

Frequently Asked Questions About the Plan to Merge LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire

Why are LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire pursuing a merger instead of continuing to operate separately?

The boards of both organizations carefully considered whether to continue as separate associations. Both are strong, financially stable, and serving members well today. After extensive discussion and due diligence, the boards concluded that a merger is the better path forward.

The challenges facing aging services providers are growing in complexity. Members need stronger advocacy, more education and technical support, broader peer connections, timely information, and responsive service. Continuing independently would mean maintaining separate systems, communications, and administrative functions.

By coming together, we can direct more of our collective resources toward what matters most: state-specific advocacy, education, networking, communications, and member support. A combined organization will have greater capacity and expertise while maintaining the close relationships and local presence members value.

This approach is also taking shape across the LeadingAge network and other association models. As demands increase, more organizations are aligning and sharing infrastructure to reduce duplication and focus resources where they have the greatest impact.

Most importantly, this is a proactive decision made from a position of strength. Rather than waiting for external pressures to force change, the boards believe this is the right time to build on what is working and create a stronger regional association for the future.

What are the benefits? What will I gain as a result of a merger?

This decision was made with you, our members, at the forefront through a thoughtful and collaborative process over the past year. As a combined association, we will be better positioned to advocate on the issues that matter most, provide stronger policy support, expand communications and resources, and improve member services.

You will gain access to a broader network of peers across Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, along with more tools, events, education, leadership opportunities, and professional development. A larger organization will allow us to offer more programming, connect members with a wider range of expertise, and provide additional support when members need it, while still maintaining the responsive service, close relationships, and state-specific support you value today.

We also look forward to welcoming Vermont providers as full members of both the new association and LeadingAge.

I really value the staff responsiveness, relationships and collegiality of the current association. Will that change in a larger organization?

Protecting the culture and responsiveness of both associations has been central to this process from the beginning. One of the things that makes both LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge

Maine & New Hampshire special is that staff know members personally, understand the services you provide, and are deeply connected to your communities. That will not change.

In fact, the combined organization will have greater staff capacity, allowing us to be even more responsive and provide more support to members. You will continue to work with the staff you know today, while also gaining access to additional expertise and support from across the region.

Over the years, our organizations have worked closely together and brought members together through joint programs and events. Members consistently tell us that they value those opportunities because they expand their networks while still feeling collegial and mission-driven. The boards believe this merger works because our organizations are a strong cultural fit: we share the same commitment to member connection, responsiveness, and support.

How will state-level advocacy happen with a regional structure?

Advocacy will remain state-specific. Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont each have different policy environments, relationships, and priorities, and the combined organization will continue to advocate on the issues that matter most in each state.

The new organization will maintain a presence in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire and will continue to engage directly with members, legislators, regulators, and coalition partners at the state level. Existing advocacy relationships and local expertise will remain in place.

For Vermont, the merger creates an opportunity to build a stronger and more formal connection over time. Vermont providers will become full members of the new organization and LeadingAge, and we look forward to increasing opportunities for engagement, information-sharing, and future advocacy support as the organization grows.

Will my state lose influence in a larger organization?

No. A key principle of the merger is that every state will continue to have a strong voice. The new organization is being designed to reflect the needs and priorities of members in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

State-specific advocacy, programming, and member engagement will remain priorities, and the governance structure will ensure representation from across the region. The goal is to strengthen local voice, not replace it.

Will there still be local events and state-specific opportunities to connect?

Yes. Members will continue to have opportunities to participate in meetings, educational programs, networking events, and other gatherings within their own state.

At the same time, many of the topics members care most about are shared across the region. Leadership development, governance, workforce, strategy, and organizational challenges are not unique to any one state. A combined organization will allow us to offer more opportunities for members to learn from one another and benefit from a broader range of perspectives and expertise.

Members can expect a mix of state-based, regional, and virtual programming. Some opportunities will remain local, while others will bring together members from across the region. Throughout,

accessibility and ease of participation will be priorities so that members can engage in the ways that work best for them.

Why is Vermont included?

Vermont providers already have strong connections to both organizations and participate in many regional activities. Today, Vermont organizations have the option to participate in LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire as subscriber members. The merger creates an opportunity to move beyond that model and welcome Vermont providers as full members of both the new organization and LeadingAge.

Including Vermont allows the new organization to more fully reflect the region we already serve and creates an opportunity to strengthen connections across all four states.

Will my LeadingAge affiliation or benefits change?

No. Members will continue to receive all of the benefits of LeadingAge affiliation, and the new organization will remain an official LeadingAge state partner. LeadingAge has been supportive of this merger and shares our belief that a stronger regional association will better serve members and strengthen the voice of mission-driven aging services providers across the region.

Will my membership dues change?

No changes to dues are planned during the transition period. Members will continue under their current dues structure following the merger.

Beginning in 2027, members will receive a single invoice from the new organization rather than separate invoices from LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire.

The goal of the merger is to provide greater value to members, not to increase costs.

How will the merger affect Business Affiliates, Partners and Sponsors?

Business Affiliates and sponsors will continue to be an important part of the organization and will benefit from access to a larger, regional membership base.

The merger creates an opportunity to harmonize the current Business Affiliate and sponsorship programs into one regional structure that is simpler, more consistent, and provides greater value. Our goal is to expand opportunities for visibility, networking, sponsorship, and engagement across Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont while reducing the need for separate memberships or duplicate participation.

Beginning in 2027, Business Affiliates will receive a single invoice from the new organization rather than separate invoices from LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire. Details about the new Business Affiliate dues structure and opportunities will be shared later this year. As that work moves forward, our goals are to create a program that is accessible, provides greater value, and simplifies participation for organizations across the region.

Who will lead the new organization?

Elissa Sherman will serve as CEO of the combined organization, and Lisa Henderson will serve as Chief Member Experience Officer.

The boards are excited about this leadership structure because it builds on the strengths of both leaders. Elissa will continue to lead the organization's advocacy, public policy, and strategic direction, drawing on more than 30 years of experience in aging policy and her long history of advancing the voice of mission-driven providers in Massachusetts.

Lisa will lead member experience and engagement across the new organization, building on her extensive background in membership development, educational programming, advocacy, and affordable housing. Her career has been defined by connecting with members, understanding their priorities, and creating opportunities that respond to their needs.

Together, Elissa and Lisa bring complementary strengths and a shared commitment to responsive service, strong advocacy, and the relationships that define both organizations.

Are any layoffs planned? Will my point of contact change?

No layoffs are planned. This merger is about growing and strengthening the organization, not reducing staff, and all current staff are expected to remain with the new organization.

Members will continue to see the staff they know today, and there will be no wrong door when it comes to reaching the organization. You can expect the same responsive, relationship-based service you value today, with the added benefit of access to a broader team with more expertise and capacity to provide support.

How will the new organization be governed?

To support a smooth transition, the boards of both organizations are expected to come together as one combined board initially. This will help preserve continuity, institutional knowledge, and strong representation from across the region during the first year.

Over time, the organization will move to a long-term board structure designed to reflect the full region while maintaining representation from different states, provider types, and areas of expertise. The goal is to ensure that the new organization remains member-driven and responsive to the needs of providers across Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

When will this happen?

The merger process will continue throughout 2026, with ample time for members to learn more, ask questions, and provide feedback. In the months ahead, members will hear from us through in-person conversations, virtual meetings, presentations, written updates, and other opportunities for engagement.

LeadingAge Massachusetts members will be asked to submit proxy votes on the merger in advance of the Annual Meeting on October 10, 2026. Under Massachusetts nonprofit law, approval requires a two-thirds vote of members.

At the same time, LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire will hold a formal member comment period, followed by a vote of its Board on October 10, 2026.

Following those approvals, the new organization will officially launch on January 1, 2027.

What will be the name of the new organization?

The new organization will launch with a new name that reflects the broader region and the future we are building together. The Boards believe it is important to select a name that captures both the region we will serve and the vision for the future.

The Boards will determine the proposed name in advance of the formal member process. That name will be shared with members, together with the proposed bylaws and amendments to the Articles of Organization. Massachusetts members will vote on those materials as part of the formal approval process, and Maine and New Hampshire members will have an opportunity to review and formally comment before the new organization officially launches on January 1, 2027.

What if I have concerns or am not sure this is the right direction?

We understand that a change of this scale may raise questions or concerns. Both boards took that seriously and spent many months carefully exploring a range of options. After extensive discussion and due diligence, the boards concluded that coming together is the best way to strengthen services, preserve what members value most, and position the organization for the future.

We do not expect members to simply take our word for it. Over the coming months, there will be many opportunities to learn more, ask questions, and share feedback. We are committed to being transparent throughout this process and want to hear what matters most to you.

We also encourage you to reach out directly to Elissa Sherman or Lisa Henderson at any time. We welcome your questions, concerns, and ideas, and want this to be an open and ongoing conversation. Your input will help shape both the transition and the future organization.

I have other questions. Who can I contact?

We welcome your questions, thoughts, and feedback throughout this process. We are committed to being open and transparent and want members to feel comfortable reaching out at any time.

Please contact Elissa Sherman, President of LeadingAge Massachusetts (esherman@leadingagemma.org) or Lisa Henderson, Executive Director of LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire (lhenderson@leadingagemenh.org). They are available to speak directly with members and, if helpful, can also connect you with board members from either organization.