

Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment

A tool developed by Area Agency on Aging 1-B



This report was prepared for Sample County based on an Assessment completed by Amanda Sears on November 6, 2020.

The **Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment** was designed to help aging services professionals measure how well community systems support caregivers. It seeks to assess the available supports offered through the health and social service systems in Michigan's cities, townships and counties to help unpaid family members, friends, and neighbors who are providing care for older persons with disabling conditions.

The assessment provides objective measures and ratings for supports and services that are often needed to successfully manage caregiving responsibilities.

The **Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment** includes seven categories or domains of community support services and programs that caregivers have identified as most helpful as they care for their loved ones. The domains are arranged across approximately 60 scored questions. The domains and the scoring framework were developed based on a review of current research in the field that assesses caregiver concerns.

While the assessment is scored to place the highest weight on those questions and domains that caregivers most frequently cite as critical to their ability to provide good care for their loved ones, the domain order is not indicative of this hierarchy. Each section includes a description of the domain and its relative importance in the lives of caregivers, as indicated by the research, along with an explanation of the point value of the domain as part of the overall Assessment score.

Each section indicates a score with areas of strength and/or areas for growth. In the areas for growth, you'll find direct links to an online resource managed by the Creating Caregiver Friendly Communities Project that includes more information about the item and any available best practices and additional resources available to you.

The Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment is the first of its kind in the country. Because it was recently developed, data is not yet available that compares scores across communities. As more communities take the assessment, our collective knowledge of caregiver supports and resource availability will greatly improve. The following score tiers are based only on actual scores and are not connected to any bell curve. In other words, they do not reflect how one community may compare to another or to a national average.

We encourage communities to take this assessment again after they made improvements based on recommendations to see how their scores improve.

Your overall score on the Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment is 68 / 164.

This overall score falls in the **Mid-Low range (42-82)**, out of a total possible points of 164. The Caregiver Friendly

Communities Assessment score indicates that this community has established a basic level of programs and supports for caregivers and may show significant strengths in some areas, while also showing significant improvement needed in other areas. Advocates should continue to develop existing programs and look for opportunities to strengthen or add supports and resources where needed. Next steps: reviewing each domain area for specific strengths and weaknesses related to the score and choose 4-5 top areas for improvement. Gather community stakeholders such as city planners and older adult service providers to add input to a plan for improvement.

In-Home Services and Respite

Respite services, including in-home respite and out-of-home respite, is one of the top supports cited by caregivers as most beneficial in their ability to continue to provide good care for their loved one(s).

Your score for this section was 23 / 50

Medium (17-32 points). A score in this range indicates that this community has some areas of strength and some areas for improvement in the area of in- and out-of-home respite services. Below is a list of specific strengths and weaknesses.

How have you seen in-home services change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How have you seen out-of-home respite services change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How have you seen Adult Day Health services change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths:

The availability of brief in-home respite services (1-2 hours)

Areas for Growth:

The types of in-home services that exist at full or reduced cost and without wait lists.

The types of in-home respite providers available

The stay length for in-home respite services

The availability of nearby out-of-home respite services

Out-of-home respite services that subsidized

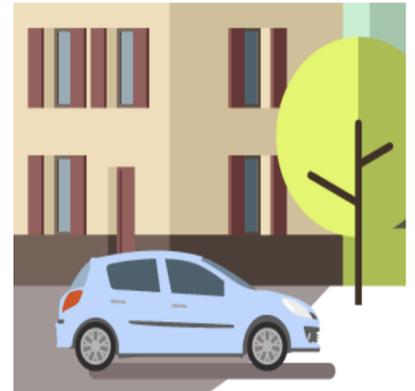
Out-of-home respite services that are offered for a range of stay lengths

Minimum length for out-of-home respite

The availability of adult day services

Adult day services offered nearby and/or are subsidized

Adult day services with extended hours (evenings and weekends)



Care Management Support

Caregivers frequently cite challenges in managing their loved ones' healthcare – including the coordination of in-home nursing and other in-home help, managing prescription medications, coordinating appointments and transportation for doctor visits, and finding information about the specific illness their loved ones are being affected by and its implications for caregiving responsibilities.

Your score for this section was 5 / 10

Medium (5-7 points). A mid-range score in the Care Management Support indicates some areas of strength and some areas where there is room for improvement. Below is a list of your specific strengths and weaknesses as indicated by assessment responses.



How have you seen care management services change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths:

The provision of individualized caregivers assessments upon patient discharge by local hospitals
The availability of care transition programs

Areas for Growth:

Local hospitals provide information to caregivers upon discharge of patient
The availability of trained advocates to help caregivers navigate health benefits

Caregiver Training and Education

Training and education for caregivers has been found to be tremendously helpful in providing information to both help care for loved ones while also making sure caregivers are taking care of themselves. Specific illness information has proven especially beneficial in helping caregivers provide good care to their loved ones.

Your score for this section was 11 / 29

Medium (11-20 points). A mid-range score in Caregiver Training and Education indicates some areas of strength and some areas where there is room for improvement. Below is a list of specific strengths and weaknesses as indicated by the assessment responses.



How have you seen training and education programs change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Areas for Growth:

Frequency that caregiver trainings are offered
An array of training types
Trainings that are available locally and to all residents
Additional supports provided for in-person trainings
The availability of individualized caregiver feedback programs
The availability of a variety of types of caregiver information

Caregiver Social and Emotional Support

Caregiver social and emotional support provide needed outlets to share the struggles of caregiving with others who understand the challenges – these supports can be tremendously helpful in providing strength and support to help caregivers continue in their role. Caregiver emotional support was interconnected with both care management as well as training and education as the second most frequently cited area of need within the research.



Your score for this section was 7 / 21

Low (0-7 points). A low score in Caregiver Supports indicates there is room for growth here. Of all the domains, this is the top area cited by caregivers as most helpful in their role. A lower score in this area should be prioritized in any action plans that are developed for your community's growth. Below is a list of specific areas where you could begin working.

How have you seen caregiver support programs change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Areas for Growth:

The availability of caregiver support groups

Virtual caregiver support services (online, video conference, etc.)

The availability of illness-specific caregiver support groups (like groups for those caring for people with dementia)

The availability of organizations that can meet cultural and language needs

The availability of cultural organizations that also provide caregiver support groups

The availability of mental health staff/counselors specializing in caregiver concerns

The availability of professionals specializing in concerns such as family disputes, end-of-life choices, driving cessation, or caregiver abuse

Resources for caregivers to connect virtually (computer equipment, wifi hotspots, etc.)

Safe, Affordable, Accessible Housing

For caregivers, the home environment can be a critical support or challenge in providing good care – this includes home maintenance and repair issues as well as accessibility issues such as thresholds which are hard to cross by wheelchair and walker, bathrooms without zero-entry showers, benches or grab-rails.

In October 2015, the Area Agency on Aging 1-B drafted an issue brief on caregivers based on surveys they conducted. As part of their findings, many indicated a need for safe and accessible housing support; 25% indicated a need for home renovations, 25% for home safety devices, 17% for housekeeping, 15% for home/yard maintenance.

Your score for this section was 5 / 10

Medium (4-7 points). A mid-range score in Safe, Affordable, Accessible Housing indicates some areas of strength and some areas where there is room for improvement. Below is a list of specific strengths and weaknesses as indicated by assessment responses.

How have you seen housing programs change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths:

Access to a CAPS builder

Areas for Growth:

Resources for age-friendly home improvements

Resources for home weatherization and other programs

Nearby access to a range of housing options for older adults



Financial and Legal Information

Caregivers frequently cited concerns about financial and legal decisions they are required to make in collaboration with or on behalf of their loved ones – from figuring out how to pay for needed healthcare and homecare services to making decisions about their loved ones' future. This includes important decisions about caregiver financial health too – such as a decision about whether or not to quit a job in order to spend more time caring for a loved one and assessing the long-term financial impact of that decision.



Your score for this section was 6 / 16

Medium (6-10 points). A mid-range score in Financial & Legal Information indicates some areas of strength and some areas where there is room for improvement. Below is a list of specific strengths and weaknesses as indicated by assessment responses.

How have you seen the financial and legal services available to caregivers change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths:

An emergency financial fund to help caregivers

Areas for Growth:

The availability and accessibility of financial experts skilled in caregiver concerns

The availability of subsidized legal assistance for caregivers

Subsidized legal services knowledgeable about caregiver concerns

The availability of alternative dispute resolution services

Transportation

Transportation continues to be one of the top-rated concerns among both caregivers and seniors. According to the issue brief drafted by the Area Agency on Aging 1-b, nearly 40% of all respondents cited this as a significant issue. In rural parts of the state, this is likely to be an even greater concern. Access to affordable transportation that accommodates mobility differences is paramount.



Your score for this section was 4 / 12

Low (0-4 points). A low score in Transportation indicates a weakness in this area. While transportation is cited by caregivers as an important resource, of all the domains in this assessment, it includes the fewest points and questions. A lower score in this area could be included in any action plans after strengthening other top-ranked areas. Below is a list of specific areas work could begin.

How have you seen the transportation services available to seniors and their caregivers change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Areas for Growth:

Adult day services with transportation help

The variety and/or accessibility of transportation options

Transportation options that are available at low cost

A concierge service to help coordinate transportation

Health Care Services

For caregivers, there are specific healthcare services and practices in health care that provide optimum support to the caregiver, including access to healthcare and emergency services that specialize in serving older adults, as well as access to various types and kinds of rehabilitative services offered upon hospital discharge.



Your score for this section was 7 / 16

Medium (6-10 points). A mid-range score in Healthcare Services indicates some areas of strength and some areas where there is room for improvement. Below is a list of specific strengths and weaknesses as indicated by assessment responses.

How have you seen healthcare services available to seniors change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our county's caregiver services have changed drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths:

At least one hospital emergency department certified in ACE
Access to nearby pharmacies

Areas for Growth:

At least one hospital emergency department which is organized around serving older adults
Accessibility of rehabilitation services
The variety of supportive health services available
Availability of pharmacy services

Additional Strengths and Areas For Growth

The following are additional, user-identified areas of strength or opportunities for growth.

Community-identified strengths:

Our county does an amazing job supporting caregivers.

Community-identified areas for growth:

We are unsure of the gaps that exist within our county.

Suggested changes to support caregivers:

We are looking for specific feedback to make our community better for caregivers and their older loved ones.

Biggest concerns related to COVID-19:

We want to be sure caregivers know there are supports available to them.

Resources

[Resources and Best Practices for developing caregiver supports.](#) (link opens in new window)