

# *Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey*

## **Executive Summary**

**SEPTEMBER 2008**

**Research Performed and Reported by:**



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## **I. Introduction**

Demographic projections from the United States Census Bureau in 2000, indicate that the aging of the “baby boom” generation will increase the proportion of persons over age 65 from 13 percent currently, to 20 percent by the year 2030. By the year 2030, persons age 65 and older are expected to represent 20 percent of the population. Individuals aged 85 and older comprise the fastest-growing segment of our population with over four million older adults having reached this milestone. As the population age 65 and older continues to increase, more and more families and communities will be faced with the challenges of providing a nurturing, proactive, responsive, user-friendly environment in which older adults thrive and are able and encouraged to contribute to their own successful aging experience and to the communities in which they live.

Locally, of the 151,095 people living in Medina County, 21,818 are 60 years or older. Five percent of the population is over the age of 75. Medina County has experienced a 23.5% population growth overall between 1990 and 2000 and a 32 % increase in seniors over the age of 60 according to the 2000 U.S. Census. By 2020, there will be 46,400 individuals age 60+ in Medina County, representing a 113% increase in the 60+ population since 1990. This is the largest increase in Northeast Ohio, including Cleveland and Akron. This aging population has serious issues and concerns that must be addressed. For instance, over 10% of the 60+ population in Medina County live in poverty and nearly 30% of individuals age 60+ have at least one disability. By 2020, almost 4,000 individuals age 60+ residing in Medina County will have a sever disability. Due to this population explosion and the economic, health, and social needs that accompany this increase, it has never been as important as it is now to develop a clear understanding of the quality of life needs of older adults in the county.

### ***A. Survey Purpose***

These population trends, combined with the current financial straits of local public and nonprofit services for older adults, prompted the survey sponsors (Medina County Family First Council, The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority, and The HANDS Foundation) to collaborate on an extensive survey of older adults living in Medina County. The survey sponsors contracted with IntelliSolve, Inc. to perform a comprehensive Older Adult Needs Assessment Survey focused on quality of life issues for seniors within the community. The Survey would include, but not be limited to questions regarding demographics, health, housing, mental health, independent living, and access to community services.

The survey took place May through July 2008, using a variety of community partners to ensure a representative sample of Medina County seniors. A total of 709 surveys were collected. The survey sample is representative of the older adult population in Medina County in terms of race and ethnicity, age, gender, and income. The survey sample did not include older adults who were institutionalized. All interviews were conducted in English and took 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

This report presents findings from a survey of older adults in Medina County, Ohio, which explored topics affecting their quality of life and participation in the community. The survey was designed and conducted collaboratively between the Medina County Family First Council, The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority, The HANDS Foundation, and IntelliSolve, Inc. Survey findings may have significant implications for planning for future needs of seniors and improve existing services.

## B. Survey Framework

In conducting this community survey, the sponsors sought to understand the forces behind the trends suggested by the 2000 Census and to understand and improve the local quality of life and community for older adults. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive literature review of senior needs assessment surveys was performed to determine how other communities had recently assessed their older adult needs, designed their research approach, and chosen potential survey items. In addition to the best practice research, community partners who serve older adults were solicited to provide any questions they had regarding the needs of older adults in Medina County. The findings were synthesized and potential survey items were identified for possible inclusion in the survey. The best practice research led to the identification of a quality of life framework that fit closely with the relevant component areas. The Wilder Foundation's quality of life framework for older adults is a framework for assessing quality of life that encompasses basic needs, engagement, and well-being. Both the survey itself and this report of results are built on this framework, whose basic elements are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: A framework for understanding older adults' quality of life (Wilder Foundation)

<b>Basic needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Nutrition</li><li>• Access to needed services</li><li>• Financial security</li><li>• Human support (comfort)</li><li>• Autonomy and choice</li></ul>	<b>Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social interaction</li><li>• Meaningful activities</li><li>• Community connections</li><li>• Learning and creative expression</li></ul>	<b>Well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spirituality</li><li>• Physical well-being</li><li>• Mental well-being</li><li>• Life satisfaction</li></ul>
<b><i>Basic Needs + Engagement + Well-being = Quality of Life</i></b>		

## C. Survey Methodology

### Sample Selection

IntelliSolve, Inc. worked closely with the survey sponsors to create a roster of community partners across Medina County who would assist with administering as many surveys as possible within a 6-week time frame to adults ages 60 and older living in Medina County. The potential community partners were identified through the Medina County Senior Resource Guide and feedback from the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey (MCSNA) core team, which included the survey sponsors and their representatives, as well as the director of the Office for Older Adults, and local county commissioners. A total of 30 potential partners were identified who could optimally assist in the dissemination and collection of surveys from participants across the county who would meet the following criteria: 1) Are representative of various geographic regions of the county; 2) Represent various levels of care for seniors from active through residential long-term care; 3) Represent various socioeconomic levels; and 4) Include veterans.

All 30 potential community partners were contacted and informed regarding the distribution and collection of surveys to ensure effective and efficient administering of the survey while eliminating potential for duplication. The survey began the week of May 20, 2008, and was completed July 16, 2008. The goal was to complete 400 interviews to represent a population of 21,181 older adults in Medina County. IntelliSolve, in collaboration with 30 community partners, was able to collect 709 interviews. To ensure the sample represented the older adult population in

Medina County, the distribution by race and ethnicity, age, gender, income, and geographic location was assessed after 350 interviews were completed. Determining that the completed cases at that point represented the older adult population, data collection staff continued administering and collecting survey data to complete the final sample. All the surveys were conducted in English. Each interview took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

### ***Sample Characteristics***

**Age.** Eleven percent (11%) of the survey respondents ranged from 60 to 64 years of age. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents ranged from 65-70 years of age. Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents ranged from 71-74 years of age. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents ranged from 75-80 years of age. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents ranged from 81-84 years of age. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents were age 85 or older.

**Gender.** Nearly three-fourths of the respondents were women (74%) and one-fourth were men (26%).

**Race and ethnicity.** In this regard, the survey group also closely resembled the county's older adult population as a whole. Nearly all (97%) were White; 2 percent were African American, and 1 percent self-identified as other. In addition, less than 1 percent of the survey participants were of Hispanic origin.

**Household income.** About one-third of the survey participants (34%) have incomes above \$25,000, with sixteen percent (16%) reporting an income between \$25,000 and \$39,000, another ten percent (10%) reporting an income of between \$40,000 and \$54,000, and eight (8%) reporting incomes in excess of \$55,000. Alternately, two-thirds of the survey respondents (66%) have household incomes below \$25,000, with twenty-two percent (22%) having incomes below \$10,000, and another forty-four percent (44%) reporting incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000. It should be noted that fourteen percent (14%) did not respond to the household income question.

**Education.** A little under half of the survey group (46%) had at least some college or technical training after high school; Twenty-four percent (24%) has some college or technical training, ten percent (10%) were college graduates, about four (4%) had some graduate school training, and about eight percent (8%) had a graduate or professional degree. However, over half (54%) of the respondents had no more than a high school diploma or GED. Fourteen percent (14%) had less than a HS diploma, and Forty-one percent (41%) reported receiving their HS diploma or GED. Only 7 percent of the women had completed a graduate or professional degree, compared to ten percent (10%) of the men.

**Marital status.** Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the survey respondents reported being married and living with their spouse. Less than one percent reported being married but separated from their spouse. Nearly half reported being widowed (46%). Twelve percent (12%) were divorced, and another three percent (3%) were never married. Nineteen percent (19%) of the men were widowed, compared fifty-six percent (56%) of the women.

**Veteran status.** Approximately one-fifth of the respondents (19%) reported being a veteran. The majority of veterans were male (93%) versus female (7%).

**Number in household.** The grand majority (98%) of those reporting household numbers reported having between one and two persons living in the household. Another five percent (5%) reported

having between three and four persons in the household. Only two percent (2%) reported having five or more persons living in the household.

**Living arrangements.** Nearly half of the survey respondents (48%) reported living by themselves. Another thirty-eight percent (38%) reported living with their spouse. Five percent (5%) reported living with a child, one percent (1%) with a sibling, and two percent (2%) with another adult. Five percent (5%) reported living in an assisted living facility or nursing home. The men in the survey were more likely to be living with a spouse or partner (66%), compared to women (27%). Women were more likely to be living by themselves (56%), compared to men (25%).

**Closest family.** Sixty-one percent (61%) of those respondents living alone reported that their nearest family member lives in Medina County. Another nineteen percent (19%) reported their nearest family member living outside of Medina County but within Ohio. Four percent (4%) reported their closest family member being outside of Ohio. Sixteen percent (16%) indicated this does not apply.

**Own their home.** Of those living independently, thirty-eight percent (38%) reported renting and sixty-one (61%) reported owning their own home (See Figure 9). Nearly three-quarters (74%) of men own their own home, compared to fifty-six percent (56%) of women.

## **II. Key Findings**

From this survey we learned that a large majority of older adults in Medina County appear to have their basic needs met, are engaged in community life and want to be more engaged, feel good about their health, and are satisfied with their lives. However, some are clearly struggling. It is important to bear in mind, when reviewing the results of this survey, that a small percentage may amount to a sizeable number when applied to the entire population of Medina County older adults.

### ***Basic needs***

- Relatively few older adults in this survey reported using supportive services personally (generally less than 10%), with some notable exceptions (senior newsletters, home delivered meals, transportation, nutrition site meals, social/recreational activities, medical assessments, and senior speaker sessions. However, respondents were slightly more likely to report that they knew others who used the services and a substantial percentage of respondents identified needed services, most notably transportation, home delivered meals, medical assessment, housekeeping, and legal services.
- The typical older adult who receives supportive services is female, living alone, and has limited personal income.
- One out of five respondents did not know where to go for information about supportive services, which signifies a need to improve awareness of information sources and service availability in Medina County.
- Most survey respondents appear financially able to meet fundamental needs for food, supplemental insurance, and prescription drugs.

- The survey showed that a large portion of the overall participants own their own home (61%); many of which reported living in their current residence for 20 years or longer (39%).
- Most respondents feel they can trust others around them, feel that their neighbors are willing to help each other out, and have someone they can call if they need immediate help.
- Nearly all respondents said their neighborhood is safe during the day (99%), with the vast majority of respondents (78%) indicating they generally trust their neighbors to watch out for them; while about one-fifth (17%) feel their neighborhood is not safe at night.
- A significant proportion of the respondents (13%) reported that they expect to move to another residential location within the next two years. “Pull” factors such as reducing home maintenance responsibilities (24%), repairs and renovations (15%), and needing help with daily living (15%) were the leading contributors.
- While the vast majority of respondents (86%) indicated they have been educated or warned about potential fraud schemes aimed at older adults (e.g., identity theft, home repairs, etc.), only about seventy percent (70%) of those with incomes below \$10,000 reported having been educated or warned about fraud.
- The survey showed that twenty-two percent (22%) of the participants receive shopping assistance, nineteen percent (19%) currently use congregate dining services (meals served to a group), ten percent (10%) have help with meal preparation, and thirteen (13%) percent receive home-delivered meals.
- Respondents who received home health care were most likely to be age 75 or older, have an income of less than \$24,000, and live in Brunswick or Medina.
- Although 69% of the respondents reported driving their own cars, lack of transportation presented a barrier to attending events or activities for a sizable number of Medina County residents (16%).
- Substantial numbers of older adults cited barriers to attending events and activities, as respondents reported that the older the person and the lower their income, the more likely they were to say that something kept them from going out to do things they would like to do.
- The most popular responses for what purpose older adults would use transit services included: grocery shopping (46%), medical or dental appointments (46%), banking and bill paying (29%), recreation and social events (28%), entertainment (26%), senior or community centers (25%), and religious activities (23%).
- Most survey participants appear able to meet basic needs for food, medicine, and health care, although 38% of the respondents reported concerns about outliving their financial resources.
- The vast majority of survey respondents (91%) reported that they were able to manage their finances, such as balancing their checkbook, paying bills, and banking. However, it

is important to note that nearly one in five respondents (19%) with less than a HS Diploma or GED reported that they were not able to manage their finances, as did thirteen percent (13%) of adults age 85 and above.

- Although the majority of the respondents reported having enough money for food (92%), gas (84%), mortgage/rent (90%) and utilities (93%), many mentioned the increasing difficulty in affording these expenses as the economy continues to be poor and gas prices keep climbing.

### ***Engagement***

- The survey showed high levels of social interaction. Respondents reported relatively high levels of social interaction with frequent family activities (95%), monthly community or social events (75%), and monthly senior center events (58%).
- Older adults are a major volunteer force in Medina County. About one-third (35%) of the respondents reported they volunteer in the community, with over one-fourth (27%) averaging over five hours per month.
- Although most of the survey participants are retired (92%) about eight percent (8%) continue to work part-time and five percent (5%) continue to work full-time.
- Fourteen percent (14%) reported being employed because they need to work, with a significant portion (11%) reported having experienced age discrimination when seeking a job.
- Twelve percent (12%) of the respondents said they provide care for one or more family members or friends on a regular basis.
- A significant percentage of the older adults in this survey (1 in 10) expressed concern about being alone.

### ***Well-being***

- A significant portion of the respondents reported maintaining a high level of personal health through flu shots (79%), pneumonia vaccinations (75%) and annual dentist appointments (63%).
- Seventy-nine percent (79%) reported having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled. However, over one-fourth (27%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and one-third (33%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 reported NOT having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled.
- Only about one-third (35%) of the respondents indicated that they had participated in an organized health education or health promotion activity in the past year.

- Nearly all of the survey respondents (98%) reported understanding the reasons they are taking medications, are aware of the potential side effects for the medications they are taking (94%) and received consultations regarding the medication interaction risks from their doctor or pharmacist before taking their medication (75%).
- Over half of the respondents (56%) reported frequent visits to parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers, with sixty-one percent (61%) reportedly exercising regularly (three or more times weekly).
- Two-thirds of the respondents (67%) rated their health as *very good* or *good*, while twenty-eight percent (28%) rated their health as *fair*, and only five percent (5%) rated their health as *poor*.
- It is interesting to note that females were more likely than male respondents to rate their overall health as *very good*. The relative percentages are 36 percent of the female respondents versus 26 percent of the male respondents.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents said they would feel comfortable asking a professional for help if they were experiencing a mental health problem, but only thirty-five percent (35%) reported ever talking to a counselor, family therapist, social worker, or psychologist.
- Nearly all of the respondents said that they are either *very satisfied* (47%) or *fairly satisfied* (40%) with their lives, while ten percent (10%) reported being *slightly dissatisfied* with their lives and only three percent (3%) reported being *very dissatisfied* with their lives.

### **III. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This assessment provides a wealth of data about the strengths and needs of Medina County's older adult population. Most seniors are flourishing in Medina County. By and large, they are mobile, healthy, and engaged in a variety of productive activities. Older residents experience a good quality of life in Medina County and most plan to stay in the community. Nonetheless, there are needs evident in Medina County's older adult population, which are likely to increase dramatically as the population ages over the next decades and the economy remains in its current condition.

#### **Recommendation #1: Improve Transportation**

The vast majority of responses regarding the biggest problem in Medina County for older adults centered on transportation. Older adults would like to have more accessible, affordable, regular transportation that reaches desired destinations, often beyond the boundaries of Medina County. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following transportation improvement strategies:

- Utilize a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored transportation programs.
- Inventory the existing transit services and review existing Medina County Transit Authority

ridership survey findings to analyze accessibility, cost, transit utilization, and customer satisfaction data to make data-informed decisions;

- Identify opportunities (both within and outside of the city or county limits) to expand services or collaborate between providers to provide services where demand is not currently being met.
- Collaboratively partner with those serving older adults with disabilities (e.g., Medina County Creative Housing, MRDD, etc.) to ensure the county is meeting the transportation needs of the older adult population with disabilities;
- Research other communities (e.g., Cuyahoga County and outer ring suburbs) to determine how they addressed the increasing demands for convenient and affordable public transportation during diminishing funding;
- Increase investment in public transportation to improve mobility for older adults. Transportation remains very expensive and greatly under funded in Medina County. More financial investment is needed from the private sector to make up for the lack of public funding that has plagued transportation in Ohio and in Medina County. There needs to be a transportation champion in Medina County who will work tirelessly to assure that the transportation needs (both current and future) are met;
- Create public transportation services and pedestrian-friendly environments for older adults, particularly in the more rural areas that may not currently offer convenient alternatives to driving; and
- Consider the expansion of senior transportation by funding community design initiatives that make shopping, entertainment and essential services more easily accessible. Possible solutions might include improvements to roadway design such as large print road signs, grooved lane dividers, dedicated left turn lanes, and extended walk times at pedestrian crosswalks to accommodate older drivers and pedestrians.

## **Recommendation #2: Increase Housing Alternatives and Affordability**

Affordability of housing and housing related costs, as well as the need for housing alternatives for older adults was also identified as a significant need in Medina County. Older adult concerns regarding housing centered around the desire to remain independent, to maintain their current home, to afford utilities and repairs, and to be able to adapt their home to meet changing needs as they age. Currently, much of the focus related to senior housing is on people in crisis. Much remains to be done to be proactive in providing preventative services to help older adults afford and maintain their homes, or become aware of housing alternatives before they experience a housing crisis. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following housing improvement strategies:

- Utilize a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored housing programs.
- Inventory the existing housing services, providers, costs, and locations to obtain a clear picture of what housing and housing resources are available to older adults, who is providing these housing options or services, and how affordable it is for older adults;
- Finalize and distribute widely the Housing Pathways model so that all providers of service to older adults are aware of the housing issues facing older adults, the decision-making process that often occurs when making housing decisions, and the resources available within the county to assist older adults with housing-related issues;
- Promote the development of home modification and home improvement programs that assist older citizens to adapt their existing homes to meet their needs, and market more effectively the existing services and programs available to seniors (e.g., home weatherization, home maintenance and repair, chore services, home adaptation, etc.);

- Ensure that there are resources in place to assist older adults in obtaining housing that is affordable and appropriate in size and design to accommodate their changing needs;
- Consider innovative ideas for helping older adults age in place, such as home sharing projects between seniors and young adults;
- Together with cities and townships, community-based organizations, human services, and government-sponsored housing programs, assess the existing land use plans, zoning ordinances and building codes to promote the development of a range of housing options that meet the needs of the county's aging population (e.g., access to transportation links, walkable distance from daily needs like medical services or shopping);
- Consider the expansion of senior housing partnerships with local non-profits and vendors to address countywide housing needs;
- Encourage all agencies who are considering new projects and grant writing efforts to submit their ideas through the Medina County Housing Network to increase county-wide awareness of housing projects, increase collaboration between partners with similar interests and objectives, reduce redundancy of program services and duplicate grant applications, and increase economies of scale; and
- Facilitate the development of a plan for addressing housing-related needs for those seniors with geropsych issues.

### **Recommendation #3: Increase Financial Management Assistance**

While the vast majority of older adults responding to the survey indicated they had enough money to pay their rent or mortgage and utilities and purchase the food and gas they needed over the last year, many mentioned the increasing difficulty in affording these expenses as the economy continues to be poor and gas prices keep climbing. Nearly 1 in 4 survey respondents said they were concerned about outliving their financial resources and about 1 in 5 indicated they have had to change their way of life significantly in the past year to pay their medical bills. With the full financial implications from the recent housing foreclosure crisis and the Federal Government "Bail Out" of Wall Street still unknown, it is important to take as proactive an approach as possible to ensure that a year from now, older adults are still able to afford their living expenses and can maintain their independence and financial security. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following financial management assistance strategies:

- Expand appropriate tax assistance, rental assistance, and utility assistance to offer a level of relief to those most in financial need. Medina County should continue to examine opportunities to reduce the financial burden of older adults;
- Inventory the existing financial assistance available to County residents, both public and private to obtain a clear picture of what assistance is available, who is providing the service, where it is located, how often and where it is offered, and how affordable it is for older adults;
- Fully utilize existing resources such as OSU Extension's Master Money Manager Program, Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), Homestead Exemption Program, and the United Way's Sustainable Families initiative, as well as encouraging local churches and professionals (e.g., local accountant, attorneys, financial planners) to provide necessary financial programs for little to no charge to seniors as part of their community service; and
- Develop partnerships to offer job training, retraining programs, and lifelong learning opportunities that assist older adults who wish to remain in the workforce do so successfully.

### **Recommendation #4: Increase Safety and Security**

While the majority of Medina County residents surveyed reported feeling safe during the day within their neighborhoods, a substantial number reported not feeling safe in those same neighborhoods at night. There is also a significant need to improve other areas of safety and security. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for increasing safety and security:

- Develop a task force of relevant stakeholders (i.e., representatives from police and fire, hospitals, city or township government, caretakers, and older adults), both within each community and across the county, to identify other areas of safety and security that may need addressed to ensure all seniors feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods, are aware of and possess the knowledge and tools to handle emergencies, and have community safety nets when they do not have a local family member to help them in times of need;
- Expand the Senior ICAT Geriatric Assessment model through interdisciplinary cooperative partners across the county, in a variety of environments, to achieve safety and security goals for older adults;
- Increase the awareness and utilization of neighborhood watch programs, especially in the areas where individuals were more likely to report feeling less safe (e.g., areas with respondents reporting incomes of less than \$24,000);
- Continue to build relations between the police, fire departments and older adults to improve older adult awareness of programs and services and strengthen partnerships between citizens and their community protectors; and
- Offer additional education and training for older adults about how to protect themselves against financial fraud and predatory lending, focusing on those with incomes below \$10,000 who indicated that they had not received such training and are perhaps the least able to afford to be a victim of this type of crime.

### **Recommendation #5: Improve Health and Well-Being**

While there is overall high rating of health and life satisfaction in Medina County, there is a dramatic need to reach the older adults with limited income and other resources to ensure that their health and well-being improves to more closely match that of their counterparts. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for improving health and well-being:

- Utilize a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored health and wellness programs;
- Continue to fully recruit and engage all relevant program providers (e.g., Emergency Rooms, Primary Care Physicians, Senior ICAT, Geriatric Case Management, etc.) in the development of a mechanism or procedure for identifying those older adults who do not have someone who could take care of them if they became sick or disabled and connect them in a timely and proactive fashion to community resources;
- Develop a mechanism or procedure for identifying those older adults who do not have dental insurance and are facing significant health concerns as a result. Develop partnerships with local dentists to build a cooperative of providers who will offer pro bono care in collaboration with local hospitals or through mobile dental units;
- Develop an inventory of public and private providers of food banks, food-rescue, and food lines to obtain a clear picture of what assistance is available, who is providing the service, where it is located, how often and where programs are offered, and how affordable it is for older adults. Specific attention should be given to addressing the food security needs of shut-

ins, those with lower incomes, and individuals with special diets that are not closely following their recommended regimen; and

- Develop a countywide marketing campaign to increase older adult involvement in community activities and physical activities, such as the Step Up to Health Program. Determine specific barriers to low participation, especially for those reporting incomes below \$10,000. Identify useful strategies for increasing participation.

### **Recommendation #6: Enhance Public Awareness and Service Outreach**

This survey made it quite clear that there is still a great deal of public awareness and outreach that needs to occur to ensure older adults are aware of the existing services, know how to access these services, and are comfortable reaching out to providers. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for enhancing public awareness and service outreach:

- Find a mechanism for funding and distributing the Medina County Senior Resource Guide and the Medina County Commissioners Guide to Services in Medina County to all older adults living in the county. These resources provide substantive information to seniors regarding local resources and contact information for acquiring services and access to programs;
- Create and expand opportunities for the effective and purposeful participation of older adults on community boards and commissions as well as to create and expand meaningful volunteer opportunities in local government and non-profit organizations; and
- Promote the development of a primary point of entry for information and access to all aging services. This single point of service should be committed to providing timely and relevant information to older adults about available resources throughout the county. They should also be committed to supporting the continuum of supportive services that older adults need to remain living independently at home and in the community.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the older adults participating in the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey reported moderate to high levels of well-being and overall life satisfaction. However, much remains to be done to meet the ever-increasing needs of seniors in the county, especially those with limited income and support. Program providers and local decision-makers must be very thoughtful about responding to older adult needs when the number of older adults is increasing, demands are expanding, and federal, state, and local funds are diminishing. The results of this survey will provide guidance in beginning the discussions and plans for building on the current strengths of the system serving older adults in Medina County and how these services might be improved over the next few years to ensure that all Medina County seniors have a high quality of life. An admirable number of community and county-wide collaborative organizations composed of public and private stakeholders currently exist. Engaging these collaborative organizations to enhance services is key to the successful development and implementation of effective strategies designed to address the existing gaps in services for older adults in Medina County. These strategies should embrace a “Front Door, No Wrong Door” approach that recognizes the holistic needs of older adults and is cognizant of the various pathways that exist to identifying and addressing current and future needs.