

Becoming a Stepping On Workshop Facilitator

Stepping On is a researched program proven to help older people reduce their risk of falls, improve their ability to safely navigate their environment, and ultimately, increase their quality of life. The workshop is offered once a week for seven weeks in communities throughout the state. Participants gain specific knowledge and skills to prevent falls in different settings. It is designed specifically for people who: 1) are at risk of falling, 2) have a fear of falling, or 3) have fallen one or more times. Workshops are led by trained facilitators and provide a safe and positive learning experience.

What is the role of a facilitator?

A Stepping On Facilitator is a current or retired health care professional, social worker, health educator, fitness expert or aging network professional. Individuals should have previous experience facilitating a group program based on adult learning or self-efficacy principles, experience working with older adults in a professional setting and have a sponsoring organization that is willing to commit the resources needed to implement and sustain Stepping On.

The facilitator must attend and successfully complete a three-day facilitator training course generally provided by two certified Stepping On Master Trainers. The primary role of the facilitator is to facilitate the seven Stepping On workshop sessions. Other roles related to the workshop include recruiting participants; arranging, reserving and setting up the room and equipment, preparing materials needed for the sessions, inviting the guest experts, preparing and sending out the materials needed by the guest experts and creating the display. Some of these responsibilities may be shared by the Program Provider organization or another partner organization.

Having a trained facilitator provide the workshop is critical for the program to be effective. Facilitating a Stepping On workshop requires specific skills. The facilitator must come to the facilitator training with an understanding of group work, a commitment to working with older people, a belief that falls can be prevented and competence in performing, progressing and monitoring balance and strength exercises. The facilitator training ensures that facilitators understand how to facilitate a group, learn how to use adult learning principles and decision-making theory to affect behavior change and fully understand the program content. Facilitators must be committed to keeping abreast of new knowledge about what works in falls prevention.

Peer facilitators

Facilitators may also recruit and train peer facilitators to assist with workshop organization and facilitation. A Stepping On Peer Facilitator is age 60 or older, a former workshop participant and committed to being a positive role model in the workshop. Peer facilitators demonstrate a commitment to and a belief in falls prevention, have a strong desire to lead by example, are comfortable in front of a group and are able to participate in the strength and balance exercises

that are part of the program. A peer facilitator does not need to attend the three-day facilitator training, but it is the preferred training method.

What will you learn at the facilitator training?

At the facilitator training you will learn the skills and knowledge you need to effectively lead the workshop. Like the [Stepping On](#) workshop itself, the facilitator training is interactive and fun. Facilitators are trained by experienced workshop facilitators who have received further training to become [Stepping On](#) Master Trainers. It takes place over three days, with time for breaks and lunch. Facilitators must attend all three days. You will learn the key elements of falls prevention as well as group leadership and facilitation skills that you can use in other areas of your life. As a facilitator, you will learn how to help older adults with a fear of falling or history of falls gain important knowledge and skills to reduce falls and gain confidence, by practicing the exercises and using the skills and tools that you have shared with them.

How do you become a facilitator?

You need to be a health professional, aging network professional, or fitness instructor to lead this course and must be employed by or volunteer for a WIHA Program Provider organization. WIHA provides facilitators with on-going support and opportunities for education.

If you are interested in committing to the facilitator training and are able to lead at least one workshop annually, please visit the WIHA website and submit a [Stepping On](#) Facilitator Training Application. Find it by visiting the WIHA website – wihealthyaging.org – and click on FOR PROFESSIONALS – Become a Facilitator – [Stepping On](#) – and scroll down to fill out the [Stepping On](#) Facilitator Application. The application provides WIHA with basic information about both the facilitator and their Program Provider organization, the facilitator's background and interest in becoming a facilitator and their understanding of the commitments involved. Additional information, such as the facilitator training schedule and training fees can also be found on the above website.

Note: Individuals applying for the facilitator training must first view the approximately 20-minute webinar for the specific program for which they are applying. This webinar will provide you with important background information on the program, its purpose, structure, evidence-base, facilitator qualifications and characteristics, support for facilitators and how to apply for facilitator training. It is also advisable for a representative from your Program Provider organization to view the webinar as well.

To find current information on facilitator trainings, training applications, webinars and other requirements for becoming a WIHA program facilitator, **visit the WIHA website – wihealthyaging.org** and click on **FOR PROFESSIONALS – Become a Facilitator**. Thank you for your interest in becoming a program facilitator to offer a healthy aging program in your community!