Sandy Markwood is a national advocate for aging issues and a champion for ensuring that older adults have the best supports to age well at home and in their communities. As the CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) since 2002, she is committed to ensuring that our society values and supports people across the lifespan. This commitment has taken many forms, including advocacy with multiple administrations and on Capitol Hill for the passage of legislation aimed at supporting older adults, including access to critical information, in-home services and caregiver support.

A passionate advocate, Sandy has led numerous n4a campaigns to support the needs of older adults as they age, including those focused on combating social isolation among older adults, encouraging healthy aging, supporting caregivers, promoting livable communities, and access to transportation and housing options. Sandy has focused on the development of community planning practices that include the creation of dementia friendly communities and maximize the benefits of volunteering and engagement for people of all ages while preventing elder abuse and neglect. Sandy’s goal and the goal of n4a is to ensure that older adults have the ability to age with maximum independence and quality of life. According to Sandy, aging isn’t just about adding years to our lives, it’s about adding life to those years.

Sandy has more than 30 years’ experience in the development and delivery of aging, health, human services, housing and transportation programs in counties and cities across the nation. Prior to joining n4a, Sandy served as the Deputy Director of County Services at the National Association of Counties where she took a lead role in research, training, conference planning, program development, technical assistance and grants management.

As CEO, Sandy is responsible for n4a’s overall management. She sets the strategic direction for the staff, oversees the implementation of all policy, grassroots advocacy, membership and program initiatives. She also leads n4a’s fundraising efforts and engages corporate sponsors to support critical initiatives. Externally, Sandy forms strategic partnerships with federal agencies and organizations in the aging, human services and health care arenas to enhance the role and recognition of Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI programs. Sandy holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Virginia.
Lori Gerhard
Director, Office of Interagency Innovation,
U.S. Administration for Community Living

Lori Gerhard is the Director of the Office of Interagency Innovation (OII) for the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). The Office of Interagency Innovation partners with federal departments such as the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Agriculture, and agencies like the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and national, state and local organizations like the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging to increase access to services that address social determinants of health and to develop, implement and replicate innovative solutions that enable people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers to maximize their independence, well-being and health. Her portfolio of work includes addressing social isolation, increasing access to assistive technology, transportation, self-directed services, housing and long-term services and supports. Ms. Gerhard has a bachelor’s of science degree in Health Planning and Administration from The Pennsylvania State University and more than 40 years of experience partnering with others to serve people in need of long term services and supports and caregivers. Lori’s knowledge is strengthened by her 7 years of experience working in the Pennsylvania human services agencies. Lori has brought together a team of national and state organizations working together to address social isolation.

Richard Prudom
Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

In January 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Richard Prudom as Secretary for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), the State Unit on Aging, whose mission is to help Florida’s 5.5 million elders remain healthy, safe, and independent. Secretary Prudom has more than 30 years in executive leadership with the State of Florida where he has worked to develop, implement, and lead public policies and programs that improve the lives of Florida families. Since 2011, he has served at the Department of Elder Affairs as Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, and Chief Financial Officer.

During his time at DOEA, Prudom also led several initiatives, including the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) and the revitalization of the Communities for a Lifetime
engAGED Virtual Summit 2021 Speakers

Initiative. DCCI was developed in response to the increasing incidence of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias in Florida. Through the initiative, DOEA aims to increase awareness of dementia, provide assistance to dementia-caring communities, and continue advocacy for care and cure programs. Mr. Prudom also leads the Department’s efforts to make Florida an Age-Friendly State in close partnership with AARP and their Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Prudom received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Kent in the United Kingdom. In September 2014, Prudom took the oath to become an American citizen and now enjoys dual citizenship with the United Kingdom.

Laura Trejo, MSG, MPA
General Manager, City of Los Angeles Department of Aging

Ms. Trejo was the first Latina appointed to level of General Manager for the City of Los Angeles. She is responsible for the overall administration of the Los Angeles Department of Aging serving one of the largest and most diverse concentrations of older persons in the U.S. She serves as technical and policy advisor to the Mayor and City Council; and represents the City of Los Angeles before the public, community and private groups on matters affecting senior citizen affairs. In her previous post, Ms. Trejo served as the first District Chief for countywide older adult mental health for Los Angeles County.

She is currently the lead for Purposeful Aging L.A. an age-friendly initiative “to make the Los Angeles region the most age friendly in the world.” Among her other activities, Ms. Trejo serves as a founding Co-Director/Investigator of the UCLA Los Angeles Community Academic Partnership for Research in Aging (LA CAPRA), Interim Director of the Los Angeles Foundation on Aging, and Executive Producer of Aging Well in L.A. an Emmy nominated magazine style public television program. Nationally, Ms. Trejo is active on the American Society on Aging where she served as founding chair of the Mental Health and Aging Network and currently serves on the Aging Today Editorial Advisory Committee; the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging’s Mission Forward Committee; and has served on the boards of the Alzheimer’s Association and National Council on Aging. Ms. Trejo was a founding member of the federal Alzheimer’s Advisory Council. She also currently serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board, as is vice-president of the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

Ms. Trejo is a gerontologist with a Master of Science in Gerontology, Master of Public Administration and Graduate Certificate in Long Term-Care Administration, and currently pursuing a doctorate in Social Work all from the University of Southern California. She consults and trains extensively throughout the United States on the
development of programs for the elderly with an emphasis on cultural competence. She works with individual countries and international organizations to develop initiatives and programs in the areas of aging, mental health, health, Alzheimer’s and rehabilitation. Her work has been published in professional journals, book chapters, and major reports.

Ms. Trejo’s commitment to excellence have earned national recognition, most noteworthy is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Community Health Leadership award, considered the nation’s highest honor in community health and the 2020 Excellence in Leadership award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Los Angeles Magazine named her among the “50 Most Influential Women” and the United States Library of Congress has recognized Ms. Trejo’s accomplishments as a force for social change.

**Mary Beals-Luedtka**  
**Director, Northern Arizona Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging**

Mary has been with NACOG (Northern Arizona Council of Governments) for 30 years and has served as the Director of the Area Agency on Aging since 2004. She served from 2006-2015 on the n4a (National Association of Area Agencies on Aging) Board of Directors and during that time was elected Treasurer, Second Vice-President and First Vice-President.

She was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging in 2005 with both a Congressional and Gubernatorial nomination. She was chosen to attend the White House Conference on Aging at the White House in 2015 by the President of the United States.

She served as Board Chair for NANASP (National Association of Nutrition & Aging Services Programs) from 2019-2020 and is now Immediate Past Chair. She is also the Founding Board Chair for AZ4A, the Arizona Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Inc.

In July 2016 Mary was awarded the Excellence in Leadership Award from n4a at the National Conference in San Diego for her work in the field of aging. In July 2019 she was awarded the n4a President’s Award for her contributions to the Aging Network.

Mary continuously advocates and works for better services and supports for older adults. She is a strong advocate for Rural Arizona and for Rural America. The agency has grown considerably under her tenure and she continues to work for better efficiencies, stronger partnerships and increased collaborations to better serve the population, reduce redundancy in services and ensure compliance.
Lisa Marsh Ryerson
President, AARP Foundation

Lisa Marsh Ryerson is president of AARP Foundation, the charitable affiliate of AARP. A bold, disciplined and collaborative leader, she sets the Foundation’s strategic direction and steers its efforts to realize an audacious vision: a country free of poverty, where no older person feels vulnerable. Since she took the helm, AARP Foundation has implemented pioneering initiatives, explored new avenues for collaboration, and secured unprecedented funding to support programs and services that truly change lives.

She also has served on the boards of numerous higher education and nonprofit organizations, including the Council of Independent Colleges, Southern New Hampshire University, Shriver Center on Poverty Law, the Congressional Hunger Center, and L.A. Kitchen, of which AARP Foundation is a founding partner.

Ms. Ryerson has spearheaded innovative partnerships with other organizations to create and advance effective solutions that help vulnerable older adults increase their economic opportunity and social connectedness. Before joining AARP Foundation, Ms. Ryerson served as the president and CEO of Wells College in Aurora, N.Y.