

Milwaukee County Department on Aging

February 8, 2018 – MCDA Advisory Council

Listening Session – “How Can Milwaukee County Department on Aging Better Serve Older Adults”

We’re creating our 2019-2021 Area Plan for Older Adults and we would like to hear from you!

Thinking about Milwaukee County...

1) What do you want for older adults in our community?

- Consideration for the present programs that are being offered without threats of discontinuing them. Value placed on present programming.
- Accessible, safe walking opportunities, physical activity for health
- Social inclusion and opportunities to participate in intergenerational events and activities; wellness programs promoting healthy lifestyles; educational programs regarding changes in public and government programs (social security, Medicare, etc.); develop age-friendly communities, providing resources and services for older adults
- To be happy, engaged in the community; social inclusion/opportunities to socialize (i.e. memory cafes); access to transportation options; to feel financially secure; to have all of their basic needs (shelter, food, legal aid) be met
- To be informed of services and resources available in the community; to have access to social outlets for the aging; to have access to good, quality health care and dental care; to have access to agencies that can assist them in crisis; to have an organization that will help them protect their rights and well-being; to have advocates that stress and assist with good quality of life; safety
- Makeover health day events with cosmetology students; day to feel better to address emotional health as well as physical health, help build self-esteem
- Senior centers to be more viable in Milwaukee County; to have the county supervisors restore funding for the employees laid off at the senior centers
- Target underserved in our community- expand our efforts; live carefree with ability to access all services available to them; mobility; availability of quality services and goods, i.e. food, social settings
- Transportation options
- Seniors don’t want to be consolidated into YMCA’s or Boys and Girls Clubs, we want dedicated places for seniors
- Older adults have a voice and want to be heard
- Government should gather more input from seniors and the public. Provide opportunities to be heard

- Community collaboration, innovative solutions such as MATC students being involved in building repairs
- Provide resources for prevention
- Relationships and partnerships with schools, neighborhood associations, law enforcement
- Organizations that help with senior rights and protection for elder abuse to work with
- Social inclusion opportunities which include intergenerational activities and cover more than basic needs

2) Why are these things important?

- Stability!! Maintain interest without fear of losing programs already existing that have served the community well!
- Physical activity is crucial for healthy aging
- To eliminate social isolation among elders; to promote healthy living and positive behaviors, ultimately affecting the well-being and mental health of older adults
- Emotional wellness of individuals and families; having more supports for older adults can also benefit the stress levels of their caregivers
- Aging can be a lonely event, way of life. These services and outlets offer hope and relief. All seniors and families need assistance on where to get help. I wouldn't want my parent/family member or neighbor to lose hope and desire to live. Resources help alleviate these stress barriers. Stability and expectations.
- Just an uplifting day of feeling better.
- To me as a senior, I do not want our senior centers to be diluted and seniors put on youth centers, i.e. Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA
- Basic quality of life which older adults deserve
- Aging can be very lonely
- Important to let people live with dignity
- Need stability in aging programs
- Need people to be lifted, respect your elders, uplift those facing family dysfunction
- Need to promote socialization, health and well-being
- Wellness is research based and can be as powerful as medication
- Supporting older adults directly benefits their caregivers and their neighborhood

3) What can we do to make it better?

- Better communications and interest in the administration (responsible) personal! Qualified and interested in the needs of the aging population and expanding some activities.
- Encourage communities to become recognized as age friendly by the World Health Organization
- Solicit involvement from local agencies, business and school communities to create and sustain programs and supports for older adults

- Continue to work on making Milwaukee dementia friendly
- Find additional funding to support senior nutrition
- Provide resources and informational outlets to assist and advocate for the aging
- Host each event quarterly at various senior centers
- Work with the seniors, county supervisors and county exec to make it happen ASAP (restored senior center funding)
- Partnerships. Awareness. Connect with local faith based groups
- Create workgroup to identify partnership opportunities
- Solicit direct involvement from local agencies, schools and businesses to sustain programs for older adults
- Inventory of what's out there now, do community needs and resource assessment then partner with existing groups/initiatives
- Literally create a list of what MCDA can assist with as a starting point to catch attention and start engaging in conversations
- Integrate ideas of livable communities
- Consider having meetings at accessible buildings such as Washington Park Senior Center
- Do research on motivation, once you create resource, raise awareness- how do you motivate older adults to become involved and engaged when they think they will never need the services of MCDA