

How Can We Make Pierce County a Livable Community for All Ages?

SURVEY RESULTS



A Community Survey for Older Adults,
People with Disabilities, and Their Caregivers
May 2011

“Thank you for being caring enough to compose these caring questions. Senior Citizens - much of the time, tend to believe no one (much) in our American society cares about us. We are invisible and disposable and in the way.”

Demographics

228 Responses to Survey

147 On-line:	64%
81 Mail-in:	35%

Age

Under 60:	39%
60+:	61%

*Note: 52% of responders to on-line survey were under 60

Gender

Female:	73%
Male:	27%

Race/Ethnicity

Caucasian:	78%
Ethnic Minority:	22%

Household Size

2 people :	45%
Live alone:	29%
4 or more:	14%

Household Monthly Income

At or below \$1,226/month	17%
Above \$1,226/month	83%

*Note: \$1,226/month (100% federal poverty level for 2 person household)
35% of mail in responders were at or below; 9% on-line

Zip Code

Tacoma:	22%
Lakewood/Steilacoom:	20%
Spanaway/Parkland/Midland:	12%
Puyallup:	12%
Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula:	10%
University Place/Fircrest	9%
Eatonville:	9%
Other:	7%

Basic Needs

Almost 20% needs help with basic needs

Cleaning house:	18%
Travel to appointments:	18%
Walking:	11%
Cooking:	10%
Bathing:	9%

64% had enough help with basic needs

Did not need any help:	26%
Not enough help:	10%

Who you would call for help with daily tasks or personal care needs

Friends, family or neighbors:	93%
Social service agency:	23%
Church:	19%

70% received help or participated in a senior or community service program

Information:	50%
Senior Meal Sites:	27%
Senior Centers:	24%
Home delivered meals:	21%
Health Ins Benefits Advice:	18%
Foot care for seniors	15%
Health Promotion Classes:	14%

63% have a plan for or know how to find resources to meet care needs as they age

19% need some changes to their home to make it easier for them to get around

42% sometimes do not eat properly because:

Can't afford to buy food:	21%
Have problem with their teeth:	20%
Can't get out and go to the store:	19%
Trouble preparing nutritious food:	18%

*Note: 34% marked "Other" without details.

Health

51% consider their health to be good

Fair:	22%
Excellent:	21%
Poor:	6%

53% reported their health sometimes limits what they can do

66% were physically active at least 30 minutes most days

43% would like to learn more about better managing their health conditions

Not interested in learning more 57%

90% has a doctor and sees them when needed

Does not have a doctor: 9%

82% get regular health screenings/exams as recommended by their doctor

Do not get regular screen/exam: 18%

30% do not always go to the doctor when they should because:

Can't afford to pay: 43%

No transportation: 16%

Can't find doctor to take them: 9%

*Note: 54% marked "Other" without details

68% have a dentist and see them regularly

Does not see dentist regularly: 20%

Does not have a dentist: 13%

42% do not always go to the dentist when they should because:

Can't afford to pay: 58%

No transportation: 8%

Can't find dentist that will take them: 2%

*Note: 25% marked "Other" without details

78% take prescription medications on a regular basis

3 or more medications: 55%

Takes no medications: 22%

90% get prescriptions filled and take them as prescribed by their doctor

Skip or take partial to save money: 8%

Cut back on basic needs to afford: 5%

Providing Help to Others (Informal Caregivers)

35% provide some help to another person

Shopping:	65%
Travel to appointments:	62%
Cleaning house:	58%
Cooking:	54%
Paying bills:	48%
Taking medicine:	48%

64% know where to get help with their care giving

Does not know where to get help:	36%
----------------------------------	-----

68% able to get a break / rest from their care giving

Does not get a break:	33%
-----------------------	-----

Supports important to caregivers:

Respite / break:	63%
Training / education:	46%
Help with daily activities:	43%
Support Groups:	30%
Counseling:	25%

Community Activities

89% spent time with family, friends or neighbors within the past week

49% attended a religious or faith community gathering in the past month

Did not attend in past month:	51%
-------------------------------	-----

44% had attended a sports, community, club or cultural event within the past week

Did not attend within past week 56%

48% volunteer on a regular basis

Does not volunteer regularly: 52%

Describing Your Community

73% describe as welcoming, safe & supportive for older adults and persons with disabilities

64% describe their community as accessible

Is not accessible: 36%

52% describe their community as affordable for older adults and persons with disabilities

Is not affordable: 48%

35% rated their community as a good place for people approaching retirement age

Very Good:	24%
Fair:	24%
Poor:	9%
Excellent:	8%
Not sure:	1%

Factors considered important to the quality of life in Pierce County:

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat/Not Important</u>
Safety of Community:	74%	24%	2%
Access to Healthcare:	70%	26%	4%
Cost of Housing:	65%	29%	6%
Quality of Housing:	55%	38%	7%
Supports & Services:	53%	33%	14%
Ease of travel:	47%	39%	14%
Close to shopping:	45%	32%	23%
Close to family/friends:	37%	43%	20%
Close to place of worship:	26%	32%	42%
Parks and recreation	24%	43%	33%
Educational opportunities:	20%	39%	41%

Services considered important to help people remain in their own homes as they age:

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat/Not Important</u>
Information about services:	60%	35%	5%
Special transportation:	48%	39%	13%
In-home personal care:	43%	41%	16%
Help with care giving duties:	40%	44%	16%
Home delivered meals:	37%	37%	26%
Senior Centers:	36%	43%	21%
Wellness Programs:	34%	45%	21%
Home repair/modification:	33%	46%	21%
Senior lunch program:	33%	42%	25%
Light housekeeping:	32%	51%	17%
Legal assistance:	31%	41%	28%
Counseling services:	28%	41%	31%
Yard Work:	22%	41%	37%

Top Priorities to Improving the Quality of Life for older adults and persons with disabilities living in Pierce County

Basic Needs (111 responses)

Economic security

- People with low/fixed incomes cannot afford high rents and increasing costs for health care, food, etc., at the same time.
- Community needs to develop programs and services with affordability in mind
- Expand availability of sliding-fee scale programs; accept payment plans
- Education on financial planning for long term care needs

Housing

- More affordable senior/disabled apartments with built in or “wrap-around” supportive services for low and lower-middle income, located close to essential services.
- More utility and rental assistance.
- Low or no cost home repair, modification and yard maintenance services.
- Living / housing options needed for older adults with mental health issues

Safety

- Address community safety concerns for elders and persons with disabilities.
- A good support system. Multiple people with knowledge and ability to provide the resources an elderly or disabled person needs, either free or at a very minimal cost.
- Address accessibility / walkability issues in public areas: sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalks, benches
- More cross-walks and traffic lights to stop traffic where seniors need to cross

Information / Education / Access

- Available and accessible information about services for older adults and persons with disabilities
- Knowledge of services and how to access them
- Someone in the community to give information about services.
- Education about benefits (Medicare, Medicaid, SSI, etc)
- Education about long term planning and options
- Need to reach people with disabilities, adult children of elderly, and elders without internet access
- More PR and use of media resources
- Helping seniors live with pride, giving them support but not controlling them so they lose their self worth
- More resources for senior centers which provide other supportive services

Nutrition

- Need for nutrition education and services

Independence & Caregivers (76 responses)

In-home personal care

- Case management services to help people easily access in-home services they need
- In-home caregiving services should be available for those who need it, in the amount and frequency they need it, including publically funded and affordable private pay services
- Increase resources / funding to pay for home care (State budget cuts mentioned)
- Availability of basic services like housekeeping, shopping, and meal preparation
- Better trained / qualified staff

*Knowledge that
we can stay in
our own homes,
with assistance as
we need it.*

Family Caregiver Support

- Supports for families caring for someone with Alzheimer's / dementia
- Educating adult children on available services and supports
- More funding more respite care
- Need to provide help for family caregivers so that they can stay healthy and continue providing care to their loved one
- Long term care planning for families caring for elders and those with disabilities
- Respite care support for caregivers is essential

Transportation

- Expand public transit "shuttle" or paratransit services, including eligibility guidelines and service areas
- Increase funding for public transit "shuttle" services
- Need "shuttle" system improvements including better trained drivers, better coordinated dispatch, and decreased wait times
- More transportation options for elders and those with disabilities to access services, i.e. health care, essential shopping, wellness programs, etc.
- Good public transit from small communities to shopping/recreational/and other services
- "The shuttle service is trying to do what they can, but I can't ride it only to 1 address 1 time, which means to the Dr. once, so I end up trying to beg rides, pay high prices, and miss appointments. The bus is out for me. I can't get to the bus stop and few people on the bus so I get out once per month with my daughter the store for food."

Health & Wellness (53 responses)

- Focus on early education about preventive health strategies
- Fitness education and physical activity programs
- Expansion of community programs that provide wellness-focused recreation
- Affordable health care services including medical, dental and mental health

- Increase doctors accepting Medicare and Medicaid patients
- Low cost prescriptions
- More access/increase providers offering mental health services to elders, including Alzheimer's/dementia
- A counselor or just someone to talk to once or twice a week for an hour is also essential.
- Comprehensive dental coverage for DD clients is important
- Some time it would be good to have someone come in to check on you and see how you're doing. You have someone to talk to.

Individual & Community Involvement (21 responses)

- Access to social activities, cultural events and recreational opportunities
- Provide opportunities to build positive connections/relationships with others to reduce isolation, loneliness and depression
- Volunteerism (including intergenerational opportunities) as a way to address some community needs (i.e. socialization, transportation).
- Getting the volunteers to help them. The government does not have a budget big enough to help