

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

Feb. 2024 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

Message From Interim Director Becky Dragoo



News and
Events

February may be a shorter month, but it has no shortage of winter celebrations, including the [Lunar New Year](#), Valentine's Day, and Black History Month.

Illinois' State
Plan on Aging

The national Black History Month theme, ***African Americans and the Arts***, highlights the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more. As you celebrate this year's theme, please consider nominating an Illinois-born or Illinois-based artist, musician, or entertainer aged 65+ for the [Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame](#) in the Arts category.

Find Services
in Your Area

February is also the first full month of tax season, and AARP's [Tax-Aide locator](#) is now live. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified to provide free help with simple tax returns. Be warned that their appointments fill up quickly, so don't delay in reserving a timeslot at a [location near you](#).

Senior
Illinoisans Hall
of Fame

For state income tax-related questions, you may contact the Illinois Department of Revenue's Taxpayer Assistance Division at 1-800-732-8866 or 217-782-3336.

License Plate
Discount

If you would like to learn about programs and services available to support older adults, you may contact the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 711 (TRS), or aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,



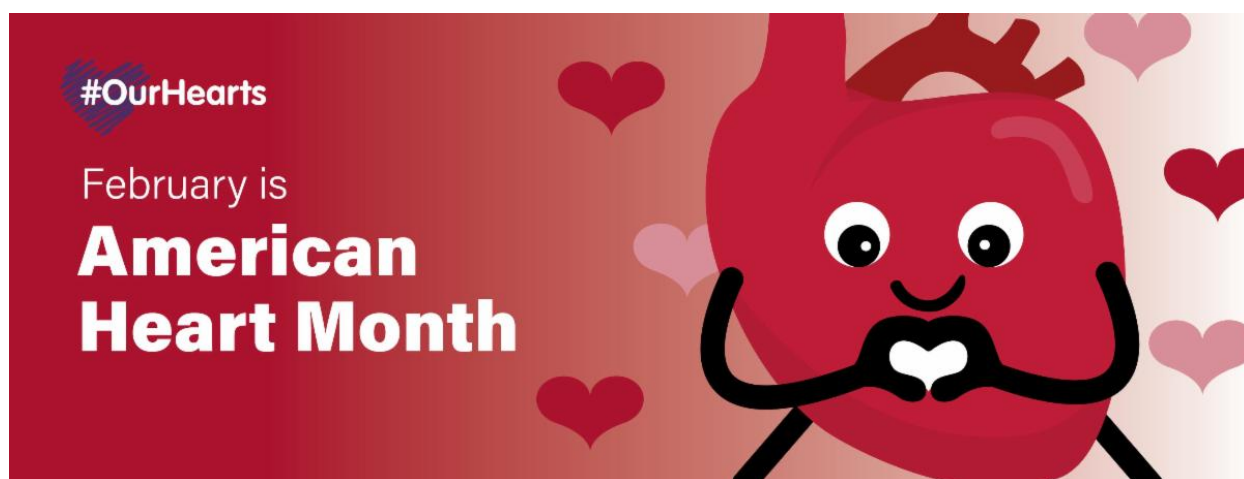
New IDoA Director, Mary Killough, to Start in March



Governor JB Pritzker recently announced the appointment of Mary Killough, a lifelong advocate for older adults, as the next director of the Department on Aging, pending Senate confirmation. Killough currently serves as Vice President of Operations and Government Relations for AccentCare, a national leader in home health and hospice services. She previously served as Deputy Director of IDoA from 2011-2015.

[Learn more](#)

February Is American Heart Month



Source: [@TheHeartTruth](#)

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for people aged 65 and older in the United States, but there are many ways to lower your risk of developing it.

If you have Medicare, you can receive a free cardiovascular [heart disease screening](#) annually, though you may need to pay a copay depending on your coverage. Heart disease screenings check your blood pressure and cholesterol to ensure you are not at risk for a stroke or heart disease. During the screening, your doctor may provide you with tips and resources to improve your health, such as adjusting your eating habits and incorporating health supplements into your weekly routine.

You may also consider making lifestyle changes to improve your cardiovascular and overall health:

- **Eat better.** Select nutritious snacks. Try whole fruits, dried fruits, unsalted rice cakes, fat-free and low-fat yogurt, or raw vegetables. Use herbs and spices instead of salt. To help you get the most bang for your buck, the National Council on Aging offers some [shopping tips](#) for eating heart-healthy on a budget.
- **Add more movement to your day.** Sit less. Take the stairs. Park a good walking distance away from your destination. March in place, or walk around the block. Anything

that gets your heart beating counts!

- **Stop (or don't start) smoking.** Make a list of the reasons you want to quit, select a quit date, and talk to a healthcare provider about resources that can help.
- **Get enough quality sleep.** If possible, aim for at least 7–9 hours of sleep each night. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- **Manage stress.** Use relaxation techniques that combine breathing and focused attention on pleasing thoughts and images to calm the mind and body.

Learn more about how to take action for your heart and prevent heart disease at www.hearttruth.gov.

Watch Out for Romance Scams During This Month of Love

Romance scams are a type of fraud that targets individuals seeking to connect with others online. Outside of romance scams, such connections typically culminate in an in-person date. However, in the case of romance scammers, meeting their target would expose them and jeopardize their chances of cashing in. Romance scams are very common and costly, with the Federal Trade Commission reporting losses reaching up to \$1.3 billion in 2022.



Source: consumer.ftc.gov

Common Signs and Tips to Identify Possible Romance Scams

You Look Too Good to be True – To trick individuals seeking connection or romance, scammers will use enticing stock images of models or steal photos from other people's social media profiles.

Tip: Conducting a quick reverse search of the photo using Google Images may reveal whether the photo is fake or stolen.

Requests to Move Conversation to Somewhere More Personal – Most reputable dating platforms have systems for uncovering dating scammers, so to avoid triggering these security measures, scammers request to move the conversation away from the dating platform early on. Scammers will want the individual to share their mobile number, email address or social media

handle so that they can communicate with them in a more “personal” way.

Tip: Eventually transitioning to another way to communicate is normal, but a scammer will request the individual transition to another service quickly and usually within a few messages. This should immediately set off alarms.

Requests and Excuses to Reschedule Meetings – An in-person meeting would expose the scammer and jeopardize their chances of cashing in, so scammers often claim to be in positions that inspire trust and travel frequently for work. Scammers will often claim to be in the military, a diplomat or in sales because frequent excuses of “I’m being sent to a new base” or “I have to fly to a conference” won’t seem so suspicious.

Tip: Canceling plans now and then is normal; however, if a suitor shuts down every attempt at a meeting, individuals should immediately become suspicious and question the suitor’s motives.

Hi, I Love You! – Scammers trap individuals by showering them with affection and making them feel wanted. Once the scammer has convinced the individual to believe that they are in a relationship, they move on to their ultimate target – the individual’s finances.

Tip: Saying “I love you” or calling an individual their soulmate within the first few days of conversation should send up red flags.

I’m Stuck, Can You Bail Me Out? – Once the scammer thinks that they have spoken to their victim for long enough and cultivated a strong enough relationship, they will move on to ask for money, gift cards, or even favors. The first requests will usually be for something small, like paying their ailing animal’s vet bill or buying some medicine, and the request is often targeted to evoke empathy (e.g. someone is ill and cannot afford medication). With success, they may begin to raise the bar by asking for larger sums they need to get out of a problem or help one of their relatives in dire need.

Tip: If someone an individual met online asks them for any amount of money, the individual should assume they are a scammer, immediately cut off all communication, and report them to the service they are using and also to the Illinois Attorney General’s office at 217-782-1090.

Want More Scam Prevention Tips?

In partnership with the Attorney General’s office, local law enforcement agencies, and fraud prevention experts in the aging field, IDoA is hosting a one-day summit to help older adults and their care partners learn the warning signs of scams and financial fraud. Session topics will include how to identify financial scams; how to protect yourself and your loved ones; and local, state, and federal reporting procedures and resources.

Who: Speakers from the Illinois Attorney General’s office, Kendall County Sheriff’s office, Peoria County TRIAD, and Terri Worman, an educator with more than 35 years’ experience in projects related to fraud prevention and advocacy training

What: Financial summit focused on scam and fraud prevention

When: Thursday, Feb. 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: The Prairie Heart Institute’s Dove Conference Center at HSHS St. John’s Hospital, located at 619 E. Mason St. in Springfield

Older adults, their caregivers, and anyone who works with older adults may register to attend

using [this link](#). Attendance is free and snacks will be provided; however, lunch will be up to each attendee. Questions may be submitted to Aging.APSTraining@Illinois.gov.

[Register here](#)

Golden Poets Poetry Contest

Illinois Poet Laureate Angela Jackson has established the Golden Poets Poetry Contest, open to writers aged 70 and older. Older adults are encouraged to enter their original, unpublished poems for a chance to win up to \$500 cash.

Requirements/Formatting:

- All poems must be typed, with name, age, and page numbers on the upper right corner of each page.
- Copyrighted text will be disqualified. Proof of age is required to win.

Selection:

- Poems will be judged on originality and creativity. Illinois Poet Laureate Angela Jackson will make the final selections.

Submissions must be emailed to ilpoetlaureate.contests@gmail.com no later than March 31, 2024. First through third place winners will be announced in May and each receive a cash prize.

[Learn more](#)

State of LGBTQ+ Aging Survey

**STATE OF
LGBTQ+
AGING**
Survey



Source: acl.gov

SAGE's Center of Excellence has partnered with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to conduct the "State of LGBTQ+ Aging Survey." The 30-minute survey seeks to better understand the current experiences, needs, and resiliencies of LGBTQ+ adults aged 50 and older.

Take the survey

Nominate Someone for the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame Class of 2024



**NOW
ACCEPTING
NOMINATIONS**

CATEGORIES:
Arts, Sports, and Entertainment
Community Service
Education
Labor Force



The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is seeking nominations for the 2024 induction class of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, which honors the accomplishments of Illinois residents aged 65 and older.

Each year, four older adults are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in the arts, sports, and entertainment; community service; education; or the labor force. Anyone may nominate an older adult for consideration.

To be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame, nominees must be:

- At least 65 years old at the time of nomination; and
- A current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life.

Posthumous nominations are also accepted, provided the nominee was 65 or older and living in Illinois at the time of death.

To guarantee consideration for the 2024 induction class, nominations must be submitted no later than June 1, 2024. Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments.

Submit a nomination

Employment Opportunities

IDoA has no employment openings at this time. Vacancies will be posted to [this page](#) as

positions become available.

Save the Date

The [Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging](#) will meet on Wednesday, March 6 at 2 p.m.

[Join via Webex](#)

**OLDER
AMERICANS
MONTH**



POWERED BY CONNECTION: MAY 2024

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads the nation's observance of [Older Americans Month](#) (OAM). The 2024 theme is **Powered by Connection**, which recognizes the profound impact that meaningful relationships and social connections have on our health and well-being. We will explore the vital role that connectedness plays in supporting independence and aging in place by combatting isolation, loneliness, and other issues.

Items of Interest

[Senior Services Plus CEO Talks Upcoming "Speed Connections" Event, More](#)

[True love: Central Illinois couple has been married 72 years](#)

[At 93, he's as fit as a 40-year-old. His body offers lessons on aging.](#)

[Older Adults Embracing Technology, AARP Reports](#)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine** at (800) 252-8966; 711 (TRS)



[Visit our website](#)