

Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 25, 2020; 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Register in advance for this webinar:

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

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Work Group Attendees: Enda Little (W-4); Sally Middlebrooks (W-2); Denise Snyder (W-2); Lisa Walker (W-2); Winifred Weaver (W-1)

Staff Attendees: Colleen Aistis, Community Services Manager; Reggie Bagley, Emergency Operations Manager; Cheri Everhart, Interim Director, Community Services; Jan Guszynski, Special Project Manager; Marci LeFevre, Age-Friendly Program Lead

City of Hyattsville 2020 Complete Count Update

Marci LeFevre welcomed and re-introduced Jan Guszynski, Special Project Manager for the City of Hyattsville, and staff liaison for the City's Complete Count Committee (CCC). Jan provided an update on the CCC's 2020 Census "final stretch" outreach priorities and tactics.

Jan began the update by noting that the September 30, 2020, data collection deadline was reversed earlier in the day by a federal judge who extended the deadline to October 31, the originally scheduled end date. As it's not clear whether this extension will withstand an appeal or intervention, Jan noted that the City will monitor updates released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Any changes to the 2020 Census completion deadline will be communicated to residents by the City.

During its "final stretch" stage, Jan shared that the CCC's primary focus is engaging volunteers as "boots on the ground" to knock on doors in undercounted communities and encourage individuals to complete the Census. This outreach will primarily take place Friday, September 25 through Sunday, September 27.

- To expand outreach to hard-to-count populations, Census takers will be canvassing targeted communities with low response rates. This outreach timeline could change if the Census completion deadline is extended.
- The City continues to emphasize three key messages: the 2020 Census is easy to complete, it's important, and it's safe (e.g., fear of legal retribution among immigrant populations).
- Jan reminded work group members to complete their Census questionnaire (if they haven't done so already), and encourage their family members, friends and neighbors to do the same.
- The Census can be completed online, by phone, or by mail. For additional Census information, residents can call 844-331-2020 or visit www.2020census.gov.
- Jan encouraged work group members interested in volunteering for the CCC's outreach efforts to contact Census@Hyattsville.org.

Winifred Weaver noted that the 2020 Census completion reminder call she received from the City's Mayor was helpful. Work group members shared that the reminder calls and texts are an effective way to reach and engage residents, in addition to the City's Green Sheet and other print mediums. Jan noted that she would share this feedback with the City's Communications Team.

Reggie Bagley asked how many completed Census questionnaires would be needed to move the current response rate (61.9%) up by 1 percentage point? Jan replied that, while she did not have an actual number on hand, she liked the direction the inquiry was headed.

- The work group discussed the idea of establishing a Census completion “micro-strategy,” where a targeted goal is visualized and communicated to the public. As steps are taken that help meet the goal, the visual would track progress to date (e.g., fundraiser bar graph).
- Outreach partners for promoting the suggested Census completion micro-strategy included The Mall at Prince George’s, Target, McDonald’s, Happy Car Wash, and area churches.

Follow-Up Discussion: Proposed Programs for Older Residents During COVID-19

Program ideas for connecting and engaging senior residents during the coronavirus pandemic suggested by community members during the August 28th Age-Friendly Work Group meeting were discussed. The proposed ideas were discussed by City staff who then prioritized recommendations based on alignment with the City’s capacity to develop and operationalize programs, with or without partnering agencies.

During the meeting, Age-Friendly Work Group members and City staff selected the following program recommendations as “favorites” to be prioritized for consideration and implementation.

Educational Programming via City’s TV Channel and Zoom Webinars

Prioritized Topic: Shopping for and Cooking Nutritious Meals

Other Topics of Interest: Selfcare for Caregivers, Using Technology, Falls Prevention

Tips for shopping and preparing simple and nutritious meals for one or two persons is of great interest to the work group and other community members.

- Older adults who live alone with health and mobility issues may have difficulty preparing meals. Tips for purchasing and preparing nutritious foods that can be easily made or reheated would be helpful not only to older residents, but also families with children.
 - The topic’s crossover appeal between younger and older audiences alike could be a win-win scenario; the program’s benefits could extend to many community members.
 - Highlighting recipes that reflect the cultural diversity among residents could be a meaningful way to learn about and celebrate the heritage and customs of Hyattsville’s different community populations.
- Having a nutritionist(s) present tips on shopping and preparing simple, nutritious meals is an appealing program component. Meal preparation ideas for medically tailored meals (e.g., diabetes, heart disease) would be beneficial.

Next Steps:

- Marci will discuss the program concept with Laura Reams, City Clerk and Director of Communications, and Ellarose Preston, Health and Wellness Program Coordinator and a staff liaison to the City’s Health, Wellness and Recreation Advisory Committee (HWRAC).

Promotion and Expansion of Friendly Check-In Calls

Socialization opportunities for older adults have been greatly affected during COVID-19. Conversation can be a gateway for seniors to move from loneliness to greater connection and engagement with their community.

Among the different ways for older adults to connect with others during COVID-19, telephone calls remain the preferred method to socialize according to recent reports published by national organizations serving and advocating for seniors.

- Telephone calls require minimal use of technology (a barrier or challenge for many older adults, especially those in greatest need of socialization).
- Telephonic socialization makes it possible to engage with others from the safety of one's home.

The City's Senior Community Needs Survey to be piloted in October includes questions about experienced social isolation and loneliness and interest in receiving friendly check-in calls. Residents who would like to receive check-in calls will be referred to one or more of the following resources:

- City's Department of Community Services (Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities)
- City's Police Department
 - Provides friendly check-in calls and visiting (suspended during COVID-19) for vulnerable older residents
- [Hyattsville Aging in Place](#) (HAP)
- [Maryland's Senior Call Check](#) [866-50-CHECK]
 - Free, opt-in, daily telephonic service for adults aged 65 and older. TTY service is available. This program is promoted in the City's Green Sheet (*The Hyattsville Reporter*).
- Older adults experiencing anxiety, depression and/or contemplating suicide can be referred to:
 - [Community Crisis Services, Inc.](#) (CCSI) [800] 273-8255; a community hotline providing individuals access to mental health services and social services within the area.
 - [Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line](#) [800-971-0016]; a national accredited crisis line for seniors.

Next Steps:

- Marci and Cheri Everhart will meet with Officer Jessica Matthews (Hyattsville City Police Department) to discuss coordination of referrals between City departments for senior community members.
- City staff and HAP will coordinate referrals as needed to ensure community members are connected to needed resources and reduce duplication of efforts among agencies.

Using Technology to Combat Loneliness and Foster Connectivity

Providing opportunities for older adults to engage with others through technology is of great interest to the work group and other community members.

- Host an Ongoing Virtual Coffee Hour
 - A regularly occurring coffee social is of interest to community members. A virtual offering could be hosted using Zoom or another platform.
- As older adults have different familiarity levels with technology, training(s) should meet residents where there are along their knowledge spectrum of using electronic devices.
 - While many older adults are tech savvy, providing senior residents with basic training on the use of computers and smart devices is viewed as an essential starting point for programmatic offerings. More advanced trainings on the use of devices could be added.
 - Programs engaging vetted and trained volunteers who are tech savvy to assist senior residents with using smart devices are available and should be explored.

- Pairing savvy senior technology users with other older adult learners could be a win-win scenario.
- It was noted that some senior housing facilities and homes may not be adequately equipped with broadband service to support online engagement and learning.
 - Identifying senior housing facilities and census tracts lacking Internet service could possibly be mapped using census tract data.
- Programs pairing technology training with access to smart devices, broadband service and online programming may be well-received by community members and should be explored.
 - To help reduce social isolation among older residents, Marci and Beryl Johnson explored developing a partnership with Greenbelt Assistance in Living (GAIL) earlier this Spring that would have provided low-income seniors with an affordable or free means to: a) connect remotely with others, and b) participate in online programs that can enhance personal enrichment and lessen the effects of isolation.
 - The discussed project entailed providing older adults in both cities with a free tablet, broadband service, and technology training and support for twelve (12) months.
 - The collaborative project did not move forward as GAIL received City of Greenbelt COVID-19 emergency funds that limited the project to Greenbelt residents. GAIL may be interested in exploring a partnership with Hyattsville after its current funding cycle has ended.

Next Steps:

- Work group members offered to look into existing technology assistance programs for seniors.
- Marci will reach out to Christal Batey of GAIL for an update on the SAINT project (Seniors Avoiding Isolation by Navigating Technology) and collaborative opportunities.

Fostering Connectivity between Youth and Seniors

Programs that connect youth/teens and older adults have much appeal among community members and staff.

- Cheri noted that City staff (Youth Programs) have discussed intergenerational programming ideas. One upcoming event being planned by City staff is a Voices of Community roundtable discussion convened by the Greater Washington Community Foundation.
 - *VoicesDMV: On The Table* is a civic engagement initiative that brings residents together to discuss issues that matter in their communities. Hyattsville will host an intergenerational conversation on Thursday, October 1, that brings together senior residents, youth community members, and Council members. HAP is participating in the event and is part of the planning effort. The topic is to be determined.
 - Cheri noted that the *VoicesDMV* project could serve as a springboard for planning additional intergenerational activities in the near future.
- Having youth make drawings and write out cards or letters for isolated older residents is a project area to be further explored for this Fall. An oral history writing project that brings teens and older community members together is another project area of much interest.

Next Steps

- A report on the convened *VoicesDMV* event will be given at the next Age-Friendly Work Group meeting.
- Community Services staff will continue to explore discussed intergenerational activities.

Continued Learning and Health and Fitness Programs

- Prince George's Community College (PGCC) offers a variety of educational programs and courses for older adults at more than 25 locations throughout the County.
 - Colleen Aistis noted that PGCC's Seasoned Adults Growing Educationally (SAGE), a tuition-free program for adults age 60 and older, provides community members with personal enrichment opportunities in areas such as fitness, the arts, and financial and estate planning.
 - Continued Education Courses are offered to residents age 60 and older at a reduced cost (seniors pay a registration fee each semester and the costs of required textbooks and other class materials).
- SilverSneakers, a national fitness network designed for people 65 years of age and older, provides access to gym memberships, weight training, aerobics, and group exercise classes. Many of its programs have been transitioned to remote, in-home classes during COVID-19.
 - Colleen noted that several years ago the City had looked into offering classes in partnership with the County's SilverSneakers. The partnership did not materialize at the time, but may be worth reexploring.

Next Steps

- Colleen noted that a Hyattsville resident had been the SAGE project coordinator at the PGCC University Town Center campus. Community Services staff will identify and contact the current SAGE project coordinator to explore collaborative opportunities.
- Marci will reach out to SilverSneakers to learn about current program offerings and discuss partnership opportunities.

Announcements

COVID-19 Test Site

- Reggie noted that the City's COVID-19 testing site reopened on September 14 and is currently operating twice a week (Mondays and Saturdays). The testing site is open 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Reggie shared that the testing site may operate three days a week beginning October 15, if additional funds are secured through the County.

Senior Community Needs Survey (COVID-19 and Beyond)

- The City's Senior Community Needs Survey will be piloted at the end of the month to identify the types of information and assistance residents need during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- The survey will be distributed to residents at Friendship Arms and community members receiving Meals on Wheels and the County's frozen meals, a total sample population of approximately 145 individuals.
- A smaller, related survey will be distributed to Hyattsville residents visiting the City's COVID-19 testing site in early October.

Emergency Assistance Voluntary Registry for Vulnerable Populations

- City staff are developing a database to be used to collect information provided by community members who wish to participate in the City's Emergency Assistance Voluntary Registry.

Hyattsville Affordable Strategy – Stage 2

- Phase 2 of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy is underway. Enterprise Community Partners will be gathering additional information from stakeholders and Council members, and assessing the City's internal capacity for strategy implementation and developing affordable housing tools.

Hyattsville Aging in Place

- HAP will hold its annual meeting via Zoom on October 21, 2020, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. More information can be found [on HAP's website](#) at www.hyattsvilleaginginplace.org.
- HAP will host an informative session on estate planning and long-term care on October 24, 2020. Details will be shared on [HAP's website](#).

Key Dates and Deadlines for the 2020 General Election

- Instructions and important dates for voting in the 2020 General Election were forwarded to work group members. Provided flyers can be circulated to community members.

Upcoming Events

- Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group, Friday, October 23, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
- Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group, Friday, November 20, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
 - Note that this meeting will be held on the third Friday of the month.
- Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group, Friday, December 18, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
 - Note that this meeting will be held on the third Friday of the month.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.