



The AdvantAge Initiative: Helping Communities Measure Their “Elder-Friendliness”

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

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Center for Home Care Policy and Research
Visiting Nurse Service of New York

A Growing Older Population: Challenges

- The “Age Wave” is coming (20% of population by 2030)
- Most older people (93%) in the U.S. want to “age in place”
- Community infrastructure is generally unprepared for a growing number of older adults
- Good information about older adults and their interests, contributions, and needs is scarce
- Negative stereotypes about older adults are pervasive and may inhibit community action




A Growing Older Population: Opportunities

- Communities are beginning to pay more attention to aging issues and the need to build capacity to support a growing older population
- Communities are also beginning to consider the older population as a resource rather than a drain on resources

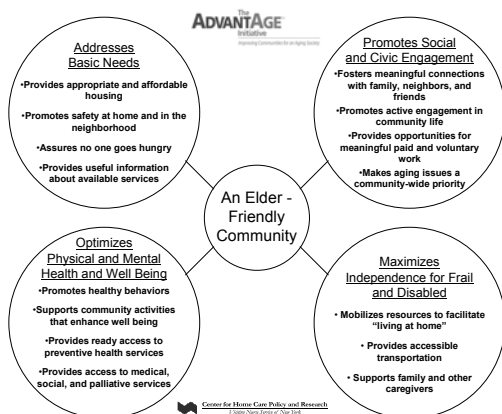


AdvantAge Initiative Objectives

- Develop a model of an “elder friendly” community
- Develop a method to measure community “elder-friendliness”
- Help communities interpret and use this information to create action plans to support older residents’ health, well-being, and independence as well as their social and civic engagement

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 The ADVANTAGE Initiative
Advancing Communities for an Aging World



AdvantAge Initiative Strategy

DATA → **INFORMATION** → **ACTION**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer surveys – catalyst • Focus groups • Census data • Other statistics (assets, health, crime) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework • Indicators • Benchmarks • Technical assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness • Set priorities • Design action plans • Allocate resources • Monitor progress |
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AdvantAge Initiative Survey Conducted in

- Six neighborhoods of Chicago, IL
- Indianapolis, IN
- Jacksonville, FL
- Lincoln Square, NYC
- Maricopa County, AZ
- Orange County, FL
- Puyallup, WA
- Santa Clarita, CA
- Upper West Side, NYC
- Yonkers, NY
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Contra Costa County, CA
- Parsippany, NJ
- Newaygo County, MI
- St. Joseph County, IN
- El Paso County, TX
- Fourteen grantee-communities of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Partnerships for Older Adults program (CPOA)
- National Survey

Primary Uses of the Survey Data

- Strategic and/or programmatic planning (Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Lincoln Square, Orange County, Puyallup, Yonkers, Parsippany, Newaygo County, El Paso, CPOA grantees)
- Strategic planning and grant-making decisions (Maricopa County, Grand Rapids, St. Joseph County, Contra Costa County)
- Market research (Chicago)
- Performance evaluation to date (Santa Clarita, Lincoln Square)
- Other potential uses: Set future targets; measure future performance

Benefits of the AdvantAge Initiative Survey

- Provides a statistically valid “data snapshot” of seniors and how they are faring at this point in time (*not* a “needs assessment”)
- Provides an opportunity to:
 - 1) Hear the voices of older people
 - 2) Organize and prioritize aging issues
 - 3) Bring stakeholders together and provide them with a “common language”
 - 4) Generate enthusiasm and momentum
 - 5) Stimulate thought and discussion about the effectiveness of current programs and help plan future programs
- Community data are comparable to AI national survey results

Lessons Learned

- **Direct data from older adults are scarce**
- **Interpreting and translating data are difficult**
- **Technical assistance is essential and welcome**
- **Consumer based information challenges untested assumptions**

Lessons Learned (continued)

- **Local leadership and community infrastructure essential**
- **Buy in must be top down, bottom up, inside out**
- **Community stakeholders want to be part of a “learning community”**