

Maturing of Illinois Initiative

Survey Response Analysis

**PREPARED FOR I4A
THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING**

By the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging
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Executive Summary

Background

The Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 authorized Area Agencies on Aging to assess the livability of their communities for the aging of the population and present final recommendations to state and local governments. In Illinois, the statewide initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois: Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population” has been developed to evaluate the preparedness of local communities for older adults including retiring Baby Boomers. During a period of three years, area agencies have worked in collaboration with community planners, service providers and leaders to organize and carry out an assessment of the program and services available for older adults and the general population.

At the state level the Illinois Senate and House of Representatives adopted the following resolution authorizing the Maturing of Illinois Initiative:

- Be it resolved that the Illinois Department on Aging and the 13 Area Agencies on Aging, with the advice of the Illinois Council on Aging, and in collaboration with other departments and offices of State government, advocacy organizations on behalf of older adults, local units of government, and organizations in the private sector shall assess the preparedness of the State of Illinois and counties and communities within the thirteen Planning & Service Areas of Illinois for the aging of the population and shall submit a report with recommendations for the planning and development of livable communities for all ages in Illinois to the Illinois General Assembly and the Office of the Governor, and local officials by January 1, 2011.

Pressing need for this report stems from the fact that the Baby Boomer generation continues to approach retirement age and it is expected that the number of people over age 65 in the United States will reach 71.5 million by the year 2030. According to the National

Association of Area Agencies on Aging, one in every five Americans will have reached 65 or more years of age in communities across the country. In the state of Illinois, the number of people over age 60 is projected to increase by 87% during a period of 30 years.

Communities in Illinois need to respond to the rapid increase in the aging population and address the quality of life for older adults and citizens of all ages.

Methodology

The thirteen Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois, in partnership with the Illinois Department on Aging, have launched a statewide initiative entitled, “The Maturing of Illinois – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population.” Area Agencies, in collaboration with citizens, local governments, and organizations, have conducted a comprehensive assessment of selected communities over the past three years, beginning October 2007. The same survey tool was utilized throughout the state in order to assess communities in ten areas:

- *Health & Human Services*
- *Housing*
- *Transportation*
- *Workforce/Economic Development*
- *Land Use*
- *Public Safety*
- *Emergency Preparedness*
- *Recreation*
- *Lifelong Education*
- *Civic Engagement*

Fifty communities in Illinois were selected by Area Agencies on Aging to be a part of this comprehensive assessment process and forty six were able to complete the task.

- *Area 1*
 - **Dixon, Mt. Carroll, Rockford, Oregon**
- *Area 2*
 - **Elgin, Kankakee, Westmont, Lockport, Highwood**
- *Area 3*
 - **Henderson County, City of Rock Island, City of Monmouth**
- *Area 4*
 - **City of Canton, City of Eureka, City of Peoria**
- *Area 5*

- Champaign, Urbana, Bloomington – Normal, Coles County, Danville, Hoopston, Macon
- *Area 6*
 - Schuyler County
- *Area 7*
 - Beardstown, Mason County, Jacksonville, Springfield
- *Area 8*
 - New Baden, Waterloo, Collinsville, Columbia, Edwardsville, Greenville
- *Area 9*
 - Salem, Flora
- *Area 10*
 - Lawrenceville, Carmi
- *Area 11*
 - Cairo, Marion, Carbondale
- *Area 12*
 - Chicago
- *Area 13*
 - Des Plaines, Chicago Heights, Berwyn, Wheeling, Oak Lawn

The goal of the assessment has been to share information and good ideas between communities, to assess the “aging readiness” of selected communities in Illinois, and to open a dialogue on the best ways to create livable communities for all ages.

The I4A community assessment tool was developed based on the research performed in similar projects by AARP, the Michigan Community Toolkit for a Lifetime and the Boston University project “Livable Communities: Taking Steps from Vision to Reality”. The survey tool development included the input of I4A members, and a number of academic advisors who volunteered to assist the area agencies with this project. The I4A community assessment tool was designed with flexibility so that a broad range of methodologies were employed to complete the assessment.

Area Agencies have determined the best assessment approach for the communities that they examined. The basic usage concept was that trained community teams of staff and volunteers employed their own observations, research, focus groups, and interviews with community leaders to help complete the assessment. The survey was meant to be completed by a trained staff or volunteer, and not designed to be distributed publicly. We did not intend to directly survey older persons, except when they elected to participate in a focus group, audience or other type of group. Throughout the process, I4A worked collaboratively to share information and findings, and is working to prepare a final report to submit to the Illinois General Assembly by January 1, 2011.

As a prerequisite for inclusion within this report, responses that were offered by the communities neared a frequency of 20% in order to be included. Varying promising practices were selected as examples of ways in which the communities are responding to their unique challenges. The assessment does not intend to compare or rate individual communities on their preparedness. Our goal was to learn from the sample about promising, challenges and planning to begin the process of preparing Illinois communities for their aging.

Located at the end of this report is an Addendum which includes resources, a glossary, information on specific sectors within communities and a snapshot of some national best and promising practices.

A Livable Community:

- *Utilizes coordinated points of entry to guide older adults to services.*
- *Ensures access to key health and support services.*
- *Provides affordable, appropriate, accessible housing.*
- *Ensures accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation.*
- *Adjusts the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility.*
- *Provides work, volunteer, and lifelong learning opportunities.*
- *Encourages participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities.*

Within each of these areas, a livable community strives to maximize people's independence, assure safety and security, promote inclusiveness, and provide choice.

While no one community has addressed all of these goals to equal degrees, many counties and local communities have made extraordinary improvements in their livability for senior adults and people with disabilities in one or even several of these areas. Their experiences and achievements can serve as inspiration and provide replicable "best practices," which other communities can emulate as they strive to become more livable.

Assets & Accomplishments

- *Health and Human Services*

- Statewide*

- **The Illinois Aging Network is developing Coordinated Points of Entry as called for in the Older Adult Services Act (P.A. 093-1031)**

- The Department on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and other partners in the Illinois Aging Network have jointly developed statewide standards for Coordinated Points of Entry.

- **Supportive Living Program**

- Illinois developed the Supportive Living Program as an alternative to nursing home care for low-income older persons and persons with disabilities under Medicaid. By combining apartment-style housing, with personal care and other services, residents can live independently and take part in decision-making. Personal choice, dignity, privacy and individuality are emphasized. To test the concept of supportive living for Medicaid clients, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services has obtained a “waiver” to allow payment for services that are not routinely covered by Medicaid. These included personal care, homemaking, laundry, medication supervision, social activities, recreation, and 24-hour needs. The resident is responsible for paying the cost of room and board at the facility.

- **East Central Illinois (PSA05) www.eciaaa.org**

- **Medication Management Improvement System (MMIS) Pilot Project** -- Since July 2008, ECIAAA has administered a grant from Carle Foundation Hospital to coordinate the Medication Management Improvement System Pilot Project to prevent medication errors and help older adults manage their medications through mentoring, monitoring, and the use of medication dispensing technology. The project has served 55 Comprehensive Care Coordination clients in Champaign, DeWitt, Douglas and Piatt

Counties. In FY2011, the MMIS Pilot Project will be extended to CCC clients in Vermilion County. *Please see glossary for detail.*

- **Housing**
 - **All areas are utilizing the Circuit Breaker Property Tax Grant Program.**
- **Transportation**
 - *Most areas*
 - **Serviced by either Rural Public Transit, Mass Transit or Dial-a-ride**
 - **Under the People with Disabilities Ride Free program, individuals who have a qualifying disability and meet the income eligibility requirements for Circuit Breaker may be eligible for free rides on all fixed-route regularly scheduled buses, trains and public transit systems.**
- **Lifelong Education**
 - *All over Illinois*
 - **Lifelong learning initiatives** -- are being discussed at the community college level
 - *Community College Presidents Lead Intergenerational Effort*
 - Local discussion goals are to strengthen communication between aging, education and service organizations to maximize the use of resources and engage older adults and younger generations to promote healthy lifestyles and increase graduation rates.
 - Discussions convened by community college presidents in cooperation with aging services directors, local educators, service organizations and community leaders of all ages. The purpose is to gather information about:

- the accomplishments related to increasing graduation rates and promoting healthy lifestyles
 - engaging all generations in the work of the community
 - the leadership and organization of civic engagement efforts between generations
 - the recommendations and examples from local discussions will be included in The Interdependence of Generations Report, as called for in the Senate Resolution 115
- *City of Rock Island* www.wiaaa.org
 - **“Living and Learning Series”** – educational program targeted to seniors, caregivers and the general public. This lifelong learning opportunity focuses on topics such as housing and renters rights, end of life and retirement planning, internet use, scrap booking classes, legal matters, storing important documents, home modification, assistive technology, pet therapy, laughing yoga, healthy eating and so much more.

Challenges and Opportunities

- *Health and Human Services*
 - **Lack of certified geriatricians**
 - By 2030, there will be an estimated 8,000 geriatricians, but the nation will need 36,000, according to the Assn. of Directors of Geriatric Academic Programs.
- *Housing*
 - **Lack of affordable housing**
 - Need affordable senior housing, dementia/Alzheimer’s housing, and grandparent housing.

- Transportation
 - **Lack of assisted transportation to medical appointments, and schedules and information regarding all transportation are difficult to locate and read.**
- Emergency Preparedness
 - **Lack of special needs tracking for emergency purposes**
 - Also there are 13 communities reporting no cooling or warming centers in case of emergency.

Recommendations

- General
 - **Branding**
 - We recommend that a common brand be utilized statewide. In multiple categories, respondents noted that despite services being available and well advertised, older Illinoisans were unaware of options. This may in fact be due to a lack of branding for these services. It is recommended that a common brand be adopted statewide which effectively brings to mind the mission of the agencies in the Illinois Aging Network and serves as an indicator that a particular service will be reliable and safe for a senior to use.
- Health and Human Services
 - **Enact the Livable Communities Act (S 1619) and fund the Livable Communities provisions in the Older Americans Act.**
 - Advocate for Congressional approval of the Livable Communities Act (S 1619) to make comprehensive planning grants and sustainability challenge grants to states and local units of government.
 - Advocate for federal appropriations to enable Area Agencies on Aging to carry out their mandated role under the Older Americans Act to create multi-year plans for the development of comprehensive,

community-based services which meet the needs of older adults and are in a unique position to expand their support to communities to assess and assist in coordinating with local agencies to address the challenges and opportunities posed by the growing numbers of older adults.

○ **Maintain Healthy Aging Programs**

- We recommend collaborative partnerships and funding at all levels to ensure the long term sustainability of evidence-based health promotion programs authorized under the Older Americans Act and the Affordable Care Act to enable people of all ages to take charge of their health.

○ **Increase Number of Geriatricians**

- There is a definite need to attract and retain certified geriatricians and others in the geriatric field. It has been estimated that next year 78 million baby boomers will turn 65. That is at a rate of one every 10 seconds. The concern is as one reaches this age, the number of medical problems increase.

- ***Additional Information:***

- About two-thirds of the boomers, when they reach 65, will have at least one chronic disease - arthritis, for example.
- When they are over 65, 20 percent of them will have five or more chronic diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, hearing loss and cancer.
- Many of these people will see about 14 physicians, resulting in about 40 doctor visits each year. These statistics quickly make the point that the health care system will be severely taxed as baby boomers enter their golden years.
- More physicians will be needed. Current physicians must learn more about geriatric care, and there will be a need for more doctors to go in to that specialty.

- It is recommended that the state of Illinois collaborate with public and private universities/community colleges to implement Title V of the Affordable Care Act to assure an adequate high quality work force.
- **Housing**
 - **Collaborate with Local Planners, Community Development Offices, Housing Advocates and Illinois Housing Development Authority**
 - There is already further study being done in multiple locations to quantify the need for affordable housing with supportive services. It is recommended that the Illinois Aging Network collaborate with local planners, community development offices, housing advocates, and the Illinois Housing Development Authority to address the need for housing and supportive services across the state.
 - *We strongly recommend the State of Illinois expand the development of supportive living facilities for persons with dementia and mental illness. Please see glossary for more detail.*
 - *We strongly recommend that local units of government adopt and implement universal design and visitability standards for the construction of new housing and the renovation of existing housing. Please see glossary for more detail.*
- **Transportation**
 - **Focus on Driver Safety Education in Collaboration with AARP**
 - A notable omission from all surveys was discussion of driver safety education and its importance. It is our recommendation due to the pending increase in older drivers that this issue be a priority of the agencies going forward. AARP is currently working to highlight a shared vision to help Illinois seniors maintain their mobility and extend their independence by increasing awareness of and participation in the AARP Driver Safety Program; reducing the possibility of serious crashes, injuries and fatalities; increasing the number of Certified DSP

Volunteer Instructors and increasing the number of host facilities. This is a tested process that has shown measurable effects including the following:

- In the past 30 years, over 12 million participants have taken the course.
 - 82% of class participants felt that the information they learned helped prevent them from getting into a traffic accident.
 - 99% of class participants reported they were likely to recommend AARP DSP to a friend.
 - The cohort of drivers 65+ is expected to grow exponentially (+70%) over the next 20 years.
- This class is now available online at www.AARPDriverSafety.org
- **Workforce/Economic Development**
 - **Community Colleges, Universities, and Local School Districts Work to Promote Job Development and to Serve an Aging Population**
 - It is recommended that community colleges, universities and local school districts work to promote job development to serve an aging population. This serves dual purposes by aiding older Americans with the provision of services they need and by aiding the economy by creating opportunities for employment during a time of recession.
 - The Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (aka AGHE) is the international leader in advancing education on aging and is the only institutional membership organization devoted primarily to gerontology and geriatrics education since 1974. AGHE's mission is two-fold: (1) To advance gerontology and geriatrics education in academic institutions; and (2) To provide leadership and support of gerontology and geriatrics education faculty and students at education

institutions. AGHE is the Educational Unit of [The Gerontological Society of America](http://www.aghe.org/). <http://www.aghe.org/>

- Exponential growth is expected in all service providing industries, and **almost limitless opportunity exists for the development and delivery of new products and services. By most accounts, careers in aging are going to be among the next big things in the 21st Century workplace.** Equal challenge and opportunity exists for students of gerontology, and those academic institutions and other workforce entities that train them for these new careers in aging.

http://businessandaging.blogspot.com/ecg/101_careers_in_aging/

- Examples of how older Americans can participate as well: mentors for youth in school and paid or unpaid consultants for business such as the Intergenerational Learning.

- **Land Use**

- **Work with the American Planning Association**

- It is recommended that Agencies work with the American Planning Association by either obtaining free or discounted access to a national database of best practices with regard to zoning and alternative living arrangements or by consulting with APA certified planners.

- **Public Safety**

- Ensure that most sidewalks in the community have adequate lighting, install lighting in alleys, and ensure that most private areas near public sidewalks are well lit.

- **Emergency Preparedness**

- **State and Local Emergency Management Teams and Their Partners Create/Maintain Effective Special Needs Tracking**

- Ensure that special needs' tracking is working effectively in case of an emergency.
- **Recreation**
 - **Build or Maintain Year Round Walking and Fitness Facilities**
 - As a means to assist all Americans, but particularly mature adults with health and wellness, it is recommended that all areas develop year round walking and fitness facilities.
- **Lifelong Education**
 - **Provide Educational Opportunities Most Wanted by Older Illinoisans**
 - Continue to poll older adults in the community to ascertain what types of educational opportunities they would like, i.e. basic computer skills, history, current events, etc.
- **Civic Engagement**
 - **Advocate Intergenerational Activities**
 - Advocate intergenerational activities and their promotion as well as recognition of older adults and their contributions at public meetings or ceremonies to sustain the focus of the Generations Serving Generations 2010 – The Year of the Engaged Older Adult initiative.