future ambassadors for aging equity will learn how to advocate for policies and programs that help all Illinoisans reach their full potential throughout their life journeys. Also, future ambassadors will receive training in advocacy skills to prepare for engaging with officials. Illinois Aging Together Policy Ambassadors will contribute to this campaign by advocating for passage of legislation for a strategic action plan on aging and other aging issues of importance to them.

Are you passionate about aging and equity? Are you interested in helping make policy change happen? Join us at a Policy Academy by clicking one of the dates above!

Over the two sessions, a variety of topics will be explored for attendees to understand the multiple policies, programs, and systems that impact individuals along the life path and as older people, as well as skills to advocate for policy change:

- Older Americans Act, aging policies, and waiver programs
- Long-term Services and Supports: Community-based services, housing, and health care
- Relevance of structural inequities and social determinants of health to aging
- Demographic trends
- Advancing equity by counteracting myths, bias, ageism, and other inequities
- Socioeconomics of aging and inequities in longevity
- Current aging initiatives
- Advocacy tools and training
- Each class builds on the information from the previous class. Between classes, there will be additional opportunities to learn from links to readings, videos, and other resources.

Virtual classes, each cohort is limited to 25 attendees. All participants who complete the sessions will receive an e-certificate of completion. CEUs are provided through UIC; if participants would like CEUs, there will be an additional \$10 fee, payable to UIC at time of CEU request.

Registration fee: Sliding scale

Presented by: Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Learn more about the presenters:

Sandra Pastore, MSW, Health and Aging Policy Organizer



Sandy joined Health and Medicine in March 2021 to develop and drive a campaign for a Strategic Action Plan for Aging to move toward aging equity in the state of Illinois. She is also spearheading an ongoing initiative to create a High School Gerontology program to support the needs of the older adult population through a better prepared upcoming labor force. Previously, Sandy was the Executive Director of Oswego Senior Center, which she helped develop from a grass-roots initiative into a non-profit post-school concept senior center with an integrated adult day program. With over two decades of professional experience in social services and the aging network, she is a systems thinker who understands how theory, policy, and practice intersect with trends, needs, and the preferences of diverse populations to create meaningful initiatives and develop sustainable programs that promote health equity. Sandra received her bachelor's degree from University of Illinois at Chicago in Sociology with a minor in Women's Studies and she received her Master of Social Work with a specialization in Gerontology from Aurora University. She is a member of the Kendall County 708 Mental Health Board, Oswegoland Park Foundation Board, and 100 Women Who Care: OMY. She enjoys cooking, art, woodworking, the outdoors, travel, and spending time with family and friends.

Wesley Eplin, MPH, Policy Director



Wesley's work focuses on advancing health equity and public health, health reform and health safety net, and aging equity across the life course. As Policy Director, he leads development of and tracking of Health & Medicine's annual policy agenda. Wesley advocates for equitable policies across structural inequities, making a public health argument for justice in social determinants such as housing. Wesley contributes to public health and broader planning efforts, including the *Healthy Chicago 2.0* and *Healthy Chicago 2025* plans, the *OnTo 2050* Regional Plan, and the *We Will Chicago* citywide plan. At Health & Medicine, Wesley helped develop and leads planning for the Chicago Forum for Justice in Health Policy. He is also on the steering committee for the Collaborative for Health Equity Cook County.

Wesley earned a Master of Public Health degree in Community Health Sciences from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health (SPH) and a BA in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 2016, Wesley was selected for the inaugural cohort of the Culture of Health Leaders, a national leadership program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create collaborative solutions that address health inequities and move communities and organizations toward a Culture of Health. During the program, he co-developed and piloted the Organizing Health institute to train people in health organizing. Outside of his work at Health & Medicine, Wesley is a co-founder of Radical Public Health, a group at the UIC SPH that moves the public health field to focus on root causes of health inequities. In his spare time, Wesley enjoys gardening and cooking, reading, and travel.