

Executive Summary: The Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition's Age Wave Readiness Plan

BACKGROUND:

Chesterfield County is, for the first time in history, witnessing a growth in the number of seniors over the age of 60 outnumbering the school-aged children. This demographic shift provides new opportunities and challenges as our local communities prepare to meet some of the needs that accompany this shift. To begin preparation, Sarah Snead, Deputy County Administrator for Human Services, authorized creation of a Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition (CCAWC), bringing together local government and community partners, including for and not-for profit sectors. Over the past year, this Coalition has met every month to consider the impact of and alignment to the Greater Richmond Age Wave Regional Plan for Age Wave Readiness, and development of an age wave plan specific to the unique design and assets of Chesterfield County.

OBJECTIVE:

The CCAWC's objective is to develop a Chesterfield County plan that marries local strengths, resources and opportunities while cooperating with regional progress, surrounding localities and agencies. The Chesterfield County draft plan represents a roadmap to establish age wave ready communities for people of all ages that are engaged (lifelong learning and civic engagement, volunteerism and support networks), livable (affordable housing and home modification, mobility and transportation, physical infrastructure, public safety and disaster planning), stable (business investment, workforce entry and retention, financial security and stability) and well (wellness, prevention and chronic disease management, access and coordination, caregiver and skilled health professionals, long-term care resources) across all ages and generations.

Four Areas of Focus:

1. Engaged

GOAL: *Chesterfield County residents of all ages and cultures are involved and connected through various volunteer, educational, technological, spiritual and leisure pursuits that enhance their quality of life.*

- Lifelong Learning
- Civic, Leisure and Spiritual Engagement
- Volunteerism
- Support Networks

COUNTY ASSETS:

- Friendship Cafes
 - Older adults can receive a hot midday meal, socialize with others and enjoy activities provided by the cafe.

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- Cooperative Extension
 - Provides volunteer opportunities
- Libraries
 - Creates new senior learning programming year-round at all branches
 - Provides personalized, free technology instruction (including eReaders and mobile devices)
- Center for Organization Excellence
 - Chesterfield County Government was ranked 22 in Training Magazine's top 125 organizations with employer-sponsored workforce training and development. We are the only local government in the nation to be ranked in top 125
- Parks and Recreation provides
 - Senior arts and crafts classes and seminars
 - Senior social activities, dinners and dances
- Pet Adoption Program for Senior Citizens
 - Seniors 62 and older can adopt a new best friend for only \$10.
- Aging & Disability Services oversees
 - Caregiver Connection: A support group for caregivers of parents, spouses or adult children.
 - Grandparent Connection: A support group for grandparents raising grandchildren and other kin raising a child.
 - Senior Ambassador Program: Enables adults 55 and older to use their skills and talents to become ambassadors for their community.
 - Volunteer Opportunities: Compiles a list of volunteer opportunities in the county and surrounding area of government, business and non-profit volunteer positions.
- Chesterfield County Public Schools offer
 - Adult Continuing Education: Offers enrichment classes, English as a Second Language, US Citizenship, GED classes and workforce training.
 - Senior Citizens Prom: Annual prom for county residents aged 55 and older.
 - Senior Passport: Residents 60 years and older receive free admission at school regular-season athletic events, plays, concerts, and other CCPS events. Also provides a discount for Adult Continuing Education classes.

2. Livable

GOAL: *Chesterfield County will offer, develop or seek solutions for housing, transportation and design features that enable its residents to live safely and with dignity throughout all the stages of their lives by organizing.*

- Affordable Housing and Home Modification
- Mobility and Transportation Infrastructure
- Physical Infrastructure

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- Public Safety and Disaster Planning

COUNTY ASSETS:

- Fire and EMS offer
 - Smoke Detector Program: Call the Smoke Detector Hotline at 804-748-1426 to schedule to have someone come to your home to check your smoke detectors and change the batteries. Smoke detectors for the hearing impaired are also available.
- Fire and EMS, Police, Sheriff's Office and Aging & Disability Services
 - Triad: A partnership committed to enhancing the quality of life and reducing crime against senior citizens. Holds monthly meetings and provides crime prevention presentations, workshops and Triad Senior Day.
- Access Chesterfield
 - Provides transportation services for any county resident who is disabled, 60 or older, or who meets federal income guidelines. Vouchers may be purchased at all county libraries and through the mail.
- Aging & Disability Services organizes
 - Council on Aging: Seeking to enhance the quality of life for older adults and adults with disabilities through education, advocacy and community service. Publishes and distributes a bi-annual Resource Directory of Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities.
 - Adult Services Interagency Task Force: Working to coordinate and consolidate resources of agencies charged with providing services for older adults and adults with disabilities.
 - Telephone Reassurance Program: Volunteers call older adults who live alone, feel isolated, or are caregivers to offer support and social interaction.
- Sheriff's Office is in charge of
 - Seniors-in-Touch Program: Sheriff's deputies monitor the needs and wellbeing of local homebound senior citizens through weekly visits and phone calls.
- Social Services provides
 - Energy Assistance Program: Low income households may receive assistance with their home heating and cooling bills.
 - Adult Services: Offers companion and adult day care services to help seniors age in place. Also work to protect adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation. If institutionalization becomes necessary, assistance is available to arrange appropriate long term care. Assistance with transitioning back into the community after institutionalization is also available.
 - Senior Clinician: Social Services and Community Health collaboration for a mental health position that could collaborate between the two agencies and to the homes of the customers. This position was the first of its kind in Virginia.

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3. Stable

GOAL: *Individuals in Chesterfield County, of all ages and diverse cultural backgrounds, are able to obtain jobs and to access services that help them to build and safeguard their assets, plan for retirement, lead productive lifestyles and care for loved ones through*

- Business Flexibility and Investment
- Workforce Entry and Retention
- Financial Security and Stability

COUNTY ASSETS:

- Cooperative Extension
 - Offers financial management counseling and information as well as Steps to Financial Success, a post-bankruptcy education program.
- General Services and Commissioner of the Revenue
 - Real Estate Tax Relief for the Elderly, Disabled and Veterans
 - Personal Property Relief for the Disabled
- Libraries
 - Your Personal Librarian and individualized learning plans
- Social Services
 - Auxiliary Grants Program: Financial assistance is available to low income aged, blind or disabled persons in licensed homes for adults or approved family care homes whose income is insufficient to cover the cost of their care.
- Utilities Department
 - Third Party Notification Program: A relative is notified if an elderly customer falls behind in paying his or her utility bills, rather than disconnecting service.

4. Well

GOAL: *Chesterfield County has effective and sustainable physical, mental health and wellness resources that are coordinated, accessible and well-utilized to provide.*

- Wellness, Prevention and Chronic Disease Management
- Health care and supportive services
- Caregiver and Skilled Health Professionals
- Long-term Care Resources

COUNTY ASSETS:

- Cooperative Extension
 - Nutrition, health and wellness sessions

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- Food purchasing, safety and preservation
- Triad and the Adult Services Interagency Task Force
 - Yellow Dot Program: A yellow dot on the driver's side rear window informs first responders in the event of an accident that vital medical information is in the glove compartment of the vehicle.
- Libraries
 - Health and wellness information programs
 - Consumer Health Information Packet (CHIP Program)
- Parks and Recreation
 - Open-gym time for adults to play volleyball and basketball
 - First Pickleball Center in Virginia
 - Senior gold league, tennis, fitness classes and a walking club
- Police and Sheriff's Departments
 - Project Lifesaver: Helps provide rapid response to save lives and reduce the potential for serious injury for adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's, Autism, Down's syndrome, dementia, and other related disorders.
- Social Services
 - Medicaid/Adult Medical Assistance: Individuals 65 and older can receive assistance with medical costs.
 - Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) Plan: Provides medical care for specified low income persons.
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Supplements the food budgets of low income households to help ensure them a nutritionally adequate diet.
 - Adult Services: Offers companion and adult day care services to help seniors age in place. Also work to protect adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation. If institutionalization becomes necessary, assistance is available to arrange appropriate long term care. Assistance with transitioning back into the community after institutionalization is also available.
 - Adult Protective Services: Investigates reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults, and reports about adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Aging & Disability Services and Senior Connections: Partner on Live Well, Virginia!, a chronic disease self-management program
- Substance Abuse Free Environment (SAFE): Engages the community in working together to prevent substance abuse.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Formation of an Action Coalition:

- This group comes together to carry forward the plan to meet the needs of a burgeoning senior population by pulling together community members/partners public and private to create ad hoc groups making a deeper more specific contribution toward meeting some of the gaps. (High County involvement, Low cost)

Website:

- Development, expansion, and/or creation of an aggregate website that has information, resources, opportunities, services and recreation for seniors at one location is needed. Fairfax serves as a model having developed their site with assistance from Senior Navigator with whom we already partner in other areas. They have made suggestions for the website development/enhancement in discussion with the Senior Advocate for Chesterfield. An example of a disconnect, when you click on Chesterfield.gov on the Online Services, Youth Based Services, "Neighborhood Wellness Watch", links to resources, volunteer connections, areas of interests, etc. but no mention is made of senior resources. County partnership in creation, enhancement, and maintenance of the site would cost very little.

Committed/Designated "Body" to Lead the Effort:

- Seeking grant funding or partnership monies from area organizations that may have a vested interest (hospitals, colleges, Universities, health care agencies, County Departments) Creating a part-time position to coordinate coalition efforts is recommended to carry forth the plan. An official position leads to accountability, whereas a volunteer position may not. Grant writing, identification and then coordination and implementing of the plan requires more time than the Action Team can do without a designated person. The coalition needs to determine if some of these community partners could put forth money. Thus saving them money in the long run through community engagement that potentially decreases the number of emergencies and crises requiring repeated hospital admissions, EMS/Fire calls, Police calls, DSS responses, etc. which contribute to high County involvement and cost,

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- **Office of Aging & Disability Services:** Placement of the position would be most logically here.

Action Team to Enhance Community Partnerships and Collaboration:

- Involves some County involvement, but minimal cost

Community Education:

- This is where engagement begins. The community needs to understand the demographic shift, as well as the resulting issues and opportunities. The coalition needs to determine what resources are available and what is needed.