

Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group Meeting

Friday, June 26, 2020; 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hWogbWvuTMymQTfmGJkoGg

Agenda

Work Group Attendees: Enda Little (W-4); Sherri McGee (W-2); Sally Middlebrook (W-2); Denise Snyder (W-2); Lisa Walker (W-2); Winifred Weaver (W-1); Marialis Zmuda (W-2)

Staff: Colleen Aistis, Community Services Manager; Cheri Everhart, Interim Director, Community Services; Marci LeFevre, Age-Friendly Program Lead

Older Adults Community Needs Survey (COVID-19 and Beyond)

The City is developing a survey to be fielded to older residents. The survey's purpose, preliminary thoughts on distributing it, and opportunities for the work group to provide feedback and guidance were discussed.

Survey Purpose and Feedback on Survey Content

- Survey will be fielded to older residents to gauge their needs during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.
- Survey responses will help the City glean information about residents who are experiencing difficulty with obtaining food, medication and transportation, and experiencing social isolation.
- Survey will ask respondents to distinguish between needs related to COVID-19 and those that are ongoing (e.g., existed prior to onset of COVID-19).
- Preferences for how persons like to receive information from the City will be asked, which can enhance outreach to underserved or hard-to-reach community members.

Survey Distribution

Work group members expressed support for administering the survey. Ways to distribute it to residents were discussed. Distribution methods may include several of the following:

- Include in a future edition of the City's monthly Green Sheet
- Mail to residents who receive the City's monthly calendar of senior activities and use Call-A-Bus
- Distribute to older residents receiving food via Meals on Wheels and the County's frozen food distribution event in the City
- Circulate to residents of Friendship Arms
- Distribute to residents who have or are currently receiving assistance from the CAPABLE program through the City's partnership with Habitat for Humanity for Metro Maryland (HHFMM) and Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP)
- Circulate to residents who receive assistance from Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP)
- Distribute to contacts for area faith groups

Sally Middlebrook suggested that the City consider promoting the survey prior to fielding it, so that the public and target audience are aware of the survey and the benefits of completing it. Work group members and City staff agreed that creating awareness about the survey could help boost response

rates. Other survey promotion ideas to be considered include contacting property managers of senior housing units and area apartments, and placing the survey on the City's website.

Emergency Assistance Voluntary Registry Program

The City's Age-Friendly Action Plan, approved by the City Council in January of 2019, includes as one of its recommendations developing an emergency preparedness contact list. During last month's (May 22nd) Age-Friendly Work Group meeting, Marci LeFevre shared that the City is exploring the feasibility of creating an Emergency Assistance Voluntary Registry Program that, if implemented, would help identify individuals who require special assistance in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Marci shared several details about the voluntary registry, which are summarized below. Ideas for creating awareness about a program, if one were to be implemented in the near future, were discussed.

Emergency Assistance Voluntary Registry Program

An emergency assistance voluntary registry is a secure database containing information about persons who will require specialized assistance in the event of a disaster or public health threat. The program allows individuals who need direct, personal assistance to voluntarily provide their name, address, and emergency needs through an online database or via a printed application.

- During an emergency or disaster, the registry provides emergency responders with information about individuals in an affected area who need special assistance (e.g., evacuation assistance, transportation, backup power for medical equipment).
- Information collected is made available to disaster responders, disaster planners and designated persons who manage the database. Collected information is not made available to the public or any agency that is not involved in disaster preparedness or response activities.
- Registration does not guarantee any particular emergency services or level of emergency services during a disaster. It can, however, enhance the ability of emergency management and local officials to meet the emergency needs of the community.

Scenarios for when information provided in a registry could be used include, but are not limited to:

- Regional hurricane, flood or other severe weather causing significant damage
- Biohazard incident
- Public health pandemic
- Widespread, prolonged power outage
- Other community-level emergencies

Work group members noted that with COVID-19 and assumptions that social distancing may be in effect for several more months, a registry could be a helpful tool to identify and assist (e.g., provide emergency food, courtesy wellness calls, transportation) older community members in need of support services.

Target Population

At-risk populations currently under consideration to be covered in the proposed registry include older adults (persons age 60 and older) and persons with disabilities. This may include, but is not limited to:

- People with restricted mobility that may need help evacuating their residence;
- People with medical conditions requiring special equipment;

- People requiring life-support equipment that is dependent on electrical power;
- People with sensory disabilities needing emergency messages to be presented in an accessible format;
- People who need wheelchair accessible or other specialized transportation assistance; and
- People with cognitive or developmental disabilities.

Registry Management

Hyattsville's Emergency Operations Manager or another designated staff person would potentially serve as the system administrator, maintaining the database and mapping system.

Vetting of Privacy Concerns Related to Volunteered Information

Some information included in a voluntary registry database may be subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA). The City has requested guidance from its legal counsel on considerations for implementing and managing a voluntary registry. Areas of special interest include:

- Verifying whether data pertaining to senior residents would be protected in a voluntary registry under section 4-340(b) of the Maryland General Provisions Article;
- Seeking clarification on the term "seniors" - what age bracket (e.g., minimum age) is included and protected under the General Provisions Article?; and
- Confirming whether vulnerable or at-risk, non-senior residents can be included in the registry under the General Provisions Article. (Broadening the definition of vulnerable populations to include non-seniors would be preferable.)

Work group members expressed support for the proposed program and noted that many of the City's older adults would be receptive to the program. Clarification on the extent to which provided personal information would be protected would be helpful to confirm and communicate to potential participants.

Testing, Creating Awareness About and Boosting Participation in a Voluntary Registry Program

Work group members advised that, prior to informing community members about an available voluntary registry, the City consider piloting the program by inviting one or more sample groups of seniors (e.g., residents of Friendship Arms, persons served by Hyattsville Aging in Place, community members receiving prepared or frozen meals) to participate in the program. Feedback provided by participants could be used to enhance the registry application and communications about the program before rolling it out more broadly.

Work group members and City staff agreed that creating awareness about the program with ample lead time could help boost participation. Contacting managers of senior housing apartments and assisted living facilities could be beneficial. It was noted that some area senior housing facilities do not provide adequate nor consistent information to residents on emergency preparedness plans. Fostering awareness about a registry program among property managers could facilitate greater communication between managers and residents about emergency preparedness measures and a property's alignment or compatibility with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Identifying Vulnerable Populations with Digital Mapping Tools and Systems

In a related effort to identify vulnerable community populations, Marci shared that City staff are exploring and applying geographic information system (GIS) technology to collect, analyze and present layers of information into visualizations using maps.

One tool in particular, HealthLandscape.org, holds much promise for being able to bolster City efforts to identify vulnerable community members. HealthLandscape.org is a free geospatial analysis tool available through the American Academy of Family Physician's Robert Graham Center.

When considering emergency preparedness measures, the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that vulnerability is the "degree to which a population, community, or individual is unable to cope with and recover from the impacts of disasters, including epidemics." To map where vulnerable older community members (age 60 and older) dwell within the City, selected data sets were overlaid and analyzed at the census block level. Among the indicators analyzed:

- Limited English Proficiency [Language]
- No Health Insurance [Health]
- Poverty Level [Income]
- Race and Ethnicity [Demographic]
- Vehicles per Household [Transportation]
- Household with No Internet Access [Digital Divide]

Colleen noted that some of the results of the mapping exercise were surprising. For example, perceptions about the prevalence of poverty among older residents did not align with the mapped data, nor did notions about the use of technology among older residents. Colleen added that the data, presented in a visual format, was instructive and compelling. Work group members expressed great interest in the digital mapping project and suggested that a demo be given at a future meeting.

To walk work group members through the data mapping exercise and share some of the learnings to date about the City's vulnerable older residents, Taylor Robey (Community and Economic Development team) will be invited to an upcoming work group meeting. Marci will follow up with Taylor about her availability for the July or August meeting.

Announcements

- A COVID-19 testing site will open at First United Methodist Church of Hyattsville at 6201 Belcrest Road. Drive-through and walk-up tests will be offered. Testing is free; no appointment is necessary. More information is available at www.hyattsville.org/covid-19.
- The City of Hyattsville's food distribution events will be extended through August. Information is available on the website for the Prince George's County Food Equity Council at www.pgcfec.org.
- Free home weatherization upgrades for qualifying veterans and older adults are available through the FY2021 Clean Energy Communities Low-to-Moderate Income Grant Program. More information is available at the Maryland Energy Administration.

Next Meeting(s):

Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group meetings for July, August, and September:

- Friday, July 24, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
- Friday, August 28, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
- Friday, September 25, 2020, 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.