

ARAPAHOE COUNTY COLORADO

2009



SENIOR SURVEY RESULTS



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Introduction Credits

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Aurora Center for Active Adults

Malley Senior Citizens Center

Tri Valley Senior Citizens Association

Overview

The Arapahoe County Council on Aging (ACCoA) and the Senior Resources Division of the Arapahoe County Department of Community Resources partnered to complete the 2009 Senior Survey. The survey attempted to reach a broad spectrum of seniors over the age of 60 living in Arapahoe County, with a goal of identifying the types of support services that are needed in the community, and how to most effectively market those services to reach the senior audience.

The survey instrument included questions about the types of services that the senior respondent might already access or require in the future, such as transportation, home upkeep and maintenance, personal care, health and nutrition, finances, legal assistance and more. It also asked where a respondent was most likely to seek information regarding resources or support services that are available to seniors in the community.

In the previous Senior Survey, conducted in 2007, the distribution of responses was heavily weighted toward those people already receiving assistance from organizations that provide support services within Arapahoe County. Therefore, the goal for 2009 was to reach a broader spectrum of seniors through collaboration between ACCoA and the County than either entity could reach on its own, and to collect opinions that reflected a true cross-section of the senior population in the County.

Surveys were distributed between September 28, 2009 and November 30, 2009. Members of ACCoA distributed 1,500 surveys to seniors through their involvement and events in the community. Surveys were also distributed at the Aurora Center for Active Adults, the Malley Senior Citizens Center in Englewood, the monthly meeting for the rural Tri-Valley Senior Citizens Association, and at the ACCoA Pathways to Wisdom Senior Resource Day at the Buck Recreation Center in Littleton.

Included with each survey was a stamped, addressed envelope to encourage completion and return. A total of 363 surveys were returned by the due date, for a return rate of 24 percent. A majority of survey respondents were Caucasian, between age 70 and 89, and residing in a private home, apartment or condo, either alone or with one other individual.

While the majority of senior respondents were found to be active and functioning in the community, able to meet their own needs, and in many cases assist others in fulfilling unmet needs, there was clearly a group of seniors that needs additional services in the community. Such services that are needed are those that support independence, such as nutrition services, in-home services, transportation and programs that provide financial support.

Such services all contribute to the well being of many seniors, allowing them to remain in their own homes and communities, within familiar and comfortable surroundings, where they can maintain valuable relationships with family and friends, neighbors, church groups and other social groups.

There also are financial benefits to the community by providing programs that support independence for seniors. Such assistance allows seniors to delay entrance to higher and more costly levels of care, which often are supported through public programs such as Medicaid. In addition, there is an added economic benefit, as seniors who remain independent in their own homes support local businesses, such as grocery stores and pharmacies. By living in and participating in the community, they also are able to foster intergenerational experiences for people of all ages.

Conclusions

Household Income

While Arapahoe County is still considered a relatively affluent County, 12 percent of seniors who responded to the 2009 Senior Survey indicated that their income was below the Federal Poverty Level of \$10,830.

This is similar to the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) overall poverty estimation of 12.3 percent for Colorado in 2008. The poverty estimate by USDA for Arapahoe County is 9.8 percent, which indicates that a slightly higher number of respondents are reporting themselves as low-income.

Another 14 percent of senior respondents stated that they live on income that is between 100 and 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. (The 2009 poverty guideline is \$10,830 for a one-person household).

At the other end of the spectrum, 39 percent of respondents indicated their income is greater than \$25,000 per year.

Basic Needs

A total of 22 percent of respondents indicated that their income is not sufficient to meet the basic needs of housing, utilities, food, and medications.

Food

Twelve percent stated that their income was not sufficient to allow them to prepare two healthy meals per day. A number of respondents receive assistance from a variety of sources, including Meals on Wheels, family and friends, food stamps, food banks, commodities and Share Colorado, in order of greatest to lowest use.

Medication

Seventy-four percent of respondents are able to afford their medications, but 20 percent indicated that they can afford them most of the time and 8 percent can afford them sometimes, while 2 percent rarely or never can afford their medications. Thirteen respondents, or three percent, indicated that they go without prescription medication due to their inability to afford them.

Forty-four percent of respondents stated that they seek help to afford prescription medications through social service agencies, family and friends.

Twelve percent of respondents need assistance with tracking their medications.

Basic Housekeeping

A majority (63 percent) of respondents stated they feel that they can manage their basic housekeeping needs without assistance, while 21 percent need some assistance and 6 percent stated that they can not do any housework. Seven percent responded that they do without the assistance they need.

Responses indicated that the majority of housekeeping assistance is provided by family and friends, although some senior respondents are taking advantage of grant programs and others are privately paying for assistance.

Personal Needs

The majority of respondents (89 percent) indicated that they can take care of their own personal care needs, such as bathing and dressing, without assistance. Five percent indicated that they need assistance, with that help most often being provided by family and friends.

Heavier Chores

Fifty-seven percent of respondents stated that they could not perform heavy duty chores, yard work and routine home repair needs.

Transportation

Survey responses indicate that a majority of respondents (72 percent) still drive, but many of them do not drive everywhere that they need to go. For example, 66 percent of seniors are always able to get to medical appointments, 15 percent answered that they usually can get to appointments, and 5 percent said that they rarely or never can get to appointments.

When it comes to grocery shopping and errands, 67 percent responded that they always are able to reach these destinations, 18 percent indicated that they usually have transportation, and 7 percent said that they rarely or never have transportation for grocery shopping and errands.

For social activities, 61 percent of respondents could always get to these activities, while 16 percent say that they can usually get to these activities, and 12 percent say that they can rarely or never get to social activities.

Family and friends provide the majority of the alternative transportation along with RTD/Access-a-Ride, and First Ride. Some respondents also use taxis, Special Transit (Eastern Plains), Omnibus (Littleton) and RTD Light Rail (I-25 and Santa Fe Drive corridors.)

Care Giving Roles

Respondents were asked if they found themselves in a care-giving role, as it relates to caring for youth, spouses or significant others.

Ten percent indicated that they are the primary caregiver for someone with health-related disabilities. Care giving services that those respondents would like to see include financial assistance, support groups, and respite care as available services.

Three percent of respondents indicated that they were the primary financial support for grandchildren or great grandchildren, ranging from caring for one to four individuals. More than half of those caregivers felt that they did not receive enough support in that role. Responses indicate that additional support would be helpful in the areas of financial assistance, transportation, support groups and assistance with school issues.

Personal Security

When asked about consumer fraud, 17 percent of respondents stated that they had been the victim of consumer fraud, ranging from identity theft (12) to credit card or bank account fraud (28), to home improvement fraud (10).

When asked if they felt safe in their homes, 11 responded that they did not.

Personal Health

There was a very strong interest in classes related to fall prevention, stress management, living with chronic conditions, healthy eating, active minds, and low-impact exercise.

Looking for Assistance

When looking for assistance or resources to meet needs, the vast majority of respondents indicated they turn to family and friends to help them locate assistance. A significant number use their senior center, the newspaper, internet or health care provider. Some seniors use social services, Arapahoe County, the Arapahoe County Council on Aging and their Senior Dining Centers to help them find solutions. A smaller number turn to DRCOG, their church, senior housing staff, the Blue Book or their local library.

Following are the actual statistical results of the survey including the comments provided by a number of respondents.

RESULTS

Statistical results of the survey follow. A comment page is also attached, as many respondents added comments at the end of the survey. It is important to keep in mind when reviewing the results that not every respondent answered every question. In addition, there are a few questions that may have multiple answers.

Age Range:

| | | |
|-----|-------|-----|
| Age | 60-64 | 43 |
| | 65-69 | 54 |
| | 70-79 | 120 |
| | 80-89 | 107 |
| | 90+ | 18 |

The number of people in my household is:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----|
| Number of people | 1 | 164 |
| | 2 | 120 |
| | 3 | 15 |
| | 4 | 4 |
| | 5 or more | 5 |

My annual income is:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| Household income | Less than \$10,830 | 44 |
| | \$10,831-\$13,500 | 51 |
| | \$13,531 - \$16,000 | 29 |
| | \$16,001-\$20,000 | 37 |
| | \$20,001 - \$25,000 | 44 |
| | Greater than \$25,000 | 141 |

Living Situation:

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|----|
| I live in: | Senior Living Community | 31 |
| | Subsidized Senior Housing | 18 |
| | Private Apartment/Condo | 85 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| | Single Family Home | 190 |
| | Mobile Home | 16 |
| | Other | 12 |

My ethnicity is:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Caucasian | 285 |
| African American | 26 |
| Hispanic | 12 |
| Native American | 11 |
| Asian | 6 |
| Other | 3 |

Is your income sufficient to meet your basic needs of housing, utilities, food, and medications?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 255 |
| No | 79 |

If no, do you receive assistance from other sources?

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Family and Friends | 37 |
| Social Services | 22 |
| Food Banks | 29 |
| Non-Profit Organizations | 11 |
| No Assistance received | 91 |

Are you physically/emotionally able to prepare two healthy meals each day?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 292 |
| No | 56 |

Are you able to afford enough food to prepare at least two healthy meals each day?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 304 |
| No | 44 |

If no, do you receive assistance from any of the following?

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Food Stamps | 17 |
| Commodities | 14 |
| Meals on Wheels | 47 |
| Food Banks | 16 |
| Share Colorado | 4 |
| Family/Friends | 23 |
| Other | 2 |

Are you able to afford the medications you need?

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Yes | 268 |
| Most of the time | 72 |
| Sometimes | 30 |
| Rarely or Never | 8 |

If no, do you receive assistance from any of the following?

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Family/Friends | 24 |
| Medicaid | 31 |
| Medicare | 74 |
| Social Service Agencies | 11 |
| I do without | 13 |

Do you require assistance to manage or keep track of your medications?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 45 |
| No | 305 |

Do you have transportation as needed to:

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Medical Appointments | | |
| | Always | 238 |
| | Usually | 54 |
| | Rarely or Never | 20 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Grocery Shopping/Errands | | |
| | Always | 242 |
| | Usually | 64 |
| | Rarely or Never | 26 |

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Social Activities | | |
| | Always | 220 |
| | Usually | 57 |
| | Rarely or Never | 45 |

Who provides your transportation?

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| I drive myself | 262 |
| Family/Friends | 110 |
| RTD/Access-a-Ride | 30 |
| First Ride | 14 |
| Taxi | 7 |
| Special Transit | 2 |
| Omnibus | 7 |
| Light Rail | 2 |

Are you able to take care of your basic housekeeping needs?

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Yes | 228 |
| With some assistance | 78 |
| Cannot do any housework | 23 |

If assistance is needed, who provides that assistance?

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Family/Friends | 103 |
| Arapahoe County | 21 |
| Privately Paid Agency | 32 |
| Medicare | 21 |
| Medicaid | 12 |
| Doing without help | 28 |
| Paid Neighbor | 1 |
| Church | 6 |

Are you able to take care of your own personal care needs such as bathing, dressing, and getting around your home?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 325 |
| No | 18 |

If assistance is needed, who currently provides that assistance?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Family/Friends | 42 |
| Medicaid | 15 |
| Privately Paid Home Health | 9 |
| Medicare | 24 |
| Assistance from Grant Funded Programs | 4 |
| Other | 6 |

Are you able to take care of your own heavy duty chores, yard work, and routine home repair needs?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 132 |
| No | 208 |

Are you able to pay your own bills and manage your finances?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 322 |
| No | 28 |

Do you ever have a need for free or low-cost legal assistance?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 97 |
| No | 246 |

Are you currently the primary caregiver for someone with health-related disabilities?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 36 |
| No | 305 |

Do you have access to services to assist you with care giving?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 88 |
| No | 142 |

What care giving related services would you like to see made available?

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Respite Care | 47 |
| Support Groups | 67 |
| Financial Assistance | 80 |

Have you ever used the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program at DRCOG to assist you with locating assisted living or nursing facilities or to deal with problems in a facility?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 14 |
| No | 331 |

Are you the primary financial support for grandchildren or great grandchildren?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 12 |
| No | 328 |

If yes, how many grandchildren or great grandchildren are you supporting?

| | |
|-------|---|
| One | 4 |
| Two | 6 |
| Three | 1 |
| Four | 2 |
| Five | 0 |

Do you feel that you receive enough support in raising your grand or great grandchildren?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 2 |
| No | 7 |

If no, in what areas would you like additional support to help care for your grandchildren?

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Financial | 5 |
| Assistance with school issues | 2 |
| Transportation | 5 |
| After school/weekend activities | 1 |
| Support Group | 3 |
| Respite for me | 1 |

Have you been a victim of consumer fraud?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 61 |
| No | 271 |

If yes, please circle the type of consumer fraud.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Identity Theft | 12 |
| Credit card or Bank Account Fraud | 28 |
| Lottery/Sweepstakes Fraud | 3 |
| Home Improvement Fraud | 8 |
| Other | 10 |

Do you feel safe in your own home?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 326 |
| No | 11 |

Are you interested in participating in classes or accessing information on:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Fall Prevention | 48 |
| Stress Management | 46 |
| Living with Chronic Health Conditions | 63 |
| Healthy Eating | 64 |
| Active Minds | 98 |
| Low Impact Exercise | 89 |

If you need assistance, how do you find the resources to meet your needs?

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Family | 176 |
| Friends | 119 |
| Senior Center | 78 |
| Newspaper | 60 |
| Internet | 59 |
| Health Care Provider | 55 |
| Social Services | 33 |
| Arapahoe County | 28 |
| Arapahoe County Council on Aging | 24 |
| Senior Dining Center | 22 |
| Public Access TV | 17 |
| DRCOG | 10 |
| Church | 5 |
| Senior Housing Staff | 3 |
| Day Care | 2 |
| Senior Blue Book | 2 |
| Library | 1 |

Please look at the following list of services and rank 1-5, with “1” being highest, those services that you feel are most important to seniors in Arapahoe County. *Please note that many people found this question confusing and the responses were not always consistent.*

| | Ranked #1 | Ranked #2 | Ranked #3 | Ranked #4 | Ranked #5 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nutrition | 67 | 19 | 17 | 9 | 18 |
| In Home Services | 34 | 43 | 24 | 19 | 18 |
| Transportation | 31 | 28 | 25 | 30 | 20 |
| Info and Referral | 30 | 17 | 16 | 24 | 26 |
| Emergency Preparedness | 19 | 110 | 9 | 14 | 6 |
| Home Repair | 18 | 26 | 6 | 8 | 19 |
| Assistance with purchase of hearing aids, dentures, or medical equipment | 17 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 17 |
| Adult Day | 13 | 9 | 15 | 15 | 11 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Services | | | | | |
| Elder Fraud | 12 | 9 | 15 | 12 | 20 |
| Care Management | 9 | 15 | 16 | 12 | 12 |
| Legal Assistance | 8 | 13 | 17 | 20 | 13 |
| Reassurance Services | 8 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| Counseling/Mental Health | 8 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 13 |
| Care Giver Support | 7 | 12 | 17 | 13 | 17 |

Are there any needs you have that are not being met or other areas you would like assistance with?

1. Help with budgeting and finding resources for prescriptions.
2. God has so far kept me independent, but one day I'll be needing more help.
3. A dedicated senior only center!
4. Dog walking in bad weather.
5. Need assistance at times filling and picking up prescriptions when ill.
6. I would suggest setting up a service where elderly who live alone call in once a day. This could be automated rather than requiring a person to answer. There should be follow up checking (call first, more if needed) for any person who has not called.
7. I need more to eat. Pot or plate skimping along is what I am getting by on . Clothes also.
8. When the leaves are all down I need help raking.
9. I like to do my shopping in more than one store. I shop the sales.
10. Housekeeping and help with personal hygiene.
11. Help with snow removal and small home repair service.
12. Moving and settling-in assistance. Minor home repair. The existing home repair won't go to mobile homes.
13. Yard work. Shower and drain repairs. Basement clean-up. Vent and air conditioner maintenance.
14. More rides to food banks.
15. Home repair. Fence installation.
16. Competent medical advice.
17. We need the trees trimmed before winter around power lines on Kenyon and Irving.
18. Yes, I need help finding legitimate work to earn money on an occasional basis to meet emergency income gaps and emergency needs. Occasional rider to work when the car breaks down and I don't have money for RTD fare.
19. Given that we seniors have had our Social Security down for two years, maybe more help and hearing aids.
20. My main need is transportation for medical appointments and grocery store.

21. At my advanced age, I can anticipate needing some assistance. As I age I will be apprehensive.
22. Property tax exemption or property tax rebate. Free services for checking plumbing and heating systems.
23. More help to doctors and stores. Have no car. Lawn care.
24. Ways to meet other healthy, independent, active seniors.
25. Why don't the utility company offer special rates to low income seniors year round?
26. Would like to see public library open on Sunday mornings. Also would like more animal control for animals running at large in my area which is zip code 80111. Not enough police patrol for streets to control vandals in our area.
27. Not at this time but please keep improving and educating and expanding as needs and desires arise.
28. Dental care.
29. Snow removal.
30. Transportation and house cleaning.
31. Senior Tai chi and or yoga classes in Byers, Strasburg, at no cost to participants.
32. Cash.
33. Legal Assistance.
34. Need to address upgrades to entry doors not just in single family homes as well as all senior housing units.
35. Programs for RTD services.
36. Oxygen therapy so I can take O2 equipment with me when I have to leave.
37. Therapy assistance for muscle cramps and things of that type.
38. Need to make sure rules and laws are enforced by police, animal control, condo boards or change rules.
39. Unable to pay health insurance for several months.
40. For an 83 year old I am in comparatively good health and a good doctor who up til now says, see you in 6 months if nothing develops.
41. No, Englewood is a great place. I keep my self in good shape and I volunteer to help others.
42. RTD service not in my neighborhood even though I pay the RTD tax.
43. Yes, help with paying house taxes and help cleaning the house.
44. At this time I'm in very good health and have family to help.
45. Trees trimmed out of phone and cable wires.
46. Financial and investment information.
47. Like house keeping and window washing.
48. Help around house and outside yard.
49. I would like to relieve my family from having to do so much for me.
50. How about helping seniors learn to stay healthy? How about more employment opportunities?
51. So hard for a senior to get food assistance.
52. Home cleaning

53. Thank you for thinking of us “old folks!”
54. I am still struggling to find medigap policy information and basic stores.
55. Thanks for what you do!
56. Organization; gasoline; food; license plate; meals.
57. Transportation and house cleaning.
58. Snow removal.
59. Tree trimming, lawn mowing, and general yard clean up.
60. More help getting to doctor’s and stores. Lawn care.
61. Plumbing and window repairs.
62. Door to door transportation.
63. To be able to buy fruit and household needs such as paper towels, toilet tissue, and cleaning supplies.
64. Thanks for helping me get books from the library...important.
65. Meal preparation.
66. Find a full time job near home.
67. Help with basic housekeeping. Assistance with grocery shopping.
68. Someone to come to my house and do paperwork.
69. Burial and cremation advice and services.
70. Tax reduction for seniors with over 10 years residence in Colorado.
71. Bathroom repairs.