

THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE



2015 White House Conference on Aging Program/Facilitator Guide

Background for Program Staff at SAGE Affiliates (for use in developing flyers, e-blasts, program intros, etc.)

The White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) only happens every ten years and it sets national aging policy for the next decade. In 2015 it will be held in July (final date TBD).

It is imperative that we gather as many comments from LGBT older adults as we possibly can to ensure that our community's voices are heard and that our needs are addressed in the development of Federal aging policy.

The major topics/themes of the WHCOA are:

- Retirement Security
- Healthy Aging
- Long-Term Services & Support
- Elder Justice

The White House is gathering community input through five Regional Forums and listening sessions around the country. The dates for the Regional Forums are:

- February 19 – Tampa
- March 31 – Phoenix
- April 2 – Seattle
- April 27 – Cleveland
- May 28 - Boston

SAGE's ultimate goal is to see the issues of LGBT older adults addressed in Federal aging policy. Through this process we hope to:

- Shape an environment for LGBT aging policy asks on a local, state and Federal levels
- Maximize the engagement and input of LGBT elders, allies & donors Project the relevance of our SAGE affiliates as leaders & change agents
- Build the national SAGE brand and increase media recognition

From our policy analysis, we think the areas where LGBT voices can have the most impact are:

- Advancing non-discrimination protections
- Seeking culturally competent services and supports
- Asking for data collection (if we are not counted, we don't count)

How You Can Participate (For Program Staff)

The White House wants to hear from us!

SAGE has developed the following Discussion Guide to help SAGE affiliate leaders engage LGBT older adults in the process.

There are many ways you can participate.

- 1) You can encourage, and enable, as many constituents as possible to share their thoughts and stories with the White House using our [LGBT Voices Survey](#).
- 2) You can hold an event on the same day as a Regional Forum. Participants would watch a webcast of the live event in the morning and participate in a facilitated discussion afterwards. Their thoughts and concerns would be submitted using the [WHCOA Viewing Discussion Guide](#).
- 3) You can hold your own listening session with your constituents. A program is outlined below for your convenience.
- 4) You can integrate a mini WHCOA listening session into an existing program.
- 5) Encourage individuals to complete the LGBT Voices Survey by sharing the link with your stakeholders.
- 6) Place the SAGE WHCOA desktop image on your computer lab monitors. The image briefly explains why the WHCOA on aging is important and encourages LGBT and allied individuals to complete the LGBT Voices Survey.
- 7) Share SAGE's promotional items about the WHCOA on your social media platforms. SAGE's social media outlets can be found on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#).

Suggested Procedure

- Advertise your program or event in advance with newsletters, flyers, social media and e-blasts.
- Emphasize the importance of hearing people's stories.
- Think about capturing these stories on video or on paper and reusing these stories in newsletters, fundraising appeals, advocacy efforts, local media outreach, etc. The WH is also collecting your [video submissions](#).

Below is an example of a 70 Minute Program Itinerary

70 Minute Program

- 10 Minutes Welcome & Introductions
- 3 Minutes Background on the WHCOA (using introduction provided above).
- 2 minutes Ask each person to think about a time when they were uncomfortable revealing their LGBT identity to a doctor, nurse or other healthcare provider – and how that might have affected the quality of their care (maybe offer pen and paper to jot down notes).
- 5 minutes Break into groups of two and have everyone share their stories.
- 15 Minutes Invite those who heard a compelling story to share it with the room.
- 2 Minutes Ask each person to think about a time when they felt that they were discriminated against as an LGBT older adult in a housing, healthcare, or financial matter.
- 5 Minutes Break into groups of two with different people than before and have everyone share their stories.
- 15 Minutes Invite those who heard a compelling story to share it with the room.
- 5 Minutes Wrap up by asking folks to identify the themes that emerged over the last 70 minutes.
- 3 Minutes Invite everyone to complete the LGBT Voices Survey (explain a bit about the survey and mention that they can add their thoughts as well as their stories)
- 15 Minutes People complete the survey