

# A Message from the Director of the Illinois Department on Aging



**EngAging Illinois: A Comprehensive Plan for Living Well** speaks loud and clear, to policymakers and the public alike, that older adults, all of us as we age, are a priority here in the State of Illinois.

This comprehensive plan arrives right on time. Not only is the number of older adults increasing faster than ever, the needs and preferences of older adults are changing and growing more complex. There are far too many long-standing inequities and service gaps preventing many of us from living with a sense of security and optimism as we get older. It is time to roll up our sleeves, do the hard and necessary work of expanding services where possible and innovating where needed. **EngAging Illinois** represents a bold first step and a blueprint for action.

While responsible for the Plan's development, the Illinois Department on Aging cannot achieve the milestones set forth in the Plan on its own. As in all times of our lives, we have multiple, interconnected concerns and interests as we age. Physical and mental health, financial security, housing, transportation, caregiving, connections to family, to friends and community – all of these are essential parts of living well as we get older.

This Multisector Plan, therefore, seeks to produce more intentional and sustained connections and collaborations between and among more than two dozen state agencies, as well as a similarly diverse set of nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses. It is about all of us, working together to create a state full of age-friendly cities, towns, and communities.

In this moment deep cuts to Medicaid and the programs governed by the Older Americans Act may have created a sense of fear and confusion for those who care about aging. These challenges, while sobering, cannot dissuade us from reimagining a much better future. Let's embrace the ideas and actions in **EngAging Illinois** and work together to better the lives of everyone in our state as we age.

Mary Killough  
Director, Illinois Department on Aging