

INDEPENDENT LIVING WORKSHOP

Tackling the Tough Stuff: Operating Independent Senior Housing Today

Thursday, Oct. 8 | 10 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.

Applewood Pointe of Eagan, 1565 Quarry Rd., Eagan, MN 55121

PURPOSE

This conference aims to equip senior housing operations staff with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to address the complex challenges of our evolving field, ensuring exceptional resident experiences and sustainable community growth.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify practical strategies for achieving and maintaining strong occupancy while understanding its connection to financial sustainability and a thriving resident community.
- Understand the property manager's role in maintaining a safe, attractive, and well-functioning senior housing community through effective maintenance practices and oversight.
- Understand how promoting wellness and engagement can support residents' independence, quality of life, and ability to age successfully in independent living.
- Recognize when a resident may need additional support and identify appropriate strategies, resources, and boundaries for responding while respecting resident rights and independence.

REGISTRATION FEES

LeadingAge Minnesota Members – \$55 per person

Prospective Members – \$75 per person

Registration fee includes morning beverages and a boxed lunch.

REGISTER HERE

CUT-OFF/CANCELLATION

Registration cut-off date/cancellation deadline is 5 p.m. on Oct. 2, 2026. Cancellations must be made in writing and are subject to a \$25 processing fee. No refunds will be provided for no-shows. Substitutions gladly accepted. LeadingAge Minnesota reserves the right to cancel this workshop or any individual session.

HANDOUTS

Participants will receive links to electronic handouts before the conference and are encouraged to print them in advance or download to view on a laptop or tablet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Olivia Scott, Events and Education Coordinator, at oscott@LeadingAgeMN.org or 651.603.3559 for assistance or if your registration has not been confirmed.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

9:30 – 10 a.m.

Registration

10 – 10:05 a.m.

Welcome

Shelli Bakken, LSW, LALD, Director of Housing Policy and Expert Support, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Jennifer Rutschke, Property Manager, Applewood Pointe of Eagan

10:05 – 11:05 a.m.

More Than a Number: Why Occupancy Matters

- Understand the connection between strong occupancy, financial sustainability, and a thriving resident community.
- Explore practical strategies for generating leads, improving conversions, and reducing preventable turnover.

Erin Wombacher, Regional Director of Sales, Benedictine, Fridley

11:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

When to Fix, When to Call: Maintenance Know-How for Property Managers

- Understand the property manager's role in maintaining a safe, attractive, and well-functioning senior housing community.
- Recognize common maintenance issues and know when they require immediate attention or specialized expertise.

Carter Gibbons, Director of Environmental Services, Walker Place by Vivie, Minneapolis; and Sherry Spurlock, Compliance Manager, Apartment Management Consultants, LLC, Stillwater

12:10 – 1 p.m.

Lunch with Remarks

Lisa Carter, Housing Manager, Orchard Estates, Glencoe; and Emily Kjelstad, Director of Housing, Apple Valley Villa Assisted Living, Apple Valley

1 – 2 p.m.

Promoting Wellness in Independent Living: Big Impact on a Small Budget

- Understand how wellness programming supports residents' independence, quality of life, and ability to age in place.
- Identify practical, affordable ways to incorporate wellness opportunities into an independent senior housing community.

Georgene Gray, Housing Director, Marvella, St. Paul

2:05 – 3:35 p.m.

Independent Living, Changing Needs: What's a Property Manager to Do?

- Identify resources, services, reasonable accommodations, and referral options that may help residents remain safely housed or transition to a more appropriate level of support.

Moderator: Amanda Vickstrom, Executive Director, Minnesota Elder Justice Center, Minneapolis

Panelists: Kimelyn Knight, Community Director of Aging, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul; Sam Pauley, LGSW, Hennepin County Adult Protection, Minneapolis; Judy Pilz, MSW, Social Worker, DARTS, St. Paul; and Pam Will, Resource Coordination Supervisor, Minnesota Aging Pathways, St. Paul

3:35 p.m.

Adjourn