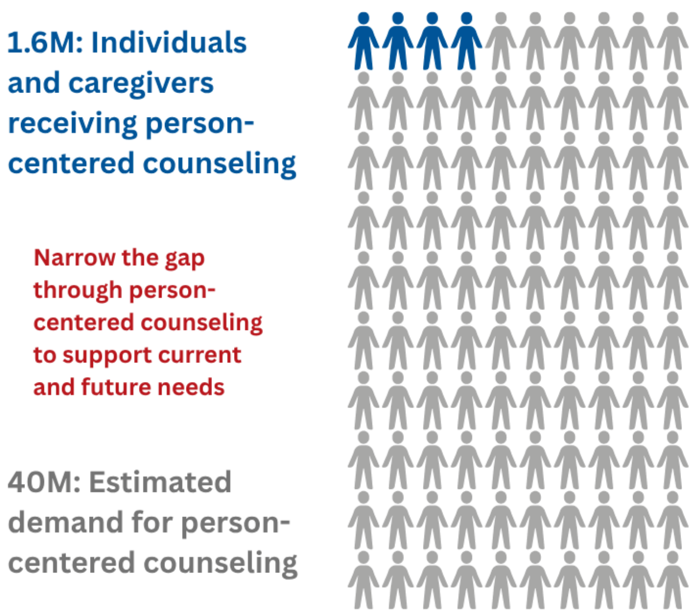
Opening Every Door: Marketing State No Wrong Door Systems to Expand Access

The challenge: **An estimated 40 million people—*a number approximately equal to the population of California*—don't know where to go for support when they need services to live independently at home.*** While 70 percent of adults over age 65 will develop a significant need for long-term care (and almost half will receive some form of paid care[1]) the system remains difficult to navigate. At the same time, nearly one quarter (63 million) of all adults in the United States provide caregiving to older adults and people with disabilities, and may also need assistance navigating a complex system of disjointed supports through person-centered counseling (PCC).[2] Fewer than half of adults, however, report ever having a serious conversation with a loved one about who will take care of them in the future if they need help with daily activities or how the costs would be covered.[3] Intensifying these challenges, **most people who need long-term services and support (LTSS) do not qualify for publicly funded programs, leaving many without clear options.** By providing individualized support to help people identify needs and understand options, PCC helps individuals take steps to stay independent at home.

> ACL's aging and disability networks are among the most trusted and widespread sources for services and support in the nation, yet too many **people still don't know where to go for help**. Effective marketing ensures that the public can easily identify, access, and navigate aging and disability services. This includes modernizing communications and using plain language. It also means ensuring that partners, providers, and other government agencies recognize ACL's role in connecting health and community care systems.
>
> Source: About ACL: Mission, Vision, & Priorities



Person-centered counseling:

- Assists with any immediate needs and plans for future needs
- Identifies goals, strengths, and preferences, and who should be part of the process
- Involves a comprehensive review of and linkage to private resources and informal supports
- Facilitates informed choice of available options and the development of the person-centered plan
- Helps individuals apply for public programs and navigate through the entire eligibility process
- Follows-up to ensure services are initiated and meet the needs of the individual, and is adjusted as necessary

***Source**: The number of people receiving PCC is estimated from No Wrong Door grantee reporting. The number of people conservatively estimated to need PCC each year is based on the number of people who are Medicare beneficiaries, Veterans, 17-year-old youths with a disability aging out of school supports, and family caregivers. A variable portion of these groups is estimated to need PCC each year.

[1] What Is the Lifetime Risk of Needing and Receiving Long-Term Services and Supports? | ASPE
[2] Caregiving in the US
[3] The Affordability of Long-Term Care and Support Services: Findings from a KFF Survey | KFF

Expanding Access to Services: Creating A Marketing Plan for State No Wrong Door Systems

- **No Wrong Door** systems help individuals and families address immediate needs and plan for their future services and supports.[4]
- PCC is a key element of No Wrong Door systems. PCC helps individuals and families understand their needs and options, including how to pay for and arrange the delivery of services.[5] PCC also helps to facilitate access to private pay services, including services that are covered out-of-pocket or through other community resources.
- No Wrong Door organizations (e.g., area agencies on aging [AAAs], centers for independent living [CILs], aging and disability resource centers [ADRCs]) provide PCC to support informed decision making, helping individuals and families use their resources wisely to meet current and future needs.
- No Wrong Door systems organize and formalize partnerships to increase access to PCC and community navigation in a coordinated and efficient way.
- By coordinating across multiple programs and funding streams, No Wrong Door systems help individuals efficiently access the services they need without having to repeatedly tell their story.
- In fully functioning No Wrong Door systems, states track the impact of streamlining access to services through No Wrong Door and project future demand for services as demographics change, including projections specific to different populations. States can also proactively plan for sufficient capacity across different segments of the system to meet the demand. This forward-looking approach aligns closely with multisector plans for aging, which are 10-year plans that protect the future of aging Americans by creating a coordinated system for restructuring state and local policies to address their unique and evolving needs.[6]

> Element 2.1: The State proactively engages in public education to ensure its citizens are aware of the No Wrong Door system. The No Wrong Door system is seen as a **visible and trusted source of information and one on-one personalized counseling** that any individual or family can turn to for help in understanding and accessing LTSS. The State's public awareness activities include a website on LTSS options and the No Wrong Door system, and a statewide toll-free number that connects individuals to staff doing Person-Centered Counseling.
>
> Source: No Wrong Door Key Elements

> Element 1.5: The State uses clearly defined performance measures and a systematic process for collecting and analyzing the data and information needed by all of the entities in the No Wrong Door system to effectively manage, evaluate and continually improve the performance of the No Wrong Door system.
>
> Source: No Wrong Door Key Elements

No Wrong Door Marketing Plan Checklist

A **marketing and communications plan** is the driver that will move you from strategy to action. It should be a dynamic document that flexes to accommodate a changing marketplace and evolving priorities. Marketing and communications should strive to focus on data and the story that it tells for each of your stakeholders. While you should create a marketing and

> No Wrong Door systems can delay Medicaid enrollment by connecting people to informal and private pay supports, or expedite home- and community-based service enrollment, to prevent costly nursing facility placement.

[4] No Wrong Door Fact Sheet July 2025
[5] "Person-centered counseling" used in this document is intended to describe system structures, functions, and job duties, but is not intended to serve as a brand that all states must use in labeling their access functions or job titles. For instance, states are implementing person-centered planning in various ways, including through training programs designed to bolster and upgrade the skills of their existing Information and Referral Assistance staff and other staff with different titles.
[6] Multisector Plan for Aging

communications plan for your overarching state No Wrong Door System, you may also develop marketing plans for specific localities or sub-programs.[7]

Table 1. No Wrong Door Marketing Plan Checklist

Step	Action	Examples and Resources
Understand who you are reaching now	• Determine the specific numbers of people in each of the following categories and how well you are reaching them: caregivers[8], Veterans, Medicare beneficiaries, youth transitioning from school to adult service system • Periodically release messaging around outreach and awareness to build up your audience base	• Section 5 of the No Wrong Door Business Case Toolkit includes templates and marketing materials • With foundation support, Pennsylvania launched a marketing campaign with public broadcasting stations • California created an Aging Across California reel series, offering snapshots of the quantity, characteristics, and needs of older adults in California. They also created a social media toolkit with ready-to-share posts that help organizations raise awareness about caregiving and connect communities with information, resources, and training • The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) developed a Toolkit with templates, messaging, and materials to raise awareness of resources and connect them to services • Nevada Lifespan Respite Care Coalition released a Respite Refuels Caregivers Video to promote awareness of and access to respite services • Colorado Respite Coalition's Caregiver Outreach Campaign uses comedy and cartoons to reach caregivers. They also developed a companion Campaign Partner Sharing Guide to enable others to use the campaign • Delaware's *"Are you a Caregiver Campaign,"* a marketing strategy to assist caregivers to self-identify as caregivers, using a "If they turn to you, you can turn to us" tagline • State Lifespan Respite Tools page contains additional examples of public awareness and marketing tools

[7] No Wrong Door Business Case Toolkit
[8] See AARP's Caregiving in the US 2025: Caring Across States for state specific caregiving data

Step	Action	Examples and Resources

Create a marketing plan to reach those you are not reaching	• Construct an operational assessment and environmental scan of partners, competitors, and the external marketplace using the template in ***Appendix A***
	• Offer PCC to current clients you are reaching through existing programming such as Older Americans Act, Rehabilitation Act, State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), etc.
	• Target people with moderate to higher incomes
	• Collect data to estimate demand for future needs
	• Conduct outreach to people who need to plan for LTSS
	• Explore concepts of social marketing[9] to guide your efforts
	• Design special outreach to caregivers
	    • Reach out to employers to target working caregivers
	    • Connect with dementia friendly or age-friendly initiatives
	• Get creative about reaching rural populations
	    • Connect with your public health department and local agency that prepares the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
	• Healthcare partners
	    • Reach out to your state hospital association to explain how ADRCs can support care transitions
	    • Connect with physicians, pharmacies, emergency personnel to make them aware of how to refer to the No Wrong Door system
		• Michigan's No Wrong Door re-design includes stronger coordination between SHIP and PCC. They also created a short video advertisement to highlight counseling and navigation support to keep individuals in control of their living decisions.
		• California explored individuals in the 'overlooked middle" in this report and website
		• See ***Appendix B*** for ideas to market to private pay
		• Wisconsin ran a marketing campaign called **"know us before you need us"**
		• Minnesota's Own Your Future campaign is a public awareness initiative
		• California's state Medicaid agency launched a marketing campaign with mailers on long-term care options called RUReadyCA
		• Maryland launched a one minute survey to assess preparedness for future long-term care needs. See ***Appendix C***:Maryland Survey***.*** They also launched a caregiver checklist on their website that directly links caregivers to the No Wrong Door
		• New York partnered with the state department of labor to reach out to employers
		• The PA Care Kit is an online assessment of caregivers needs that generates personalized educational resources for caregivers as well as connects to their PA Links ADRCs
		• The Rhode Island ADRC leveraged an RV to reach some of their rural areas
		• Iowa's Return to Community Program leverages local No Wrong Door partners to help facilitate transitions from hospital to home
		• The ACL Nutrition and Aging Resource Center also offers several helpful strategies
		• North Carolina developed and released a podcast about their No Wrong Door approach targeted towards policymakers, healthcare professionals, CBOs, research institutions, and community members

[9] Social marketing includes using commercial marketing and communication principles in order to achieve social goals through behavior change.

Step	Action	Examples and Resources

Develop capacity of your network	• Build strong aging and disability partnerships
	• Expand staff capacity to explore private pay options
	• Include planning for future needs and private pay support in person-centered counseling standards and training
	• Establish policies and procedures for identifying individuals who could benefit from planning for future LTSS needs
	    • Train staff to identify and refer individuals who could benefit from planning support
	    • Build strong collaborative relationships with the SHIP to identify these individuals
	    • As part of PCC, have staff inform family members or friends of individuals that planning for future needs is also available
	• Develop or procure educational materials on assessing and planning for future long-term care needs and working with people who can afford to pay for LTSS
		• Disability and Aging Partnerships in No Wrong Door
		• State Examples of No Wrong Door Funding
		• The Pima Council on Aging since publishes a community newspaper Never Too Late**.** In one issue, their leadership stated "Too often, people only learn about Pima Council on Aging when they are already in crisis. We want to change that. Our vision is a community where older adults are supported earlier, where dignity is protected before hardship becomes emergency, and where no one fades into the shadows because they lack resources or visibility"
		• Wisconsin developed a planning tool and a cost calculator to facilitate serving private pay individuals
		• The Nebraska State Unit on Aging's quarterly consumer review meetings for ADRC partners — where agencies take turns presenting cases for group discussion — are a strong example of effective outreach, giving partners a recurring opportunity to learn about one another's services and expertise. Various disability groups, including centers for independent living and the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska, are key partners in this collaborative process.
		• See ***Appendix D***: Tools for Planning for Future Needs

Evaluate the outcomes of your efforts	• Measure your No Wrong Door reach by calculating how many people you are reaching in your target populations • Track which outreach and marketing efforts yielded the most success • Calculate your Return on Investment (ROI)	• Wisconsin requires local ADRCs to collect data on contacts per 1,000 county population as a measure of how well local ADRCs reach the target populations.[10] • ROI One Pager

Reach out to the No Wrong Door Resource Center for support in developing and evaluating a marketing strategy. Email nowrongdoor@lewin.com.

[10] 2023 Aging and Disability Resource Centers in Wisconsin Status Report (page 5)

Appendix A: Sample Marketing and Communication Plan

Use the table below to prioritize and describe your target audiences, potential partners, and stakeholders.[11] Feel free to add as many rows as necessary. Use the "Notes" section to describe your target audiences and their priorities. Then, determine a few key messages for each group and identify tools and strategies for sharing those messages.

After completing the table below, create a work plan specific to your Marketing and Communications plan. Identify specific tasks to engage each target audience you prioritize, owners for each of those tasks, and deadlines.

Table 2. Sample Marketing and Communication Plan

Potential Partner, Stakeholder, or Target Audience	Notes	Key Messages	Tools	Appropriate Communication Channels and Budgets	Frequency of Communication
[Potential partner/ stakeholder #1]	*[Describe the potential partner/stakeholder group and its priorities. Why do you want to partner with and/or influence this group? What is this group interested in? What pain points or challenges does it have? What other key stakeholders influence this group? What makes this audience a priority?]*	*[How do you want to be perceived by the target audience? What key takeaways are your priorities for this audience? How do you envision a potential partnership?]*	*[Do you have appropriate existing tools? What tools will you need to create? What medium (e.g., pitch deck, one-pager, etc.) can most effectively convey your message to this audience?]*	*[What communication channels (e.g., 1:1 meeting, online presence, TV/print marketing, etc.) would be appropriate for this group? Do you have an existing relationship with your target audience? Which of your staff or contacts might be most appropriate to approach the partner, and what might be the most effective approach? How much will these strategies cost?]*	*[How often will you attempt to engage?]*
Potential partner/ stakeholder #2]					
Potential partner/ stakeholder #3]					

[11] Adapted from [Ultimate Tool Kit: Free Communication Strategy Templates, Examples, and Expert Tips]

Appendix B: Marketing to Private Pay

Support local level organizations in understanding the benefits of making services available to those with the ability to pay privately. It is important for individuals and families with all levels of income to receive unbiased, reliable information and counseling about their options. Through donations and cost-sharing for some services, individuals with private resources can contribute financially to organizations' operations. Broad community use of No Wrong Door services helps build support for the organization, which can help achieve long term sustainability.

According to USAging's 2025 National AAA Survey, approximately one-third of AAAs offer private pay services to consumers.[12] Of the services USAging asked about, AAAs were most likely to offer nutrition, assessment, in-home services, and transportation on a private pay basis. Historically, few of these organizations have marketed to privately paying individuals or tried to attract those with higher incomes. As a result, they tend to be less knowledgeable about privately financed services than about publicly funded services. While these organizations would rarely turn anyone seeking assistance away because their income is too high, they may not have the information or resources to assist these individuals.

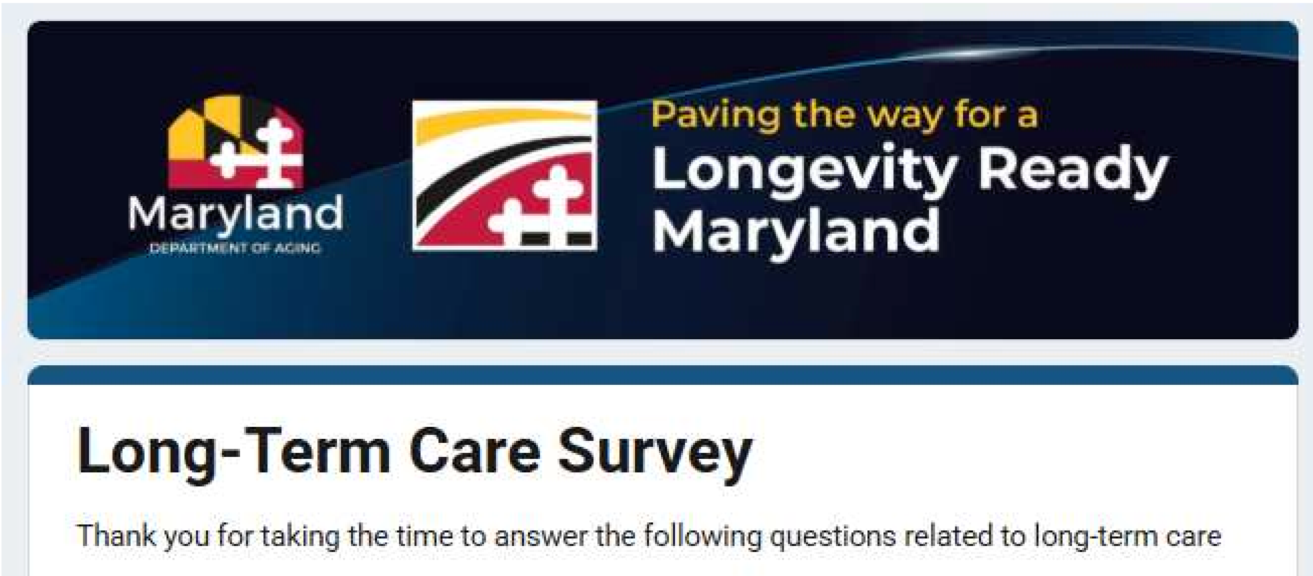
Below are steps local organizations (e.g., AAAs, CILs, ADRCs) can take to improve their ability to serve individuals who can privately pay for long-term services:

- Serving privately paying consumers may require a change in organizational culture and outlook. Staff may have to shift their orientation from thinking "what public program does this individual qualify for?" to "how can I help this individual identify existing resources and evaluate services in the community that meet his or her preferences and needs?" Program staff may need to adapt I&R/A protocols and intake questions to remove assumptions that the consumer lacks private resources.
- Research and know your target audience. For example, what media do individuals with higher incomes pay attention to? What organizations are they affiliated with? Reach out to "critical pathways" providers who serve people with moderate and high incomes. In addition, consider engaging elder law attorneys, financial planners, banks, real estate agents, libraries, schools, country clubs, recreation centers, etc.
- Use focus groups or consumer market research to ensure that your name and messages are clear and effective and do not have unintended connotations. For example, does your name, logo, or tag line lead consumers to think that your organization is all about "welfare" or "county assistance?"
- No Wrong Door marketing materials should emphasize the availability of comprehensive and unbiased information, expert advice, and decision-support services. Avoid messages and materials that overemphasize access to public programs. You do not want private paying consumers to stay away because they are afraid of taking services away from people who "really need it."
- A common referral source to No Wrong Door organizations is friends and family. Excellent customer service is critical to raising visibility and trust. Without it, people will not refer their friends and family.
- Work with I&R/A staff to identify the most common requests for information and assistance they receive from consumers with moderate and higher incomes and ensure that your resource database includes listings for these types of resources.
- Develop a set of inclusion/exclusion criteria for resources in your information and referral database to help you decide which types of providers and services you will list and what criteria they must meet to be included.
- Develop training materials and educate staff on resources available to people with private resources.

[12] USAging 2025 Chartbook

Appendix C: Maryland Survey

[Long-Term Care Survey](#)



1. If I can no longer care for myself, I expect the **majority** of my long-term care needs to be supported by:
   - Medicare
   - Medicaid
   - Long-term care insurance
   - Personal savings, income or assets
   - A family member or loved one
   - Veterans benefits
   - I don’t expect to have any support for long-term care

2. I live in: (county drop down)

3. My age group is: (age drop down by 10 year cohorts)

Appendix D: Tools for Planning for Future Needs

- Charting the LifeCourse tools: Tools that may be helpful in supporting planning for future needs include the Life Vision tool, which helps individuals of all ages start to think about a more specific vision for life in the future.
- Federal Decision Support Guides: A federal cross-agency project team worked closely with community-based organizations and members of the public to develop a suite of guides designed to help older adults, caregivers, and front line staff make informed decisions about healthcare, finances, housing, and food. Each guide includes:
    - Federal benefits and services available
    - Rules and considerations for eligibility
    - How and where to apply
    - Where to turn for personalized assistance
- Late-In-Life Decisions Guide: This guide is written by Financial Finesse to help older retirees and those who assist them make informed decisions.
- Long-term care: The National Institute on Aging's Long-Term Care website has information on paying for long-term care, including private financing options.
- Long Term Care Costs & Who Pays: The Administration for Community Living's Long Term Care website includes information on costs of care and various ways to pay for it, including long-term care insurance, life insurance, reverse mortgages, annuities, and trusts.