

Needs Assessment

The direction of the three (3) year Area Plan is driven by needs assessments of the community. A mirage of needs assessments have been conducted under different forums to best establish the unmet needs and the priority of the needs of the older adults and adults with functional impairments. As shown below, the assessments help to shape the direction of the Area Plan. Each of the needs assessments / surveys are itemized and discussed as follows:

1. In November, 2003, Chico State University received a sizable grant from the California Endowment to conduct a two-year needs assessment project which was entitled, "The Graying of the North State". The name was taken from the fact that large numbers of potential and current retirees are moving north, many of them with large equities from urban real estate gains to take advantage of a higher "quality of life" in Northern California's natural beauty, affordability, and rural atmosphere. This in-migration of urban retirees, couple with a persistent out-migration of youth to urban environments, has created a "graying" of the North State.

The PSA2AAA Executive Director(s) were actively involved and collaborated in all aspects of this project and had planned to utilize the final report as the primary needs assessment to plan this four-year Area Plan document. However, despite the massive contributions made on behalf of the PSA2AAA directors, the CED was unable to complete the project to date. Therefore, the final report could not be utilized as a needs assessment to help develop the four-year Area Plan, with the following exception.

2. Chico State University (CSU) conducted a mail-out survey, of which the results helped to form the direction of the Area Plan. CSU used a stratified sample of 200 random households with a senior householder, for each county. When comparing a multi-county tabulation, CSU weighted each county's responses by the total number of senior households in each county.

CSU received the following completed surveys: 47 (or 23.5%) from Lassen County, 55 (or 27.5%) from Modoc County, 60 (or 30.0%) from Shasta County, 68 (or 34.0%) from Siskiyou County, and 55 (or 27.5%) from Trinity County.

The results of the five-county survey indicated the following as the largest unmet needs:

- 62.6% Drug Costs
- 56.8% Dental Costs
- 53.6% Energy/Utility Costs
- 45.6% Yard Upkeep
- 41.9% Medical Costs
- 33.5% Optical Costs

(All other unmet needs fell at or below 18 %.)

All of the needs indicated above (with the exception of Yard Upkeep) are addressed under Goal #4, Health Care. The general education of how to access less costly services, insurances, and prescriptions is the only aspect of which we are funded (through the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP)). Ongoing advocacy efforts will continue to occur throughout the four-year planning cycle.

The Advisory Council plans to develop a Volunteer Bureau beginning in the fiscal year 2006/2007 which will not only address the Yard Upkeep unmet need, but many other needs throughout the counties. (In light of the aggressive workload the Council has chosen for the first of the four-year cycle, the members decided to wait one year to begin the development of the Bureau.)

3. The PSA2AAA Information and Assistance Services Providers summarize all inquires received during the last fiscal year (03/04) and provided counsel and the following results listed in order of greatest unmet need:

- Transportation
- Housing
- In-Home Help and Home & Yard Maintenance
- Caregiver Help
- Energy / Utility Costs
- Health Care

Goal #3 Transportation, Goal #4 Health Care, Goal #5 Energy / Utility Costs were developed to address these needs.

4. The PSA2AAA Advisory Council members conducted a needs assessment survey. Each member (five in each county) was asked to conduct ten (10) surveys, with participants “from all walks of life”. A total of 149 assessments were received and tallied. The results are in order of greatest unmet need:
 - Transportation
 - Health Care
 - Energy / Utility Costs
 - In-Home Help and Home & Yard Maintenance
 - Loneliness and Depression

As indicated above, the Volunteer Bureau development will help to address the unmet needs of In-Home Help and Home & Yard Maintenance, and Loneliness and Depression.

Other interesting and helpful components resulting from this particular needs assessment are the following profile developed from the majority of responses:

A 77 year old woman, is widowed, non-minority, has lived (not alone) in the area 28 years, in a house, drives an automobile, receives \$771 -\$1,225 per month combined income, participates in senior activities 2 – 3 times per week, and does not have difficulty taking care of her own needs.

5. Over 240 surveys were mailed to all service providers, PSA2AAA Executive Board and Advisory Council members, newspapers and radio stations, caregivers, law enforcement agencies, first-responders, and to the general public (inclusive of adults with functional impairments and assisted living facilities), of which 17 responded. The results are in order of great number of comments:

- Outreach
- Transportation, Nutrition, and Volunteerism tied for 2nd greatest unmet needs

Increased outreach has been incorporated into the Area Plan through the Goals No's 2, 4, & 5. Transportation needs are addressed in Goal #3. PSA2AAA is meeting all *possible* needs of nutrition, given the limitation of funding through the OAA. The plan to increase Volunteerism has previously been addressed in the above two assessments in the development of a Volunteer Bureau.

6. A workshop was held with The Older Adults Policy Committee members (composed of Shasta County department heads and community leaders) to identify and plan for the needs of the "Baby Boomers". The results of this workshop are incorporated into a broad-based planning approach to meeting the Boomer needs, which is under construction at this point. The results have been distributed to all other directors from State Area Agencies to initiate a "sharing" of information and ideas. Further discussion related to planning for the Boomers occurs within Goal #2 Service.
7. A workshop was held with the Shasta County Commission on Aging to identify and plan for the needs of the "Baby Boomers". The results of this workshop indicated that *"All of our commissioners agreed that those needs and services are in place along with your agency's proposals"*. The commissioners also expressed their confidence and appreciation of PSA2AAA in their efforts to benefit the Baby Boomers. Therefore, no new goals were developed as a result of this particular planning meeting.
8. There was a discussion with the PSA2AAA Advisory Council to identify and plan for the needs of the "Baby Boomers". The results of this discussion was that the Advisory Council believed that the correct mechanisms were currently in place to meet the needs of the Baby Boomers at this time and for ongoing assessments throughout the upcoming years. There were no additional recommendations made by the Advisory Council.
9. Current year informal needs assessments were conducted with focus groups, grass-root level representatives, and with local and state-wide agencies. Again, the overall unmet needs and priorities resulted in re-establishing the above unmet needs for the upcoming Area Plan cycle.

Given in input from all of the above, the following reports the greatest unmet needs, in order of priority:

- Transportation
- Health Care / Prescription Costs
- In-Home Help and Home & Yard Maintenance

- Energy / Utility Costs

Upon evaluation of these needs, it is realized that PSA2AAA is ultimately challenged with trying to develop new modes of assistance above and beyond the funding through the Older American's Act and the Older Californian's Act. The Advisory Council continues to step forward identify unrecognized current alternative services and to develop new strategies.

Thank you to all that participated in this very valuable exercise!