

community**experience**
PARTNERSHIP

engaging older adults for civic good

An initiative for U.S. community foundations
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The ShoreWisdom™ Network Community Assessment Report

Prepared for the



*Community
Foundation*
of the Eastern Shore, Inc.

By

GrayShore

An initiative of



(BEACON of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University)

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Executive Summary

Objectives

We embarked on the Community Assessment project with the objective of answering three questions:

- 1) What are some of the natural linkages between our community needs and the knowledge, know-how, experiences, and skill sets our older adults can bring to the table to help us meet some of these community needs?
- 2) How do we go about quantifying and qualifying the collective wisdom of older adults?
- 3) What are the barriers and obstacles to engaging older adults?

Methodology

The Community Assessment was conducted by the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University (BEACON). BEACON is the creator of the GrayShore™ Coalition and is the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore's lead partner in this project. BEACON's approach to conducting this Community Assessment was comprised of three major phases: a comprehensive literature review, quantitative research collected through surveys, and qualitative research collected from focus groups.

Key Findings

The Eastern Shore of Maryland (Shore) is a net importer of older adults whereas the State of Maryland is a net exporter of seniors. The median age on the Shore is getting higher while at the state level it is getting lower. On a number of socioeconomic factors, the Shore counties are in the bottom 10% of all counties in the United States whereas the State of Maryland is in the top three among the 50 states on these same factors. This state-level wealth disqualifies or reduces the ability of Maryland to receive a variety of Federal or Foundation resources, leaving the "Have-Not" counties of the Shore in the cold. Also, the state-level public policies are geared to the statewide realities of a "younger" population that tend to be very different than those seen on the "Graying" Eastern Shore of Maryland. Finally, the Shore is experiencing a very rapid and previously unseen increase in the number of non-native born individuals with limited English proficiency, changing the rural community mosaic in drastic terms. As a result, these unique and unmet community needs on the "Graying Shore" become the problem of local community-based organizations. Fortunately, the in-migration of older adults to our region brings us a large potential pool of well educated, highly skilled, and experienced volunteers. Finally, our "From-Here" seniors are showing signs of wanting to bring their "Sweat Equity" to the table and join forces with the "Come-Here" seniors to help develop the solutions our region desperately needs.

Conclusions

Thanks to this Community Assessment, we now know a lot about the various components of the older adult community in our region. We have learned how to best reach them, and we have learned how to trigger, maintain, and enhance civic engagement by these older adults. Our proposed ShoreWisdom™ Network presents an opportunity to use these findings to implement a program to turn our knowledge into action. This initiative is the beginning of a new way of life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland for older adults and for our community. It represents an elegant solution to an inelegant set of problems. The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, together with project partners MAC, Inc.-The Area Agency on Aging, and BEACON at Salisbury University have, through their substantial and ongoing investments of time and other resources into their GrayShore™ Coalition, shown their commitment to enhancing the region's capacity to serve the needs of the growing population of older adults in our communities, while simultaneously benefiting from the collective wisdom of these individuals.

Narrative

Background

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore has been proactive in responding to the changing demographics in its service area by supporting many local programs focused on our aging population. Recent examples of such program support include grants to the Worcester County Garden Club for a garden therapy program at a local nursing home and to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to establish an ongoing series of computer training workshops for senior citizens. We also provided funding to MAC, Inc., (our local Area Agency on Aging) to conduct a facility needs assessment for a new senior center in Wicomico County. Plans for that Center are currently underway, with over \$4 million committed to date. Perhaps more importantly, however, since 2003 the Community Foundation has supported long-term strategic research, analysis, and coalition-building around the “Graying” of the Eastern Shore.

In 2003, the Community Foundation and MAC, Inc. jointly commissioned a study on our region’s aging population from the Business, Economic, And Community Outreach Network (BEACON), a research and consulting unit of the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

In 2004, BEACON’s report, “The Graying of Delmarva,” documented the realities and implications of the Shore’s in-migration of older adults. The Community Foundation helped to sponsor a public forum to present BEACON’s findings that was attended by over 80 stakeholders. That study led to the creation of the GrayShore™ Coalition which today brings together stakeholders from over 50 organizations across the Eastern Shore and is dedicated to building awareness and promoting preparedness for a “Graying Shore.” The GrayShore™ Coalition meets regularly on the campus of Salisbury University.

In 2005, BEACON and its GrayShore™ Coalition organized the first GrayShore™ Legislative Day. This successful event attracted over 120 participants from across the region including the Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging and legislators from the Maryland General Assembly.

In 2006, BEACON hosted the second GrayShore™ conference and became a regular advisor to the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging. The GrayShore™ Coalition has attracted State- and Federal-level attention and is credited with the passage of critical legislation benefiting older adults.

The original GrayShore™ study sponsored by MAC, Inc.-The Area Agency on Aging, funded by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, and conducted by BEACON at Salisbury University told us that we needed to come together to better understand and to better prepare for meeting the needs of a “Graying” Eastern Shore of Maryland. The ongoing activities of the GrayShore™ Coalition has enabled it to become a catalyst for action. Among the 50 states, Maryland is in the top three on a number of socio-economic factors. Yet, for these very same factors, seven out of the nine counties of the Eastern Shore of Maryland are at the bottom ten percent among the 3,000+ counties in the United States. In addition, this very rural region in this very urban state has recently become a magnet for non-native born individuals with limited English proficiency. Thus, being a “Have-Not” rural region with rapidly changing demographics in an urban “Have” state, as well as being a region that is a net importer of seniors of many cultural backgrounds and languages in a state that is a net exporter of seniors poses some unique challenges to the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It was clearly time to get proactive and to strategize.

Aims and Objectives of the Community Assessment

All good strategic planning must begin with a thorough analysis of the situation with extensive external and internal analyses. The Community Assessment enabled us to plug a very important hole in our situation analysis. Prior to undertaking the Community Assessment, we had not examined in any detail the need for and the benefits of engaging older adults for civic good. We knew and indeed discussed in-depth the higher ratio of “volunteerism” found among older adults as one of the opportunities that the “Graying” of the Eastern Shore presented. However, we did not know the nature and scope of this opportunity.

We embarked on the Community Assessment project with the objective of answering three questions:

- 1) What are some of the natural linkages between our community needs and the knowledge, know-how, experiences, and skill sets our older adults can bring to the table to help us meet some of these community needs?
- 2) How do we go about quantifying and qualifying the collective wisdom of older adults?
- 3) What are the barriers and obstacles to engaging older adults?

Community Partners

There are four groups representing over 120 organizations that have partnered with the Community Foundation in this Community Assessment:

BEACON

BEACON, the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network, a unit of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland, offers business, economic, workforce, and community development consulting and assistance services to a variety of organizations, including businesses, government agencies, and non-profit community-based organizations.

Over the years, BEACON's grant and sponsored research projects, have benefited countless local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies. The ten-year regional economic impact of BEACON was recently estimated to be around \$150 million, creating or retaining over 3,000 jobs throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. BEACON's applied research philosophy has been recognized regionally and nationally with seven major awards over the past five years, including a Shore Leadership Award for Economic Development.

BEACON's Director Dr. Memo Diriker has a regional presence on a number of public policy issues, including the "Graying" of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He was appointed by the Governor of Maryland in 2004 to serve on a State-wide Task Force to identify migration patterns among Maryland's 55+ population. Dr. Diriker is the Chair of the Task Force's Cost-Benefit Committee, where he uses Scenario Analysis Modeling to forecast the implications of potential policy decisions. He has also given GrayShore™ presentations to State representatives, including the Maryland Council on Aging, the Secretary and senior staff of the Maryland Department of Aging, and the Eastern Shore Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly. BEACON is the lead partner for this Community Assessment.

MAC, Inc.

MAC, a private, non-profit organization, and a member of the United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore, is the designated area agency on aging for Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. MAC is dedicated to the principle that older persons are entitled to lives of dignity, security, physical, mental, and social well-being; and to full participation in society. To achieve its purpose for all older persons, MAC, an equal opportunity employer and service provider, serves as a focal point from which to address social and economic needs identified by older persons; and to provide a full range of services including health, nutrition, transportation, employment, education, recreation, and long term care services. MAC, Inc. provided organizational support and technical know-how for the Community Assessment.

The GrayShore™ Coalition

Since 2003 the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore has worked with BEACON to communicate with both the public and stakeholders on the inter-related topics of aging on the Shore and the in-migration of seniors to the Shore. In 2003, the Community Foundation and MAC, Inc. jointly commissioned a study on our region's aging population which became The Graying of Delmarva report. After the Community Foundation sponsored a public forum to present the report to over 80 stakeholders, BEACON created the GrayShore™ Coalition.

A Partial List of the GrayShore™ Coalition:

Anchorage Nursing Center and Rehab Facility
The Arbor at Ocean Pines
Berlin Senior Center
CellComm Mobile, Inc.
Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Inc.
Consulting, Training, and Development Services
Deer's Head Hospital Center
Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center (ESAHEC)
Eastern Shore Business Leadership Network
Economic Development Office of Somerset County
Economic Development Office of Wicomico County
Economic Development Office of Worcester County
Somerset County Health Department
Wicomico County Health Department
Worcester County Health Department
Home Health Corporation of America – Eastern Shore
InterFaith Caregivers
Lois Haggerty & Associates, Inc.
Londonderry Retirement Community
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
MAC, Inc.
Mallard Landing Retirement Community
MD Commission on Aging
MD Department of Aging
MD Department of Business & Economic Development
Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation
Mercantile Mortgage, LLC
Mercantile Peninsula Bank
Merrill Lynch
Ocean City Senior Center
Office of Senator Barbara Mikulski
Office of Senator Paul Sarbanes
Peninsula Regional Medical Center
Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce
Salisbury Rehab and Nursing Center
Salisbury University
Salvation Army
ShoreUp! Inc.
Shore Transit
S.M.A.R.T. Moves, LLC
Somerset County Department of Social Services
Wicomico County Department of Social Services
Worcester County Department of Social Services
Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
Wicomico County Public Library
Wicomico Commission on Aging
Wicomico Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
Worcester Commission on Aging

The GrayShore™ Coalition meets regularly on the campus of Salisbury University and now comprises stakeholders from over 50 organizations across the Eastern Shore and dedicated to building awareness and promoting preparedness for a “Graying Shore.” The close partnership between the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore and GrayShore™ has already led to additional synergies related to the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network. In the “Graying of Delmarva” report, a major community gap identified was the shortage and high turnover of health care professionals in the region, especially nurses. Recently, the Community Foundation (with the support of its partners) was able to procure funding from the Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future (PIN) program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation. The PIN program will develop a comprehensive mentoring program designed to support new nurses, reduce turnover, and create a career path for new nursing educators. Such mentoring initiatives are at the heart of the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network.

The GrayShore™ Coalition, collectively as an entity, and through its various member organizations, provided access to opinion leaders and seniors in the region for data collection and information gathering. In addition, The GrayShore™ Coalition sponsored a series of meetings with BEACON to help design and implement the Community Assessment.

Eastern Shore Senior Network (ESSPN)

In the development and execution of its stakeholder and individual surveys BEACON also collaborated with the Eastern Shore Senior Providers Network. ESSPN is a non-profit (section 501.C6) regional network of service providers dedicated to the Delmarva Peninsula's growing senior population. Their activities include promoting public awareness of senior-oriented businesses, services, government, and nonprofit agencies and advocating for public understanding and appreciation of senior interests in

such areas as health care, employment, housing, transportation, and law. In addition to its relationship with GrayShore™, ESSPN also partners with several publications, disseminating news of interest to the 50+ Eastern Shore population--The Eastern Shore Milestone, Upper Shore Aging, and Guide to Retirement Living. The ESSPN joined forces with The GrayShore™ Coalition mid-way through the Community Assessment.

Approach/Methodology

The Community Assessment was conducted by the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University (BEACON). BEACON is the creator of the GrayShore™ Coalition and is the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore’s lead partner in this project. BEACON’s approach to conducting this needs assessment was comprised of

three major phases: a comprehensive literature review, quantitative research collected through surveys, and qualitative research collected from focus groups.

In the first phase, BEACON conducted an extensive literature review on the current status of senior civic engagement on a national level, state level, and locally through regional documentation and organizations. Within each level of research, BEACON examined existing programs, identified opportunities to increase engagement, isolated barriers to engagement, and measured the level of philanthropy available/willing to support these ventures. After compiling the data, BEACON was able to accurately gauge the Eastern Shore's comparative capacity to engage its senior population, as well as its ability to become a regional leader on senior civic engagement programs in rural areas with rapidly changing demographics. This secondary research included the review and analysis of other needs assessments, nationally published reports, program descriptions, annual reports, and models.

In the second phase of the needs assessment BEACON used the findings of the literature review in combination with examples of current engagement surveys being conducted to craft a series of surveys tailored to the Eastern Shore and its relevant groups. The groups involved were defined as: Stakeholders/Organizations and Engaged/Disengaged Seniors. A different set of survey questions was developed for each segment to expand BEACON's understanding of the issues and trends observed through the first phase of research as well as identify new factors that remained unrecorded. The survey developed for Stakeholders/Organizations differentiated between those who did or did not currently make use of volunteer staff and then examined the level of commitment the organization made to recruit its staff, their methods, and barriers to better utilizing this population. Seniors were questioned on their current level of volunteering activities, the nature of these activities, and their opinions on the projects/organizations they worked with. Those who did not currently volunteer were given the opportunity to identify views and circumstances that prevented them from doing so. Due to a pervasive regional problem of unemployment and underemployment in this rural region, post-retirement employment issues for older adults were left out of the surveys and instead explored through in-depth interviews with key informants and focus groups with opinion leaders.

In the final and most specific level of assessment, BEACON analyzed any discrepancies in the findings of the literature review and the surveys and identified gaps in the information collected. Individuals from both Stakeholders/Organizations as well as Engaged/Disengaged seniors were interviewed in a focus group setting as well as through in-depth interviews when needed to clarify any discrepancies remaining and provide additional input on areas of interest.

Throughout these three levels of data collection, BEACON was able to draw from information sources generated from past assessments, surveys, and focus groups performed for the GrayShore Coalition to create a broad spectrum of data on the current state of senior involvement for the Eastern Shore. All of the data was used to construct a Gap Analysis that provided specific and well documented successes and gaps in the Eastern Shore's ability to engage senior adults.

Key Findings

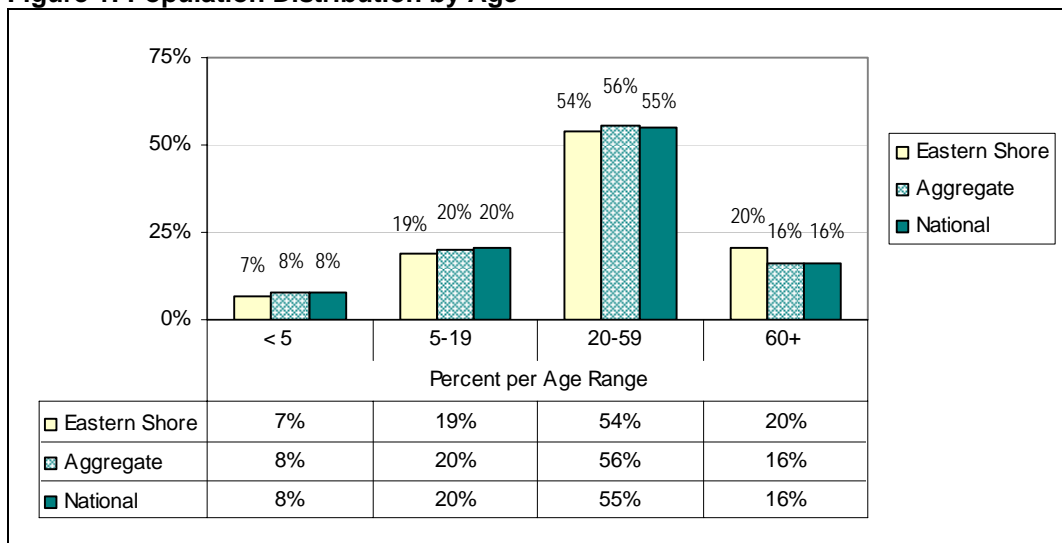
Community Profile

Our Community Foundation serves Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore, comprising the three counties of Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester. As a peninsula bordered by the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, the Eastern Shore has historically been a rural, geographically isolated area oriented towards agriculture, seafood, and tourism. Over the last twenty years, however, our economy and demographics have begun to change dramatically as increasing numbers of affluent, professional baby boomers from the urban areas of the Mid-Atlantic have "discovered" the Eastern Shore as a retirement destination. A recent State study of elderly migration patterns in Maryland determined that the biggest gainers of 55+ residents between 1995 and 2000 were Eastern Shore counties. These senior in-migrés tend to be educated, affluent professionals who want to use their expertise, stay engaged, and contribute to their communities in their retirement. At the same time, as newcomers to the region, they are not familiar with

the needs, service opportunities, and culture of the Eastern Shore. Nor are the service providers in these communities necessarily well-positioned to take advantage of what they have to offer.

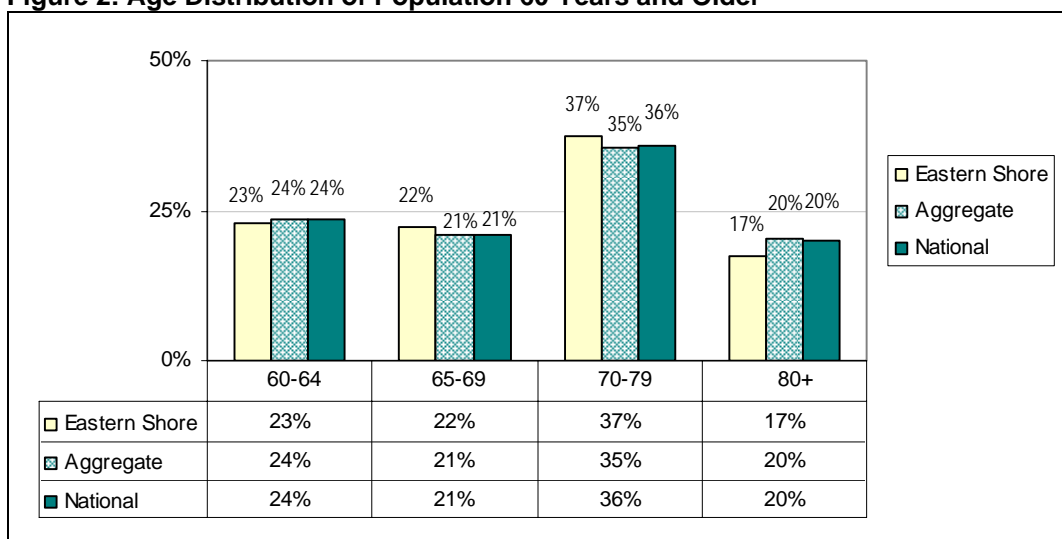
As seen in Figures 1 & 2, one fifth of the total population on the Eastern Shore is 60 or older, a figure 4% higher than the ratio for the entire state of Maryland. Figure 3 illustrates the expected population segments for 2011 and shows a clear shift of towards growth in the older age segments. Every age group below 45 is expected to shrink and every segment above 45 will expand by 2011. In the 45-54 age range, the population size increases minimally; however the next age group, 55-64, expands rapidly—almost a full 2%. Projections by the Maryland Department of Planning extend out to the year 2030 and show ratios significantly higher than the average for the state for these years. By 2030, it is expected that Worcester County’s 65+ population will rise 15.1% making it account for well over a third of the total population.

Figure 1: Population Distribution by Age



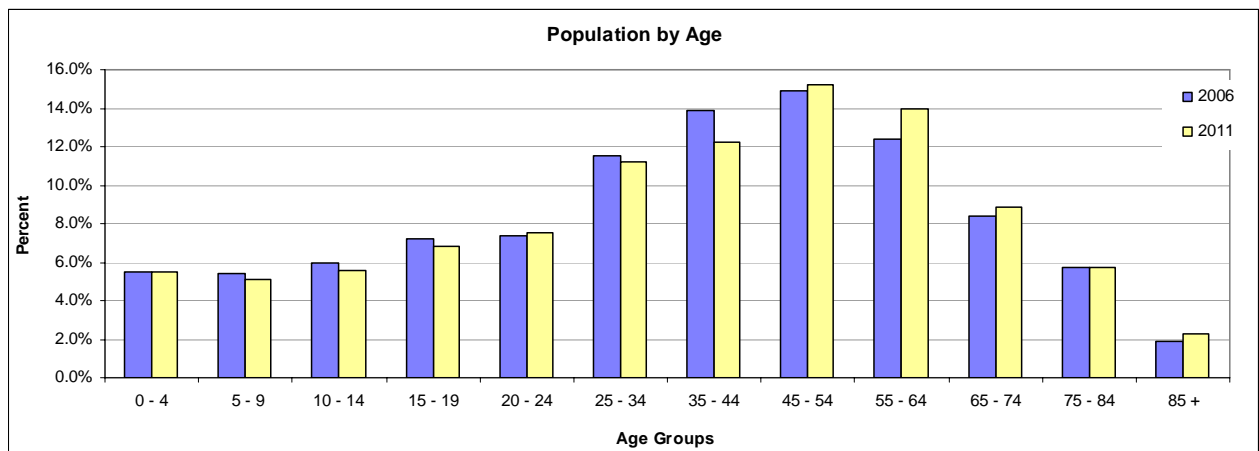
SOURCE: Community Planning and Research, LLC & U.S. 2000 Census Data
 The sum of the percentages may be more or less than 100% due to rounding.
 Aggregate represents all 30 Community Foundations Participating in CEP

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Population 60 Years and Older



SOURCE: Community Planning and Research, LLC & U.S. 2000 Census Data
 The sum of the percentages may be more or less than 100% due to rounding.
 Aggregate represents all 30 Community Foundations Participating in CEP

Figure 3: Age Distribution for Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Population



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau -- © 2006 ESRI

Because of the Eastern Shore’s historic geographic isolation and lack of resources, we typically lag behind the State in key socio-economic indicators. Our residents as a whole are less well off financially than the State average. Specifically, Figure 4 shows a median household income consistently below the State as far back as 1989. When broken down further (Figure 5) we see that for the tri-county area combined, there are comparatively few top earners and less than a fifth of the population has a combined median household income of \$50,000- \$74,999 a year. In addition about 12% of the population falls in the \$25,000- \$34,999 range, and an astounding 14% are getting by on less than \$15,000. Poverty rates in the tri-county area (Figure 6) were consistently high for the period 2000-2003, as much as twice the State average for Somerset residents. These figures put the counties in our rural region at the bottom 10% of all counties in the United States while our state enjoys being in the top 5% in the nation on these very same factors. This creates a very dramatic discrepancy between the realities of our very rural and poor region in a very urban and rich state. The rapidly increasing number new arrivals of seniors as well as individuals with limited English proficiency to our region are stretching our resources to the limit.

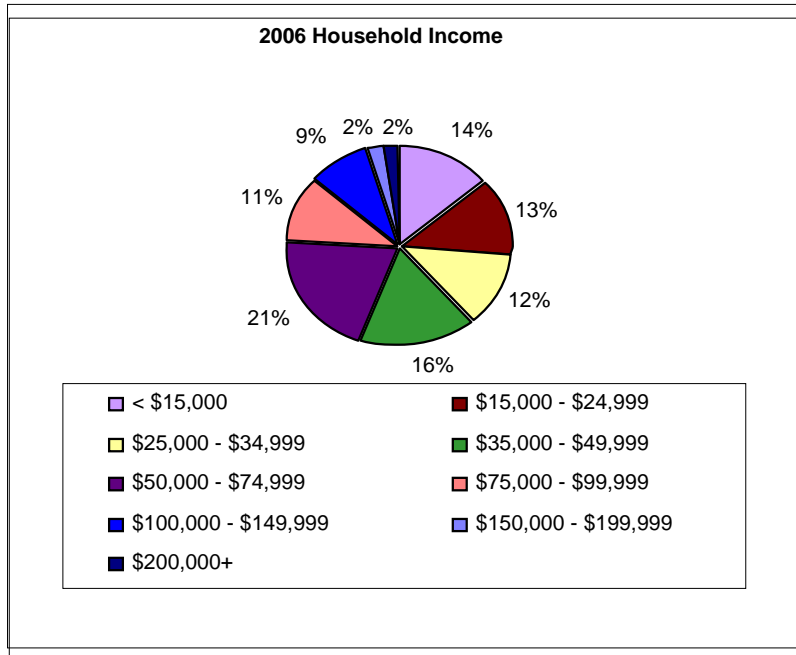
Figure 4: Median House Hold Income

	Median Household Income		Estimated Median Household Income				
	1989	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Somerset	23,379	29,900	30,900	32,300	31,750	32,800	34,100
Wicomico	28,512	39,050	40,600	41,300	41,700	42,550	44,100
Worcester	27,586	40,650	42,450	43,850	44,750	45,500	47,750
Maryland	39,386	52,850	56,250	57,800	58,550	59,350	62,000

SOURCE: US Census Bureau & Maryland Department of Planning

Educational attainment, including high school graduation rates, dropout rates, and percentage of Bachelor’s Degrees, is also a critical issue on the Lower Eastern Shore, affecting the workforce preparedness and overall economic health in the region. For example, Figure 7 shows that number of individuals without a high school degree was almost level the number possessing bachelor degrees in 2003. The only county to differ was Somerset County, whose number of drop-outs soared 18.9 percent higher than the number of college grads.

Figure 5: 2006 Household Incomes for Tri-County Area



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau -- © 2006 ESRI

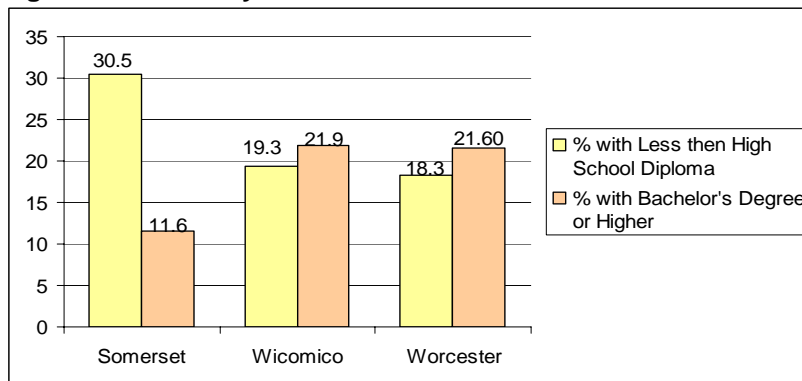
Figure 6: Poverty Rates 2000-2003

	Total Poverty Rate			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Somerset	20.8%	20.9%	22.7%	19.2%
Wicomico	11.6%	11.4%	12.0%	11.5%
Worcester	9.3%	8.9%	9.4%	9.8%
Maryland	7.9%	7.7%	8.3%	8.8%

SOURCE: Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

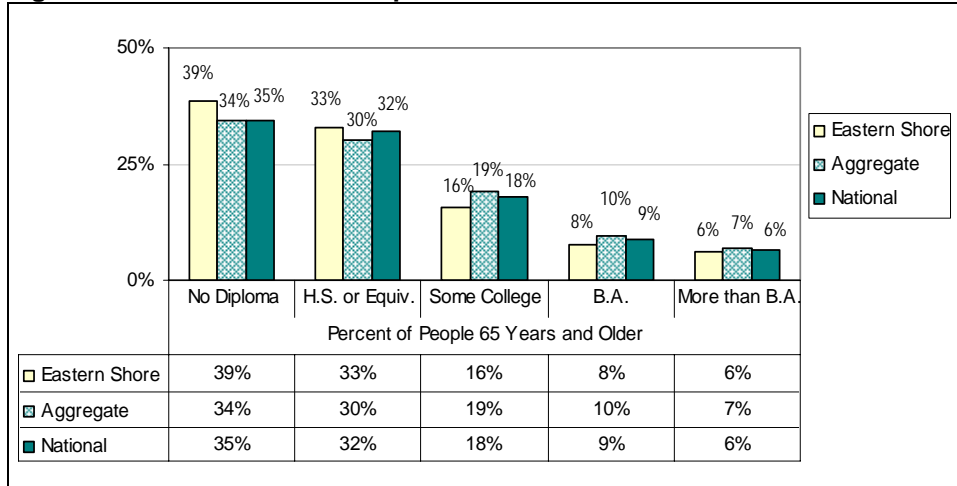
Figure 8 shows that the Eastern Shore's 65+ population is comparatively less educated than the rest of the State of Maryland. According to the Maryland Department of Education, 33% did not continue past high school and an additional 39% of the elderly population did not have a high school diploma at all. Figure 9 shows dropout rates well above the state average in Somerset and Wicomico as recent as 2005. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services listed Wicomico County as having the second highest dropout rate of all Maryland counties for the 2001-2002 school year.

Figure 7: Tri-County Educational Attainment



SOURCE: Maryland State Department of Education

Figure 8: Education for 65+ Population in 2000



SOURCE: Community Planning and Research, LLC & U.S. 2000 Census Data
 The sum of the percentages may be more or less than 100% due to rounding.
 Aggregate represents all 30 Community Foundations Participating in CEP

Other factors threatening the quality of our workforce deal with the quality of education received by students who do receive high school degrees on the Eastern Shore. In 2003 the average combined SAT score in public school was below the State average, with Somerset coming in as low as 879 (Figure 10).

Finally, the Lower Eastern Shore has challenges in the area of child/family wellbeing, including child poverty, teen parenthood, and juvenile delinquency. On the Lower Eastern Shore 15-20% of our children live in poverty and our counties are ranked as some as the worst in the state (Figure 11). Somerset County is the second to worst Maryland County for child poverty. Figure 12 finds the teen birth rate for the nine counties on the Eastern Shore to be almost equal of with that of the State of Maryland.

Figure 9: Educational Attainment

Area	H.S. Graduation Rate (%) 2005	H.S. Dropout Rate (%) 2005	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%) 2000
Somerset	81.8	5.4	11.6
Wicomico	78.6	4.0	21.9
Worcester	88.7	2.1	21.6
Maryland	84.8	3.7	31.4

SOURCE: Maryland Higher Education Commission

Figure 10: SAT Scores

Average Combined SAT Score: 2003

Tri-County Area			
Somerset	Wicomico	Worcester	Maryland
879	992	962	1024

Note: Includes public high school students only
 SOURCE: Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

Most of the economic and educational deficits facing the area described above are severely compounding the challenges facing our youth, however there are limited resources for programs to address them. One telling example is that despite successful statewide programs such as The Maryland Mentoring Project, mentoring programs existing are not sufficient to meet demand in the area and virtually nonexistent in

Somerset County. Because of these challenges, we believe that the Lower Eastern Shore can benefit enormously from the energy, resources, and talent of its older adults.

Figure 11: Child Poverty Rates

Child Poverty Rates			
Rank (2000) 1=Best 24=Worst			
	1999	2000	State Rank
Somerset	22.0%	25.5%	23
Wicomico	15.0%	17.0%	19
Worcester	14.5%	16.0%	18

SOURCE: Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Figure 12: Teen Birth Rates

Teen Birth Rate				
For All Nine Eastern Shore Counties				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Eastern Shore	39.7%	36.4%	35.1%	33.7%
Maryland	44.5%	41.0%	38.0%	35.5%

SOURCE: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Review of the Relevant Literature on Senior Engagement

A review of the current literature on senior engagement shows a huge movement towards engaging the aging boomer population. This movement, however, is seen primarily in large national organizations that deal specifically with the senior populations. Organizations such as The Gerontological Society of America, Intergenerational Strategies, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Experience Corps have begun generating and publishing studies that report statistics, best practices, and occasionally some tools for addressing the issue. Other more interdisciplinary organizations, such as The Urban Institute (a nonpartisan economic and social policy research organization), have caught on and have identified senior engagement as a "new" retirement issue. For example, the Urban Institute addresses senior volunteering, retirement expectations, and delayed retirement in publications from their Retirement Project research. A detailed literature review is presented in Appendix A.

Key Findings Regarding Capacity

Due to a pervasive problem with un- and underemployment of the working age population in our rural "Have-Not" region, our survey research was limited primarily to volunteerism as a way to engage older adults for civic good. Issues related to the employment of older adults were explored separately through focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Volunteer recruitment in the Eastern Shore organizations polled was shown to be an informal operation with minimal levels of investment. Over three quarters of these organizations depend on word of mouth for recruiting, while only a third uses tools like flyers or websites as recruitment tools. Even though the average organization devoted 38 hours a month to recruit and place volunteers, only 22% polled made use of an actual volunteer recruitment drive. Over half of the organizations reported they had not made management changes, changed structure, or altered their outreach to recruit seniors (Figure 13). In addition, 70% admitted they have not made changes at any time to employment and volunteer policies, or practices to accommodate older adults.

The surveys also showed that there is significant room for improvement in these organizations' abilities to make the best use of their volunteers' knowledge and experiences. Of the possible jobs or tasks available to volunteers, only 16.7% of organizations offered teaching or tutoring contributions and even less, 5.6%, offered mentoring experiences (Figure 13). In general, the majority of functions performed by volunteers centered on recreational and special events or serving on boards and/or committees. 76% of current volunteers over 60 were only 'somewhat' provided with training, and over half were included, to a limited degree, in decision making or goals driven activities (Figure 14).

Overall, responding organizations had high opinions of the ability of volunteers to contribute to their organization. The majority felt that seniors were dependable workers who brought both wisdom and experience to the workplace (Figures 15 & 16). To assess the presence of any negative stereotypes about the ability of seniors, respondents were asked how true they felt the following statements were: "Seniors are not comfortable with computers", "Seniors prefer easy jobs that do not require them to be supervisors or managers," "Seniors are difficult and stuck in their ways," and lastly, "Seniors are difficult to attract and retain." The popular answer was that these factors were "sometimes true" (Figure 17), as opposed to "always true." This indicates open mindedness towards the ability of seniors despite any misconceptions or negative past experiences with volunteers.

Figure 13: Activities for Volunteers

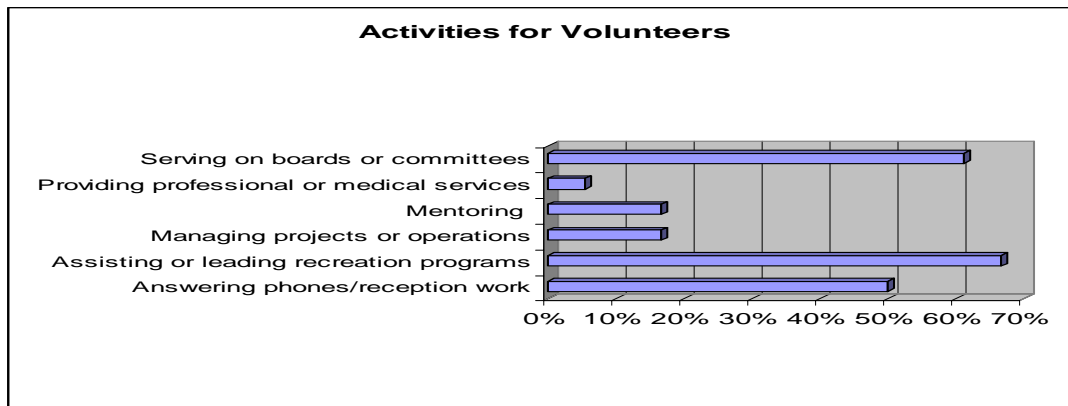
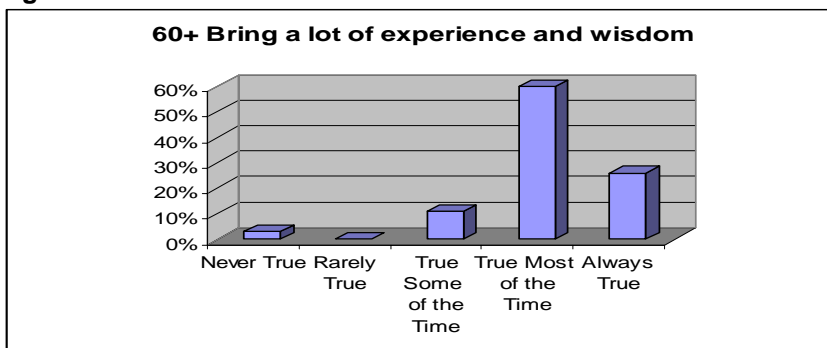


Figure 14: Volunteer Experiences

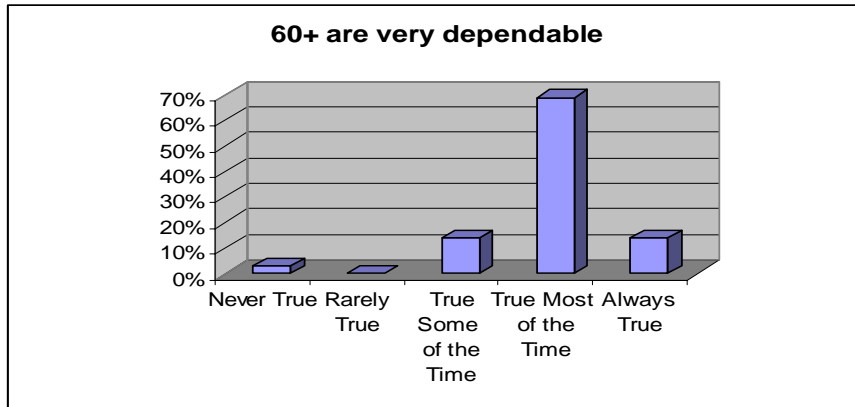
	Percent		
	Not at all	Somewhat	A great deal
Do you provide training?	0%	76%	24%
Are the volunteers included in decision making?	6%	65%	29%
Do the volunteers participate in goal-driven activities?	0%	59%	41%

Figure 15: Attitudes towards Seniors' Wisdom



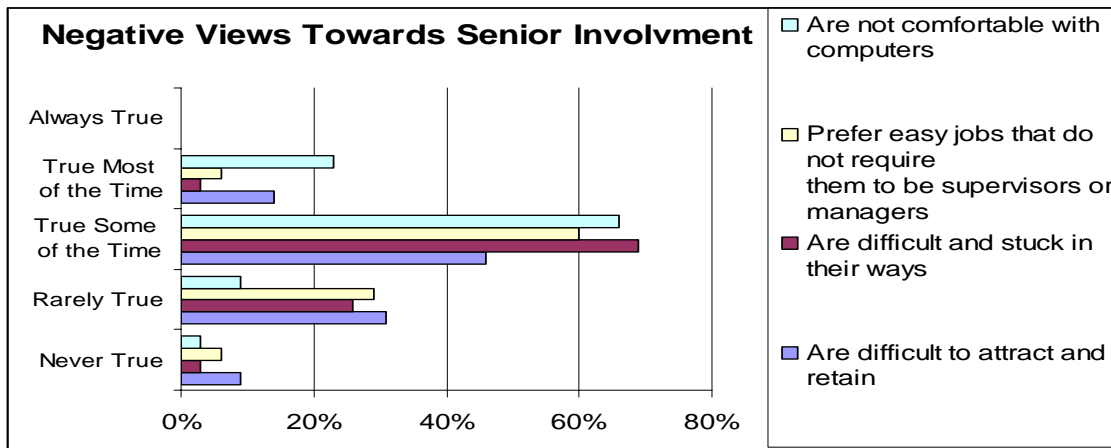
The statement in the set of questions about seniors' comfort level with computers touches on an interesting element of senior recruitment. Given that only a third of the organizations use their websites as a recruitment tool, and 89% felt the statement "Seniors are not comfortable with computers" was true some or most of the time (Figure 17); it's fair to say these organizations would not view the Internet as a highly effective tool for senior recruitment. However, as stated in the literature review (Appendix A) the exact opposite is known to hold true for older adults in general.

Figure 16: Attitudes Towards Seniors' Dependability



Best practices for senior involvement provided by the Promising Practices in Recruiting and Engaging Older Volunteers report (Appendix A) identify the internet as an important tool. The views and policies found in our survey reflect out-of-date experiences with past generations of senior volunteers and illustrate the necessity to better understand the skills and experiences of the Boomer population.

Figure 17: Misconceptions on Senior Ability



When asked about their best strategies for engaging adults over the age of 60, the most popular answer was either word of mouth or providing recognition of volunteer's achievements. Other answers revealed that some of these organizations were utilizing newer strategies to increase senior involvement. These answers included utilizing referrals, community contacts, and partnerships with senior specific organizations. Some answers seemed taken directly from the ShoreWisdom™ narrative such as matching seniors' skills to the needs of the host agency or educating the prospective volunteers on civic needs. Despite some promising signs in the open answers section, the majority of the responses showed that practices such as these were not common in all of the organizations. Over 60% of organizations reported that social networking opportunities and the opportunity to transfer past experience to volunteer work were not utilized.

The majority of organizations indicated they are looking forward to increasing the ability to attract and utilize the skills of our growing senior population. 71% responded that they plan to change outreach practices to target adults over age 60 as resources in the next five years. In the same questions, however, 70% responded they did not plan on incorporating volunteer coordinator duties into someone's job description in an effort to engage 60+ adults in the next five years. While the desire to tap this resource is present in our organizations it appears the resources are not always available within their organization to do so. Only 17% of organizations who used volunteer resources reported they were very satisfied with their ability to recruit, train, retain, and manage volunteers.

Combining all the information collected on the current views and practices of these organizations as well as their plans for the future, we find an open minded group of stakeholders ready for the ShoreWisdom™ program. Overall, they are becoming aware of what this population of potential volunteers can offer their organization and the communities they serve. As many of the recruitment and networking activities done at these organizations are informal, the “network” approach will blend well with the current practices of the organizations. However, very few of the organizations have the tools or structures needed to effectively market their organizations to this group. To develop these tools, strategies, and structures, they will need access to the findings of the ShoreWisdom™ assessment and additional consulting to learn how this information can be applied to their operations. Also, current volunteer opportunities within these organizations are not adequately structured to match the valuable experiences of older adults. A network such as ShoreWisdom™ that will identify the strengths and abilities of these potential volunteers can help overcome these barriers to the engagement of older adults for civic good.

Key Findings Regarding Older Adults in our Region

A series of focus groups and in-depth interviews using “Food-Based” events were conducted to examine the current and future potential engagement of older adults in our region. Our findings indicate that over 80% of older adults in the region fall into one of the following two segments with regards to their current or potential engagement for civic good:

- 1) **ENGAGED:** Over three quarters being non-natives of the Shore (“Come-Heres”);
- 2) **LESS-ENGAGED/DISENGAGED:** Close to two thirds being natives of the Shore (“From-Heres”).

This apparent division of engagement potential between local and in-migrating older adults and the socio-economic differences between the relatively poor Shore and the richer areas from which the in-migrants are coming pose major challenges. However, the skills, know-how, experiences, and other assets that the in-migrants bring, when combined with the demonstrable needs of the region and the desire of the local seniors to provide “sweat equity” for the benefit of the community, provide excellent opportunities for the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network to be the elegant solution to an inelegant set of problems.

A very important exception to the “From-Here” profile of the “Less-Engaged” older adults is the rapidly growing population of “Come-Here” older adults who have limited English proficiency. The rapid changes brought on by the introduction of seniors from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds with 31 different languages and limited English proficiency creates challenges for which our rural region is not prepared.

Building on Existing Partnerships

Our survey research, focus groups, and in-depth interviews revealed a growing awareness of the potential for engaging older adults for civic good, a desire to collaborate with these older adults, but limited resources or expertise to do so. For the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network, these organizations and individuals, as well as all the affiliated organizations in our region supporting this CEP project through the GrayShore™ Coalition, MAC, Inc, the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, and the Eastern Shore Senior Providers Network, together become an instant meta-coalition. This meta-coalition, under the umbrella of the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network, is already connected with the “Engaged” older adults in the region and is actively enhancing capacity to better connect with the “Less-Engaged and/or Disengaged” older adults.

With the help of the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, The ShoreWisdom™ Network will publicize its agenda widely and use this meta-coalition to facilitate the engagement of our older adults while simultaneously addressing community needs of this “Graying” and “Have-Not” region in a state where public policy is driven by the fact that the state as a whole is neither “Graying” nor “Have-Not.” This meta-coalition has already gotten the attention of state-level public policy decision-makers who are, for the first time, publicly acknowledging that the Eastern Shore of Maryland is very different than the rest of Maryland when it comes to socioeconomic factors and the demographics of aging.

Creating Accommodating Volunteer Programs: Sharing Information and Tools

In addition to serving as a resource on best practices and tools developed in this assessment, ShoreWisdom will also facilitate the dissemination of other tools and practices developed by outside organizations. A perfect example is the Viable Futures Toolkit, a document designed specifically to help frontline administrators create “Sustainable Futures for All Ages.” The strategies outlined in this kit involve assessing the abilities of senior volunteers and the needs of the community and has been shared throughout our emerging meta-coalition. This kind of rapid and far reaching distribution of relevant information will be increased and enhanced by the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network.

Building New Partnerships

Throughout the course of this assessment, several notable programs have been identified that are working towards the engagement of the boomer population but are not directly available to the residents of the Eastern Shore. As a long term strategy, the envisaged ShoreWisdom™ Network will explore the following programs and, where appropriate, will partner with them on the Lower Eastern Shore:

The Experience Corps: The nearest Experience Corps program is hosted in Washington DC by a program called CentroNia™, an organization that provides services to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, youth, families, as well as manages the DC Bilingual Public Charter School. By partnering with the Experience Corp, this group has been able to pair 55+ volunteers with local school children to provide them with mentoring geared towards literacy and behavioral improvement.

The Maryland Mentoring Program: This program focuses on fueling the growth of MD mentoring programs through coalitions and partnerships in four sectors: Corporate, Government, Faith, and Community. A partnership involves MMP assisting the group with the formation of their own program as well as providing training. There is currently no training program that specifically targets the senior population but MMP teachers are flexible and will work with programs to meet their needs.

Barriers to Older Adults and Civic Engagement

We have known from the earliest days of the GrayShore™ Coalition that reaching the “Come Here” seniors was going to be easier than reaching the “From Here” seniors. The recent arrivals will naturally contact many of the private and public sector members of our meta coalition, including the GrayShore and ESSPN members, simply as a part of establishing residency here (phone company, electric, cable, local government agencies, banks, real estate companies, health care providers, pharmacies, etc.). This then gives us several opportunities to let them know about ShoreWisdom and to capture their information for the SW Network. What we have learned, much to our surprise and delight, was at how many different levels and how frequently seniors from all walks of life, engaged or not, from here or not, touch one or more members of our meta-coalition (especially GrayShore™ and ESSPN) on a regular basis. This even includes our limited English proficiency seniors.

Yet, some major barriers still exist. Some of these include an inadequate public transportation infrastructure, limited information on opportunities, attitudes of employers, as well as the leaders and/or staffers of community-based organizations and government agencies, etc. However, by taking advantage of best practices outlined in Appendix A, we can overcome these to effectively engage older adults.

Lessons Learned

There were a number of very important lessons learned through planning, development, and implementation of the ShoreWisdom™ Community Assessment in our region. Some of these are:

- 1) The service providers to older adults have a vested interest to band together and to collaborate despite the occasional turf issues and the realities of competition for resources and, in some cases, clients;
- 2) The older adults in the community have an incredible network of informal connections. This proverbial “Bush Telegraph” uses methods ranging from age-old knocking on doors and neighborhood meetings to state of the art Internet and cell phone technologies;
- 3) For the engaged and ready-to-engage older adults, the problem is not outreach. They are reaching out themselves to the service providers from the private, public, and non-profit sectors, offering their services. The challenge is coming up with appropriate opportunities for them to engage in sufficient quantity and quality;
- 4) For the less-engaged and disengaged older adults, the more appropriate engagement triggers tend to be peer outreach and faith-based organization involvement. In some cases, health care professionals also seem to be successful in triggering engagement. Also, “Food-Based” events at natural congregation venues tend to work best with our limited English proficiency seniors.

Best Practices

This ShoreWisdom™ Community Assessment enabled us to identify a number of best practices for undertaking similar projects in the future. These best practices are described in detail in Appendix A.

Some Observations and Opportunities for Improvement

As a result of this project we made three significant observations:

- 1) We had significantly underestimated the energy and enthusiasm for a project of this kind. Whether it was the older adults with whom we interacted or the various service providers from the private, public, and non-profit sectors, there was almost an impatience for action on this issue;
- 2) Most of our data collection and information gathering activities were formal and organized in nature. Yet, some of the most interesting discoveries during the process came from spontaneous and completely informal “Food-Based” events and activities. The variety of back channels involved was simply mind boggling;
- 3) We had not designed the Community Assessment using a “Reach and Frequency” approach, relying solely on “Reach.” During the process we learned that our ability to reach more of the older adults was directly correlated with the frequency of our outreach efforts.

These observations lead us to believe that, in the future, we will need to make a greater effort to alert the community to our plans, and allow for significantly higher opportunities for informal and/or spontaneous events, activities, channels to feed information in to our data collection and information gathering loops. Our rural GrayShore™ phenomenon is so incredibly dynamic that some of the well established approaches and methodologies fail to do justice to the possibilities such dynamism presents. In addition, events and activities planned need to be repeated at different times and at different places to combine our “Reach” with “Frequency” to touch those older adults who are interested in what we have to offer, but may be otherwise engaged during the times and at the places where we first attempt to connect with them.

Conclusions

We at the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, together with our project partners BEACON and MAC, Inc. believe that we have met and exceeded our project expectations. Thanks to this Community Assessment, we now know a lot about the various components of the older adult community in our region. We have learned how to best reach them, and we have learned how to trigger, maintain, and enhance civic engagement by these older adults. Our proposed ShoreWisdom™ Network presents an opportunity to use these findings and to implement a program to turn our knowledge into action. We also wish to acknowledge the tremendous value that the CEP Learning Community Forum has brought to the design, development, and execution of this project. What we have learned from the other community foundations, and from the various contributors to the Learning Community Forum, has enabled us to better overcome each challenge we faced during our Community Assessment process.

Implications for Future Work

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, through its partnership with BEACON and the GrayShore™ Coalition, is committed to enhancing the region's capacity to engage our growing population of older adults for civic good. This Community Assessment has enabled us to envision a way to tap into a very rich vein of resources present within this community of "Graying" adults for civic good.

When we had first launched GrayShore™, our vision was somewhat limited. We were concerned about being unprepared for the implications of a "Graying" region in terms of social, societal, health care, economic and workforce issues. We made excellent progress with building public awareness and with educating service providers from the private, public, and non-profit sectors about the need for being prepared for the "Graying" of our region. Where we seemed a little bit in the dark was how to become better prepared. The Community Assessment we conducted for the Civic Engagement Partnership project was like turning on a beacon on to this issue. With 20-20 hindsight, it is clear that part of the solution for meeting the challenges of a "Graying" Eastern Shore can be found in some of the opportunities that the "Graying" phenomenon brings us.

Next Steps

The GrayShore™ Coalition is ready to design the "Implementation Plan" for ShoreWisdom™. The logical next step would be to convene a Coalition Retreat sometime in the fall of 2007. This retreat will be used

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The GrayShore™ Coalition Retreat<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Plenary Sessionsb. Breakdown Sessionsc. Steering Committee Wrap-up2) The ShoreWisdom™ Steering Committee Formed3) The ShoreWisdom™ Steering Committee Launches Five Working Groups<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The Process Design Groupb. The Database Design Groupc. The ShoreWisdom™ Older Adults Recruitment Groupd. The ShoreWisdom™ Service Providers Recruitment Groupe. The Community Outreach and Public Relations Group4) The Geographic Distribution of the ShoreWisdom™ Network is Finalized5) The Resource Allocation Model for the ShoreWisdom™ Network is Finalized6) The ShoreWisdom™ Network is Launched.
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to formulate Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term action steps for the ShoreWisdom™ (SW) Network. These action steps are shown in Figure 18. Additional goals, subject to funding availability would be:

1. Launch a regional pilot project to test the SW Network;
2. Launch three local (one per county) pilot

projects to test the reach and portability of the SW Network.

3. Launch a Shore-wide multi-cultural and multi-lingual program for engaging older adults with limited English proficiency for civic good. This program would have to be customized for the rural nature of our region. We successfully used "Food-Based" events to reach these incredibly diverse populations. We now need to build on this for solid engagement results.

