Old Colony Planning Council – Area Agency on Aging

FY 2008 Elder Needs Assessment Survey

OVERVIEW:
As the Area Agency on Aging for the local region, the Old Colony Planning Council – Area Agency on Aging (OCPC-AAA) is charged with the responsibility of helping to identify and address the needs of elders from throughout our region. As part of our ongoing effort to identify and address the greatest unmet or inadequately met needs of elders in our 23-community region in SE Massachusetts, the OCPC-AAA recently conducted a survey of provider agencies and individuals from throughout the region. The purpose of the provider survey was to collect information from agencies and individuals who have regular contact and interaction with people over the age of 60, and who have direct, day-to-day experience in assisting elders. The perspective gleaned from direct service staff members that have regular contact and interaction provides a unique perspective, a valuable source of information for the entire elder service network, and helps to establish service priority areas for Older Americans Act (OAA) funding for the region.

The information and feedback gained from the survey will be used in conjunction with other information (Older Americans Act requirements, listening sessions, past programming, statewide initiatives and trends) to establish service priority areas for the OCPC-AAA. These priority service areas help the OCPC-AAA to direct OAA funding to the greatest needs in the region.

METHODOLOGY:
The OCPC-AAA selected various provider agencies and individuals to be surveyed. This selection process was based on OCPC-AAA's knowledge of and experience with the elder service network in the region. This is by no means an exclusive and exhaustive listing of provider agencies in the region.

OCPC-AAA identified the following as agencies to be surveyed for the project:
> Old Colony Elderly Services (1)
> Councils on Aging/Senior Centers (24)
> Housing Authorities (18)
> Title III Providers (9)
> "Others" (Brockton Mayor's Office, BAMSI-HELPLINE, MA Department of Mental Health, Alzheimer's Association, Brockton Hospital, Caritas Good Samaritan Hospital, Jordan Hospital, Southcoast Hospital, Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, Massasoit Senior Center, and Brockton Salvation Army (11).

Surveys were sent to 63 different agencies. Agencies were not limited to one response per agency, but were encouraged to distribute the survey tool to as many appropriate staff as possible.

This was a mailed survey process. Recipients were sent a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, and a one page survey to complete. Surveys were mailed out on March 7, 2008. Recipients were asked to return the survey by March 31, 2008. The survey included a postage-paid return envelope. The survey consisted of a listing of 28 different services or service categories. Respondents were instructed as follows:

> *"(prioritize) the ten most needed or unmet service areas facing the elders (and their caregivers) that you have served over the past 12 to 15 months. Please rank only ten specific service categories. (1=most needed and unmet, 2=2nd most needed and unmet,……………10=least needed and unmet)."*

To tabulate the results, we reversed the ranking for any given service category and assigned the appropriate score. For example, a ranking of 1 (most needed) was equal to 10 points, a ranking of 2 was equal to 9 points, a ranking of 3 was equal to 8 points, etc. We summed up the total scores to come up with the ranking from highest to lowest score.

RESULTS:

A total of 63 agencies were surveyed, 37 agencies responded for a return rate of 59%. Follow-up inquiries were made to those agencies that did not respond by the requested submission deadline. A total of 121 different individuals from the 37 agencies responded. Eleven (11) of the returned surveys were unusable because they were completed incorrectly. There were 46 responses from Old Colony Elderly Services. Of the 24 COA's/Senior Centers in the region surveyed, 21 responded. Of the 18 Housing Authority Offices surveyed, 10 responded. Of the 9 Title III provider agencies surveyed, 5 responded. Of the 11 "other" agencies surveyed, 4 responded.

Table #1 below reflects the final rankings of the service categories listed on the survey tool. Table #2 reflects the actual scores by category.

Table #1

FFY 2008 Elder Needs Assessment Results

Service Category:	Ranking:	Raw Score:
Transportation	1	723
Affordable Housing	2	560
Financial Assistance	3	500
In-Home Personal Care	4	351
Medication Management	5	341
Mental Health Care	6	315
Homemaker Services	7	295
Home Repairs	8	291
Information and Assistance	9	258
Adult Day Programs	10	229
Outreach	11	215
Legal Assistance	12	190
Home-Delivered Meals	13	178
Shopping	14	174
Chore Services	15	170
Bill-Paying Services	16	169
Friendly Visiting	17	162
Home Modifications	18	150
Case Management	19	137
Protective Services	20	135
Other 1	21	98
Telephone Reassurance	22	58
Employment	23	51
Exercise/Fitness	23	51
Recreation	25	46
Health Education	26	44
Nutrition Education	27	42
Other 2	28	21
Letter Writing	29	14
Roommate Matching	30	8

Other 1 = personal items; respite funds; SHINE Counseling;
companionship; run errands; fuel assistance;
grandparents caring for grandchildren;
access to domestic violence counseling; caregiver respite;
educational programs, trash pick-up; intrepreting,
in-home podiatry, advocates for doctor visits.

Other 2 = marketing; overnight services; caregiver respite;
substance abuse counseling; education.

Table #2
Need Priority Ranking
Number of Respondents by Category Ranking:

| Service Category: | Most needed | | | | | | | | | Least needed | Number of Respondents |
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Transportation	36	15	15	3	6	6	4	0	2	1	**88**
Affordable Housing	22	14	8	9	5	5	3	3	4	3	**76**
Financial Assistance	14	8	10	9	7	8	9	6	3	3	**77**
In-Home Personal Care	4	10	10	5	8	4	2	7	3	3	**56**
Medication Management	4	6	6	8	8	6	6	9	4	6	**63**
Mental Health Care	4	6	6	8	6	6	8	3	3	4	**54**
Homemaker Services	4	5	7	7	2	10	7	2	3	3	**50**
Home Repairs	0	2	10	8	13	3	6	1	5	7	**55**
Information and Assistance	9	8	4	1	2	1	3	6	4	2	**40**
Adult Day Programs	1	4	4	6	5	7	3	4	8	4	**46**
Outreach	5	5	2	3	4	3	5	3	6	3	**39**
Legal Assistance	1	3	0	2	7	5	5	12	5	6	**46**
Home-Delivered Meals	1	5	2	6	4	2	2	3	6	2	**33**
Shopping	0	2	6	6	2	2	4	5	5	3	**35**
Chore Services	0	1	3	5	5	4	7	4	5	2	**36**
Bill-Paying Services	0	4	3	3	2	5	6	3	8	2	**36**
Friendly Visiting	1	1	3	2	3	8	7	2	2	9	**38**
Home Modifications	0	1	3	4	4	6	3	3	3	8	**35**
Case Management	2	2	2	3	3	3	0	6	3	5	**29**
Protective Services	2	1	2	1	3	7	2	3	4	5	**30**
Other 1	2	4	0	1	2	0	3	3	0	2	**17**
Telephone Reassurance	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	5	2	5	**17**
Employment	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	3	3	**15**
Exercise/Fitness	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	2	4	3	**15**
Recreation	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	2	**10**
Health Education	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	4	0	**12**
Nutrition Education	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	3	1	2	**11**
Other 2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	**5**
Letter Writing	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	**4**
Roommate Matching	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	**4**

- The highest possible score that any service category could have received would be 1,100. If every respondent (N=110) ranked the same service category as 1, this would equal 10 points for that service (110 x 10 = 1,100).

- *Transportation* – 88 of the 110 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs (80%). Of these 88 respondents, 36 ranked this service as the number one unmet or undermet need (score of 10). Of the 88 respondents, 66 ranked this service as one of the top three unmet needs.

- *Affordable Housing* – 76 of the 110 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs (69%). Of these 76 respondents, 22 ranked this category as the number one unmet or undermet need (score of 10). Of the 76 respondents, 44 ranked this category as one of the top three unmet needs.

- *Financial Assistance* –77 of the 110 respondents reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs. Of these 77 respondents, 14 ranked this category as the number one unmet need (score of 10). Of the 77 respondents, 32 ranked this category as one of the top three unmet needs.

LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT:

- This survey process and the resulting findings are simply a descriptive analysis of the perspective and experiences of the respondents. The results reflect the respondents own interpretation and understanding of the greatest unmet or undermet needs of the elders they have served over the past 12 to 15 months.

- This is a point-in-time survey that reflects the respondent's perspective on the date that they completed the survey.

- Respondents were not provided with uniform definitions of the service categories listed on the survey tool. As such, each respondent is using their own interpretation and definition of a given service category.

- Respondents were not given an opportunity to explain their own understanding and knowledge of the existing elder service network, the availability and utilization of different programs and services, or their understanding of eligibility criteria for different services and programs. As such, respondents may be reporting unmet or under met needs in categories and areas that they do not have extensive knowledge of or experience with, or programs and services that are available, but with eligibility limitations.

For the purposes of comparison, we are including the rankings from our **FFY 2005** Elder Needs Assessment Project.

FY 2005 Elder Services Provider Needs Assessment
Old Colony Planning Council-Area Agency on Aging

Service Category:	Ranking of Greatest Need:	Score:
Transportation	1	411
Affordable Housing	2	287
Financial Assistance	3	268
Personal Care	4	231
Homemaker	5	196
Mental Health Care	6	195
Home Repairs	7	179
Outreach	8	176
Friendly Visiting	9	175
Information and Assistance	10	172
Chore Service	11	148
Shopping	12	138
Adult Day Programs	13	134
Case Management	14	129
Legal Assistance	15	128
Bill Paying Service	16	101
Home Delivered Meals	17	98
Home Modification	18	98
Protective Services	19	54
Recreation	20	50
Nutrition Education	21	50
Health Education/Screening	22	49
Employment Opportunities	23	42
Other	24	35
Exercise	25	25
Roommate Matching	26	24
Telephone Reassurance	27	19
Letter Writing	28	10