ADvancing States Announces 2027 Next Gen HCBS Leaders and Launches New HCBS Executive Fellows Program

Two leadership development programs will support emerging and experienced state leaders working to strengthen home and community-based services.

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ARLINGTON, VA — ADvancing States is pleased to announce the selection of the 2027 class of Next Gen HCBS Leaders and the launch of the new HCBS Executive Fellows program. Together, these programs reflect ADvancing States' commitment to investing in leadership development at multiple career stages and building a strong network of state leaders equipped to advance home and community-based services (HCBS) for older adults and people with disabilities.

As demand for HCBS continues to grow, developing and supporting talented leaders is essential to ensuring that state agencies can effectively respond to the evolving needs of the people they serve. State HCBS leaders must navigate increasingly complex programs, changing policies, and growing expectations for accessible, high-quality services and supports. By investing in both emerging and experienced leaders, ADvancing States aims to strengthen leadership capacity, encourage innovation, and foster the relationships and expertise needed to sustain strong HCBS systems for years to come.

2027 Next Gen HCBS Leaders

The Next Gen HCBS Leaders program supports emerging state leaders working in Medicaid, aging, and disability services through a unique combination of professional development, mentorship, and networking opportunities. The year-long program helps participants deepen their knowledge of HCBS, strengthen their leadership skills, and build lasting relationships with peers and experienced leaders from across the country.

Selected participants receive all-expenses-paid scholarships to attend the 2027 ADvancing States Spring Membership Meeting and the 2027 HCBS Conference, where they can connect with state leaders, national experts, and fellow emerging professionals. Throughout the year, participants also benefit from individualized mentorship, exclusive educational opportunities, and access to a national peer network. Next Gen Leaders also receive scholarships to participate in the Foundational Leadership in HCBS training program, offered in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Gillings School of Global Public Health.

New in 2027, the Next Gen cohort will also include a Kathy Greenlee Elder Justice Fellow, recognizing and supporting an emerging leader working to advance elder justice.

The Next Gen HCBS Leaders program is made possible through the generous support of

UnitedHealthcare, Molina Healthcare, and Pulselight. ADvancing States is grateful for their continued commitment to developing the next generation of HCBS leaders.

ADvancing States congratulates the following individuals selected for the 2027 Next Gen HCBS Leaders program:

Sophie Asah, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Lisa Castro, Ohio Department of Aging
Zachary Davenport, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Ryan Fines, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
Gary Hinkle, Arkansas Department of Human Services
Kimberly Jones, Oklahoma Healthcare Authority
Ashlyn Lund, Utah Department of Health and Human Services
Brian Pastor, Illinois Department on Aging
Alicyn Reimer, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services
Danielle Ridge, Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Savitha Sambandamoorthy, New York State Department of Health
Megan Snyder, South Dakota Department of Human Services

The 2027 Kathy Greenlee Elder Justice Fellow:
Erica Felder, Colorado Department of Human Services

Introducing the HCBS Executive Fellows Program

Building on the success of the Next Gen HCBS Leaders program, ADvancing States is excited to introduce the HCBS Executive Fellows program, a new leadership development opportunity designed specifically for experienced state leaders working in aging, disability, and Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS).

The year-long program is designed for senior state agency leaders with at least 15 years of experience who oversee major programs, manage complex systems, and help guide the future of HCBS in their states. Recognizing the unique responsibilities and challenges faced by experienced leaders, the program provides a dedicated space for meaningful peer exchange, collaborative problem-solving, and continued professional growth.

The HCBS Executive Fellows program emphasizes learning from the expertise and experiences of fellow state leaders. Participants will have opportunities to engage in facilitated peer learning discussions, explore solutions to challenges facing their agencies, and exchange strategies and promising practices with counterparts across the country.

The program will also offer opportunities for Fellows to connect in person at the ADvancing States Spring Membership Meeting, participate in state exchange visits to learn directly from other state programs, and engage in executive-level learning opportunities focused on the challenges of leading complex HCBS systems.

Through these experiences, the HCBS Executive Fellows program aims to strengthen a national network of experienced state leaders, support leadership retention and succession planning, and help participants build the relationships and skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex HCBS landscape.

ADvancing States is pleased to recognize the following individuals selected for the inaugural HCBS Executive Fellows cohort:

Jenifer Adams, Wyoming Department of Health
Kristen Borders Wood, New Mexico Health Care Authority
Nicole Brooks, Arizona Department of Economic Security
Meghann Galland, Tennessee Division of TennCare
Veronica Jameson, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Traci Lee, Utah Division of Aging and Adult Services
Sean O'Brien, New Jersey Department of Human Services

Investing in the Future of HCBS Leadership

Together, the Next Gen HCBS Leaders and HCBS Executive Fellows programs represent a comprehensive approach to strengthening leadership across state HCBS systems. While Next Gen provides emerging leaders with foundational knowledge, mentorship, and professional connections, the Executive Fellows program offers experienced leaders opportunities for peer collaboration, strategic problem-solving, and continued leadership growth.

By supporting leaders at different stages of their careers, ADvancing States seeks to foster a strong and connected HCBS leadership community, strengthen institutional knowledge, and prepare state agencies to meet future challenges. These investments not only benefit participating leaders but also support the long-term capacity of state agencies to deliver effective, innovative, and person-centered services and supports to older adults and people with disabilities.

ADvancing States congratulates all selected participants and looks forward to supporting their continued leadership and contributions to the HCBS field.

About ADvancing States

ADvancing States represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and long-term services and supports directors.

ADvancing States supports visionary leadership, the advancement of systems innovation and the articulation of national policies that support long-term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities.