

The Community Chest convened the first Community Issues Summit on June 19, 2017. Gathering local citizens, nonprofit, business, community, and government leaders, we worked together to understand the issue of Aging here and generate solutions for our community.

Part I: Learned about Aging and how it affects people in our area

Joyce Dudley, a local expert who worked with Age-Friendly Englewood Coalition, described the issue of Aging as it is experienced in eastern Bergen County: <https://youtu.be/3zXRhNL2Z7E>

Part II: Described current and ideal future states and generated ideas to bridge them

In a breakout session moderated by Janet Sharma, Age-Friendly Englewood Coalition Coordinator, participants engaged in a guided discussion on a focus question. We described the current situation in our area regarding the issue and then imagined what the ideal future state could look like. Then we came up with ideas that would help us work collaboratively to make progress that moved us from the current situation closer to the ideal future state. This work is summarized below.

Focus Question: How can we work collaboratively as a community to decrease social isolation of seniors while increasing access to information about available services?	
Current State	Future State
There is a lack of education about Aging on part of professionals and the general public here.	Professionals and people in our community understand Aging--common issues, needs, and opportunities--and have a positive outlook towards seniors.
Many services for seniors are available here but services are fragmented across many providers.	We have active partnerships and shared supports that make what's available more accessible.
Elders often experience social isolation. Heavy demands on caretakers create a lot of stress. Older people are not seen as contributors since our culture tends to place a lot of value on youth.	Elders are known by neighbors and connected to social support networks here. Our seniors are activated as assets--we tap their knowledge, skills, and energy to benefit our community.
Seniors lack information and don't know about existing services.	Seniors learn about available services and activities that increase their support and connections within our community.
There have been budget cuts affecting services. There are also a lack of needed legal, tax, and home-based services.	Advocates for Aging stay abreast of local issues and take action to protect and/or add needed services.
Seniors struggle to age in place and keep up with the rising cost of housing here.	Seniors here take advantage of many different age-friendly housing options.
Bridging Actions that Move Our Community Toward Future State	
Provide frequent communication about services for seniors (individual providers, businesses, and agencies).	
Foster vital, welcoming, and centralized community centers that offer programming for seniors	
Host intergenerational activities that strengthen relationships and encourage sharing between generations.	
Designate a local advocate for Aging for services and navigation who also does legislative advocacy.	
Provide information and support for building and modifying age-friendly homes.	
Encourage faith-based communities to include elder care issues as part of their mission.	
Create educational programs for public and providers about the positive aspects of aging.	

Part III: Provided input and prioritized the most impactful actions to take next

In the final part of the Summit, the whole group got back together to listen to reports from the breakout sessions, select their priority for the top bridging action, and then give insights and advice for next steps on this work. Top priority we heard for Aging was: **Host intergenerational activities**

Going forward, The Community Chest will use the collective thinking from the Summit inform its funding, training, and collaboration efforts. **For more information and to stay abreast of this initiative, follow us on [Facebook](#).**