The State of San Diego Senior Centers
What We Have Now and What We Need

Assessment Report
Summer 2019
WHO WE ARE

The San Diego Seniors Community Foundation was founded in December 2016 and qualified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Our mission is to transition San Diego seniors from vulnerable to vibrant, through the power of philanthropy, so that no local senior is left without access to the resources to thrive. We envision a world where the senior population of San Diego County is nurtured into a healthy, dynamic way of life; where they are socially connected, physically active and a vital element of our community. We provide leadership in the San Diego older adult network with a goal of ensuring that every senior has someone they can turn to and trust.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

By 2030, San Diego County will be home to more than 1.2 million individuals over the age of 55. This figure will account for over one-third of the total population of San Diego County. Numerous challenges exist and will only continue to grow in intensity as the United States undergoes an unprecedented demographic shift.

At the San Diego Seniors Community Foundation (SDSCF), one of our primary goals is the creation of a coordinated network of sophisticated, modern senior centers. We are dedicated to becoming a leader, catalyst, philanthropic grantmaker and partner in the enhancement, revitalization and creation of senior centers that can meet the demands of a burgeoning and increasingly more diverse older adult population.

Senior centers have been vital community entities for decades in the support of older adults. From meals to socialization and recreation opportunities, these services have been instrumental in helping millions of seniors maintain overall wellness and social connectedness. Yet, the leadership of senior centers and the managers who oversee the daily operations are faced with the challenge of reinventing their place in the community to address a growing population with broader and more diverse needs. Older adults are entering their retirement years with expectations that differ from any previous generation. Senior center leadership needs to weigh these expectations and ponder whether a recreational/socialization model is the proper vehicle to address the needs of seniors who are seeking more dynamic solutions within modern, multipurpose facilities to address their physical, mental and financial health needs.

In addition, leadership combats societal perceptions of what comprises a senior center and the inertia of the stigma attached to these facilities as “a place where old people go.” With an eye to the future, we pose the question, “Will the traditional senior center model have the capacity and services to sufficiently address the impact of the aging Baby Boomer generation upon American society?” To provide an informed perspective, an assessment of the present inventory of senior centers in San Diego County was deemed to be a crucial first step toward a better understanding of the current situation, as well as an understanding of what will be needed in the future.

This assessment project was made possible through a grant by the Gary and Mary West Foundation.

Senior Centers

According to the National Institute of Senior Centers, 10,000 senior centers serve over 1 million adults daily in the U.S.¹ Senior centers are critical community settings that provide essential services and represent a key strategic element in the enhancement of San Diego’s older adult infrastructure. More than 25 senior centers exist throughout San Diego County, in addition to several hybrid community center/municipal parks and recreation centers. These centers are community hubs for older adults and serve as access points for seniors to socialize, exercise, access nutritional services, receive information on solutions to their healthcare needs, learn of social entitlement programs and services funded by the

Older Americans Act, and find opportunities for meaningful civic engagement. Participation in senior centers provide numerous benefits to seniors, generating positive impact upon their physical, social, spiritual, emotional and mental health.

Traditional core programs and services of senior centers include:

- Meal and nutrition programs
- Information and assistance
- Health, fitness and wellness programs
- Transportation services
- Public benefits counseling
- Employment assistance
- Volunteer and civic engagement opportunities
- Social and recreational activities
- Educational and arts programs
- Intergenerational programs

Objective

The San Diego Seniors Community Foundation conducted an assessment of the “State of Senior Centers” in San Diego County, in order to identify the challenges and opportunities that exist in the current senior center environment, provide perspective on innovation in senior centers nationally as a standard to strive for, and draw relevant conclusions and recommendations to improve the senior centers within our region.

A looming crisis gains in intensity with each passing day; 10,000 people in the United States celebrate a 65th birthday every day and will continue to do so until the early 2030s. The “graying of America” is becoming manifest. Now is the time to lay out a new vision for the impact that senior centers can have on the people they serve. This report opens the discussion on beginning a transition from stand-alone senior centers grounded in the traditional recreational model to the creation of a sophisticated network of innovative centers that harness the power of philanthropy and partnerships to meet the growing demands of an aging society.

Approach

While information exists on senior centers through their own websites, marketing efforts and partnerships with county/municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations, we felt that the optimal approach to achieve a thorough assessment was to visit as many San Diego County senior centers as possible. This strategy provided an opportunity both to view the physical structure, learn of core programs and services and to ask questions from the leadership of each center.

This approach provided tremendous perspective in contrasting the facilities, equipment and program offerings of each center, as well as assessing other important and relevant factors such as location, transportation, parking, surrounding population density, municipal geographical footprint, staffing, community resources and numerous other variables that impact each center’s effectiveness.

The following list represents 28 senior centers located in San Diego County, as well as 7 selected local senior service providers / community centers relevant to this report. At this writing, the SDSCF team has visited the majority of the senior centers as well as a promising innovative café model of senior center located in the Chicago area.
SAN DIEGO COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS

SOUTH BAY
- Norman Park Senior Center, Chula Vista
- Kimball Avenue Senior Center, National City
- John D. Spreckels Center, Coronado
- Imperial Beach Senior Center, Imperial Beach
- San Ysidro Senior Center, San Ysidro

CENTRAL SAN DIEGO
- Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center, San Diego
- College Avenue Center, San Diego
- Mira Mesa Senior Center, San Diego
- Fourth District Senior Resource Center, San Diego
- Neighborhood House Senior Center, San Diego
- Balboa Park Senior Lounge, San Diego
- La Jolla Community Center, La Jolla
- Cathy Hopper Clairemont Friendship Center, San Diego

EAST COUNTY
- La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, La Mesa
- Lemon Grove Senior Center, Lemon Grove

NORTH COUNTY COASTAL
- Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center, Rancho Santa Fe
- Encinitas Community Senior Center, Encinitas
- Carlsbad Senior Center, Carlsbad
- El Corazon Senior Center, Oceanside
- Country Club Senior Center, Oceanside

NORTH COUNTY INLAND
- Ed Brown Senior Center, San Diego
- Escondido Senior Center, Escondido
- San Marcos Senior Center, San Marcos
- Gloria McClellan Senior Center, Vista
- Fallbrook Senior Center, Fallbrook
- Ramona Senior Center, Ramona
- Borrego Springs Senior Center, Borrego Springs
- Poway Senior Center, Poway

SELECTED SENIOR SERVICE PROVIDERS/COMMUNITY CENTERS
- Casa Familiar Senior Services, San Ysidro
- Bayside Community Center, San Diego
- Peninsula Shepherd Center, San Diego
- Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, La Jolla
- Alpine Community Center, Alpine
- Del Mar Community Connections, Del Mar
- Solana Beach Community Senior Center, Solana Beach

Summaries of each location can be found in Appendices “A” and “B”.
San Diego County Senior Centers

North Coastal
1. Country Club Senior Center
2. El Corazón Senior Center
3. Carlsbad Senior Center
4. Encinitas Community & Senior Center
5. Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center

North Inland
6. Fallbrook Senior Center
7. Gloria McClellan Senior Center
8. San Marcos Senior Center
9. Escondido Senior Center
10. Ed Brown Center for Active Adults
11. Ramona Senior Center
12. Poway Senior Center
13. Borrego Springs Senior Center

Central
14. Mira Mesa Senior Center
15. La Jolla Community Center
16. Cathy Hopper Friendship Center
17. College Avenue Center
18. Balboa Park Senior Lounge
19. Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center
20. Neighborhood House Senior Center
21. Fourth District Senior Resource Center

East
22. La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center
23. Lemon Grove Senior Center

South
24. John D. Spreckels Center
25. Kimball Ave. Senior Center
26. Norman Park Senior Center
27. Imperial Beach Senior Center
28. San Ysidro Senior Center

Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
A. Solana Beach Community Senior Center
B. Del Mar Community Connections
C. Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center
D. Bayside Community Center
E. Peninsula Shepherd Center
F. Alpine Community Center
G. Casa Familiar Senior Services

Adults age 60+ per square mile
1 5,100
Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Key Findings

Based on senior center site visits, research and other ancillary information gathered, the following is a concise summary of our key findings and observations. Additional information is included later in this document:

- Most senior centers visited are dated and in need of repair or renovation, representing a less-than-appealing environment to the average older adult. Twenty-two senior centers were constructed over 30 years ago.

- The senior centers visited serve less than 8% of the total senior population in their regions. For purposes of this report, an older adult is an individual aged 60 and over.
  - Senior center managers consistently spoke of the challenges in attracting the 60-69 age demographic, and many seniors of varying ages are not visiting senior centers because they do not connect with the existing program offerings, struggle with transportation, face relatively long commutes to center locations and are not drawn by building aesthetics. Older adults are also working, volunteering, caregiving, raising grandchildren and are occupied with other scenarios that limit the time available to visit senior centers.

- An emerging “class” referred to as Senior Orphans are older adults who for various reasons, including lack of nearby relatives, never having children, never getting married, widowed, divorced, or even in some cases, the death of a child, find themselves alone with no one to care for them as they age. For many seniors this situation leads to adverse environmental conditions that severely impact their quality of life and physical and mental well-being.
  - A concerted effort to eliminate social isolation for older adults within their geographic area was not even on the radar of most senior centers, due to a lack of adequate funding for such outreach, or perhaps unawareness of the serious and growing plight of this particularly vulnerable population.

- Senior center financial and human resources are limited, whether within a city’s Parks and Recreation department or under the direction of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Managers cited a scarcity of resources as the primary impediment in hiring additional qualified staff, expanding program offerings, pursuing new funding avenues and implementing opportunities for innovation. This is readily apparent when revenues are compared to similar institutions offering programs and services to the public such as our valued YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs. Constraints on resources create an environment focused on day-to-day survival with little opportunity to focus beyond daily operations and minimal program offerings.
  - Twenty senior centers are managed by 1 or 2 full time employees. Six senior centers have no fulltime employees. It is documented that all senior centers are supported with a range of part-time staff members and older adult or community-based volunteers.
  - To illustrate the contrast in revenue levels, total annual revenue received by San Diego regional senior centers is estimated to be only about:
    - 40% of annual revenue received by San Diego County Boys and Girls Clubs, and
    - 6% of annual revenue received by the YMCA of San Diego County
In some cases, designated program revenues were a significant portion of the total revenue, further limiting available resources for general programs, operations, and staffing. The San Marcos Senior Center, for example, administers a government-funded nutrition program comprising over half of their annual budget.

Some city-funded senior centers could not provide budget figures because that information is entwined within the city budget.

• External factors constrain the opportunities of many senior centers, including challenges with transportation, affordable housing in their communities, parking, language barriers, cultural preferences, and the reality that many seniors are not independently mobile.

• The sizable geographic footprint of several cities and communities exceed the capacity of a single senior center to meet that area’s needs. There is a disparity between the number and location of senior centers in relation to the population of that region. Examples include Chula Vista and Escondido.

• The senior centers that provide congregate meal dining are experiencing a decline in number of seniors served. Conversely, these centers are experiencing an increased demand for delivery of meals to older adults who are homebound.

• General operating hours for most senior centers are aligned with traditional business hours. In addition, it is common among senior centers to experience noticeable downturns in center attendance after 1 p.m. As senior centers struggle to attract a younger demographic, experimenting with hours of operations needs to be considered just as carefully as what programs are offered.

• The flexibility of many senior center managers is limited due to ownership by and/or current policies of the local municipalities.

  • For example, some senior center buildings and equipment owned by local governmental entities are used for multiple purposes, constraining the senior center’s usage and configuration of the facility.

  • One municipality required earned or donated revenue for the senior center to be returned to the city treasury.

• Nationally, only 2% of institutional philanthropy goes toward senior programs and projects, and despite the current demographic shift, this percentage has not changed over the last 20 years. This means senior centers have rarely been the beneficiaries of major donors.

  • Several senior center managers interviewed noted that they are so focused on survival, given their limited available funding, that they have little bandwidth to contemplate financial solutions for long-term sustainability, or consider options for developing and funding a modern and innovative cutting-edge senior center.

  • Few senior centers have developed a planned giving strategy that would create a pipeline of future estate gifts or raise permanent endowments that would cover operational costs in perpetuity.

• While many senior centers encourage volunteerism within the center itself, few promoted opportunities for meaningful civic engagement among their senior participants, and none had considered implementing a robust “social enterprise” for the benefit of both the center and
seniors who need additional income and/or job training, although we note that one did operate a thrift store generating a modest income back to the senior center.

- Nearly three-quarters of senior centers have developed extensive partnerships within the community to supplement and deliver additional programming and services for older adults. However, many centers do not have strong partnerships with local senior affordable housing and senior care facilities in their communities, or with local civic groups that could provide a base of volunteers and funding opportunities.

Next Steps — A Regional Focus

The most effective way to achieve a network of integrated, effective and robust senior centers throughout the San Diego region will be to focus on regional consensus and solutions that gain countywide participation.

CONSENSUS

It is critical that regional leaders understand the essential role of senior centers in serving the senior population, gain an informed perspective on the actual state of senior centers in our region, and reach an agreement that something needs to be done to promote an integrated network of senior centers as a core resource for successful aging in San Diego.

We are just starting to feel the impact of a decades-long demographic shift. There are many talking points that advocates in the older network utilize to demonstrate the potential effects of an aging population upon society. Here is one we find particularly sobering: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2014, there were 27 million more people under the age of 18 than individuals over the age of 65. By 2030, that difference will shrink to just over 2 million. By some point in 2032 or 2033, older adults will outnumber children in the United States.

What this numerical reality portends is still an unknown, but statistics like this and many others are warning signs and remind us that, before solutions can be crafted, consensus must be established. Politicians; policy specialists; researchers; and city, county and state agencies need to join advocates and older adult professionals to recognize the potential in senior centers and their capacity to evolve into more dynamic localized solutions of community-based support.

Consensus building in the older adult network is gaining momentum. Led by the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services (AIS), County of San Diego Health and Human Services AgeWell San Diego, Age Friendly Cities initiative, the Village Movement and nonprofit organizations, awareness and impactful aging practices are gaining attention in the public space. Leaders in the senior center space would do well to adopt similar strategies to demonstrate how their vision can create an optimal environment for San Diego seniors.

SOLUTIONS

The seniors of today and tomorrow are unique. People are entering their retirement years with a variety of attitudes, perceptions and expectations that differ from any previous generation. Any attempts by leaders in the older adult network to create solutions must include clearer insight into the priorities of those who they aspire to serve.
Long-term regional and community plans need to be developed that incorporate input from numerous perspectives. In the senior center space, leaders need to come together and develop a countywide strategic plan to ensure that every community has a modern, innovative and well-financed senior center with the capacity to handle the needs of a region whose population of 55-plus will swell to 1.2 million by 2030.

**PHILANTHROPY**

The role of philanthropy needs to be an integral part of any plan. Leadership needs to evaluate why significant philanthropic investment has eluded the older adult space, identify the perceptions and attitudes that contribute to philanthropic indifference, and create strategies that cultivate a new philanthropic mindset and resource development strategies for the needs of older adults.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Out of this assessment, a few unique opportunities arose that might lend themselves to the beginning of what the region and the communities can do to help seniors.

**Opportunity #1: Initial Projects**

Taking from examples of promising national work in the senior center space and incorporating input from administrators of local senior centers, four initial projects for revitalization of existing senior centers or the creation of new and modern models are presented here for consideration. These project choices are based on existing opportunities or specific need in selected areas of San Diego County and would serve as test pilots in terms of feasibility, approach, challenges, implementation and lessons learned. The following is a summary of examples outlined in a subsequent section of this report titled “Regional Opportunities.”

**Project #1 – Borrego Springs – Assessment and Business Plan**

The Borrego Valley Endowment Fund (a community foundation) provided a grant to the San Diego Seniors Community Foundation to conduct a formal assessment of the existing Borrego Springs Senior Center, for the purpose of determining if the community needs an enhanced senior center, or a new senior center.

The assessment was completed in May 2019, rendering a recommendation that a new senior center be constructed. A second grant just approved by the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund will fund the development of a full business plan for the new center.

This effort will provide an outstanding test pilot for analysis, feasibility assessment, resource acquisition and implementation. Information gleaned and lessons learned from this process will inform future projects.

**Project #2 – Otay Ranch, Chula Vista**

Chula Vista is the second-largest municipality in San Diego County, and yet has only one senior center serving the older section of the city. No senior centers currently exist in the newer expanding and growing areas of East Lake and Otay Ranch.

Chula Vista government officials have been proactive in pursuing solutions to help meet the needs of older adults in their community, including a process currently underway of attaining the “Age-Friendly City” designation and piloting a “Mobile Senior Center” outreach program.
Given the city’s active interest in helping seniors, there is momentum to create viable partnerships with regional and community stakeholders toward that effort.

Project #3 – Escondido

Escondido is the fourth-largest municipality in San Diego, and yet is also served by only one senior center located near the city center, in facilities that are significantly “aged” and outdated, and with very limited city funding.

Revitalization of the existing Escondido Senior Center and the addition of one or more new senior centers are needed to effectively service the Escondido region. This would require that city officials’ partner with local stakeholders and regional leaders to identify solutions, encourage innovation, locate partnership funding and engage its community on the idea of senior center expansion within this sizable geographic footprint.

Project #4 – Carlsbad

Carlsbad is the fifth-largest municipality in San Diego County, and again has only one senior center situated in the older part of the city center, presenting challenges and barriers in the form of distance and transportation. Carlsbad presents an opportunity for a joint public-private development of additional senior center space to better serve the city’s elder residents.

Opportunity #2: Advocacy

A united voice is needed throughout the San Diego region to advocate on behalf of seniors for more favorable governmental policies and participation in the needs and future of senior centers, for an environment conducive to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism in every senior center, and to encourage the development of strategies designed to secure new funding and long-term sustainable support of this core infrastructure.

A conference bringing together senior center leaders and subject matter experts from various disciplines should be convened to create a strategy that produces a local response to a state-wide master plan.

Opportunity #3: Promoting Innovation and Sustainability

In order to meet the demands of an aging society, senior centers face the prospect of having to do even more with the limited funding sources currently at their disposal. To attract new sources of funding, leadership needs to demonstrate the impact that their services have on their participants. Growing research in the medical field on the social determinants of health is demonstrating the true costs of a person’s environment upon their overall well-being. Senior centers attend to a multitude of factors that affect this issue. Through coordinated efforts, local senior centers can produce a platform to approach previously untapped entities such as healthcare foundations, health insurance plans and hospital systems as means of funding sources. Emphasizing innovation in programs and services and demonstrating outcomes will be paramount in the development of these potential relationships.

Additionally, a new paradigm is needed to provide perspective on modernization, entrepreneurialism and innovation of senior centers and a path to understand and implement enhancements that are feasible, achievable, and sustainable. This would require relationships and partnerships with key community leaders and stakeholders that enable each senior center to implement positive and cutting-edge programs and services.
edge advances in its mission, program offerings, facilities and equipment, and the funding strategies to achieve long-term sustainability.

For further discussion on innovation, see the section titled “National Examples of Excellence in Innovation” later in this report.

CONCLUSION
Senior centers are so much more than buildings. They are gateways to the aging network, providing vital services that help older adults stay healthy and independent. With uncertainties revolving around health care costs, the solvency of Medicare and Social Security, long-term care and other issues, now is the time for the development of enhanced, community-based supports that can improve the well-being and quality of life for older adults. A sustainable solution requires creating a network of sophisticated senior centers across San Diego. Local senior centers providing innovative programming and critical resources with a commitment to fully integrating into the communities they serve will be essential elements in this effort.
SAN DIEGO SENIOR CENTERS – OBSERVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Whether a senior center is under the direction of a 501(c)(3) organization or operating as a department within municipal or county governance, the issues of limited resources and adequate staffing are common challenges facing center directors. A growing population of older adults with different needs and varied preferences will further the need for senior centers to be creative and adaptive in their service delivery approach and in their facilities and equipment. In this consistent struggle to maintain viability and relevancy, the San Diego senior centers we visited encounter many of the following realities in their day-to-day operations:

Constrained Resources

Across the board, the financial resources of senior centers are very limited, with each center manager expressing the need for a considerable increase financial support to be able to hire additional qualified staff, expand program offerings, pursue new funding avenues and implement opportunities for innovation.

Managers consistently spoke to a shortage of qualified staff as a significant challenge in incorporating new ideas and expanding the menu of services. Nineteen senior centers are managed by two or fewer full-time employees. Six senior centers have no full-time employees leading the operations.

To provide a contrast between revenue received by local senior centers and revenue received by San Diego regional YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs: Total FY2017 revenue for 24 San Diego County YMCA locations (including 18 YMCA centers, three camps, two resource centers, and the HQ operation) totaled $183 million. Total FY2017 revenue for 23 San Diego County Boys and Girls Clubs totaled $28 million. Contrast that with annual revenue of approximately $5.7 million for the 17 senior centers that provided budget information, which (extrapolating) would be equivalent to approximately $9.4 million annually for 28 senior centers, and keeping in mind that portions of this funding are designated for governmental nutrition programs, the stark disparity in funding for senior centers becomes very clear. In fact, some senior centers operate on an annual budget of less than $100,000 per year.

Despite the lack of resources, budgetary pressures and scarce funding opportunities, the staff members at these senior centers are unwavering in their commitment to the seniors they serve and are to be commended for the terrific work they undertake each day.

Aging Facilities and Inadequate Equipment

We observed that many of the senior center buildings and equipment need renovation and upgrade. The exterior and interior of the buildings visited are generally dated and drab, lacking the modernity that would appeal to a larger segment of the adult population. Many of the fixtures and equipment observed were old or worn out, and in need of repair or replacement.

Most managers noted that computer equipment is sparse or non-existent in their center, and highly desire to have a modern computer room available to seniors for their daily usage as well as for training seniors on software applications and social media platforms.
Municipal Control, Resources, and Policies

Some senior centers are owned by municipalities and in many cases those facilities are used by multiple organizations, each with their own arrangement and equipment needs. This significantly restricts the usage and configuration of the facility assets by the senior center staff members who often must set-up, tear-down, and clean-up after usage by other organizations, all within limited hours of operations, much to the disadvantage of its senior patrons.

Revenue for several city-owned senior centers is constrained by the availability and amount of municipal funding and sometimes by city policies that limit fundraising options. One municipality requires any earned or donated revenues to be returned to the city treasury.

Transportation and Logistics

Almost every senior center manager described varying levels of transportation hurdles for senior patrons. Transportation for seniors to/from local senior centers is challenging, in part because of limited transportation options and availability, and often because the area served is large and the distance seniors must travel to the senior center is not convenient. This is especially true for seniors who are not mobile enough to avail themselves of public transportation and senior-oriented ride-share transportation that may be available. For example, both Ramona and Borrego Springs senior center managers indicated that there is no public transportation at all, limiting senior center visitors to those that can drive or who are able to find a ride with someone else.

The sizable geographic footprint of a number of cities and communities exceed the capacity of a single senior center to meet that area’s needs. There is a disparity between the number and location of senior centers in relation to the population of that region. For example, both Escondido and Chula Vista are served by one senior center, and yet could easily justify an additional center given their large population and geographical size. An older adult travelling by vehicle from the Eastlake area of Chula Vista to the Norman Park Senior Center can expect a 20 to 30-minute commute each way, much longer if travelling by public transportation.

Programming

Every senior center visited indicated that the “younger” senior demographic (60–70) do not typically utilize local senior centers, and staff members and volunteers find it very challenging to attract that age-group.

The senior centers that provide congregate meal dining are experiencing a decline in number of seniors served. Conversely, these centers are experiencing an increased demand for delivery of meals to older adults who are homebound.

Outreach programs to identify and serve socially isolated seniors are scant, primarily due to the limited staffing and volunteer base of each senior center. Many of these isolated adults are Senior Orphans in need of someone who can help connect them to available services, visit them regularly, monitor their condition, and provide opportunity for socialization. Senior centers have a unique ability to serve as a local hub for programs and services to senior orphans, but few senior centers are actively searching-out and serving this particularly vulnerable population.
General operating hours for most senior centers are aligned with traditional business hours. In addition, it is common among senior centers to experience noticeable downturns in center attendance after 1 p.m. As senior centers struggle to attract a younger demographic, experimenting with hours of operations needs to be considered just as carefully as what programs are offered.

**Fundraising**

For those senior centers that can retain earned or donated revenues, staff and leadership generally do not recognize the power and potential of philanthropy. When fundraising efforts are made, they are most often in the form of class fees, bingo, rentals or other fundraising events, and are not broadened to garner philanthropic support from major donors and to build a pipeline of deferred giving.

**Partnerships and Innovation**

Area senior centers do an excellent job in maximizing collaborative opportunities with local entities that help increase the level of programs, services and supports.

Many senior centers do not have strong relationships and collaborative efforts with local senior affordable housing and senior care facilities. Relationships with other locally based membership or affiliation groups (Lions club, churches, etc.) are often weak or nonexistent. Cultivating such partnerships would likely access a large base of willing volunteers and potential funders.

No senior centers comprising this report had implemented a robust social enterprise that would actively employ and provide job training for seniors, and spin-off income to the senior center (e.g., catering business, crafts store, in-house salon, etc.), although we note that one senior center operates a thrift store generating a modest income back to the center.
SITE VISIT SURVEY DATA POINTS

The following San Diego senior center data points are derived from our research and site visits.

HOURS OF OPERATION
- 5 senior centers offer limited evening hours
- 5 senior centers offer limited weekend hours
- 2 senior centers provide extended hours of operation on Saturdays
- 1 senior center provides extended hours of operation on Sundays
- No center offers early morning hours

MANAGING ENTITY
- 13 senior centers operate under the direction of municipalities
- 15 senior centers operate under the direction of a 501(c)(3) organization

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE
- 6 senior centers have been constructed within the last 20 years
- 22 senior center structures are at least 30 years old with 11 senior center structures constructed over 40 years ago

PARTICIPANTS
- The average number of annual participants across centers who provided attendance estimates is 1,400. High and low outliers were not averaged into this estimate.
- Utilizing an age threshold of 60-years-old, local senior centers are providing services to approximately 8% of the eligible individuals in their service areas
- Estimated average age of participants is 74 years old
- 95% of senior centers express concern with attracting younger members, age 60–70

TRANSPORTATION
- 10 senior centers are in communities with good access to public transportation
- 14 senior centers are in communities with limited/poor access to public transportation
- 4 senior centers are in communities with no access to public transportation
- 11 senior centers offer one or more specialty transportation options for seniors in their communities
- 4 senior centers offer a limited specialty transportation program designed to increase senior’s accessibility to the congregate meal service
- 13 senior centers do not offer a specialty transportation program
NUTRITION
- 18 senior centers offer congregate meal service
- 2 senior centers do not have on-site congregate meal service, but seniors have access to a site within walking distance of the center that provides a meal
- All senior center managers who operate meal programs expressed concern with a decrease in congregate meal diners despite a growing number of eligible individuals within their community. This is an issue that is not specific to San Diego, it is occurring at senior centers throughout the country
- 7 senior centers are distribution sites for the San Diego Food Bank
- No senior centers surveyed had established relationships with local farmer’s markets

EQUIPPED FITNESS ROOMS
- 5 senior centers have an equipped fitness room
- 1 senior center has a gymnasium that provides space for multiple physical activities including basketball, pickleball, volleyball and badminton
- 1 senior center has a dedicated, outdoor physical fitness space

COMPUTER CLASSROOMS
- 6 senior centers have a dedicated computer classroom with multiple workstations

SOCIAL SERVICES
- 1 senior center is staffed with social workers and explicit programming initiatives to address service needs of older adults
- 8 senior centers have an established relationship with a non-affiliated service provider who assists seniors with social work services

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
- 18 senior centers have developed extensive partnerships within the community to supplement and deliver additional programming and services for older adults
- 8 senior centers have created external civic engagement and volunteer opportunities for older adults

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
- 1 senior center operates a social enterprise that creates revenue invested back into center operations
- While referrals and resources are provided to interested seniors, no senior center has developed a consistent job-training program for older adults
REGIONAL SITE MAPS

Legend
- Senior Center
- Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
North County Coastal Region

Senior Centers
1. Country Club Senior Center
2. El Corazon Senior Center
3. Carlsbad Senior Center
4. Encinitas Community Center
5. Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center

Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
A. Solana Beach Community Senior Center
B. Del Mar Community Connections

Legend
- Senior Center
- Senior Service Providers & Community Centers

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
North County Inland Region

Senior Centers
6. Fallbrook Senior Center
7. Gloria McClellan Senior Center
8. San Marcos Senior Center
9. Escondido Senior Center
10. Ed Brown Senior Center
11. Ramona Senior Center
12. Poway Senior Center
13. Borrego Springs Senior Center

Legend
- Senior Center
- Senior Service Providers & Community Centers

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Central San Diego Region

Senior Centers
14. Mira Mesa Senior Center
15. La Jolla Community Center
16. Cathy Hopper Friendship Center
17. College Avenue Center
18. Balboa Park Senior Lounge
19. Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center
20. Neighborhood House Senior Center
21. Fourth District Senior Resource Center

Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
C. Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center
D. Bayside Community Center
E. Peninsula Shepherd Center
East County Region

Senior Centers
22. La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center
23. Lemon Grove Senior Center

Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
F. Alpine Community Center

Legend
- Senior Center
- Senior Service Providers & Community Centers

Adults age 60+ per sq mi

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
South County Region

Senior Centers
24. John D. Spreckels Center
25. Kimball Ave. Senior Center
26. Norman Park Senior Center
27. Imperial Beach Senior Center
28. San Ysidro Senior Center

Senior Service Providers & Community Centers
G. Casa Familiar Senior Services

Adults age 60+ per sq mi

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Project - Borrego Springs

Borrego Springs is a census-designated place (CDP) located in far northeastern San Diego County approximately 90 miles from downtown San Diego. The most recent estimates published by the County of San Diego put the population of Borrego Springs at approximately 3,200, with one-third of the residents being 65 and over.

The town is currently served by a small senior center that offers limited hours of operation, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A congregate meal service is offered three days a week and seniors who are homebound are supported through a meal delivery program. The menu of activities and events at the center is limited.

Recent discussions with various Borrego community stakeholders centered on the feasibility of either transforming the current senior center or developing a new one. From these discussions, the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund provided a grant to the San Diego Seniors Community Foundation to conduct a community needs assessment in order to determine the best course of action.

The assessment provided a comprehensive overview of the existing senior center, garnered feedback from community stakeholders and considered existing community supports.

Key quantitative and qualitative data points included:

- Demographic analysis with acknowledgement of potential impact of seasonal population fluctuations
- Review of the existing senior center’s programs and services, capacity to deliver services and strengths/weaknesses
- Community buy-in and stakeholder feedback
- Existing and potential funding/philanthropic supports with an eye to long-term sustainability
- Analysis of existing medical, social service and organizational supports in the community
- Creation of a “wish list” of facility amenities and programmatic offerings
- Review of the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services’ (AIS) role in the community

The assessment was completed in May 2019, rendering a recommendation that a new senior center be constructed. A second grant just approved by the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund will fund the development of a full business plan for the new center.
Project - Otay Ranch, Chula Vista

Chula Vista is the second-largest municipality in San Diego County with a population of 260,598, according to the most recent estimates produced by the county. The city is home to over 45,000 people age 60 and over.

The municipal footprint grew significantly with the annexation of the Eastlake and Otay Ranch areas. However, there has been no development of a senior center to service those areas. The Norman Park Senior Center in the older area of Chula Vista remains the only senior center to serve the community.

Chula Vista’s Parks and Recreation Department has developed some senior services at several of the city’s parks to address the needs of seniors.

Through collaboration of several city departments, Chula Vista is well-positioned to meet the growing demand of its senior population.

The city is in the process of attaining the “Age-Friendly City” designation, a joint effort of AARP and the World Health Organization (WHO) in creating municipal environments that keep older adults connected and supported.

The Parks and Recreation Department is piloting a “Mobile Senior Center” to provide outreach at select city parks to seniors who live in the neighborhoods that are not serviced by the Norman Park Senior Center.

However, given the geographic footprint and population, Chula Vista—in particular, the newer, eastern portion of the city—is a candidate for an additional senior center that could be supported by philanthropic and advocacy efforts and a joint public-private financial endeavor to create a new facility.

Project - Escondido

Escondido is the fourth-largest municipality in San Diego with a population of 149,912, according to the most recent estimates published by the county. Despite a population of over 24,000 individuals aged 60 and over, the residents of the city are served by just one senior center.

While the facility is located near the city center with accessible public transportation, city growth prompts a discussion of whether one center is enough to meet the needs of an increasing population with a sizable geographical footprint.

In addition, the current senior center is housed in a collection of buildings that date from 1908 and 1958. There have been recent renovations, but the buildings still possess an institutional aesthetic.

Escondido represents a municipality with a large population of seniors served by an older physical structure that presents geographical and access challenges. Revitalization of the existing Escondido Senior Center and the addition of one or more new senior centers are needed to effectively service the Escondido region. This would require that city officials’ partner with local stakeholders and regional leaders to identify solutions, encourage innovation, locate partnership funding and engage its community on the idea of senior center expansion within this sizable geographic footprint.
**Project - Carlsbad**

Carlsbad is the fifth-largest municipality in San Diego County with a population of 112,008, according to the most recent estimates published by the county. The city is home to about 25,000 individuals over the age of 60.

Like most municipalities, the city is served by one center located in the older part of town. While the physical structure of the building could accommodate additional numbers of seniors, seniors who live in the city outskirts face challenges with travel distance and minimal transportation options.

The director of the Carlsbad Senior Center has noticed a significant increase in calls from seniors, specifically the southern part of the city, for more services in that area.

Carlsbad presents an opportunity for a joint public-private development of additional senior center space to better serve the city’s older residents.

**Advocacy**

A united voice is needed throughout the San Diego region to advocate on behalf of seniors for more favorable governmental policies and participation in the needs and future of senior centers, for an environment conducive to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism in every senior center, and to encourage the development of strategies designed to secure new funding and long-term sustainable support of this core infrastructure.

We mentioned the growing intensity of the issues around the “graying of America”. But just as the issues around this phenomenon strengthen, there is a counterbalance to negate the repercussions with the emergence of increased advocacy.

There is growing pressure on elected leaders in California to construct a “master plan” on aging. The West Foundation and SCAN Foundation are leading a “We Stand With Seniors” campaign to bring increased awareness to the ramifications of incomplete and disconnected policy upon the lives of California seniors. Then there are the seniors themselves, an emerging yet dormant bloc of people who, no matter their background or socioeconomic status, share similar challenges and struggles.......and they vote, more so than any other age group.

Within this environment of growing advocacy, leaders in the senior center arena need to come together to promote and champion their work. A conference bringing together senior center leaders and subject matter experts from various disciplines should be convened to create a strategy that produces a local response to a state-wide master plan. Senior centers as currently constructed can play an increased role in the development of community-based solutions to a growing problem. Newly constructed, modern senior centers with a focus on innovation with a holistic wellness approach have the potential to deliver even more. To make this vision a reality, advocacy is a vital component.
Promoting Innovation and Sustainability

As more fully outlined in a subsequent section of this report, creativity, innovation, modernization and entrepreneurialism in senior centers can significantly enhance community participation of older adults and achieve standards of excellence that offer a superior experience and program offerings.

The principles and concepts from the NISC report outlined later in this document would suggest that proactive and cooperative engagement with senior center managers, board members, community leaders and philanthropists would contribute to a consolidated effort to bring local senior centers up to a higher standard in terms of innovation and modernization of facilities, equipment, program offerings, long-term sustainable funding, staffing and overall excellence.

This would require relationships and partnerships with key community stakeholders that enable each senior center to implement positive and cutting-edge advances in its mission, program offerings, facilities and equipment, and funding strategies.

Considerations for Community Leaders

The following list outlines a few considerations for improvements based on our observations at the San Diego County senior centers we visited. Some of these concepts are represented elsewhere in this report and are consolidated here for action.

- Understanding the current situation and drafting action plans to address it
- Investment in facility upgrades and equipment
- Investment in additional staff to provide more expansive community outreach
- In lieu of adding additional staff for outreach purposes, develop volunteer “Senior Center Ambassadors” who can undertake the task. Senior volunteers can:
  - Establish relationships with the local business community to cultivate potential sponsorship opportunities
  - Represent the center with civic organizations, churches and community groups
  - Represent the center as a “volunteer team” at local charity and special events
  - Engage with their peer network to conduct surveys on attitudes toward senior centers
  - Identify and assist seniors who are socially isolated, and connect them with the senior center and available services
- Develop volunteer “welcome teams” for first-time senior center visitors, in order to reduce the number of seniors that do not return due to an indifferent or bad initial experience at a center
- Create market research strategies to better understand the needs of the senior community
- Adopt a culture that targets larger-scale philanthropy and planned giving
- Change the senior center culture to a business-oriented “customer service” approach
- Increase customer surveys to stay current with changing preferences and new ideas
- Implement consistent evaluation practices to gauge program efficacy
- Expand commitment to exploration of social enterprise opportunities
PHILANTHROPY AND SENIOR CENTERS

Each day, senior center leaders are faced with the daunting challenge of delivering a maximum level of services to accommodate senior needs within a minimal budgetary structure. Most senior centers rely on a mix of funding streams such as municipal general funds, grants, contracts, federal and state grants, membership dues, fees for selected programming and donations to sustain operations.

Centers create appeals campaigns, unique donor engagement practices and fundraising events to complement the larger revenue streams. However, the donations typically support a relatively small portion of the budget.

In the philanthropy space, funding for issues and causes pertaining to older adults have received limited attention. Nationally, only 2% of institutional philanthropy is provided to the aging network, and despite the current demographic shift, this percentage has not changed over the last 20 years.

Like YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and the public library system, senior centers represent a community resource committed to the public good. Yet, unlike these entities, senior centers have not been the beneficiaries of large-scale philanthropy.

How do leaders in the older adult network alter this landscape and inform and inspire charitable entities and individuals with the capacity for significant investment about the emerging needs of older adults and the community infrastructure that supports them? To capture the attention of philanthropic organizations, stakeholders dedicated to serving older adults must find answers to the following questions:

- Why has the older adult space been excluded from significant philanthropic investment?
- Do perceptions and attitudes toward aging contribute to philanthropic indifference?
- Do organizations clearly articulate the impact of the demographic shift on all levels of society?
- Are outcomes and impacts of senior programs and projects too vague to generate interest?
- Have senior centers been able to demonstrate the impact of their work as a complementary component in the reduction of rising health care costs?
- Large-scale philanthropy has provided massive financial support to public entities such as universities, hospitals, libraries, and community centers. Why have senior centers been unable to gain equal status?
- Are senior center managers supported by their board of directors or municipal managers to think strategically in terms of long-term sustainable funding and deferred giving, and if not, what can be done to change that paradigm?
- Philanthropy is grounded in the principle of empowerment, i.e. a resource is provided for a disadvantaged individual so that they may acquire the capacity to thrive in the world. How do older adult providers create new narratives and strategies that can demonstrate the impact of empowerment of seniors to funders?

SDSCF is pleased to help as a strategic partner within San Diego’s older adult network to promote strategies that engage the philanthropic community to invest in the empowerment of its senior community.
NATIONAL EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

The impact of the Baby Boomer generation will put demands upon leaders and stakeholders to inject innovation, modernization and entrepreneurialism into San Diego’s senior center network. We recently published a report titled “SDSCF Report on Senior Centers August 2017” on emerging innovation and entrepreneurial trends in senior centers nationwide. The report captured key information on modernization and “best practices” in cutting-edge senior centers from a previous report published by the National Institute of Senior Centers titled “New Models of Senior Centers,” an insightful and informative source document for opportunities to enhance and strengthen San Diego senior centers. The following information pertains to that report, influenced by our own local observations.

Innovative Models of Senior Centers

In 2009, a taskforce of the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) completed an ambitious project to identify examples of new models in the senior center field, envision senior centers of the future, position NISC as the leader in defining the 21st century senior center and disseminate what they learned. The result was a 55-page report titled “New Models of Senior Centers.”

Eight models of emerging senior centers were highlighted by the nationwide study:

- Centers of Excellence
- Community Center
- Wellness Center
- Lifelong Learning/Arts
- Continuum of Care/Transitions
- The Next Chapter
- Entrepreneurial Model
- Café Model

An excerpt from the NISC report summarizing these innovative models is in Appendix “C” of this report.

Innovation in Senior Center Projects and Programming

The NISC study also identified additional innovation in Projects and Programs, summarized in their report in the following categories:

- Facility Design
- Multi-generational Programming
- Civic Engagement and Volunteering
- Utilization and Incorporation of New Technology
- Attracting Boomers
- Innovative Marketing
- Innovative Fund Development
- Collaborations and Partnerships
- Innovative Programs
- Pursuing Recognition of Excellence

An excerpt from the NISC report summarizing their findings from these innovative projects and programs is in Appendix “D” of this report.

From our own perspective, we note that local senior centers serve a critical role in addressing the complex needs of their clientele and tailor programs and services to meet those needs. Yet, lack of adequate funding, staffing and equipment limits their capacity to incorporate new initiatives. In recognition of the burden facing managers to simply maintain their day-to-day operations, SDSCF has identified promising initiatives that have been introduced in senior centers across the country. The
following examples represent innovative efforts to address the changing needs of an increasingly diverse, burgeoning older adult population. Some local senior centers are already providing some of these programmatic options:

**INTERGENERATIONAL**
- Sporting events
- Walking groups
- Community garden projects
- Community service projects for high school/college students
- “Adopt a class”
- Photographic scrapbook project
- ABCs of finance

**WELLNESS/SOCIALIZATION**
- Talent show competition among local senior centers
- Hands-on healthy cooking
- Cooking for chronic disease management
- Fitbit wellness training
- Fitness room with enhanced accessibility and physical therapy
- Ethical wills
- Virtual lecture series/museum tours
- Grad student lecture series
- Brain fitness
- Virtual game room
- Evening programs

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**
- Job training with emphasis on technology skills
- Catering service
- Thrift store
- Hair salon
- Day care
- Arts and crafts
- Community health workers
- Financial education
- Respite caregiving

**Standards and Practices of Accredited Senior Centers**

The Standards and Practices of Accredited Senior Centers section is comprised of analysis of 25 senior centers located throughout the U.S. that have recently achieved accreditation status with the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC). These centers, serving urban, suburban and rural locations, ranging from 60,000 square-foot “super senior centers” to 5,000-square-foot “micro senior centers” all adopt key strategic initiatives and administrative practices to maximize their impact on the seniors they serve.

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) provides a nine-step program for senior centers to achieve accreditation status through a comprehensive evaluation process. In 2016 and 2017, 25 U.S. senior centers successfully navigated the process.²

SDSCF examined the qualification criteria for NISC accreditation, noting the common practices and philosophies that help establish levels of excellence leading to recognition of accreditation by the national authority on senior centers. Whatever challenges may be unique to each senior center location, common themes in their work and approach emerge that result in a culture of excellence.

Some of these strategies are already being incorporated in San Diego regional senior centers, while others remain as promising pathways that can increase the demand for senior center services. Here is an overview of practices that can lead to higher standards of excellence and performance:

**STRONG COMMUNITY NETWORKING PRACTICES**

- Commitment to consistent outreach practices to reach targeted populations
- Professional marketing materials and utilization of social media
- Establishment of relationships and continued cultivation of those relationships with municipal/county governance
- Identification of potential community partners and development of recruitment practices that can create collaborations to enhance center programming
- Creation of the senior center as a community hub for all things related to the older-adult environment
- Recruitment of the local business community to become supporters of the center through sponsorship programs and special events
- Recognition and cultivation of relationships with local universities or community colleges and the benefits of in-kind support and/or research that these institutions can provide
- Creation of a collaborative environment for companion senior centers in their regions

**MODERN FACILITIES AND AMENITIES**

- New construction of multipurpose centers or significant modernization of existing structures
- Fitness centers complemented with a gymnasium, outdoor exercise space and aquatics
- Rental space in multipurpose rooms for use by the general community with some of the revenue going toward senior center operations
- Newer facilities with office and meeting spaces for rental to community businesses or as means to provide for social enterprises for their senior clientele
- Commitment to modernization viewed as an investment in their communities
- Space dedicated and equipped to enhance participation in the creative arts
- Newer centers constructed with an emphasis on the specific needs of the residents in their areas

**RESPONSIVE AND ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING**

- Consistent evaluation practices to gauge program efficacy. If something is not well received by clientele, program or activity is scuttled to allow for a new idea
- Consistent evaluation of programs and services for cost effectiveness
- Experimentation with senior center hours to respond to the needs of older adults, specifically those of the Baby Boomer cohort who continue to be part of the workforce
- Willingness to continue to diversify center programming to broaden its appeal to the senior population’s varied tastes
• Complementing congregate meal service program with additional food security measures, such as partnerships with local food banks, pantries and farmer’s markets
• Recognize the importance of transportation services and create various partnerships to maximize options for their clientele
• Develop partnerships with local businesses in conjunction with upgraded worker training programs to increase opportunity for seniors to gain employment
• Create programming and support mechanisms for seniors with limited English language proficiency
• Utilize technology to bring senior-related programming to isolated homebound seniors
• Develop intergenerational programming to connect their communities

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS
• Development of engaged and involved advisory boards
• Consistent evaluation and adaptation of strategic planning initiatives
• Management and line staff expected to create annual action plans to strengthen competencies and improve the client experience at center
• Conduct biannual community needs assessments to stay current with changing preferences and stakeholder and community member feedback
• Consistent internal focus groups with clientele in a continuous quality improvement approach
• Create a culture of “senior ownership” of the center through peer-driven programming and client involvement on what they want their center to be
• Center directors adapt the “steward” leadership approach to integrate organizational and clientele needs with a focus on impacting the wider society.
• Willingness to take risks and incorporate innovative practices into the centers
• Thorough and comprehensive manuals for volunteer programs
• Create a welcoming environment in the center, especially for individuals coming to a center for the first time. A “new member” protocol provides orientation and a supporting hand to ensure that a senior’s first experience at a center is a pleasant one

FINANCIAL PRACTICES
• Create diversified sources of funding
• Aggressive pursuit of grant opportunities and other periodic revenue sources
• Create membership models but recognize the financial limitations of the populations served
• Develop advocacy efforts to petition local government for a tax levy to help fund operations
SENIOR CENTER MODELS

Like any community entity, senior centers evolve and adapt to the conditions and needs of their environments. Population, available resources, community support, services offered, client demand and a host of other variables will influence and determine the shape and scope of a senior center. Services and programming will be provided in a setting that is responsive to the factors mentioned above.

In San Diego County, the vast majority of senior centers can be categorized as midsize entities that offer a range of programs and activities based in the traditional model of service delivery. These centers are supported with naturally aligned partners who augment the menu of services with additional and more diverse programming.

Smaller communities with a limited population base of older adults and few potential community partners develop a senior center structure of smaller size and few amenities with a focus on just a handful of core programs. In some areas of San Diego, services for seniors may be provided by organizations that utilize multiple existing structures in the area to provide decentralized services typical of a stand-alone senior center.

Appendix “C” provides detailed information on a variety of current and emerging models of senior centers operating in the United States. The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) has developed 8 categories to differentiate service delivery models that address community needs. These models are not intended to be absolute as senior centers may incorporate principles and practices from several of the categories.

Rather than placing local senior centers into a specific NISC category, this report will create three categories, two that mirror the current San Diego senior center infrastructure and one that serves as a possible model for the future.

Micro Senior Center

This designation applies to a senior center that operates within a small building with limitations on programming, amenities, equipment and staff. The conditions are:

- Building size ranges from 2,000 to 5,000 square feet
- Provide programming and services to 150 to 400 older adults
- Small menu of programs and services usually limited to light exercise, games and occasional social events
- No building amenities and little to no equipment
- May be comprised of all-volunteer staff or be under the direction of 1 full-time employee who is supported by 1 or 2 part time staff and/or senior volunteers
- No programs designed to address the transportation needs of older adults in community
- Membership fees and program fees are nominal or nonexistent
- Minimal technology capacity (i.e. computer lab)
- Minimal volunteer program focused entirely on internal support
Minimal development of community partnerships, primarily due to dearth of such resources in the service area
Limited or no opportunity to develop innovative programming
Local example of a Micro Senior Center is the Borrego Springs Senior Center

Midsize Senior Center
This designation is applicable to most of the senior centers in operation in San Diego County. A larger physical plant supports more robust levels of services. The conditions are:

- Building size ranges from 5,000 to 40,000 square feet
- Provide programming and services from 400 to 4,000 older adults
- Broader scope of programs and services that address the physical, cognitive, and social needs of clientele to impact overall well-being and quality of life
- Centers have large multipurpose rooms with dedicated classroom space that allows for expansion of service menu. Facilities may include computer labs, fitness rooms and specialty classrooms for enhanced artistic programming
- Comprised of 1 to 4 full time employees with several part time staff to support efforts
- Transportation programs ranging from providing access to congregate meal service at the facility to improving access to services in the community (medical appointments, grocery and social gatherings, etc.) are common
- Membership fees and program fees are variable and are balanced to acknowledge economic realities of the senior population, with need for centers to develop funding streams to ensure sustainability
- Some centers provide technology resources with dedicated space for a computer lab with varying levels of tutoring and support available
- More formalized volunteer programs are in place with a primary focus on internal support with some opportunity to engage in the broader community
- Environmental conditions allow for a greater development of community partnerships to enhance on site programs and services. Examples of partnerships include alignment with nonprofit agencies, municipal and county agencies, community colleges and universities, health care services and civic organizations
- Synergy developed through a larger staffing capacity with the community partnerships creates potential for the development of innovative programming
- Local examples include the San Marcos Senior Center, the Gloria McClellan Senior Center in Vista and the Norman Park Senior Center in Chula Vista

Super Senior Center
In the current senior center landscape, this designation represents more of a vision for the future rather than established practice. No current senior center in San Diego would fall under this category, indeed, few senior centers nationwide would be within this domain. This type of senior center would include all the elements described above in the Midsize center category with a physical plant and
commitment of resources in place to develop an even stronger and wider variety of services and supports.

The physical plant would range from 40,000 to up to 100,000 square feet and would be operated with a purpose of bringing all generations of the community together serving 4,000+ individuals.

Other elements that would elevate a center to such a distinction may include:

- Focus on physical health with a modern fitness room with equipment adaptable for use by seniors
- A gymnasium to provide recreational space for individual or group sporting events
- An aquatics center for recreation and specialized classes
- Development of outdoor space to enhance exercise and fitness classes and take advantage of the San Diego climate
- A commercial kitchen that exists to not only provide meal service but can be utilized to develop extensive nutritional support through classes and cooking demonstrations
- Expanded hours of operations including early morning, evening and weekend hours that account for the needs of older adults with obligations that conflict with traditional senior center hours of operation
- Serve as the authority on all things related to the older adult environment and provide all members of the community with reliable, current and comprehensive information on resources, whether it be a senior or a resident who supports an older adult
- Create an environment responsive to the needs of changing perceptions on older adulthood and what it means to age successfully. A senior center of this scope will develop programs and services traditionally not found within the senior center space including:
  - Expanded programming and opportunities to pursue lifelong learning
  - Expanded volunteer opportunities with an external focus that allows for greater integration of seniors into their communities
  - Creation of or collaboration with applicable community organizations to develop better job-training programs that increase employment options and are relevant to the needs of local business communities
  - A larger physical plant with greater availability of space creates opportunity for development of social enterprises. Entrepreneurial initiatives can produce job opportunities for older adults and provide new sources of revenue for center operations.
- While there are no centers in San Diego that currently fall under this expansive model, certain senior centers offer elements of such an enterprise. Examples include:
  - The Encinitas Senior Center is part of a larger community center that welcomes all residents. Yet, building design provides for a dedicated space for senior programs while allowing for easy access to other amenities within the facility, primarily a large, modern gymnasium that is home to a whole host of physical activities and events
- The Fallbrook Senior Center operates a large thrift store social enterprise within the building that provides significant revenue back into center operations and is staffed with older adults.

- The Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center offers traditional senior center programming that is supported with a synergistic health and wellness model. A staff of referral specialists, care navigators, social workers and nurses provide a range of services to ensure that the older adults they serve have every opportunity to lead healthy and independent lives.

- The El Corazon Senior Center in Oceanside has a fully equipped fitness room with adaptable equipment to provide exercise options for seniors of varying physical abilities.
APPENDIX A: SENIOR CENTERS – SITE REPORTS

The SDSCF team visited the majority of senior centers in San Diego County and one innovative café model senior center in Chicago. The reports below provide an overview of our observations at each center, as well as noting some challenges and potential opportunities at selected facilities.

Following this section are cursory summaries of community centers and selected nonprofit agencies that provide decentralized services to seniors. Given the purpose of this report, we would like to acknowledge these entities and give general background of their work for the seniors they serve.

Senior Center summaries are broken down into five regions: South Bay, Central San Diego, East County, North County Coastal and North County Inland.
INTRODUCTION

The Norman Park Senior Center of Chula Vista (NPSC) is located at 270 F Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910. Chula Vista is the second-largest city in San Diego County with the most recent estimate published by the County of San Diego documenting a population of 260,958. We met with Aaron Ruiz, recreational specialist and manager of the Senior Center. NPSC is operated by the City of Chula Vista and all staff are employees of the city. Hours of operations are Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. through 7:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. The Monday through Thursday hours of operation are noteworthy as NPSC is the only local senior center to offer such consistent extended daily access. The NPSC is currently the only senior center serving the municipality. However, the Parks and Recreation department offer programming for older adults at numerous parks and recreation centers throughout the city.

The physical structure, located near the city center of the “older” Chula Vista, is situated on 1.5 acres and was constructed in 1963. External and internal aesthetics reflect the date of construction. Public transportation is within reasonable walking distance of the NPSC. There is no dedicated parking lot for seniors who operate their own vehicles, though there is some street parking available in the area. A 168-unit senior housing building occupies the same street as NPSC. That site contains some supporting services for their residents that overlap what is provided by NPSC. There is no formal collaborative agreement between the two entities.
OBSERVATIONS
The NPSC programs and services are directed by 2 full-time employees and 12 part-time staff with over 40 seniors volunteering at the site. The NPSC serves about 450 seniors a month and an estimated 1,500 annually. The estimated average age of NPSC participants is 69 years old.

The City of Chula Vista is the primary funder for NPSC, along with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and some rental revenues and fee income. An approximate annual budget was not available at the time of the drafting of the report. The NPSC is home to a variety of programs, classes and events commensurate with traditional older adult programming. Nearly all programming is free of charge. Highlighted programming includes specialized dance class, yoga, photography class, golf instruction, live band performances, watercolor, creative writing, world affairs discussion group and book club.

Some programming is funded through HUD’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and as such is subject to oversight and regulation, most notably the verification of a senior being aged 62 or older in order to be eligible. The recreation department is responsible for many of the calendared events. To bolster their menu of services, NPSC has developed partnerships with Sharp Hospital, Balboa Park’s Museum of Photographic Arts, Chula Vista Golf course, Silverado Hospice, UCSD, Scripps, St. Paul’s PACE, and Southwestern Community College for provision of health and wellness workshops, events, and support groups.

In addition, NPSC provides on-site office space for two nonprofits, Meals on Wheels and Southern Caregiver Resource Center, that provides convenient access for seniors in need of nutritional or caregiving resources.

The building has dedicated classroom space for a variety of its education and social programming and a large multipurpose room to accommodate larger events. There is a commercial kitchen utilized for special nutritional programs and for use as an amenity for the building rental to the community. There have been lingering issues with the kitchen that has limited its availability, but a recent funding allocation will allow for upgrades and repair to restore the space to its full capacity. Despite the presence of the kitchen, there is no congregate meal program at the NPSC.

The NPSC includes a fitness center that is open to all ages with membership fees below market rate (3 months for $28). The fitness center requires a staff member to be present during hours of operation and as a result has a staggered set of hours. There are late afternoon/early evening hours four days a week and limited hours on Saturdays. The fitness room is not open for early morning use.

CHALLENGES
The NPSC is the only senior center serving the Chula Vista community. The city supplements senior-specific programming at satellite locations in the municipality, but the NPSC location in such a geographically large area presents significant barriers for the city’s older residents who do not reside in the immediate area of the NPSC yet wish to make use of the location.

Chula Vista has experienced tremendous growth over the last 40 years. Much of the growth can be attributed to the expansion of the city’s geographic footprint into the areas of Eastlake and Otay Ranch. Commute by vehicle to NPSC can take upwards of 30 minutes from these areas. Use of public transportation from the eastern part of the city requires transfers and an even greater time investment.
The building needs structural and aesthetic upgrades. This issue is in the formative stages of resolution as funding is being directed to address the various demands.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

The NPSC is in the beginning stages of a significant renovation that will reinvigorate the location. There is a continuous effort to seek out community partners to enhance their menu of programming. A recent example is a collaborative video production with the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) that educates and empowers older adults to effectively make use of public transportation resources.

In July 2016, the City of Chula Vista launched an initiative to join the World Health Organization and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in becoming an “Age-Friendly” city. Among other initiatives to realize this objective, the city has a Commission on Aging that informs and makes policy suggestions to the City Council on issues pertaining to older adults. This strategic planning places the City of Chula Vista ahead of other municipalities in the region and provides opportunities for potential collaboration.

To provide for seniors who have difficulty accessing the NPSC, the city is piloting a “Mobile Senior Center” project that will travel to numerous parks within the city to deliver support services. This innovative approach could serve as a model for other San Diego locales that struggle to deliver programs and supports within a large geographic footprint.

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### Kimball Senior Center, National City

1221 D Avenue, National City, CA 91950

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with limited programming
- **Building constructed:** 1987
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** 800/8%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 9,800
- **Budget:** N/A
- **Full-time staff:** 1
- **Average age of participant estimated:** 74
- **Managing entity:** City of National City
- **Public transportation:** Excellent accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** Yes, for center activities
- **Meals program:** None, but congregate site within 1 block walk
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** Very small/older equipment
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Limited
- **Social enterprises:** None
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited/internal

### INTRODUCTION

The Kimball Senior Center of National City is located at 1221 D Avenue, National City, CA 91950. We met with Maria Wright, Rec Supervisor III. The managing entity of the center is National City, which owns the building and employs the supporting staff. Hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Tuesday and Friday 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Kimball Senior Center, built in 1987, is an approximately 5,000 square foot facility, and is dedicated exclusively to senior activities. The Center is strategically situated across the street from a park and
adjacent to 2 9-story senior HUD buildings that provide 300 units of affordable housing for senior 62 and over. Public transportation is very accessible with several bus routes and stops located within 2 blocks of the Center. The aesthetics of the building are similar to a “park design” recreation center. It is a one-story building with good lot parking and ample street parking available. Seniors attending the Center have public transportation options with numerous routes and stops in the Center area.

The staff of the Center consists of 1 full-time employee (30 hours/week) and 3 part-time employees (10 hours per week). Daily attendance varies depending on programmatic offerings, ranging from 100-400 older adults. The approximate number of seniors served on annual basis was estimated to be 800. Average age of Center attendees is 75 years old.

A Hispanic population represents most of the demographic. The staff indicated that a large Filipino community of older adults reside in National City but represent a relatively small segment of the population served. Staff cited significant familial responsibilities of Filipino older adults (caregiving, helping raise grandchildren) as a primary reason of low attendance.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The programmatic offerings are very limited and can be categorized as primarily recreational in nature. There is also a limited number of partnerships with community agencies and businesses. San Ysidro Health provides occasional wellness events or workshops, but there is little else in the form of Community collaboration. There are no current programs involving social workers at the Center.

The San Diego Food Bank provides a monthly visit to provide food parcels for Center participants. 300-400 seniors take advantage of the program.

Of the programs and services that exist, they are administered by an interesting dynamic that has organically developed within the Center. Two grassroots senior-led groups provided the bulk of the activities at the Center. Group 1, the Kimball Seniors Club, has a membership of 350 seniors who pay an annual membership fee of $15 to support Center activities. Mondays and Thursdays are the group’s days to offer and lead events such as an English class, Bingo, Dedicated social hour, monthly dances and games.

Group 2 is the Casa de Salud Seniors club with a membership of 150 seniors that promote and develop programs for Hispanic seniors. Their day of operation is Wednesday and offer Bingo or Loteria, monthly dances, dedicated social hours and other events.

The interior of the building is comprised mostly of one large open space. There is dedicated office space for staff, a small commercial kitchen that is rarely utilized and serves as more of storage space for the Center’s 2 groups, other small storage areas and a small classroom that can accommodate 15-20 people. There is little in the form of equipment. The Center has no computer room or devices. The Center has one treadmill in a small space that is currently not functioning. There are 2 billiards tables in the large community hall.
There is a County-funded lunch program for the seniors, but it is not located on site. The location is 1 block from the Center at the Kimball Morgan senior towers and follows County protocol as a nutrition site for individuals 60 and over. Suggested donation of $3.50 is asked for, but no one 60 and over is turned away based on ability to pay.

**CHALLENGES**

The Center struggles with limited financial commitment from the city and has no other funding mechanisms in place. There is a need for new equipment such as computers and fitness devices. A limited staff is unable to attend to other matters that could enhance Center operations such as community outreach and engagement of potential partners.

Staff stressed on several occasions the dearth of opportunities to engage seniors who may not be aware of the Center’s activities and the barriers in reaching the large Filipino community in National City. There is no dedicated effort to expand civic engagement into the National City community.

Like most other senior centers, staff commented on the small numbers of “younger seniors” who attend events, yet with limited resources and funding mechanism in place, they realize that current programming may not appeal to that segment of the older adult population.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities to bolster the vitality of the Center include:

- Funding for dedicated staff to be more involved and adding to the day-to-day programming and events
- Funding to increase outreach efforts to better engage with the community. This includes:
  - Outreach to senior buildings
  - Outreach to underserved populations (Filipino community)
  - Engaging local businesses, health agencies, and nonprofit service providers to bring more event, workshops, and classes to the Center
  - Development of plan to reach “elder orphans”
  - Outreach to appropriate entities to develop a more robust civic engagement initiative and/or intergenerational component
- Funding is needed to upgrade or purchase needed equipment
- Funding for improvement in the physical plant. 90% of Center space consists of one large hall. Remodeling of building to incorporate more space into dedicated meeting or class space, possible computer lab or exercise room would be beneficial.
John D. Spreckels Center, City of Coronado
1019 7th Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with traditional and wellness programming
- **Building constructed:** 2017
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** 700/11%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 6,200
- **Budget:** $400,000
- **Full-time staff:** 2
- **Average age of participant (estimated):** 70
- **Managing entity:** City of Coronado
- **Public transportation:** Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** Excellent
- **Meals program:** None
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited
- **Social enterprises:** None

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Wendi Garrison, Recreation Supervisor for the City of Coronado and the director of operations at the Spreckels Center (COCSC). The city is the owner of the building and the services are under the direction of the City’s Recreation Services department. A nonprofit organization, Coronado Senior Association, offers supporting programming at the COCSC. Since 1978, the association has provided socialization opportunities and special events for older adults in Coronado. Funding for the association is provided through the City of Coronado and supplementary revenue is derived from rentals, class fees, bingo and an association membership.

Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. through 5 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 p.m. The COCSC is a bright, modern 9,000 square foot facility that opened in 2017. It is strategically located on a main Coronado artery adjacent to a library and across the street from a large park. A bowling green, managed by a volunteer association, is located on the COCSC property. There is no dedicated parking lot on site, but some street parking is available within a short walk of the COCSC. Public transportation is accessible and within a short walk of the building.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The COCSC offers over 30 programs and classes a month with a focus on health, fitness and wellness. The COCSC aspires to “put some play in the day”. Programs and services under the direction of the recreation services department are supported by 2 full time employees and 7 part-time staff. The events led by the Coronado Senior Association are under the direction of 2 part-time staff and are crafted with a focus on the older segment of the senior population. The average age of COCSC participants is 70 years-old and approximately 700 adults aged 50 and over take advantage of the menu of services. A roster of 15 volunteers provide support for the day-to-day activities of the COCSC. The approximate annual budget of the COCSC is $400,000.
The Coronado Senior Association offers programming in line with traditional senior center offerings. There is a $40 annual membership fee and there is a small fee for select events. Events operated by the association include Bingo, card games, chair yoga, crafts, knitting and crocheting, creative writing, table games and film forum.

The services under the direction of the Recreation Services department are designed to address the greater diversity of interests across the age spectrum of older adults. These services utilize the infrastructure of Coronado to increase the variety of programming with a focus on an active lifestyle.

There are fees for most programs ranging from $5 to $15 per session depending on the type of activity. Examples of COCSC programming include interactive cooking class, technology tutoring, seasonal floral design, acrylic and watercolor painting, strength and balance class, yoga, tai chi, line dancing, Zumba.

Classes conducted off site include aerobics, water aerobics, tennis, pickleball, paddle board, and golf. The COCSC offers an innovative “Trails and Ales” event that combines exploration of premiere San Diego hiking trails with a follow-up social gathering at a nearby restaurant/tavern.

The COCSC has partnerships with various naturally aligned entities who provide support with health, wellness and educational curriculum. Sharp Coronado Hospital, Sharp Hospice, UCSD Osher Lifelong Learning, and Alzheimer’s San Diego have created workshops and classes in the COCSC to deliver an extra level of services that enhance senior well-being.

The interior of the complex is bright, modern and possesses a most welcoming environment. There is a large multipurpose room that can be partitioned to accommodate various needs. A beautiful, well-appointed lounge with fireplace overlooks the adjacent park and provides a setting for social engagement. A pool table and two outdoor gathering areas are additional building amenities. The building also includes a catering kitchen that is utilized for special events and is a key amenity for the purpose of facility rental for the general community.

There is no gym, fitness room or pool on-site, but as mentioned, the infrastructure within Coronado allows for easy access to these entities within a manageable distance from the COCSC. There is no congregate meal service offered at the COCSC.

The city offers a great transportation program for seniors through the Coronado Out and About program. Seniors 60 and over pay a nominal fee of $1 to $4 for volunteer-based transportation services to a variety of destinations in Coronado and the surrounding area (up to 18 miles one-way). The program has a current roster of 27 volunteers who provide the transportation and program sustainability is provided in part through a partnership with SANDAG.

**CHALLENGES**

The COCSC, quite intentionally, does not have the word “senior” in its name. Like nearly all senior centers regionally and nationally, the COCSC is faced with the problem of gaining the interest of the younger cohort of the senior population. The team at COCSC is attempting to attract greater numbers of younger seniors through a continuous quality improvement approach to creating, implementing and strengthening innovative programming built around “being active”.

Omission of the word “senior” in the building name and information materials may cause some uncertainty for individuals who may be seeking services traditionally found in such a center.
Though there is public transportation and the volunteer ride service, lack of parking at the COCSC can present a barrier for those who operate their own vehicles.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

With a demonstrable focus on health, wellness and activity, the COCSC presents a local example of a senior center adopting innovative practices to better serve a growing and more diverse older adult population. The COCSC utilizes existing entities such as nearby fitness and recreation centers and the outdoor benefits of the San Diego area to provide a community gathering place were wellness within the health, emotional, physical, mental and social domains are addressed in a holistic manner.

The COCSC represents one of the better local examples of developing engagement practices that draws younger seniors into their community setting and can be used as a model for other centers to follow.

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**Imperial Beach Senior Center**

1075 8th Street, Imperial Beach, CA 91932

- **Size/type of center**: Micro with limited programming
- **Building constructed**: 1960’s
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 4,200
- **Budget**: $34,000
- **Full-time staff**: 0
- **Average age of participant (estimated)**: 74
- **Managing entity**: City of Imperial Beach
- **Public transportation**: Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: None
- **Meals program**: None
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Limited
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

The IBSC is operated by the City of Imperial Beach with limited hours of operation. Mondays and Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. The current facility was constructed in the 1960’s and the center is operated with an annual budget of $34,000.

Regular programming consists of stretch and flex exercise class, tai chi, acrylic painting, crafts, sewing and quilting, yoga and card games. Other special events primarily focused on sharing meals are scheduled throughout the month.

The Imperial Beach Senior Club consists of older adults who frequent the IBSC and support the center by creating special events. The group meets weekly and has dues for membership that help sustain the group’s efforts including monthly Bingo, potluck gatherings and a monthly lecture series.
Leadership in Imperial Beach is motivated to develop a new senior center. Architectural renderings of a modern senior center have been completed along with the convening of community meetings for resident feedback. The city has applied for state funding for a proposed center, but at the time of this report, no update on the status of the proposal could be provided.

**San Ysidro Senior Center**
125 E. Park Avenue, San Ysidro, CA 92173

- **Size/type of center:** Micro with limited programming
- **Building constructed:** 1986
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+):** N/A
- **Budget:** N/A
- **Full-time staff:** 0
- **Average age of participant (estimated):** N/A
- **Managing entity:** Serving Seniors, 501c3
- **Public transportation:** Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** None
- **Meals program:** Congregate lunch
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** Non-affiliated social service provider once a month
- **Community collaboration:** Very limited
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** None
- **Social enterprises:** None

**INTRODUCTION**

The San Ysidro Senior Center (SYSC) is part of the San Ysidro Community Park complex operated by the City of San Diego’s Park and Recreation Department. The building, constructed in 1986, sits adjacent to the community library and play ground and athletic fields. The center is less than 2,000 square feet.

The primary role of the SYSC is to serve as a congregate meal site where adults 60 and over have access to a nutritious lunch 5 days a week. Serving Seniors is the contractor who provides the meals and a part-time staff member to direct the center’s operations. The SYSC has limited hours of operation, loosely built around the lunch service, Monday through Friday from approximately 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The site serves approximately 20-30 seniors a day for the meal program. There is little to no formalized programming scheduled on a regular basis. Serving Seniors will provide occasional activities and Consumer Advocates for Residential Care Reform (CARR) provide a monthly “pop-up” clinic to assist older adults with any number of social service needs.

The primary function of the SYSC is to serve as a gathering place where older adults can socialize and engage in cards and games. There is no exercise equipment or computer lab at the SYSC. Older adult volunteers will assist with the serving of the meals.

The majority of older adults who frequent the SYSC speak Spanish and the average age of attendees (75) is similar to other centers in the area. Public transportation is accessible with a bus stop within 2 blocks of the building.
CENTRAL SAN DIEGO REGION

Serving Seniors’ Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center
1525 4th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize Wellness center model
- **Building constructed**: 2010
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 4900/N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: N/A
- **Full-time staff**: N/A
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 67
- **Managing entity**: Serving Seniors
- **Public transportation**: Excellent
- **Special transportation program**: None
- **Meals program**: Congregate and home delivery
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: Excellent 14 station café with support
- **On-site social services**: Excellent social service and wellness navigation support
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Excellent with focus internal and external
- **Social enterprises**: None

INTRODUCTION

The Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center (GMWSWC), managed by Serving Seniors, operates with a staff of 20 employees and serves nearly 5,000 older adults annually. The only eligibility requirement for individuals to participate in center events and programs is to be of age 60 and older. Unlike other centers in the area, the GMWSWC sees a significantly higher number of older adults aged 60-69 utilize their programming. GMWSWC serves a very diverse population and provides their core services to a population who fall at the lower end of the economic scale. Ample public transportation includes access to multiple MTS bus routes and two trolley stops within 6 blocks of the GMWSWC. There is no dedicated parking structure and given the location of the GMWSWC in downtown San Diego, street parking can be challenging. There are multiple public parking lots in the area, but the costs incurred is too significant for the population served.

The GMWSWC is a modern, bright facility that opened for business in April of 2010. The interior matches the vibrancy of the exterior with plenty of light colors and natural lighting. This innovative community space has earned the designation of a Wellness Center and offers an extensive menu of services, programs and supports for older adults. This comprehensive model helps fulfill the agency mission of helping seniors in poverty live healthy and fulfilling lives. The lack of adequate affordable housing is a significant issue for GMWSWC clients, and the Serving Seniors organization is at the forefront in creating solutions to address this crisis. The organization built two complexes in the East Village and City Heights neighborhoods of San Diego complete with on-site supportive services and, in June of 2019, a third affordable housing development will be opened in Ramona. Meal services are
provided to sites throughout the County and a substantial Home-Delivered Meals program provides nutrition services to over 500 home-bound seniors.

**OBSERVATIONS**

GMWSWC offers an extensive array of classes and activities at no charge to seniors, and a comprehensive, wrap-around wellness service model that is focused on whole-person health. The GMWSWC welcomes 350-400 seniors a day. The wellness team comprised of social workers, nurses, care navigators, mental health professionals, and benefit experts provide layers of additional support to help those that are the most vulnerable. Assistance with housing, medical support, mental health, entitlements, community resources, caregiving and legal advice can all be obtained under the same roof. GMWSWC also collaborates with an extensive network of interdisciplinary professionals and provides office space to over 30 partnering agencies. Organizations represented at the GMWSWC include Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Consumer Center for Health, Education and Advocacy, Elder Law and Advocacy, Sharp Hospital, Veterans Village of San Diego, San Diego Housing Commission, UCSD, SDSU, Family Health Centers, West Senior Dental Center and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services.

The GMWSWC programs and services complement the foundational nutrition program that offers nutritious meals 365 days a year. It is the only senior center in San Diego that operates 7 days a week. The bulk of the programming occurs during normal business hours, with limited activities on the weekend. All programs and services are offered free of charge and even the meals program is available to any senior 60 and over regardless of ability to pay. This is an essential element in fulfillment of the agency mission as 85% of the visitors to the GMWSWC live at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Daily programming and activities include:

- Feeling Fit Club (County-funded program offered in 2 sessions 3 days a week)
- Walking group
- Wii interactive games
- Ping Pong
- Bingo
- Blood pressure screenings
- Support groups
- UCSD concert series
- Knitting and crocheting
- Sharp Healthcare educational workshops
- Travelers Video Tour group
- Tai Chi
- Movie Days
- Mindful meditation group
- Veteran’s craft class
- The History Guy
- Cooking demonstrations
- PAWS pet food distribution
- Write Out Loud
- Self-massage class
- Health workshop seminars provided by on site nursing staff

The bulk of the classes and activities of the GMWSWC occur on the 1st floor of the two-story structure. A large lobby area with couches, a gathering place with chairs and sofas where seniors can socialize and watch television, a game room, a cyber café consisting of 15 work stations and tech support, a multipurpose room with audio/visual capacity, a commercial kitchen and a 200-seat dining room comprise the lower floor plan The 2nd floor is utilized for the social services team, activities coordinator and the West Senior Dental Center.

Despite a large number of visitors every day, 7 days a week, the building is in tremendous shape due to the diligence of the maintenance team. The building is LEED certified.
The GMWSWC has a robust volunteer and community-focus initiative centered around the pillars of civic engagement and advocacy. Special events are created to provide avenues for older adult voices to be heard that include town hall meetings where elected officials are given an opportunity to hear from their senior constituents.

Older adults interested in creating change are welcomed to join the civic engagement committee. The group meets on a weekly basis and creates a platform to address senior-related issues. The committee has championed causes at San Diego City Council meetings and some members are part of the California Senior Legislature, a state-wide advocacy group that meets in Sacramento annually to propose legislation regarding senior citizens issues.

The group also works internally by creating quarterly newsletters, creating special events and running a bi-annual White Elephant sale that provides funding for their efforts.

The civic engagement group is also involved in the advocacy efforts of the Serving Seniors organization by going out to the community and providing presentations to older adults and stakeholders on how to contact elected officials and promoting pending legislation that support senior causes.

The group is also instrumental when the GMSWC hosts elected officials or conducts “town hall” meetings on important senior issues.

One highlight of 2018 was the visit of the new governor of California, Gavin Newsom, just days prior to his primary win.

Serving Seniors has been serving meals to the older adult community for nearly 50 years and its current meals program is an agency foundational service. With the GMWSWC site, the 8 additional congregate sites, and the 500 home-bound seniors served, the agency produces nearly 600,000 meals per year.

**CHALLENGES**

Challenges for the GMWSWC include: Reversing a nation-wide counterintuitive trend of decreasing attendance at all congregate meal sites, capacity to handle the exploding crisis in housing for seniors, providing enriching and engaging services that seniors want, the provision of culturally-competent services to a very diverse population, mental health concerns and maladaptive behaviors by clientele, service animal and emotional support animals’ policy abuse, and outreach to older adults in the collaring areas and reaching and engaging isolated seniors.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

GMWSWC presents an innovative community center that is more than just recreation services and nutrition. The wellness model created at GMWSWC addresses the whole person and provides meaningful interaction for older adult at many levels. It is replicable and sustainable and represents a promising avenue in the creation of an enhanced infrastructure network for San Diego seniors.

The nutrition program serves over 500 home-bound clients each day. Serving Seniors and GMWSWC have an opportunity to gain better understanding on this population through more enhanced outreach efforts. With additional funding, an outreach program can be created to determine impact on social isolation and to examine the breadth of these clients’ social network. A growing body of research is uncovering the detrimental effects of social isolation on the older adult population. An initiative
focused on understanding the impact and designing interventions to reduce isolation holds great promise for the clients of GMWSWC as well as for all communities in San Diego.

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College Avenue Center, Jewish Family Services
6299 Capri Drive, San Diego, CA 92120

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize/Traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 2007/1975
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A/N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: N/A
- **Full-time staff**: 1
- **Average age of participants estimated**: 75
- **Managing entity**: Jewish Family Services
- **Public transportation**: Very limited
- **Special transportation program**: Excellent with multiple programs
- **Meals program**: Congregate and home-delivered meals
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: Excellent with 16 laptops for everyday and specialty use
- **On-site social services**: None on site but excellent referral process to JFS programs
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Moderate internal with limited opportunities to engage in community
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Elissa Landsman, Program Manager for Jewish Family Service’ College Avenue Center in the Del Cerro neighborhood of San Diego. Jewish Family Service (JFS) is a leading social service agency in San Diego providing a large menu of programs and services for individuals of all ages. For over 100 years, JFS has continued to develop a nonprofit model that is a “client-centered, impact-driven organization working to build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient San Diego”.

The College Avenue Center (CAC) is their senior center space that provides social and wellness programs for adults 60 and over. CAC is open from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are no weekend hours of operation.

The CAC is on the campus of Temple Emanu-El and occupies two buildings of a complex that also includes a pre-school and the synagogue. Public transportation is limited and not within easy walking distance of the campus. There is a moderately-sized parking lot, but with restrictions on use, it can be challenging to find spaces during peak operations. This is especially relevant as 90% of seniors who attend the CAC drive themselves. There is ample street parking to ease the burden and JFS has a variety of transportation options for seniors to come to the site. The building exterior is modern and the grounds are attractive and well-maintained. A security guard is on site and all visitors must check-in and undergo a brief screening before gaining entry.
OBSERVATIONS

CAC is operated with a staff of 1 full-time program manager and 3 part-time staff who oversee a large menu of programs and special events. On an average day, 125 older adults take advantage of the CAC. Staff document “visits” to account for program participation so an estimate on annual unduplicated visitors could not be provided. Seniors are encouraged to become volunteers at the CAC and can participate in a variety of tasks. The average age of CAC seniors is 70 years old. Historically, most CAC seniors have been Jewish, but as a result of numerous factors, it is estimated that less than half of current attendees are Jewish. The CAC serves multiple neighborhoods of the City of San Diego so an estimate on eligible population in service area is not available.

The CAC has a tiered membership program. Basic enrollment is free and comes with access to the nutrition program, some classes and limited use of the computer time in the Cyber Café and other basic privileges. For $48 for an individual and $60 for a couple, Community Membership encompasses all basic enrollment privileges in addition to other features. The VIP Memberships for $80 for an individual and $100 for a couple is comprised of all the benefits of the other membership levels as well as special privileges such as preferred seating at CAC events, recognition in the quarterly newsletter and an invitation to an exclusive VIP-tailored event.

The CAC offers traditional senior center programming with a focus on fitness, wellness and social connection. Some notable program offerings include brain fitness class, meditation, current events class, ESL for Russian older adults, Trivia Tuesday, drama class, laughter yoga, weekly lecture series and weekly live music.

As an entity under the JFS umbrella, older adults at CAC in need of any assistance are provided with referrals to the many social service programs of the organization. Senior-specific resources available through the JFS menu include the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative, Balboa Avenue Older Adult Center for older adults with higher levels of need, the JFS Fix-It home repair program for older adults with low income, the Foodmobile for homed-delivered meals, the Friendly Visitor program for lonely and isolated seniors and Geriatric Care Management for creating and implementing treatment plans and coordination of services.

Additional community partners on site who deliver class instruction and lead special events include UCSD, SDSU, JCC Lawrence Community Center, San Diego Food Bank, Project CARE, Sharp Grossmont Senior Resource Center, Recovery International, HICAP, Elder Law and Advocacy, San Diego Zoo, Continuing Education from San Diego City College and Alzheimer’s San Diego.

The wing of the synagogue campus occupied by CAC is a newer building constructed in the late 2000’s. A second building that has 2 classrooms for CAC use was built in the 1970’s. Together, the 2 buildings total approximately 6500 square feet. The CAC has only been an occupant at the current location since 2015, moving from another temple site a few miles to the south.

Upon entry into the main building, a small lobby area contains meeting space for casual gatherings and games. A reception desk is staffed by CAC volunteers who provide basic information and sign in seniors who will be engaging in that day’s meal service. A large multipurpose room accounts for most of the space in the building. Most programs and activities, special events and the lunch service take place in this location. The room is equipped with partitions to easily section off parts of the room to account for concurrent programming. An adjacent building is home to two classrooms where classes with more of an educational focus take place.
There is no fitness center on the premises and little in the way of recreational equipment. A well-stocked library doubles as a classroom when needed. There is no dedicated computer lab with desktops, yet CAC has ample opportunities for seniors to engage with technology.

The CAC has 16 laptops that are used for their computer classes that range from basic to advanced, for the brain fitness program that utilizes cutting-edge software designed to improve cognitive capacity and provide tutoring sessions on making the most of smart devices. The center also offers drop-in hours for those in need of immediate help with pressing tech issues.

The CAC has a commercial kitchen with significant capacity. However, for the purposes of the older adult programming, the kitchen is utilized as a staging area for the daily lunch service as meals are prepared and delivered by staff of JFS main commercial kitchen at their Balboa Avenue campus.

Lunch service is provided Monday through Friday at the CAC. The congregate dining service program is similar to most other senior centers as JFS/CAC is a recipient of County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services/Older Americans Act funding. The suggested donation for a meal is $4 but no one over the age of 60 is turned away based on their ability to pay. An average of 55 older adults dine at the CAC daily. JFS has a home delivered meals program that supports the nutritional needs of home bound seniors.

In support of the daily lunch program, older adults receive additional nutritional support through the JFS food pantry operation. Twice a month, seniors are provided with fruits and vegetables delivered to the CAC facility from JFS’ main campus location. A partnership with ‘Senior Gleaners”, a nonprofit focused on salvaging potentially unused food, provides an additional opportunity for seniors who may struggle to afford fruits and vegetables.

The CAC serves as a monthly distribution site for the San Diego Food Bank’s commodity food box program older adults with low incomes.

Public transportation is limited in the area for older adults and not a viable option for many of the CAC attendees. However, JFS has a robust specialty transportation program to meet the needs of seniors. The “On the Go” service is comprised of five different transportation options and is available to seniors for a $20 annual membership fee (paid members of the CAC are exempt from this charge)

Rides and Smiles is San Diego’s largest volunteer-based transportation program providing over 2,300 rides a month for seniors to medical and personal appointments. It is a donation-based service and rides require reservations one week in advance. Eligibility for this service is restricted to specific San Diego zip codes.

Navigator is an on-demand service that utilizes ride-share transportation service such as Lyft. Older adults that use this service are responsible for cost of ride and a service charge.

On the Go Silver accommodates individual riders for errands or large groups for customized outings that includes accessibility for older adults in wheelchairs. On the Go Shuttles provides group transportation to JFS locations, religious events, shopping centers and special event destinations. On the Go Excursions gives individuals the opportunity to partake in organized outings to popular attractions and point of interest throughout San Diego County. Fees for this vary dependent on the type and location of event.

Like all senior centers in San Diego, CAC has internal structures in place to engage and utilize older adults to assist with day-to-day operations. There is also opportunity to be neighborhood-focused by
volunteering to be a driver within the JFS On the Go program or as a volunteer handyman in the home modification effort. In honor of Older Americans Month in May, CAC is developing a community-oriented service day by coordinating a group of volunteers based out of CAC to work for a Community Outreach Food Distribution event to military families.

CHALLENGES
The CAC faces the similar challenges of any nonprofit entity with having enough resources in order to build capacity and further impact their communities, but as an entity under the leadership of JFS, the CAC is well-positioned to grow along with the burgeoning population they serve.

OPPORTUNITIES
As a leader in the nonprofit network, JFS is a potential valuable partner in the work of the SDSCF to improve the infrastructure for older adults throughout San Diego County.

Mira Mesa Senior Center
8460 Mira Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92126

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize/Traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1986
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A/N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: Under $100,000
- **Full-time staff**: 0
- **Average age of participants estimated**: N/A
- **Managing entity**: Alliance for Quality Education

INTRODUCTION
Joe Gavin met with Mitz Lee, the Executive Director of the Mira Mesa Senior Center (MMSC). In addition to her role as ED, Mitz is Founder and President of the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that directs the operations of MMSC. AQE has received a special use permit from the City of San Diego to operate MMSC and is committed to becoming a standard in the delivery of impactful programs and services for older adults. The MMSC is staffed by 5 volunteers who manage the day-to-day business; there is no paid staff on site. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through
Thursday and 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Fridays. The MMSC is closed on weekends as the building is available for rental space to the community.

MMSC is in the Mira Mesa community of San Diego on the grounds of a large municipal park complex. Athletic fields, playgrounds, picnic grounds, a recreation center, and library are other amenities within the park. There is an MTS bus line that serves the area and stops are within 1 to 2 blocks of the facility.

There is a large parking lot that provides ample spaces for visitors to MMSC.

The exterior of the building is accentuated with various small plant beds making for an attractive entrance. There is no dedicated lobby area upon entrance into the building. While MMSC activities and events are geared toward the older adult population, there is no specific age threshold precluding adults from participating at MMSC.

**OBSERVATIONS**

Similar to the organizational structure of the Ed Brown Senior Center in Rancho Bernardo, there is no paid staff that work at the MMSC. In addition to the five volunteers who operate the day-to-day, the MMSC is supported by many senior volunteers who provide support for various tasks throughout the center. Approximately 150 older adults participate at the MMSC on average day. Numbers for annual number of participants and average age of participants were not available. Since the MMSC serves a variety of neighborhoods within the City of San Diego, service-area population estimates are not available. There are no membership fees and all onsite daily activities are free.

Regularly scheduled programming incudes Tai Chi, Zumba, Yoga, painting, technology support classes, square dancing, community gardening events, piano, ukulele and guitar lessons and Bingo.

A unique feature of MMSC is a weekly event called Rediscover San Diego that provides guided tours of various local landmarks and points of interest. Fees for this program are variable ranging from no charge to $10. There is no transportation provided, participants must be able to get to the sites through their own means. The director commented that there is considerable cooperation amongst seniors in creating carpools so that those without transportation can engage in the tours as well.

MMSC has multiple community partners on site providing direct programming and ancillary support services. The partnership with the San Diego Continuing Education program through the City’s Community College system delivers the art and music classes, the technology class and the Rediscover SD program. Other partners include AARP, Elder Law and Advocacy, HICAP and the Consumer Center for Health, Education and Advocacy, a department of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego.

MMSC is a 4,800 square foot facility that was constructed in 1986. The City of San Diego is the owner of the building and within the last couple of years have provided $400,000 for exterior upgrades to the building. Discussions between the MMSC and the City have begun to upgrade the grounds to enhance the outdoor space not only for the everyday visitors to the Center but to increase the appeal of the facility as a rental space for community gatherings.

There is no fitness center with equipment and there is no computer lab with workstations. There is the technology class that is provided but that is restricted to personal devices owned by seniors.

The building is mainly comprised of a large community room where most programs are convened. There are two small classrooms that provide space for engagements with limited attendees and for rental to the community for meeting room space. There is a limited kitchen space that serves as the
staging area for the congregate meal service and for the needs of the individuals who rent the space for private functions.

Adjacent to the kitchen is another small staging area that serves as the prep area for the fruits and vegetable program offered by MMSC through a partnership with the San Diego Food Bank. In addition, the MMSC partners with a local Trader Joe’s market to repurpose plants and flowers and provide arrangements to their older adult participants.

There is a large outdoor area surrounded by garden beds and populated with benches. A local Eagle Scout troop recently donated an outdoor game board that is situated within this open space.

Through a partnership with Serving Seniors, a daily congregate lunch service is provided to MMSC older adults. This program is funded through SD County AIS and the Older Americans Act. There is a suggested donation for the meal, but no one aged 60 and over is turned away based on their ability to pay. Over 50 seniors dine at the MMSC on an average day. There is no home-delivered meals program based out of the center. Serving Seniors HDM program is responsible for the servicing of the Rancho Bernardo area.

MTS public transportation serves the area and there are bus stops within a short walk of the MMSC. The MMSC has no specialty transportation programs.

Volunteers provide support for the various activities and events and the lunch program at the MMSC. The 501(c)(3) that operates the facility, AQE, is a strong believer in the power of volunteerism and actively encourages and recruits seniors to become active members of not only the MMSC, but of the general community as well.

**CHALLENGES**

As a senior center that is operated by an all-volunteer staff, the MMSC is faced with significant resource limitations and must rely on the cultivation of community partners to sustain their service menu.

As a special use permit holder with the City of San Diego, the organization must deal with the forces of municipal bureaucracy and are constrained by rules and regulations that may limit the ability to implement new funding sources.

A specific challenge cited by the ED was a need to better understand the demographic they are charged with serving. The number of the Baby Boomer generation reaching traditional retirement age grows with each passing day and the rhetorical question of, “do we really know what they want in a senior center or do they even need the services traditionally provided by a senior center?” requires serious attention. If senior center administrators are not actively seeking out the feedback of their clientele and adapting programming to their needs and tastes, then they put the future of their centers at risk.

AQE has only recently become the managing entity of the MMSC and a primary goal is “to redesign the facility programmatically to better serve the older adults of Mira Mesa and the surrounding communities”. The MMSC, despite its resource limitations, is proactively taking steps to address the changing demands upon the senior center marketplace with a focus on social enrichment, lifelong learning, senior independence, quality of life, senior center as a community hub of resources and support and to become a leading model for the delivery of services to older adults in San Diego.
OPPORTUNITIES
The MMSC is quite similar to the Rancho Bernardo Senior Center. Both are in City of San Diego municipal park complexes in buildings owned by the City with all volunteer staffs with very limited budgets and resources. As with Rancho Bernardo, the MMSC represents a model that could be better supported as SDSCF tries to lead the way in bringing larger scale philanthropy into the senior center space.

Fourth District Senior Resource Center
570 S. 65th Street, San Diego, CA 92114

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 2006
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: N/A
- **Full-time staff**: 2
- **Average age of participant (estimated)**: 75
- **Managing entity**: FDSRC, 501c3
- **Public transportation**: Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: None
- **Meals program**: Congregate lunch
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Moderate
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited
- **Social enterprises**: None

INTRODUCTION
The FDSRC, operating out of the George L. Stevens Senior Center, is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for their “seasoned ambassadors” by a safe and wholesome gathering place. The center is a LEED certified structure that was opened in March of 2006.

The building features a multipurpose assembly room, meeting rooms, classrooms, exercise room, boardroom and commercial kitchen. There is ample parking available for older adults with vehicles. Public transportation is mildly challenging with a 3-block walk from the nearest MTS bus stop.

A congregate meals program operates four days a week (no Thursday service) with meal prices of $5.50 and $7.00 on Fridays for individuals age 60 and over. It could not be determined if this program receives funding from County AIS to supplement the program costs or if it is a donation-based service.

Most programs, classes and activities are free of charge. It could not be determined if there are annual membership fees to help sustain the operations. Programs include light exercise, walking group, line dancing, yoga, arts and craft, table games, computer class, and financial and legal workshops. The FDSRC is a distribution site for Feeding San Diego healthy foods supplemental nutrition program.
Neighborhood House Senior Center
795 S. Boundary Street, San Diego, CA 92113

- **Size/type of center**: Micro with limited programming
- **Building constructed**: 1980
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 150 and N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: $250,000
- **Full-time staff**: 2
- **Average age of participant (estimated)**: N/A
- **Managing entity**: Neighborhood House Association
- **Public transportation**: Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: None
- **Meals program**: Congregate breakfast and lunch
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Limited
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: None
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

Neighborhood House Association (NHA) is a multi-faceted social services organization serving individuals across the lifespan to improve quality of life through a variety of programs and services. The NHSC operates under the direction of the 501(c)(3) parent organization. Funds to operate the NHSC are provided through the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services Department and through NHA. Including the meals program, annual budget for NHSC is $250,000. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The building was constructed in 1980 with minor remodeling occurring in 2006. NHSC leases the building from the City of San Diego.

The NHSC serves the Central San Diego region and welcomes about 30-40 seniors a day and 150 annually. A unique component of the NHSC is the provision of a continental breakfast meal to complement the daily lunch service that is common for most senior centers in San Diego. This expanded service provides over 1/2 of the daily nutritional needs of participating seniors. Suggested donations are $2 for breakfast and $3 for lunch though no one 60 and over is turned away based on ability to pay. The meals are prepared on site in the NHSC commercial kitchen.

NHSC offers limited programming including a walking club, spiritual workshop, painting, a weekly educational class, bingo, and a twice a week Feeling Fit club provided by the County. Once a month, a senior advisory council meeting occurs where center participants can provide their thoughts and feedback on the NHSC and have a say in program creation and direction.

There is limited parking available in an adjoining parking lot shared amongst different programs of NHA and limited street parking. Public transportation is moderately accessible with an MTS bus route a few blocks away. The NHSC provides special assistance to older adults with mobility issues through helping individuals apply for the MTS Access program. Once established as an eligible rider, seniors are given scrip to pay for the paratransit service.
Balboa Park Senior Lounge
1650 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101

- **Size/type of center:** Micro with decentralized structure
- **Building constructed:** N/A
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+):** N/A
- **Budget:** N/A
- **Full-time staff:** N/A
- **Average age of participant (estimated):** N/A
- **Managing entity:** City of San Diego
- **Public transportation:** Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** None
- **Meals program:** None
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** Non-affiliated social service provider twice a month
- **Community collaboration:** Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Good
- **Social enterprises:** None

**INTRODUCTION**

The Balboa Park Senior Lounge (BPSL) is located in the Casa Del Prado, room 105, at Balboa Park. The lounge is a gathering place for older adults from San Diego and tourists from throughout the world were 5 days a week they can enjoy coffee and socialization. The BPSL operates under the Senior Citizen Services of the Parks and Recreation Department. Hours of operation for the lounge are Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The lounge welcomes over 200 older adults a week.

The lounge serves as the epicenter in the City’s senior citizen services program. In addition to three other sites within Balboa Park, the BPSL provides activities, classes, workshops and special events.

A quarterly newsletter, *The Scroll*, informs San Diego seniors with the activities of the Balboa Park campus as well as older adult specific programming that occurs at the numerous recreation centers in the San Diego park system. Most programming is free of charge though the City requires a registration process that can either be completed online or in-person and is conducted on a quarterly basis.

Activities that take place weekly, biweekly, and monthly include:

- Art philosophy group
- MTS Talking Transit workshop
- Otherwise Improvise workshop
- Walking group
- What’s Your Story acting workshop
- Needlecrafts
- Poetic Legacy
- Bingo
- Lunch and Learn educational workshop
- Mah Jongg
- Yoga
- Laugh Hour
- Dance class and biweekly theme dances
- Travel Club
- Piano notes music class
- Monthly day-trip excursions (fee required)
- Poetry party
- Self-Defense for seniors
In addition to these regularly scheduled events, the BPSL serves as the hub for large scale senior events including:

- Annual senior talent show
- Senior Photography exhibit
- Senior Art Contest
- Senior Craft Sale

Public transportation is accessible with an MTS bus stop on nearby Park Boulevard. It is about a two-block walk although a portion of the walk is uphill. Parking can be challenging in Balboa Park, but support is provided with a tram service that services a few parking options on the exterior of the park and drops visitor off in the center of the park.

As mentioned, the Parks and Recreation Department provides some programming specific to older adults, but the primary focus at these community centers are youth. However, a new community center will be opening in late summer 2019 that has more expanded focus on seniors, the Park de la Cruz Therapeutic Recreation and Enrichment Services located on Landis Street in City Heights.

La Jolla Community Center
6811 La Jolla Boulevard, La Jolla, CA 92037

- Size/type of center: Midsize with traditional and wellness programming
- Building constructed: 1980’s
- Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served: N/A
- Senior population of area (60+): N/A
- Budget: N/A
- Full-time staff: 3
- Average age of participant (estimated): N/A
- Managing entity: LJCC, a 501c3
- Public transportation: Good accessibility
- Special transportation program: None
- Meals program: None
- Fitness room/status of equipment: None
- Computer lab: None
- On-site social services: Non-affiliated social service provider once a month
- Community collaboration: Excellent
- Civic engagement opportunities: Good
- Social enterprises: None

INTRODUCTION
The LJCC mission is to provide programs and services that promote lifelong learning, wellness and friendship. LJCC operates as a 501(c)(3) organization. The 7,200 square foot recently remodeled facility is under the direction of 4 staff members. Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. though 5 p.m. with extended hours on select days. Multiple class offerings on Saturdays is a unique feature within the San Diego senior center environment. The LJCC has a formalized volunteer program providing seniors and all members of the La Jolla community with several options to become
involved. With board rooms, classrooms, a large multipurpose room and kitchen, the LJCC is available to the community as rental space.

Individuals who wish to join the LJCC have a variety of membership plans to choose from starting with a baseline membership at $120 annually. Public transportation is an option for individuals. For older adults who drive, there is limited street parking in the surrounding area.

The LJCC stands out as an innovative senior center with an eclectic mix of classes and special events. Enhanced programming focused on whole person health is evident in their menu of services. LJCC participants have a variety of engaging options available to them due to a strong volunteer instructor roster and partnerships with community-based organizations.

More than a dozen light exercise, yoga disciplines, and dance classes are available to center participants. Aside from traditional senior center programming, LJCC is distinguished through other programmatic offerings such as:

- Monthly Jazz series
- Opera Wednesdays
- Blues/Rock dance night
- Restaurant gatherings
- Annual healthy living fair
- Distinguished speaker series
- Brain longevity workshop
- Brain health educational series
- Memory café
- Music appreciation and instruction
- Various artistic medium classes
- Tech support
- Language classes

Some programming is offered free of charge at LJCC, most classes require a fee to be paid ranging from $5 to $30 per session depending on subject matter.

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**Cathy Hopper Clairemont Friendship Center**

4425 Bannock Avenue San Diego, CA 92117

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize with limited traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1988
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 500/N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: N/A
- **Budget**: $200,000
- **Full-time staff**: 1
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 75
- **Managing entity**: Lutheran Social Services, a 501c3 organization
- **Public transportation**: Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: None
- **Meals program**: Lunch and Learn program twice monthly
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: Laptops/Desktops with weekly tutoring program
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Moderate
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited, internal
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Eleanor Slaughter, Program Director of the Cathy Hopper Clairemont Friendship Center (CHCFC). The CHCFC operates under the direction of Lutheran Social Services of Southern
California (LSSSC), a 501c3 organization with a 70-year history of providing services to the San Diego region. The organization became the administrator of the CHCFC in 2017 in response to a City of San Diego Request for Proposal seeking an entity to reopen the property for senior services after the closure of the previous center in 2015. The city is the owner of the building and leases the location to LSSSC. One full-time employee and 2 part-time employees who are responsible for operations are employees of LSSSC. Hours of operation are 7:00-4:00 Monday through Friday. The building is available for rental space to the community and is home to evening meetings of various associations in the Clairemont community.

The CHCFC is located within the North Clairemont Community Park. The building was constructed in 1988 and is adjacent to the community recreation center. There is sufficient parking available to older adults who utilize the CHCFC, but public transportation provides a challenge as the nearest MTS bus stop is approximately 3 blocks from the park grounds.

OBSERVATIONS

The majority of the programming offered by the CHCFC is developed through a partnership with the San Diego City College system. The menu of programming is affected by the schedule of the college with the CHCFC offering its full complement of programming in parallel to when school is in session. Regularly scheduled programming includes various light exercise classes, chair yoga, health screening events, card games, several drawing and painting classes, a weekly meeting of a choir, music appreciation, knitting and crochet, line dancing, card makers, Bingo and a weekly computer lab with tutelage. Annually, approximately 500 older adults participate in activities and events at the CHCFC with a daily attendance rate of 50-75 individuals.

The majority of ECSC programming is at no charge to older adults and there is no annual membership fee. Classes that require a fee are priced from $5 to $15 per class.

While there is no congregate nor home-delivered meals program at CHCFC, the center does provide a twice a month Lunch and Learn program were older adults can gather for a community meal and learn more about specific subject matter or community resources.

The CHCFC develops special events to increase the community awareness of the center and to help with fundraising efforts. This September, the CHCFC will be hosting the Clairemont Multi-Cultural Festival that will highlight the diversity of the local community with all proceeds of the event going to the support of the CHCFC operations.

CHALLENGES

With the limitations produced by reliance upon the City College schedule, consistency of programming is impacted, particularly in the summer months. Lack of funding opportunities and other economic variables produce a difficult landscape for the CHCFC to maintain the current operating budget. The location of the CHCFC is not ideally situated for the utilization of the MTS public transportation system. Aside from referrals to entities that can provide individualized transportation services, the CHCFC has
no specialized program that can accommodate those individuals who are without their own vehicle. The CHCFC does provide rental opportunities of their space to the community, but the revenue realized has little impact upon their annual budget.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
The CHCFC is representative of a regional senior center that is considerably constrained by lack of funding availability to improve the level of services to the older adults of the Clairemont community. With additional support, more expansive and diverse programming, outreach into the community and additional transportation services are areas where the CHCFC could strengthen their efforts to meet the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s older adult.

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**EAST COUNTY REGION**

**La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center**
8450 La Mesa Boulevard, La Mesa, CA 91942

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1965 and 2011
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 900/7%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 12,200
- **Budget**: $130,000
- **Full-time staff**: 2
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 72
- **Managing entity**: City of La Mesa
- **Public transportation**: Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: Good
- **Meals program**: Congregate
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Moderate with opportunity in the general community
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**
The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center (LMAEC) is located at 8450 La Mesa Blvd, La Mesa, CA 91942. We met with Susan Richardson, Director, City of La Mesa Recreation Department. The LMAEC operates under the city’s Recreation department and the facilities are municipally owned. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. though there are dates for special events that are offered outside of traditional business hours. The building is served by adequate public transportation services.

**OBSERVATIONS**
The LMAEC operations are directed by 2 Full-time staff and 3 part time employees. The City has a robust volunteer program that supports center operations including a volunteer-based transportation program. The LMAEC serves approximately 350 seniors a month and 900 annually. Average participant age is estimated to be 72 years old.
The LMAEC provides a variety of classes, workshops and activities for adults 50 and over. Specific programming includes line dancing, music instruction, arts and crafts, painting, support groups, card and table games, calligraphy, and movie days. There is a nominal charge of $2 to $5 for most events though some are presented free of charge. A partnership with Grossmont Adult Education (GAE) provides additional programming with multiple classes offered over several weeks. Fees range from $50-$75 for this multi-session curriculum that includes painting, ceramics, gardening, tai chi, aerobics and creative writing. In addition to GAE, other community partners include Verlosity (urban line dancing), AARP, MTS for a transit 101 class, Sharp Grossmont Hospital, Alzheimer’s Association and Day Tripper tours for one-day excursions. The LMAEC also provides senior-focused programming at other park locations in La Mesa including therapeutic water aerobics at the community pool.

Congregate meal service is available each weekday through a partnership with Serving Seniors, a local nonprofit agency that over 500,000 meal annually at various community and housing sites throughout San Diego County.

LMAEC provides transportation resources for older adults no longer able to drive through the RidesforNeighbors program. This volunteer driver effort provides door-to-door transportation for medical appointments, common errands and social events for eligible seniors. Recent upgrades to the program include reduced-rate taxi scrip and improved access for wheelchair-bound older adults.

The primary physical plant was constructed in 1965 and needs upgrades to both the structure and the equipment. The annual budget of the LMAEC is $130,000.

CHALLENGES

Virtually all revenue for the senior center is funded through the City of La Mesa. There is currently no strategy for raising philanthropic support through donations. The annual budget is at the lower end of spectrum when compared to other senior centers operated by municipalities.

Staff stated that the LMAEC has a stigma within the community as a place for older people, “not hip or appealing to the Baby Boomer generation”.

The furnishings and the interior aesthetics are dated and there are significant hurdles in acquiring funds to undertake the needed work. Deferred maintenance needs include large-scale projects such as window replacement, roofing and HVAC system.

With only 2 full time employees, one of which is the building custodian, it is difficult to increase center capacity and add to the existing menu of services.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City of La Mesa is planning to eventually build a new multi-generational community center across the street from the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center. The director indicated that most of the funding would likely come from a city bond issue, assuming voters approve such a measure when presented.
There may be an opportunity to assist the City of La Mesa and the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center to partner with donors to refurbish the existing facility and enhance the planned Community Center. Opportunity also exists to introduce concepts and strategies of more modern senior center, particularly pertaining to building design and layout for seniors, senior-friendly exercise equipment, and entrepreneurialism.

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**Lemon Grove Senior Center**

8235 Mt. Vernon Street, Lemon Grove, CA 91945

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with very limited programming
- **Building constructed:** 1977
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** 500/10%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 5,000
- **Budget:** N/A
- **Full-time staff:** 0
- **Average age of participants estimated:** 75
- **Managing entity:** Serving Seniors (contracted by City of Lemon Grove)
- **Public transportation:** Very limited with no nearby bus stop
- **Special transportation program:** None
- **Meals program:** Congregate and home-delivered meals program
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Minimal
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited and internal
- **Social enterprises:** None

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**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Bonnie Dupree, HDM Coordinator for Serving Seniors, a nonprofit organization who contracts with the City of Lemon Grove to operate a nutrition program and a limited activities schedule. The building and surrounding property are owned by the City of Lemon Grove, Serving Seniors pays rent to the city for use of the building. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The City provides no operational dollars for the senior center other than being responsible for building upkeep, utilities and maintenance.

The Lemon Grove Senior Center (LGSC) sits on about a ½ acre lot in a residential area of Lemon Grove. The center is adjacent to an elementary and charter high school to the east and a small park to the south. A parking lot can accommodate approximately 50 vehicles. Public transportation is limited with one MTS bus line route serving the neighborhood. The nearest bus stop is about 3 blocks from the Center. There are three buildings on the site with one being available for rental usage for the general community. The site was developed in 1977 with a generic building design. There is some outdoor space on the grounds and occasionally is utilized for group events. The interior office space and multipurpose rooms are reflective of the age of the building.
OBSERVATIONS

The LGSC is operated by Serving Seniors through an agreement with the City of Lemon Grove. Three P/T staff members who are employees of Serving Seniors provide the management of the day-today operations. About 5-10 seniors volunteer to provide support, primarily during the daily lunch service. On an average day, LGSC serves about 50 seniors with an annual total served at approximately 500. The average age of attendees is 75 years old. About 20% of the demographic served are bi-lingual Hispanic. There are approximately 5,000 adults over the age of 60 residing in Lemon Grove.

The primary function of the location is to serve a lunch 5 days a week. This program is administered by Serving Seniors, who provide congregate meal services to several other sites throughout San Diego County.

Program and activities offerings are very limited. A yoga class organized through the City of Lemon Grove is offered twice a week for fee of $3 per class. The County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services (AIS) provides a Feeling Fit exercise program twice a week at no charge to participants. Grossmont Older Adults (OASIS?) program has an aerobics program twice a week for a $40 per semester fee.

A monthly movie event and weekly bingo are provided at no cost and the Center provides 2 monthly special events focused on socialization and music. Community Health Group provide monthly health workshops focused on prevention and education and chronic disease management programs. Through existing organizational capacity, Serving Seniors will provide occasional programming and special events.

LGSC has a very limited equipment inventory. A large television in one of the community rooms functions as the movie of the month setting and is adaptable for video presentations. There is no fitness equipment, computer lab, arts and crafts’ supplies and library.

Three buildings are located on the site. Building one consists of lobby and reception area, offices, storage and other space for Serving Seniors Staff, office space rented out by city to other non-affiliated entities and a large 700 square feet multipurpose room where most of the limited activities take place.

A second building is rented out by the city to a non-affiliated community entity. The third building, about 1,200 square-feet, contains another large multipurpose room that is primarily utilized for exercise class and lunch service. This building also contains a large non-commercial kitchen that is used for lunch service staging and as a prep kitchen for groups who rent the space for special events. There was a recent renovation project that updated the facilities restrooms.

The lunch service provided 5 days a week is administered by Serving Seniors with support by the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services. This meals program is similar to other centers throughout the County. Anyone over the age of 60 can participate in the meal service regardless of ability to pay. Attendance for the lunch service ranges from 20-50 seniors dependent on the fare served and what activities are being provided for that day. The coordinator emphasized that the number of seniors who come for lunch has dropped dramatically over the last few years and noted that it was standard that 50-80 seniors would dine on site on an average day. Approximately 120 seniors with limitations in the Lemon Grove/Spring Valley area are provided with home-delivered meals.
Neither the City of Lemon Grove nor Serving Seniors provides any assistance with specialized transportation programs. As noted earlier, MTS has one bus route that serves the neighborhood, but the nearest stop is over 3 blocks away.

With limited programming, classes and special events, LGSC does not possess a schedule that requires a significant level of volunteers. About 5-10 volunteers are utilized primarily for the lunch services.

At this time, there is no volunteer group committed to engaging in the general community.

**CHALLENGES**

LGSC is faced with numerous challenges:

- Limited support from City of Lemon Grove
- No investment in equipment
- No plans for renovation/modernization of plant
- Limited programming and activities
- Downward trend of senior participants
- Poor public transportation location with limited bus lines/ location in residential neighborhood

- Significant drop in congregate meals attendance
- Outdated building aesthetics
- Major repair needed to kitchen air conditioning
- Coordinator cited seniors’ “apathy” toward Center
- No classrooms

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Serving Seniors contracts with Lemon Grove to be the provider of the daily congregate meal service. In addition, the agency provides the similar service to older adults at the Spring Valley Community Center located about 3 miles from LGSC. The meal attendance and program offerings are even more limited at Spring Valley. The population of individuals over the age of 60 in the two areas is over 22,000.

While physical structures exist for both, the amount of investment from the governing bodies is minimal evidenced by a dearth of programs and services.

There are several issues that would need to be overcome, but LGSC and the greater surrounding area are a prime location for a coordinated regional modern senior center.

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**NORTH COUNTY COASTAL REGION**

**Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center**

16780 La Gracia, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92091

At the time of this report’s publication, information on the Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center was unavailable.
**Encinitas Senior and Community Center**  
1140 Oakcrest Park Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024

- **Size/type of center**: Large community and senior center with dedicated space for seniors/extensive programming  
- **Building constructed**: 2002  
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A/N/A  
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 15,100  
- **Budget**: N/A  
- **Full-time staff**: 2  
- **Average age of participants estimated**: N/A  
- **Managing entity**: City of Encinitas  
- **Public transportation**: Limited, bus stop 2 blocks away with steep grade to center  
- **Special transportation program**: Excellent, but wait list  
- **Meals program**: Congregate  
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None, but community and senior center has large gymnasium and mirrored exercise/dance room  
- **Computer lab**: Moderate, 5 stations with tutelage  
- **On-site social services**: None  
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent  
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Moderate/internal  
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Christie Goodsell, Senior Center manager and Troy Mickelson, Assistant Center Manager of the Encinitas Community and Senior Center (ECSC). The facility is owned and operated by the City of Encinitas and all staff are city employees. Hours of operation of the ECSC is 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are no weekend hours.

ECSC is located near a primary Encinitas artery and is part of a large municipal complex that includes a school, park and other recreational space. The ECSC is part of the larger Community Center that welcomes all ages. However, the ECSC has its own dedicated entrance, lobby area and classrooms while having the ability to access the amenities of the entire complex.

There is a public transportation line that serves Encinitas Blvd. and a bus stop located about 2 blocks from the ECSC entrance. There is a considerable grade leading up to the ECSC so there could be many seniors who are unable to use the bus service due to mobility and ambulatory difficulties.

There is a large parking area so those that arrive by their own vehicle have little issue with access. The exterior is of modern design with the feel of a multipurpose civic facility. There is limited outdoor seating at front of building with a touch of natural landscaping. The entryway is handicap-accessible with automatic sliding doors that leads to an attractive lobby with modern artistic finishing and a reception desk immediately to the right. A large aquarium at the end of the lobby is a notable and unique feature. There are sofa sectionals and comfortable chairs in lobby as well as a “Donor Memory Tree” to honor a loved one. The ECSC serves the population of 50 and over.
OBSERVATIONS

ECSC is supported by a Center Manager, Assistant Manager, 3 recreations supervisors and 3 program assistants. It is noted that these employees are responsible for the entirety of the Community Center complex and not just the senior services.

This staff is supported by 2 p/t nutrition coordinators, 3 p/t kitchen staff, 2 p/t van drivers and 1 p/t recreation coordinator. ECSC receives the assistance of over 140 volunteers that help with numerous efforts including lunchroom aide, computer tutoring, class instructor, program facilitator, librarian and volunteer driver.

On average, 300-400 seniors use the facilities daily. The City of Encinitas is home to about 15,000 people over the age of 60. An average age of participants was unavailable.

There are no membership fees to belong to ECSC, but a majority of the programming have monthly or bimonthly fees attached. Program offerings include drawing, watercolors, line dancing, Hula, Fun to be Fit, Health Barre, Pilates, Qi Gong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Zumba, Duplicate Bridge, Pool tournaments, social dances and Ukulele. These class offerings are offered from $30-$40 for 6 sessions.

Free programs and events include computer lab, book club, Italian language class, current events, 50+ singles club, Pickleball, pool, Recreated Cards, Sittin and Knittin, Stamp Club and Scrabble and other board games.

Community partnerships include AARP and their Smart Driver Course and tax preparation service, Project C.A.R.E and their safety net program for isolated seniors, Advanced Care Planning programming provided by a network or registered nurses, a Death Café in partnership with the Encinitas Library, an innovative program that encourages seniors to speak freely about death as a means of making the most of their lives, Hospice By the Sea provides seniors with a bereavement group, HICAP provides health insurance and Medicare counseling, a Blood Pressure Clinic in partnership with Encinitas FD and Elder Law and Advocacy for legal counseling.

The Encinitas Senior Foundation was a non-profit organization that provided monetary donations and capital purchases in support of programs and services for older adults but closed their operations. The City’s Senior Citizen Commission meets monthly at Encinitas City Hall.

The ECSC and adjoining Community Center complex is a 39,000 square-foot facility that was built in 2002. The condition of the facility is excellent with bright colors, high ceilings and artistic décor sprinkled throughout the site. There is a lounge that doubles as a library, computer lab with 5 stations, scanner and printer (volunteers provide tutoring), audio/visual capacity in multiple locations, 5 classrooms, pool room with 3 high-quality tables, and a large banquet hall that is home to the lunch meal service that also contains a stage and a large portable dance floor.

ECSC recently received upgrades to the plant with new interior paint and carpeting in 2018. Additionally, they received a new portable dance floor at a price of $63,000. This investment not only serves the purpose of day-to-day community and senior center activities, but as an upgrade to maximize the room as a rental location.

Other recent upgrades include new wood flooring, new computer workstations, club chairs and tables for library, resurfacing of gymnasium floor, gym divider, and four large-screen TV’s in Banquet Hall and one in the conference room. A large, commercial kitchen is used for the daily lunch service and as a catering station for when the adjacent banquet room is in use for a private event.
The large gymnasium features significant space for multiple sports activities. Pickleball is an especially popular program for the senior population.

Of note, despite significant space dedicated to the gymnasium, there are no workout machines nor aquatics at the facility.

The ECSC offers senior congregate meals program that is supported by County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services (AIS) and the City of Encinitas. Suggested donation for lunch is $4.00 but no one is turned away based on ability to contribute. Despite a large, fully equipped commercial kitchen, ECSC contracts out for production of the meals. Average number of attendees for the congregate service is 45.

There is limited public transportation access to the ECSC. A single NCTD Breeze bus line serves the area and as mentioned earlier in report, a significant grade up from the street makes the 2-3 block trek difficult for seniors.

Seniors 60 and over are eligible for the City of Encinitas lunch shuttle service for a suggested donation of $2 per round trip. Special events in conjunction with lunch service are part of the shuttle program on select days.

The Out and About Encinitas transportation program is a volunteer driver program that provides rides to grocery stores, medical appointments, pharmacies and many other locations in Encinitas. There is no charge for the program, however, at the present time, there is a significant waitlist. There is a great need for more volunteer drivers.

There are ample opportunities for older adults to engage in ECSC efforts through volunteerism. Most options occur within the ECSC operations although the driver volunteer program is a way to serve the greater Encinitas community.

Given the unique placement of the senior center within a larger all-ages complex, there are more chances for intergenerational programming to come together.

During the open gym hours, there are games available for all age groups to participate. In addition, special events such as the Sweetheart Ball brings all ages together for an evening of dancing and fun. The Ukulele classes offered in the ECSC facility are offered to all ages as well.

**CHALLENGES**

The ECSC serves thousands of older adults annually and there is a need for additional space in the facility to offer more classes and programs.

Like nearly every other senior visited, there is the desire of the center’s director to serve a greater number of younger seniors by developing programs and activities that are more attractive to the Baby Boomer cohort.

The Out and About transportation program struggles to meet the demands of the area and currently has a lengthy waitlist. Older adults interested in the service must wait until a passenger leaves the program or a new volunteer driver is brought on board.
OPPORTUNITIES

The ECSC represents a potential model for future developments of senior centers in San Diego. A modern, all-ages community center possesses an energy that is lacking in several of the other centers that have been visited.

A key design feature is that there is a dedicated entrance, lobby, offices, classrooms and large multipurpose room for the older adult population. This represents an acknowledgement that it is important for seniors to have their own space. Yet, access to the large gymnasium and other center property is just a short walk across the facility. The ECSC feels open to all individuals no matter the age, a key point in the effort to keep people connected to their communities.

INTRODUCTION

Joe Gavin met with Margaret Hamer, Recreation Area Manager for the City of Carlsbad and director of Carlsbad Senior Center (CBC). The CBC is operated under the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Carlsbad. All staff are employees of the City. Hours of operation for the CBC is 8:00- 5:00 Monday through Friday and 9:00- 1:00 on Saturday. The CBC is closed on Sundays, although it is utilized for selected special events.

The CBC was built in 1989 and is owned by the City of Carlsbad. It is in the center of Carlsbad and shares a large public space with a park and an adjoining youth activity center. A large church is located across the street. The exterior of building is consistent with architectural styles of the area and is enhanced by its proximity to a vast green space. A large parking lot can accommodate over 100 vehicles. There is limited public transportation; the nearest bus stop is on a main artery approximately 4 blocks from the CBC.
OBSERVATIONS
CBC is operated with 2 full-time employees and 15 part-time employees. Seniors are provided with opportunity to volunteer throughout the Center. Daily attendance of older adults (CBC serves individuals age 50 and older) is approximately 250-300 per day with annual totals of over 2,000 seniors. Carlsbad is estimated to have about 26,000 citizens over the age of 50. This estimate would suggest that CBC serves under 10% of the service area. Like other regional senior centers, staff estimates the average age of CBC participants at 73 years old.

CBC offers a robust program and service menu. Fee-based and free programs are evenly split on their calendar of options. Fee-based opportunities include aerobics dancing, tai chi, balance and mobility, yoga, meditation, Pilates, Zumba, drawing, collage, watercolors, gardening and social interactive dance.

Free programs include: creative writing, Spanish classes, spinal fitness, line dancing, needlecraft, ping pong, chess, 5-in-1 Joy class, sign language class, ceramics, sewing/quilting, bingo, tech-users group, book club and movie days.

CBC maintains partnerships with various local nonprofits, educational organizations and business groups to provide additional center programming.

Through collaborations with Mira Costa College, Morningstar Investment, Elder Law and Advocacy, HICAP, Braille Institute, AARP and local medical center, CBC can supplement the staff-delivered programs and create more opportunity for senior center participants to become involved. Additional programming includes educational lectures, legal assistance, notary public, vision and hearing consultations, health insurance counseling, diet and nutrition counseling, ask the pharmacist program, ask the orthopedic surgeon, brain health assessments, smart driver program and enhanced technology classes.

CHALLENGES
The limitations of current staffing structure were identified as the biggest challenge facing CBC. Ideas for additional programming and service points are plentiful, but the limits of time and availability due to competing tasks for the staff lead to ideas and suggestions to be tabled. CBC is currently lobbying the city for an addition of 1 full-time employee. While the part-time staff provided great support, it can be challenging for a manager to rely heavily on part-time staff due to hours uncertainty and incomplete coverage times.

The CBC has 2 passenger vans (with wheelchair accessibility) to accommodate the needs of Carlsbad seniors with limited transportation options. However, these vehicles are older and beginning to show signs of significant wear and tear. Money will be needed in the near future to upgrade to newer, more reliable vehicles.

While the location of the CBC next to a larger park and green space has benefits, it has also contributed to an unintended consequence in the form of a large homeless population that has, at times, caused some issues within the Center.

Individuals, particularly homeless individuals who do not meet the age requirements of the Center, have become aggressive and disruptive and frightened seniors to the point that the CBC had to hire a security guard to secure the building and surrounding outdoor space to keep the environment safe for seniors.
Carlsbad is the 5th largest city in San Diego County with a population of 112,000. Margaret stated that there has been an increase in calls received by the CBC from individuals who live in the southern region of the City expressing the need for more senior-based services in that area.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Of particular interest is the report that the south area of Carlsbad is apparently without a dedicated space for senior oriented programs and services. Margaret did mention that nearby Encinitas has a senior center that may be closer for these Carlsbad residents, however, access to that location is dependent on senior’s ability to secure transportation.

At the conclusion of the site visit, Joe Gavin was invited to speak to the Carlsbad Commission on Aging meeting where he provided a quick background and SDSCF and main mission efforts, including the focus on enhancing the infrastructure of senior centers in San Diego.

It is suggested that SDSCF follow up and identify key people within the City of Carlsbad to see if there is movement in addressing the shortage of services in the southern part of the city and gauge interest levels in conducting an assessment.

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**El Corazon Senior Center, Oceanside**

3302 Senior Center Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with limited traditional programming
- **Building constructed:** 2009
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** 3000/8%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 35,500
- **Budget:** $300,000
- **Full-time staff:** 1
- **Average age of participant estimated:** 72
- **Managing entity:** City of Oceanside
- **Public transportation:** Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** Excellent
- **Meals program:** None
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** Yes/excellent
- **Computer lab:** 4 stations in public space
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Moderate
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited, internal
- **Social enterprises:** None at moment, but a commercial kitchen offers promising opportunity

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**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Doug Moon, Recreation Supervisor for the City of Oceanside and the manager of the El Corazon Senior Center (ECSC). The Center operates under the Parks and recreation Department of the City of Oceanside under the direction of Homer Post. ECSC is one of two senior centers in Oceanside, the third biggest city in San Diego County with a population of 180,000. The other location, the Country Club Senior Center, is in the city center of Oceanside. The city is the owner of the building and all staff are city employees. Hours of
operation are 9:00- 5:00 Monday through Thursday and Friday 9:00- 4:00. Limited special events are held occasionally on weekends, but the building is normally reserved for rental events during that timeframe.

The ECSC is in the southeastern region of Oceanside in an area of commercial development and open space. It sits on a 6-acre city-owned parcel of land that is currently in planning stages for future development. The ESCSC was built in 2009 as a response by city planners to prepare for the growing population of older adults in Oceanside and to provide a secondary option to complement the programs and services of the Country Clubs Senior Center in the older area of Oceanside.

There is limited public transportation in the area with a bus stop approximately 2 blocks from the building. However, there is a rather steep grade for those who walk to the ECSC from the stop which could pose significant challenge for those who rely on the public transportation option.

There is a large parking lot to accommodate older adults who drive their own vehicle. The building makes use of the natural landscape of the area and possesses a modern design feel upon arrival.

OBSERVATIONS
The ECSC is operated by 1 full-time staff member (another city employee is the full-time manager of both Oceanside senior centers) and 3 part-time recreation specialists. One half-time employee is responsible for the building maintenance.

There are ten senior volunteers who provide internal support such as manning information desk, giving tours to new seniors, some office work and helping with preparations for special events Average attendance at the ECSC varies dependent upon when the nearby Mira Costa College is in session. The college provides various fitness classes. When in session, attendance at ECSC is approximately 250-300 per day; when Mira Costa is not in session, attendance figures are approximately 125-150 per day. Annually, approximately 3,000 older adults participate in ECSC activities and events. With a population of an estimated 35,000 people over the age of 60 in Oceanside, this figure demonstrates that ECSC is serving about 8% of the target population. Average age of ECSC attendees is estimated to be 72 years old.

The majority of ECSC programming is at no charge to older adults. These classes and activities include “EC Walkers” group, knitting, table tennis, card games, chair yoga, spinal fitness, balance and mobility, book club and drawing and painting. Fee-based activities include Zumba, line dancing and membership to the fitness club.

Due to a major remodeling project of the commercial kitchen area at ECSC, the fitness classes will be moved to the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation facility. This building is located 4.3 miles from ECSX and will be the host of these classes for the next seven months.

Aside from Mira Costa College, there is limited engagement with other entities to provide additional programming at the site. For the month of February 2019, AARP is providing tax return assistance and HICAP provides 2 dates for health insurance counseling.

CHALLENGES
The current remodeling of the commercial kitchen is impacting ECSC programming and forcing the move of several classes to an off-site location. This transition will continue through the summer.
Current staffing is below desired levels with only one full-time staff member always on site during ECSC hours of operation.

Staff have documented increases in calls from all members of the community for information on a wide range of older adult issues. Staff have limited time and capacity to field calls.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

ECSC is a modern center that is supported by a municipality that is preparing for the future needs of its older adult residents. The completion of the commercial kitchen space will provide opportunity for ECSC to create a nutrition program for older adults and also serve as an education and job-training site to serve the needs of the entire community.

There is desire and opportunity within ECSC to enhance their community outreach efforts, not only in marketing their venue to older adults, but also in creating an enhanced resource information team for the general community.

The proposed SDSCF program model of community health workers focused on older adult wellness could be a potential fit in this community.

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**Country Club Senior Center, Oceanside**
455 Country Club Lane, Oceanside, CA 92054

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: N/A
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 35,500
- **Budget**: N/A
- **Full-time staff**: 1
- **Average age of participant (estimated)**: 75
- **Managing entity**: City of Oceanside
- **Public transportation**: Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: Excellent
- **Meals program**: Congregate lunch
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

The CCSC operates under the direction of the City of Oceanside’s Neighborhood Services Department. The CCSC is one of two senior centers located in the city with the El Corazon Senior Center serving the southern and eastern part of the municipality. Hours of operation are Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Two staff oversee the center operations with additional part-time staff managing the transportation and nutrition programs.
The CCSC offers traditional senior center programming. Services of note include an enhanced ceramics class series and several classes offered through a partnership with Mira Costa College. The CCSC is a food distribution site for the San Diego Food Bank as well as site for Animeals pet food distribution. Most programs and classes are offered at no charge to older adults.

A congregate meal service is offered on site through a partnership with Serving Seniors and is offered 5 days a week at the LJCC. This program is like other nutrition programs that exist throughout the area that are primarily funded through the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services (AIS).

The City of Oceanside operate a robust transportation program for older adults with transportation barriers. The Seniors on the Go service provides three options for seniors. The volunteer driver program is comprised of Oceanside residents providing free rides to seniors for a variety of errands, yet with a priority for medical appointments. Seniors have the option to purchase reduced-rate taxi scrip booklets to help defray the cost of cab service when other transportation options are not available. The Ride Service Program is a $5 one-way door-to-door transportation service that covers Oceanside and neighboring communities as well as some area medical centers.

NORTH COUNTY INLAND REGION

Ed Brown Senior Center, Rancho Bernardo
18402 W. Bernardo Drive, San Diego, CA 92127

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize/Traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1989
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional populations served**: 500/6%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 8,000
- **Budget**: $88,200
- **Full-time staff**: 0
- **Average age of participants estimated**: 76
- **Managing entity**: Ed Brown Center for Active Adults

- **Public transportation**: None
- **Special transportation program**: New program being implemented
- **Meals program**: None
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: 5-station computer room
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: 
- **Social enterprises**: None

INTRODUCTION

Joe Gavin met with Lynn Wolsey, volunteer director of the Ed Brown Senior Center at Rancho Bernardo (EBSCRB). Operations are managed under a 501(c)(3) organization dba as Ed Brown Center for Active Adults. The facility is owned by the City of San Diego and EBSCRC has a special use permit (SUP) to utilize the building and grounds. Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. There are some extended late afternoon/early evening hours for specific programming offered on occasion.

EBSCRB is part of a large municipal park complex in the Rancho Bernardo community of San Diego. Athletic fields, open green space, an all-ages recreation center, playgrounds and large tennis court
complex are primary attractions. There is no public transportation serving the primary road adjacent to the facility.

A large Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) is within 2 blocks of the EBSCRB. Parking areas are scattered throughout the site with approximately 50 spaces within a short walk of the building. However, this parking is used for individuals accessing the tennis complex as well and can create issues during popular program times and special events.

EBSCRB is located in a small building with modest landscaping features surrounding the property. A portion of the building remains vacant since an organization who ran a lawn bowling club on a parcel of land immediately to the south of the facility has ceased operations. EBSCRB has pursued gaining access to this unused space but have experienced challenges with the City of San Diego in coming to a resolution. A small lobby that features an information and resource wall and a volunteer-operated reception desk is in place to greet visitors.

EBSCRB is focused on delivering programs and services to older adults, but there is no specific age threshold to participate in the programs and events.

OBSERVATIONS

EBSCRB is unique in the San Diego senior center network as there is no salaried staff that direct operations. A Board of Directors and a volunteer administrator comprise the executive leadership. The daily programs and events are “self-managed” by the instructors and volunteers who provide the specific event. EBSCRB serves approximately 300 older adults per month and 500 annually. The average age of participants is 76 years old.

The director stated that about 8,000 individuals comprise their target population in their service area. This translates to a participant rate of about 6% at the EBSCRB. Annual membership fees are $65 and an annual “Class Pass” that gives unlimited access to seniors for over 30 activities and programs is available at $125. For individuals with limited income, there is a scholarship program to supplement the costs of membership.

Featured programming includes yoga, Qigong, Tai Chi, a variety of dance classes, general exercise, arthritis & balance class, watercolors, drawing, Bingo, knitting club, a playreaders theater group and a single senior’s group. Annually, there is a health and fitness fair directed by the center and a “Life Matters” symposium dedicated to discussion of senior-related issues. EBSCRB has multiple partners in the community who provide for additional programming and services including National University nursing program for health screenings and education workshops, Rancho Bernardo Rotary Club for a small home modification program, National Aging in Place Council for guidance and education on home adaptation, American Lung Association with the Better Breathers Club, HICAP for health insurance counseling, and Clear Choice for hearing screenings.
With the nearby city of Poway beginning construction of a new senior center, Jewish Family Services (JFS) will be transitioning an office that was in the old Poway center to the EBSCRB. This provision of office space to JFS will provide members with greater access to their menu of services, including access to the JFS transportation programs.

The EBSCRB is a 5,200 square foot facility that was constructed in 1989. Most of the structure is comprised of a multipurpose community room with a stage were most of the programs are offered. There is a dedicated space for a small computer lab with 5 workstations and corresponding programming for tutoring and instruction. A small library that doubles as additional classroom space is also located in the main structure of the facility.

There is an additional classroom space that is within the main building but is accessed from the outside. As mentioned earlier, there is more space available due to the shuttering of a lawn bowling club, but challenges in working within the city department in charge have arisen and the space continues to go unoccupied. This is especially problematic for EBSCRB as limited classroom space forces the delivery of some of their programs to the nearby Glassman Rec Center.

There is no fitness room with exercise equipment on site. EBSCRB has hand weights, exercise bands and other limited equipment to support their light exercise classes.

The City of San Diego has recently completed upgrades to the exterior of the building. The interior remains without significant upgrade from original construction. A proposed upgrade to an outdoor seating area is currently being discussed as a subsequent project. The proposal centers around improving a patio at the rear of the property to make the space better equipped to provide additional events. Costs are estimated at $42,000 and an initial fundraising effort of selling engraved memorial bricks to support the work is in discussion. Costs would be shared by the adjacent Rancho Bernardo Tennis Club.

The building is available for rental to the general community for special events. The site has a non-commercial kitchen for use for staging of food service for these events but contains very limited equipment and space. While the use of the kitchen is part of the rental program, due to logistics and other confounding matters within the special use permit, it is primarily off-limits for the use of the EBSCRB.

EBSCRB does not offer any nutrition service for its members. The kitchen amenities would require a significant upgrade before a congregate meal service option would be feasible.

The impending arrival of Jewish Family Services (JFS) to offices at EBSCRB will provide transportation options that will improve access to the facility and the surrounding area for its members. Participants at EBSCRB will be able to access JFS On the Go and Ride and Smiles program for better access to locations in the surrounding community and become eligible for JFS partnership with Lyft to receive free rides to and from the center. This emerging partnership for older adults addresses a significant need as the public transportation system does not provide a route near the center’s location. The JFS On the Go buses will be provided at reduced rates for the EBSCRB so that the organization can plan more “field trips” to area attractions within 25 miles of EBSCRB.

The EBSCRB is reliant upon senior volunteers to staff the information desk in the lobby. A rotating team handles the basic administrative functions and are provided support of the volunteer director who is only at the facility one day a week. Volunteers schedule and lead some of the daily programming.
Through a partnership with the Ranch Bernardo Community Foundation, the EBSCRB is home to the People, Opportunities, and Participation (POP) seminar series. This series is comprised of educational workshops over the course of a few months to provide any resident with a curriculum to encourage civic participation. The program is designed to teach essential civic knowledge and community organizing skills so that individuals can better engage with their community leaders.

**CHALLENGES**

EBSCRB has been able to keep the doors open through periods of significant challenge through the work of dedicated volunteers and board members. EBSCRB nearly closed its doors in 2008 and continues to face significant issues in maintaining and sustaining their operations.

At an annual budget of less than $100,000, EBSCRB is challenged monthly with paying the bills. The City installed solar panels a few years ago to address costs, but due to bureaucratic entanglements and the fact that the utility bill goes directly to the center and not the City, these panels are not being utilized for the benefit of EBSCRB. The average utility bill for the facility is $800 per month.

There is no one currently on the volunteer staff who can assist with grant writing responsibilities to increase funding streams.

The current arrangement with the City precludes in-kind renovation and upgrades to the building. A condition of the special use permit obligates EBSCRB to pay a “prevailing wage” for any work done in the building.

Operating as an all-volunteer organization leads to challenges for day-to-day oversight of center operations. Staff who provide the administrative tasks (answering phone, engaging with members, small bookkeeping tasks, etc.) need greater support than what can be currently offered.

The EBSCRB is a small facility that limits opportunities for growth of services and programs and again, the nature of the agreement with the City adds to the challenge of addressing these needs.

There are a large amount of older adult communities and assisted living facilities in the Rancho Bernardo area that pose a challenge for EBSCRB in an effort to recruit new members. Residents of these communities have access to varying levels of activities and programs of a similar nature to what is offered at EBSCRB.

While parking in the area is usually accessible, there are times when an overflow causes issues. There is an unused parcel of land that has been identified as an area where expanded parking would be a potential solution, but there has been no willingness on the part of the City to address this concern.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

EBSCRB is significantly under-resourced senior center that provides a menu of services and programs that belie their financial reality. The center represents a promising location where the power of philanthropy could greatly impact its sustainability.
Escondido Senior Center
210 E. Park Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025

- **Size/type of center**: Large plant with traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1908/1958
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 2,000/8%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 24,900
- **Budget**: $680,000
- **Full-time staff**: 3
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 75
- **Managing entity**: City of Escondido
- **Public transportation**: Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: Transport for meals program available
- **Meals program**: Congregate, no HDM
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: Partnership with a senior resource council
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited and internal
- **Social enterprises**: Small thrift store, negligible proceeds

**INTRODUCTION**

The Escondido Senior Center is located at 210 E. Park Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025. We met with Jilaine Hernandez, Supervisor III, Director of the Center. Staff consists of 3 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees. The Center serves 300-500 seniors per day. Approximately 25,000 seniors (60+) live in the Escondido area. The Center serves a large Hispanic population, 40% of clientele, as well as a relatively large population of Egyptian older adults, 5% of clientele. The average age of Center attendees is 75-80 years old.

The center is conveniently located, 1 block off a main Escondido artery and multiple bus stops within a 2-block walk. There is ample parking available all around the complex. The physical plant size is 3 acres. There is a senior apartment complex within 2 blocks of the Center. A unique aspect of the Center is that it opens to all ages after 2 p.m. and provides meeting space for a variety of community groups in the evening and weekends. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. with variable evening and weekend hours.

**OBSERVATIONS**

An immediate observation was that the Escondido Senior Center facilities were older. The director confirmed that buildings dated back to 1908, 1958, 1994, having been built and/or renovated progressively over time. The aesthetics of the lobby reflected the age of the building with limited lighting and muted color scheme.

The Center offers traditional programming for seniors, but most programs are provided by Oasis, a lifelong learning organization that charges fees for its programming. Events offered by the Center are free of charge. Half of the annual budget applies to the nutrition program. Lunches are served Monday through Friday, to an average of 100 guests per day, who are low and very-low income individuals. Seniors 60+ can eat free, although encouraged to donate $3 per meal when able. The food is prepared off-site through a partnership with Redwood Senior Homes & Services, who also provides transportation for seniors 60 and over. Once a month, the San Diego Food Bank comes to the Center to provide food to eligible, low-income seniors aged 60 and over. Staff stressed the importance of the program and its timeliness at the end of the month when disposable income becomes increasingly limited.
There is an ancillary organization called the Senior Service Council Escondido, a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides additional programmatic offerings on the campus such as support groups, computer classes, health workshops and taxi vouchers.

**CHALLENGES**

The Center does not have a program for those in need of home-delivered meals (Meals on Wheels has a Center presence). Like similar senior centers, staff indicated a challenge in getting younger seniors to attend events at the Center or to utilize the nutrition program.

There are limited opportunities for civic engagement for seniors, but the Center has a roster of 100 seniors who fill a variety of volunteer roles for the entity. There is also limited programming involving intergenerational activity, even though the Center becomes an all-ages community Center after 2 p.m.

A portion of the annual funding consists of $159K from the City of Escondido. As currently constructed, the Center is tied to the financial policy of the City of Escondido in a way that severely limits pursuit of additional means of funding. Any revenues raised through fundraising must be redirected back to the City Treasury to replace funding allocated to the Senior Center. This results in a disincentive for the staff to engage in promoting additional fundraising efforts, in-kind donations and other means of monetary support.

Staff indicated they are receiving more inquiries into affordable housing options for seniors and have little resources to provide guidance.

Seniors also inquire frequently about technology upgrades at the center and assistance in the form of tutoring and instructions. The Center has no computer equipment.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

The most pressing need at the Center is a physical plant upgrade. The feel of the Center is institutional and drab. As mentioned, the budget is directed by the city through the general fund, creating a challenge to raise the funding through philanthropic means. While the facility is lacking in aesthetics, it does possess adequate size to accommodate potential upgrades. There is ample space for additions such as a fitness center, computer lab and more educational and event programming. There is also ample outdoor space that could also accommodate additional efforts such as a community garden or an outdoor fitness space.

Opportunity exists to provide an outreach program designed to inform the community about the Center and certainly focus on addressing the needs of Escondido seniors who fall into the Senior Orphan category.
STAFF WISH LIST:

- Refurbishing of physical plant: new carpets, paint, improved lighting fixtures and selected repairs
- In-Kind contributions: tables, chairs, etc.
- Computers (with games installed) and programming for tutelage
- Volunteers to donate time and effort for refurbishing efforts
- Improve intergenerational programming
- Amending current city policy that limits fundraising

San Marcos Senior Center
111 Richmar Avenue, San Marcos, CA 92069

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize/traditional and wellness
- **Building constructed**: 1988
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 3,000/20%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 14,900
- **Budget**: $520,000
- **Full-time staff**: 4
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 73
- **Managing entity**: City of San Marcos
- **Public transportation**: Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program**: Multiple options
- **Meals program**: Congregate, no HDM
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: Large dedicated space with limited equipment
- **Computer lab**: Excellent with 30 stations and tutelage available
- **On-site social services**: Limited, volunteer led resource and information
- **Community collaboration**: Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited and internal
- **Social enterprises**: None

INTRODUCTION

The San Marcos Senior Activity Center is located at 111 Richmar Ave, San Marcos, CA 92069. We met with director Brian Thill. The Center is managed by the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation department, employs four full-time staff and 7 part-time staff to manage the day-to-day activities, and has 10 senior volunteers who assist in various capacities. Hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Approximately 3,000 adults aged 50 and over utilize the Center each month. The vast majority of Center attendees are White, English-speaking adults. Average age range is 70-75 years old.

The campus is located on a sizeable lot located just off a main San Marcos artery, with plentiful parking available and more than adequate space to accommodate drop off/pick up of seniors who arrive by van or bus service. However, public transportation is limited with a NCTD bus line near the Center. The
facility offers several modern well-maintained rooms designed for socialization, entertainment, classes, programs, and food services.

The outside grounds are visually appealing and entry into the lobby reveals a bright, modern-looking facility with vibrant coloring and plenty of natural light. Construction of the building occurred in the late 1980’s. There are no senior apartment buildings in the immediate area.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The Center stands out from other senior centers with the depth of their programmatic offerings. While traditional offerings such as Bingo, games, and crafts populate the calendar, there are a multitude of fitness opportunities and unique classes by which to engage seniors. All classes require seniors to pay for involvement. Most of the sedentary classes are available for a fee of $1. Fitness classes and specialty classes like oil painting and watercolors range from $25 to $85 a month. Also, seniors who participate in Center activities are asked for a minimum of $10 for an annual donation.

Several community partners provide programming for the center, including Palomar Health (various health screenings), Elder Law and Advocacy, AARP Safe Driving Class, Alzheimer’s SD, Cal State San Marcos, local Church groups, and the San Diego Food Bank.

The Center provides a daily congregate meal lunch through funding from the County of San Diego and City of San Marcos. Suggested donation for the meal is $4 for seniors over 60 and $5 for under the age of 60. No senior over the age of 60 is denied a meal based on ability to pay.

**CHALLENGES**

Civic engagement initiatives are internally based. There are no planned efforts to create a group that will develop initiatives to branch into the greater San Marcos community.

Public transportation options are sparse compared to the more densely populated City of San Diego region. The Center has developed a partnership with the Unified School District to utilize buses to provide door-to-door transportation for seniors enrolled in the meals program. There is no fee, but a $1 donation is suggested. While use of school buses during a time they are normally idle is a great use of dormant resources, there are challenges for seniors with mobility issues. An additional “Catch a Ride” program offers a resource for those older adults able to pay a moderate fee, but it is restricted to the San Marcos city limits.

Funding for the Center is provided through the City of San Marcos general fund. The operations side is provided with approximately $250K and the nutrition program is comprised of $270K in funding for the nutrition program. Annual membership fees, donations received from transportation and meals program, fees for exercise and fitness and activities and classes, and rental of space provide revenue streams to counterbalance municipal layouts. However, this small budget provides limited ability to hire dedicated and qualified experts to serve the seniors of San Marcos.

The average guest age is 70+ underscoring the challenge of engaging seniors age 50-65. Pressing questions were how to market to that age demographic? How to figure out innovative programming for younger seniors?
OPPORTUNITIES
New for 2019 will be the introduction of the Outdoor Fitness Zone. This area located adjacent to the main building will provide opportunities for seniors to engage in exercise and fitness classes in the fresh air. Isometric equipment and other free-standing exercise equipment will be available for seniors energized to improve their fitness in the great outdoors. This will offer the opportunity to introduce additional seniors to the Center.

Current outreach efforts include visiting local senior living facilities and mobile home parks. There is opportunity for additional thought, strategies, and innovation in outreach efforts including development of a protocol to engage elder orphans.

Currently the center is revamping their volunteer package and considering other ways to attract and recruit additional volunteers.

Gloria McClellan Senior Center, Vista
1400 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista, CA 92084

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed:** 1977/1987
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** 1,500/10%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 15,100
- **Budget:** $750,000
- **Full-time staff:** 4
- **Average age of participants estimated:** 74
- **Managing entity:** City of Vista
- **Public transportation:** Limited, bus stop 1 block away
- **Special transportation program:** Excellent
- **Meals program:** Congregate and home-delivered meals program
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None, but have donated moderately used equipment, no current space available
- **Computer lab:** Small, 2 stations
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited/internal
- **Social enterprises:** None

INTRODUCTION
Joe Gavin met with Donna Meester, Community Services Program Manager for the City of Vista and the director of the Gloria McClellan Adult Activity and Resource Center (GMAARC). The Center is under the administrative direction of the Recreation and Community Services Department of the City of Vista. All GMAARC staff are employed by the city. Hours of operation of GMAARC are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. There are no evening or weekend hours.

The GMAARC consists of 2 buildings located on the 39-acre Brengle Terrace Park that contains multiple recreation sites. Aside from GMAARC, the city-owned public space contains parks and picnic sites, sports complex, outdoor theater, and botanical gardens.
The areas to the east and south are residential neighborhoods comprising of what Donna termed, “Old Vista”. Public transportation provides bus stops within a 1 block walk of the facility. There is expansive parking available with 50 spots in front of building and significantly more in areas to the North of the buildings that are utilized during busy special event days and when the facility is rented out for private use.

A special feature witnessed during the site visit was a volunteer program that provided senior visitors with rides to their vehicles upon departure. Volunteers operating golf carts took seniors to their cars as the physical plant is on a significant grade above the parking area. The exterior of the brick buildings presents a modern feel and are complemented with an outdoor lunch patio area that is visible upon entry from the parking area. There is a canopied area with benches at the entrance of the building to provide a pleasant setting for seniors to await pick-up from family, the GMAARC transportation program or the ride to the lower parking lot.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The GMAARC programs and services are supported with 4 full-time employees (Director, Recreation Coordinator, Nutrition Supervisor and Transportation Coordinator) and 4 part-time employees. Senior volunteers help support the internal efforts. Currently, there are 75 seniors on the volunteer roster. A range of 100-150 older adults participate in programs and services on a typical day with an annual total estimated to be 1,500. The population of 60 and older in Vista is approximately 15,000 which means GMAARC is serving about 10% of eligible individuals. The average age of participants is 74 years old.

There are no membership fees to join GMAARC and there are numerous activities and events available to the seniors. Most of the programming is free and consists of bingo, monthly birthday parties, craft creations, senior tap dancing, line dancing, computer basics, knitting, sewing, quilting, music appreciation, book club, painting and Scrabble club. Fee-based activities include contract and duplicate bridge, chair yoga, Positively Fit and Tai Chi Chuan. Fees are nominal ranging from $3-$4 per session.

The GMAARC is home to the Culture Caravan program that provides 4 day-trip events a month. This program is self-sustained through participant fees and provides seniors with excursions throughout Southern California. A highlight of this month’s events is a trip to opening day for the San Diego Padres.

GMAARC maintains partnerships with various community agencies that provide supporting educational and social service workshops. These additional services include health insurance counseling, hearing screenings, safety and wellness checks, minor home repair, legal assistance, nutritional education and dietary planning, tax preparation, and a monthly food box delivery through the San Diego Food Bank for eligible individuals.

GMAARC consists of two 8,100 square-foot buildings of similar design. The first was constructed in 1977 and the second in 1987. Building 1 is the primary entrance to the facility. This building recently underwent significant renovation with new flooring, remodeled bathrooms, upgraded tables and chairs and improvements to make the building more accessible for seniors with mobility challenges. A reception desk is in a small lobby area that is staffed with a rotating roster of senior volunteers and an employee of the Center.

The majority of the space is comprised of the large, multipurpose room that primarily serves as the dining room for the congregate lunch program. Other special events and activities are held in the room that includes a stage for theatrical or musical performances.
The recent upgrades included a renovation of a previously under-utilized area that was transformed into an outdoor dining area. Periodically, GMAARC will hold special-event barbecues for the seniors. A large commercial kitchen is the staging area for the day’s lunch service. While certainly containing space and capacity to produce meals on site, GMAARC partners with Kitchens for Good who are responsible for the meal preparation. There are no classrooms in building 1.

Building 2 is located immediately north, no more than a 20-foot walk from building 1. It is not an identical floor plan but is of similar interior and external design. This building is dominated as well with a large multipurpose room that is used primarily for the fitness, exercise, and dancing classes. There is more office space in this building. It is used by GMAARC staff as well as some non-affiliated community organizations. The classroom that is used for the sedentary activities is in this wing.

Primary equipment includes an upgraded audio/visual system, a small computer lab consisting of 2 computers for public use and a library. The facility was the recipient of a sizeable donation of senior-friendly exercise equipment that appears to be in very good shape. However, the GMAARC does not have space currently available to house a fitness room. The director stated that there have been preliminary discussions with the City and architects to renovate building 2 to create suitable space for this inventory.

GMAARC provides a daily congregate meal program through a partnership with the City and the San Diego County Department of Aging and Independence Services. The suggested donation for a meal is $4, but no one over the age of 60 is turned away based on their ability to pay. Last year, GMAARC provided over 12,500 meals to Vista seniors. Daily number of diners range from 50-80. The director stated that, like senior centers throughout the country, daily attendance of lunch service has dropped significantly over the last few years.

A home-delivered meals program is also provided to Vista seniors who have difficulty preparing meals and have medical conditions that restrict mobility. Fifty seniors are delivered daily meals and are provided with multiple meals on Fridays for weekend consumption. The same standard of a donation-based program applies to the home delivery service as well.

Additional nutritional support is provided through dietary and nutrition workshops and GMAARC serves as a pick-up site for the San Diego Food Bank to provide food boxes for seniors with limited incomes.

GMAARC provides multiple transportation options for seniors to the facility and out into the community. A shuttle service for the daily lunch program is available to individuals 60 and over. This service is donation-based with a suggested fare of $1. A discounted taxi service program (60% of market value) is an additional option. Eligible seniors can purchase taxi scrip valued at $20 for $8 and can purchase up to 4 books of scrip per month.

The Out & About transportation program is comprised of shuttle service and a volunteer driver program. Vista seniors can utilize this service for general errands, medical appointments and social engagements within the Vista region. Door-to-door service with the shuttle service is $4 for round trip and the volunteer driver program costs range from $6-$12 round trip depending on distance travelled.

There are 75 senior volunteers who provide internal support for GMAARC operations. Assisting with the lunch service and helping with coordination of the free programs and services are the primary functions of the volunteer team. Volunteers also lend support to employed staff at the lobby reception.
desk. The director stated that there are occasional events with an intergenerational emphasis, but they are difficult to sustain due to multiple factors. There is little outreach into the community by GMAARC volunteers.

**CHALLENGES**

Lack of additional staffing is a consistent issue at GMAARC. Additional part-time help for afternoon hours to support the various departments and an additional shuttle driver are especially needed. Part-time staff are required to be available to staff the facility when it is in use for private rentals. Part-time staff are capped on the number of hours that can be worked in a year. This causes significant problems for the facility director as hours worked on rental responsibilities takes away from hours available to work for GMAARC duties.

GMAARC has experienced a significant drop in congregate meals attendees. The director provided the anecdote that “only a few years ago, on popular days, we would have over 100 people dining in the lunchroom, today was a “popular day and we served less than 80”. GMAARC is not alone in experiencing this issue as it remains a confounding issue at congregate meal sites throughout the country. In addition, while attendance at the congregate meal site has declined, GMAARC has experienced a 15% in their home-delivery meals program. The program has grown to the point where they are unable to add any new requests without a current recipient withdrawing.

The transportation program is a valuable asset in the GMAARC menu of services but present a financial challenge as all maintenance costs are charged back by the City of Vista to GMAARC budget.

The City of Vista has grown to the point that the GMAARC may not be able to address the needs of all older adults in the community. The director mentioned areas to the south and west of city center are a 20–minute drive from GMAARC. This region is home to more “younger seniors”, according to the director, who have different needs and circumstances and may find the GMAARC inconvenient and have programming that does not suit their tastes and lifestyles.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

With over 17,000 adults over the age of 60 currently residing in Vista and with projected growth in this demographic, construction of a second senior center, similar to what has occurred in the nearby city of Oceanside, is a possible course of action. SDSCF could provide support through a community needs assessment akin to what has been developed for the Borrego senior center discovery process.
Fallbrook Senior Center
399 Heald Lane, Fallbrook, CA 92028

- **Size/type of center**: Micro/traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1972
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served**: 500/4%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 13,000
- **Budget**: $300,000
- **Full-time staff**: 1
- **Average age of participants estimated**: 77
- **Managing entity**: Fallbrook Senior Center, a 501(c)(3)
- **Public transportation**: None
- **Special transportation program**: Good with 2 programs provided by partnering agency

**Meals program**: Congregate and home-delivered meals program
**Fitness room/status of equipment**: Small, outdoor (canopied)/good
**Computer lab**: None
**On-site social services**: None, but strong community partner
**Community collaboration**: Excellent
**Civic engagement opportunities**: Good, internal with external opportunities with partnering agency
**Social enterprises**: Excellent thrift store model

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin met with Susie Gonsalves, Operations Manager for the Fallbrook Senior Center (FSC). FSC is a 501(c)(3) organization. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Site is closed on weekends.

FSC is located on a main artery near the city center of Fallbrook. The site is part of a larger public area consisting of parks and recreational space and an all-ages community center. There is no public transportation servicing the center. While there is no dedicated parking on-site, street parking and a community lot adjacent to the property provide ample spaces. There is a school and a church located within one block of FSC.

The exterior of FSC is consistent with architectural design of surrounding area and presents a welcoming, small-town feel.

**OBSERVATIONS**

FSC program and services are supported by 1 full-time employee and 5 part-time employees. Seventy senior volunteers support staff in various FSC activities including lunch service, activity coordination and in the thrift store. On average, approximately 100 older adults aged 50 and over utilize the FSC daily with a total of 500 seniors visiting annually. Average age of FSC participant is 77 years old.

Most recent census data projects the current population of Fallbrook citizens over the age of 60 to be about 13,000. With an annual number of attendees of 500, only about 4% of eligible individuals attend FSC. This is below the 8% average of senior center attendance in the region. Fallbrook’s rural setting may be a significant variable in this statistic.
There is a $15 annual membership fee though the fee is not required for FSC lunch program attendees. Most activities and events are of no charge to participant and include: Senior Wellness Exercise group, cards and games, line dancing, weekly pool tournaments, ukulele class, and evening bingo. Two program offerings, watercolor painting and chair yoga, require a nominal fee for participation.

FSC offers seniors access to multi-day travel packages. FSC also partners with the Vista Senior Center Travel Caravan for day trip outings.

Community partners include AARP who provide safe-driving classes and tax preparation assistance, Palomar College, Mira Costa College, UC San Marcos School of Nursing, and the Temecula School of Beauty.

Seniors Helping Seniors, a homecare and companion service, is an important community resource for seniors who need additional assistance in order to remain safely in their homes. The program provides employment opportunities for older adults to serve their peers in the Fallbrook area.

The Foundation for Senior Care is a 501(c)(3) Fallbrook-area organization that provides additional supports for older adults that are not otherwise available through FSC. A Care van and volunteer driver service, adult day care center, care advocacy workers and computer and educational seminars, and senior volunteer program are the key agency offerings. Volunteer also operate a variation of the “You Are Not Alone” program (YANA) by a friendly telephone call check-in service and greeting card initiative.

FSC is a 4,000 square-foot facility that was constructed in 1972. FSC owns the building that sits on County-owned land. The annual lease of the land is $1. The interior consists of lobby, office space for staff, lounge, 2 classrooms, pool room and a multipurpose room. At time of visit, 40 seniors were utilizing the multipurpose room for bridge.

The FSC recently created a canopied, outdoor exercise area complete with 8 pieces of equipment. A large television is scheduled to be added to enhance the experience for those utilizing the treadmills. There is no computer equipment made available to the seniors.

The building has undergone a recent renovation with the installation of new windows and new flooring. There are plans for the development of solar capacity for the FSC in the near future.

A unique element of FSC is a large and thriving thrift store located in the back of the property. While thrift stores have been chronicled in a couple of other senior centers in the region, the FSC store stands out in sheer size, selection and as a source for revenue for FSC. The store consists of 2 floors of typical thrift store wares and maintains a covered outdoor setting and sheds to store large furniture.

The thrift store has several volunteers who operate the day-to-day operations. The proceeds from the operation help support the FSC budget with proceeds of up to $60,000 annually.

FSC is a provider of the daily lunch program made possible through funds provided by County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services (AIS). There is a suggested donation of $5.00 but no one over the age of 60 is turned away based on ability to pay. FSC also operates a home-delivered meals program as well. Daily numbers for the congregate meal service average 40 diners and 60 individuals are provided with the home-delivered meals service.

Due to space limitations and lack of kitchen within center, the meals program is provided at the adjacent community center a ½ block from the senior center.
Through the Fallbrook Food Pantry, a monthly distribution of food items is provided to eligible seniors. FSC does not offer transportation services but is aligned with the Foundation for Senior Care that offers two programs. The Care Van provides door to door service for medical appointments, grocery shopping and more. Seniors are asked to make reservations 48-hours in advance and rides to medical appointments are given priority.

The Expanded Rides Program places seniors with volunteers who utilize their own vehicles to bring seniors to medical appointments within a 55-mile radius of Fallbrook. This program has taken on additional significance since the Fallbrook Hospital closed its doors in 2016.

Over 70 volunteers donate time to the efforts of FSC. The focus of these efforts is purely internal. Seniors do have the opportunity to volunteer time with the Foundation for Senior Care for more expansive opportunities in the Fallbrook community.

CHALLENGES
FSC has only 1 full-time employee to direct all operations of the center. Often, the managing director is pulled into responsibilities simply because there is no one else available.

With no municipal support and reliance upon donations and uncertain funding streams such as grants, meeting the annual budget is challenging. It is difficult to plan for expansion of programs and services and building maintenance when consistently battling financial limitations.

FSC and the Foundation for Senior Care deliver terrific services to older adults in Fallbrook. Yet, with a population of over 13,000 individuals aged 60 and over in the Fallbrook area, the number of people accessing the services of these two organizations appears to be quite small. The rural landscape of Fallbrook certainly may a contributing factor to this access issue.

The Thrift Store is an excellent example of a social enterprise providing revenue to support the FSC mission and could be utilized as a model to be incorporated into other centers in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES
The Foundation for Senior Care provides ancillary support to the work of FSC. This localized support structure that supplements the social and nutritional efforts of FSC is similar to the SDSCF COACH corps model of community-based action to ensure every senior has someone they can turn to and trust. A meeting with the program director would be beneficial to SDSCF team in the continuing development of the COACH Corps.
Ramona Senior Center
434 Aqua Lane, Ramona, CA 92065

- **Size/type of center**: Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed**: 1990’s
- **Estimated annual participation and percentage of regional population served**: 500/7%
- **Senior population of area (60+)**: 7,200
- **Budget**: $500,000
- **Full-time staff**: 3
- **Average age of participant estimated**: 75
- **Managing entity**: Pacific Educational Facilities
- **Public transportation**: Poor
- **Special transportation program**: Limited
- **Meals program**: Congregate and home delivery
- **Fitness room/status of equipment**: None
- **Computer lab**: None
- **On-site social services**: None
- **Community collaboration**: Minor
- **Civic engagement opportunities**: Limited and internal
- **Social enterprises**: None

**INTRODUCTION**

The Ramona Senior Center (RSC) is located at 434 Aqua Ln, Ramona, CA 92065. We met with the director, Lora Cicalo, and two of the board members. The RSC rents space in the local Recreation Center, owned by the water district. The RSC operates under a stand-alone 501(c)(3) organization, named Pacific Educational Facilities.

The RSC is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. The building was constructed in the 1990’s and is two blocks from the main thoroughfare in Ramona in the Ramona Community Park. The exterior and interior aesthetics are reflective of the building’s age. There is a parking lot on the grounds. There is no public transportation serving the RSC.

The physical plant includes a small meeting room, a mid-sized room that is used for socialization and small activities such as games, a larger room that is used for various purposes, and a sizable dining room that can accommodate larger events and is the gathering site for the RSC congregate meals program.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The operations of the RSC are led by 3 full time employees and 7 part time staff. The RSC has a roster of 60 volunteers who provide support for various internal and external functions. Approximately 500 older adults utilize the RSC on annual basis. Average age of participants is 75 years old. The programming at the RSC is traditional inclusive of light exercise, yoga, tech support, arts and crafts, card and board games, Bingo, travel club and movie days. Classes are offered free of charge. The RSC has nominal annual dues of $5.00.
The RSC operates both a congregate and home-delivered meals service through funding from the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services. The building contains a commercial kitchen that produces 200 meals a day of which 140 is for home-bound clients and 40-60 meals for seniors attending the RSC. The RSC serves an expansive footprint for its home-delivery program consisting of nine zip-codes, including such areas as Julian, Santa Ysabel, Warner Springs, and Palomar. The RSC operates a Nutrition Advisory Council that supplements the nutrition program by providing healthy eating workshops and giving older adults resources and referrals to food programs. The RSC offers health workshops and educational seminars on helping older adults manage conditions related to chronic disease.

The RSC offers a limited transportation program to provide seniors access to their congregate meal service. For a suggested donation of $1 each way, a senior with transportation barriers can access the meal program. This is an important program in a location with little to no public transportation resources.

The approximate annual budget for the RSC is $500,00 and funding is received from both governmental and private sources, estimated at 50% county funding and 50% from grants, fundraising, and donations. The building is available for rental by community groups, but any revenues derived from facility rentals revert to the Water District.

**CHALLENGES**

Ramona is a census-designated place (CDP) in San Diego County; residents are widely scattered in the region so access to vital services and community institutions is challenging, particularly for older residents. Staff frequently used the term “down the hill” when referencing the location of numerous critical community services (job centers, hospital systems, older adult health support systems, etc.), each often more than an hour’s drive for Ramona residents. This situation is exacerbated for those without a vehicle or a reliable source of in-kind transportation.

There is no public transportation, and the van owned by the senior center, which is used for meal delivery as well, is not ADA-friendly, so a senior must be mobile enough to use the steps into the van. Thus, most older adults visiting the senior center must either drive themselves or accompany someone who drives, limiting the number of visitors.

Since the senior center rents space in the recreation center, and other entities also rent the same space at different times, an inherent challenge is that the senior center cannot setup and organize permanent space. Staff is forced into a daily cycle of “set-up/break-down” that contribute additional burden and detracts from establishing the locale as the “community home” for Ramona older adults.

The staff often repeated a query that is common to nearly every senior center, “Where are the younger seniors?”

**OPPORTUNITIES**

A new affordable housing building for adults aged 62 and over is scheduled to be opened in June of 2019. This 62-unit complex will introduce new seniors into the Ramona community and provide the RSC with an opportunity to conduct outreach to inform the new residents of their programs and services. It also offers the possibility of partnering with the property management to create a satellite center that can offer events similar to the RSC. The housing complex is about 1 ½ miles from the RSC.
In a region with limited transportation options, exporting programming to an entity that will house over 100 seniors has potential merit.

Consideration should be given to eventually obtaining a dedicated “non-shared” space for the RSC, enabling them to permanently set up the facility in a way most beneficial to seniors, extend operating hours, and generate non-governmental supporting revenue. The staff of RSC stated that there has been years-long discussion of the creation of an inter-generational community center located centrally and near the new senior housing complex. This effort led by the County of San Diego would include a gym, exercise equipment, a pool, and a senior center. At the time of this report, feasibility of this project has yet to be determined. The RSC staff and board members stated they would be very interested in partnering in this development, but currently many details surrounding the proposal are not forthcoming from the County.

Given the extensive geographic footprint served by the Ramona Senior Center, one opportunity is for local organizations to recruit “partners” to help non-mobile or home-bound seniors. Recruitment could be from associations (e.g., Lion’s club, women’s groups...), local churches or religious institutions, membership groups, and so forth. The concept is that “younger” mature adults would visit and assist seniors who are not independently mobile. This example of community organizing is especially important in an expansive region such as Ramona that does not have the community infrastructure of older adult supports common in other areas of the county.

**Borrego Springs Senior Center**
580 Circle J Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

- **Size/type of center:** Micro/Limited programming
- **Building constructed:** 1991
- **Number of participants annual:** 125/8%
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 1500
- **Budget:** $92,000
- **Full-time staff:** 0
- **Average age of participants estimated:** 70
- **Managing entity:** Borrego Springs Senior Center
- **Public transportation:** None
- **Special transportation program:** None
- **Meals program:** Congregate and home-delivered meals
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** Small, 2-station in common area
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Very limited
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** None
- **Social enterprises:** None

**INTRODUCTION**

Joe Gavin and Jerry Ray met with Lynne Vasquez, Executive Director, and four board members of the Borrego Springs Senior Center (BSSC). The center operates as 501(c)(3) under the same name. Hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, but there are occasional extended hours on select days with special programming. There are no weekend hours of operation.

The BSSC shares a parcel of land with a pre-school and a little league baseball field. The building is of modular design and consists of one multipurpose room. There is no dedicated parking lot; an area just to the north and west is open space that provides 5-6 makeshift parking spaces. Parking is available.
along the street. A ramp has been constructed to accommodate individuals with ambulatory impairment as the building is elevated.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The BSSC conducts operations with 2 part time staff and 15 volunteers who provide internal and external support. The BSSC served about 25 seniors a day and approximately 125 on annual basis. The average age of participants is 70 years old. There are about 1,500 adults aged 60 and over in Borrego Springs creating an 8% attendance rate in the BSSC service area.

The BSSC has a limited program menu consisting of yoga and light exercise classes, card games, and movie days. The staff provide an element of social service work as they assist clients with everyday needs and benefits assistance.

The building is a pre-fabricated modular rectangular structure. It is a 2,400 square foot one-room facility that has been in operation since 1991. There is no outdoor space available for recreational activities. The BSSC received 2 computers and a printer through a donation to provide tech capacity for their participants. A piano is adjacent to the computer area. A large exercise bike has recently been donated, but there is no space at this time for utilization. A mounted TV is used for movie days and special events.

A large, commercial refrigerator is located within the main room and tables and chairs for 40 seniors for meals, card games and social events accounts for most of the center space. A small office for staff comprises the remaining space of the building. The building recently received an upgrade with the installation of 3 air-conditioning units.

The BSSC operates a congregate meal service three days a week and delivers home-delivered meals (HDM) to homebound older adults. The current roster of HDM client is 23 and the congregate service is generally comprised of 5-10 seniors. Partial funding for the program is received from the County of San Diego Aging and Independence Services and the Older Americans Act.

There is no commercial kitchen at the BSSC, so the meals are prepared at a local restaurant. The BSSC staff expressed concern as the price per meal charged by the restaurant is above what is reimbursed by the County. This issue will increase in magnitude as the restaurant is seeking an additional 30% in the new fiscal year. The BSSC is in a difficult situation as there are very limited kitchen options in Borrego Springs should they reject the proposed increase.

There is no public transportation in Borrego Springs other than a once-weekly route that will take individuals into the City of San Diego. The BSSC has no specialty transportation programs although older adults with vehicles will provide rides for their fellow seniors.

As a small senior center with a limited number of attendees, there is no formalized volunteer program.
CHALLENGES
There are numerous challenges facing the team at the BSSC. The nutrition program faces much higher costs in FY 19-20. The cost of utilities is high. The center serves a very small client base. There are no transportation options for seniors without vehicles other than receiving a ride from a friend or neighbor.

The one-room design presents challenges for holding concurrent events and there is no room for expansion. The menu of programs is limited and there are very limited community resources that are natural partners in the senior center space.

There are challenges with outreach to the Hispanic community in Borrego Springs.

OPPORTUNITIES
The SDSCF is working in partnership with the Borrego Valley Endowment Fund to conduct a community needs assessment. Through meetings with area stakeholders and distribution of surveys to the Borrego Springs community, SDSCF will incorporate feedback and provide a summary of findings.

Poway Senior Center
16315 Pomerado Road, Poway, CA 92064

- **Size/type of center:** Midsize with traditional programming
- **Building constructed:** N/A
- **Estimated annual participants and percentage of regional population served:** N/A
- **Senior population of area (60+):** 10,800
- **Budget:** N/A
- **Full-time staff:** 2
- **Average age of participant (estimated):** N/A
- **Managing entity:** PSC, a 501c3
- **Public transportation:** Limited accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** Limited
- **Meals program:** Congregate lunch
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** None
- **Computer lab:** None
- **On-site social services:** None
- **Community collaboration:** Good
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited
- **Social enterprises:** None

INTRODUCTION
The PSC is in the midst of a transition period. Recently, the city of Poway approved the construction of a new community center that will replace the current structure. For the next two years, the PSC will move to a temporary home in Poway and continue to deliver services while construction of the new facility commences. The last day of operations at the present site will be June 14, 2019 with a reopening at the temporary site scheduled for July 9, 2019.

The PSC is a 501(c)(3) organization that has provided programs, services and supports for over 45 years to Poway older adults. Over 100 adults utilize the PSC each day and the operating budget is funded through donations, grants, memberships and business partnerships. While Bingo is common in all senior centers, the game is especially vibrant at the PSC. Twice weekly Bingo events raise enough funds to cover nearly a half of the PSC operating budget.
Five staff members (f/t or p/t status unavailable) oversee the daily operations and 3 staff manage the nutrition program. Most of the activities are provided free of charge, but the PSC generates revenue through an annual $35 membership fee. A gift shop staffed by volunteers’ spins revenue back to the PSC as well. Last year, the PSC benefitted from 150 volunteers providing over 20,000 hours of service to help fulfill their mission.

The PSC offers traditional senior center programming focused on physical, emotional and social well-being. A congregate and home-delivery meal service is provided through support of AIS. A transportation service that provides rides to the PSC for lunch service and social activities is available.
APPENDIX B – SENIOR SERVICE PROVIDERS/COMMUNITY CENTERS

SOUTH BAY REGION

Casa Familiar Senior Services, San Ysidro
268 W. Park Avenue, San Ysidro, CA 92173

The CFSS is a comprehensive social service 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to educate and empower the residents of South San Diego and San Ysidro. Their multi-faceted programming structure endeavors to improve the quality of life of all.

A senior service department delivers classes and programming tailored specifically to older adult residents of San Ysidro. In addition to access to CFSS social work services, senior-specific classes include social clubs, photography class through a partnership with the Museum of Photographic Arts, computer and tech classes, food distribution days, health insurance counseling, Alzheimer’s support group, and senior-specific exercise and fitness classes.

CENTRAL SAN DIEGO REGION

Bayside Community Center
6882 Linda Vista Road, San Diego, CA 92111

The BCC is a 501(c)(3) organization operating an all-population community center focused on empowering their diverse community of Linda Vista to improve the quality of life through services, education and advocacy. The BCC is in a transition period as the inclement winter weather has caused significant damage to their center and forced daily operations to be moved to a temporary location.

The BCC is gaining significant financial momentum in expanding their capacity to offer more programs and services to the area. Since FY 16-17, the BCC has generated a five-fold increase in their revenue streams to a current level of $650,000. Plans are in development to revitalize the current center into a bustling, modern community hub with an emphasis on micro enterprises.

Programming specific to older adults include a daily congregate meals program, feeling fit exercise class sponsored by the County AIS, ukulele instruction class, tai chi, and a Zumba class at an off-site location. The BCC provides opportunity for seniors to become involved in the Linda Vista community through a monthly advocacy meeting.
Peninsula Shepherd Center
1475 Catalina Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92107

The PSC is a 501(c)(3) community-based organization that provides a localized support system to ensure that adults 60 and over can maintain their independence and thrive within the communities in which they live. The PSC is based on the Shepherd’s Centers of America model that tailors programs and supports to fit the needs of the communities they serve. There are over 100 similar programs in existence in communities across the United States. The PSC serves the zip codes of Point Loma, Ocean Beach and the Midway/Sports Arena district. The 60 and over population in these locales represent 18.1% of the total population of these areas. This ratio is significantly higher than the average for San Diego neighborhoods.

The PSC is not a senior center but does operate out of a central location. Programs, activities and special events take place at other locations in the service area. Daily operations are supported by an executive director and two program coordinators. Programs and activities offered at various sites include support groups, needle and knitting club, newsletter club, lunch bunch and healthy aging group, computer classes and tech support, bridge club, health screenings and education workshops, and light exercise and yoga classes.

Recognizing the needs of their client base, PSC supports improved community access through a strong transportation program. Two distinct options are available to seniors in need. The PSC provides a van shuttle service four days week that allows for older adults to access a variety of stores and shopping centers in the service area. Recently, the PSC was the beneficiary of a major gift, a wheelchair accessible van that allows for seniors with ambulatory limitations to receive the same benefits as others. The PSC also operates a volunteer driver service program that provides door-to-door transportation for seniors to complete specialized errands such as visits to medical offices within the City of San Diego. There is a $60 annual membership for each transportation option. The volunteer ride program does not require a donation while the van shuttle service asks for a donation of $5 round trip. In addition to volunteering for the transportation program, younger and older are given opportunity to donate time for other PSC initiatives including visiting angels, computer tutoring and the minor home repair/handyman program.

Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, La Jolla
4126 Executive Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

The LFJCC is a 501(c)(3) organization providing a wide variety of activities, events and programming for all ages. There is something for everyone at the LFJCC and individuals of all ages are welcome. Within this 97,000 square foot complex, there is Senior Adult Program that emphasizes learning, growing and enriching the lives of others.

Monthly membership fees for an individual senior are $36 a month with a one-time registration fee of $30. The LFJCC serves over 500 older adults annually. Members have access to a fitness room, gymnasium, a 50-meter heated swimming pool, softball fields and tennis courts. A variety of senior-specific classes are offered.
The LFJCC also offers educational and socialization opportunities. Program highlights include:

- Film Fan group
- Music appreciation and instruction
- Painting and sketching
- World literature class
- Current events discussion group
- Healthy living workshops
- Card games
- Joy of opera
- Aerobics
- Qigong
- Tech tutoring with teens
- Language classes

Some classes require a fee for participation. Many activities are offered at no charge either through the LFJCC or through a partnership with the Continuing Education program of San Diego Community College.

Transportation services are available to older adults in collaboration with Jewish Family Services On the Go program.

Seniors are also provided with access to health insurance counseling and legal services.

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**EAST COUNTY REGION**

**Alpine Community Center**  
1830 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901

ACC is an all ages community center located in the center of Alpine. The ACC is an 8,000 square foot facility that provides recreational activities, fitness classes and socialization opportunities. The building is within a complex that includes a park and playground, a lighted baseball field, tennis courts and a stage.

The ACC is operated by a 501(c)(3) and relies strictly on donations from the community to support ongoing operations.

There is limited programming specifically tailored to older adults. These classes and events are offered once a week and are donation-based:

- Sit N Fit (gentle exercise)
- Alzheimer’s support group
- Card Club
- Senior Lunch and games
NORTH COUNTY COASTAL REGION

Del Mar Community Connections
225 9th Street, Del Mar, CA 92014

DMCC is a community-based volunteer-driven organization that provides programs, services and supports through various sites in the city of Del Mar. Their focus is on helping older adults in Del Mar so that they may age in their homes and remain in the community they love.

The 501(c)(3) organization has been in existence for 20 years and has grown to meet the challenges of our aging society. Del Mar has the highest percentage of seniors 65 and over of any city in San Diego County (23.5%) and relies on the volunteer spirit that has bolstered the organization since its inception.

There is no specific “senior center” building. The services are delivered in several locations in Del Mar with the Del Mar Community Building as a primary site and home to the 2 Full-time staff members who oversee the operations. In FY 17-18, total revenue for DMCC was $240,000 with fundraising and special events accounting for over half of that figure. Programs and services delivered by the organization include:

- Shuttle service for grocery trips
- Volunteer driver service
- Wheelchair accessible van service
- Monthly diners club at Del Mar restaurants
- Tuesday lunch club for older seniors
- Healthy Aging workshops
- Financial workshops
- Tech support and computer tutoring
- Social events at local church
- UCSD Healthy Aging Lecture series
- Card games
- Book club
- Silver Age Yoga

Solana Beach Community Senior Center
120 Stevens Avenue, Solana Beach, CA 92075

The SBCSC is an outreach program operated by the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church. There is no dedicated senior center space, programs and activities take place in various sites of the church campus. The budget of the SBCSC is funded by the church. The SBCSC provides programs and activities one day a week (Wednesdays) for any senior regardless of their affiliation with the church. The operation is seasonal with no scheduled activities for July or August.

Activities include a feeling fit club sponsored by the County of San Diego, bible study, silver age yoga, book club, music appreciation class, lunch and learn seminar series, coffee corner, current events discussion group, health and legal counseling and health screenings. The SBCSC provides opportunities for one-day excursions throughout San Diego County for their senior participants.
OUT OF STATE

Mather’s Café, Chicago

- **Size/type of center:** Micro/café model
- **Building constructed:** 2003
- **Number of participants annual:** 2,000
- **Senior population of area (60+):** N/A
- **Average age of participant estimated:** 70
- **Managing entity:** Mather’s Lifeways
- **Public transportation:** Good accessibility
- **Special transportation program:** None
- **Meals program:** Breakfast/Lunch at market rate prices
- **Fitness room/status of equipment:** Small/newer equipment
- **Computer lab:** Small but excellent support services
- **On-site social services:** LCSW with limited availability
- **Community collaboration:** Excellent
- **Civic engagement opportunities:** Limited
- **Social enterprises:** The model is part social enterprise with considerable support from parent organization

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Gavin visited the Mather’s Café – a “Café Model” senior center located in Chicago, meeting with Nina Kuzniak, Director of Café Operations. Mather’s operations consist of senior living properties, a nationally recognized institute on aging, and social service programming. In addition to services for older adults provided in multiple locations in the northern suburbs of Chicago, Mather’s has launched 3 innovative cafés that give older adults opportunity to engage in an innovative community setting.

OBSERVATIONS

The Café operates out of a 4,900 square foot building that is leased by Mather’s, is proximate to public transportation, and has a dedicated parking lot. It is bright and colorful with plenty of natural light. The building consists of a small lobby staffed by 2 older adult employees, an exercise room, a gathering place that also serves as a multipurpose room, a small fitness center, a small area for computer use, the main dining area that can accommodate approximately 50 diners and an open kitchen.

The café is in a primarily African-American neighborhood and the clientele is representative of the neighborhood. The café welcomes approximately 135 older adults on a typical business day serving a total of 2,000 older adults annually. The age of 70 was used as a breakdown of café visitors with half under and half over. All ages are welcomed at the café, yet the staff added that they do have to fight the perception that the café “is for older people”. The café is open 7 days a week.

Mather’s Lifeways is the sole funder of the café operations. The organization does not receive any local, state or federal funding and they do not seek out grants, foundation funding, donations or other philanthropy. Mather’s Lifeways provides substantial subsidy for the three cafés budgets, amounting to about $2 million dollars annually. Congregate meal sites are offered at low to no-cost options for those who may not have the financial means to afford the café prices.

Revenues (in addition to the subsidy) are derived from net “profit” margins on café sales, as well as suggested “donations” for certain programmatic efforts, although there is a considerable number of events that are free of charge for seniors.
Mather’s Café provides a wide variety of events, classes and workshops; programming is created that is mindful of the cultural diversity of each of the locations.

Mather’s utilizes a philosophy of “treating the person first and the older adult second. The signage and feel of the café support this approach; an individual walking into the café for the first time would not think they were walking into a facility dedicated to “senior citizens”. The café provides a community setting for older adults to engage and connect in an environment that would be best described as non-traditional in terms of “senior centers”.

CHALLENGES
Sustainability of this model is a serious challenge, given the need for a substantial commitment of philanthropy from a “parent” or supporting organization.

OPPORTUNITIES
The café model represents a significant sea change in what a senior center can be. While programming is similar to what is offered in more traditional settings, the built environment provides a modern feel that can have impact on appealing to a broader segment of the older adult population. Other benefits include the increased opportunity for the organic development of intergenerational interactions as cafes are open to all in the community and increased opportunity for creation of a social enterprise. Stakeholders interested in developing infrastructure for older adults in dense urban areas are potential targets for introduction into this form of service delivery.
APPENDIX C – INNOVATIVE SENIOR CENTER MODELS

Eight models of emerging senior centers identified in a 2009 nationwide study by the National Institute of Senior Centers


I. CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are their drive to:

- Meet the highest standards of excellence, primarily as identified by NISC accreditation
- Apply for state association of senior centers’ accreditation
- Operate as nonprofit centers that meet state nonprofit standards
- Apply for recognition from nonprofit and governmental centers, eg., the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
- Hire and support directors with higher education and/or management certificates
- Promote continuous improvement, adaptability, and strategic management

Example #1: Fergus Falls Senior Citizens Program, Inc., Fergus Falls, MN

The Fergus Fall Senior Citizens Program, Inc. (www.ffsenior.org) has received:
- A Certificate of Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership & Management
- NISC Accreditation and Re-Accreditation
- MN Nonprofit Excellence Award
- Certified Senior Advisor® designation
- Recognition that it meets the Charities Review Council Standards
- Recognition as a Community Leader beyond a Senior Center

Example #2: Sartory Senior Center, Coral Springs, FL

The Sartory Senior Center (www.coral springs.org/senior programs) has:
- Been funded by the City government (Parks & Recreation)
- Led community in a statewide initiative to create “Communities for a Lifetime”
- Created a broad coalition by involving all members of the community in planning and development
- Stopped migration of older adults from rural areas to urban areas to access services
- Demonstrated leadership and civic-mindedness, as a result of which they are viewed as an integral focal point in their community.

Impact of the Centers of Excellence Model:
- Provides planning, evaluation roadmap, risk management for communities they serve
- Increased credibility, accountability, quality assurance, consistency
- Inspiration and increased morale among staff and participants
- Increased Public Relations: recognition, prestige, image, professionalism, press
- Increased Funding
- Builds/increases strategic partnerships, enhances programming
- Stakeholder involvement, development, educates, increases participation
- Senior centers seen as integral and viable models within communities
II. COMMUNITY CENTER MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Diverse and comprehensive programming
- Programming to be offered at multiple sites through partnerships, e.g. ‘Centers Beyond Walls’
- Provide inclusive programming and activities for all ages and abilities
- A state-of-the-art health and fitness center
- Programs that encompass health, recreational, educational, cultural, nutritional and social service needs
- Consistent and intensive program evaluation and needs assessments
- Use of alternative names instead of ‘Senior Center’

Example #1: Fort Collins Senior Center, Fort Collins, CO

The Fort Collins Senior Center (www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/recreation/seniorcenter) is:

- A program that was created by a public process of advocacy, a needs assessment and voting on a funding stream
- City-funded
- A center that hosts 30-60 events per day, reports 1,000 visits per day, and provides off-site events
- A center that operates 7 days a week, 6 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m.,
- Partnered with community agencies and organizations (e.g. medical, schools, businesses)
- A Center that has received national/international recognition

Example #2: Manzano Mesa Multi-generational Center, Albuquerque, NM

The Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational Center (www.cabq.gov/seniors/centers/manzano-mesa-multigenerational-center/):

- Operates a 37,000 sq. ft. multi-generational facility
- Provides programs for consumers - youth through seniors
- Operates extended hours from early morning to late evenings - senior use high from morning to early afternoons, community use high in the evenings
- Worked collaboratively with community to create niche programming for seniors
- Established a large number of strategic partnerships
- Receives city and federal funding
Other examples of the community center model, including examples of alternative names:

- Avenidas, ‘New Roads for Older Adults’
  www.avenidas.org
- 55 Kip Center, ‘Building Bridges to Successful Aging’ www.55kipcenter.org
- Mill Park Center, ‘A Community Center for Active Adults’
  www.seniorcenterservices.com
- Vesper Hall, ‘We Add Quality to Life’
  www.bluespringsgov.com/vesper
- Evergreen Commons, ‘Helping Adults get the Most out of Life’
  www.evergreencommons.org
- PEAK Center, ‘People Experiencing Activity, Arts and Knowledge’
  www.peakcenter.org
- Goodrich-Gannet Neighborhood Center
  www.ggnc.org
- Fairhill Center for Aging
  www.fairhillcenter.org

Impact of the Community Center Model:

- It’s the “IN” thing to do- intergenerational program opportunities, integrated leisure activities, inclusive vs. exclusive
- Gives taxpayers and other stakeholders the most bang for their buck
- Best utilization of facility throughout the day
- Serves large segment of population, including seniors who may not go to a ‘senior center’
- Cost sharing results in cost savings
- Quality facilities promote quality programs
- Appealing to Boomers who resist ‘senior centers’
III. WELLNESS CENTER MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Use of evidence-based health promotion models
- Consistent use of evaluation tools
- Significant collaborations
- A state-of-the-art health and fitness center
- Steady participation in health-related research protocols
- Use of innovative technology and current knowledge to promote health
- Coordination with healthcare professionals, universities, research institutions and pharmaceutical companies

Example #1: Baltimore County Senior Centers, Baltimore, MD

The Baltimore County Senior Centers (www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/aging/centers/):

- Have built a state-of-the art fitness center and offer various health-promotion programs to attract adults 55-70
- Have established strategic partnerships with Towson University (provides assistance with research and staffing) and Erickson Communities Continuing Care.
- Received expanded funding from diverse sources- University (research, staffing), Center Council (equipment), Department of Aging (programs)
- Have found that participation among younger and older seniors has increased tremendously.

Example #2: OPC Center, Rochester, MI

The OPC Center (www.opcseniorcenter.org):

- Is funded through a combination of a mill levy (1/3), fund raising and grants (1/3), service fees and charges (1/3)
- Serves three communities
- Operates a state-of-the-art fitness facility- lap & therapeutic pools, gyms, deck, garden, café
- Has more than doubled visits per day first year (700)
- Partners with university and hospital
- Operates 13 mini-buses
Example #3: Center in the Park, Philadelphia, PA

The Center in the Park (www.centerinthepark.org):

- Offers evidence-based health promotion programs such as In Touch, Beat the Blues, Harvest Health, Healthy Steps
- Partners with Thomas Jefferson University’s Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health
- Is working on sustainability business plan for Harvest Health, a chronic disease self-management program and receives consultation fees

Other examples of the Wellness Center Model:

- Lowcountry Senior Center, Evidence-Based Wellness Programs
  www.ropersaintfrancis.com/seniorcenter
- North Shore (IL) Senior Center, Large Fitness Center
  www.nssc.org
- North Shore (WA) Senior Center, New Fitness Center
  www.northshoreseniorcenter.org
- Monroe Center for Healthy Aging, Healthy Aging Alliance
  www.monroectr.org
- Elsie Stuhr Senior Center, ICAA Senior Fitness Test
  www.thprd.org/facilities/estuhr.cfm
- Rogers Adult Wellness Center
  www.rogersarkansas.com/wellnesscenter/

Impact of the Wellness Centers Model:

- Better outcome measurement through evidence-based programs
- Enhanced physical and mental health of participants (that can be documented)
- Ability to measurably promote independent lifestyles of seniors
- Increased strategic partnerships with professional organizations
- Raised the level of professionalism and image of senior centers as health-focused institutions
- Attracts younger seniors and non traditional participants
IV. CENTERS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE ARTS MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Programs and activities offered at multiple sites
- Focus on intellectual stimulation, personal growth, and enhanced quality of life
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Highly skilled, competent and experienced cadre of staff and volunteers
- Programs that are inclusive, comprehensive and innovative
- Celebrating the exploration of our creative selves

Example #1: The New Center for Learning, Five Towns Senior Center, Woodmere, NY

The New Center for Learning (email: seniorwoodmere@aol.com):

- Receives funding from the National Council of Jewish Women, School District, City, County, and State
- Provides programs for intellectual, social, cultural enrichment
- The organization is self-sustaining through fees
- Partners with school district to provide advertising and classrooms for its programs
- Offers 3-session classes to connect with new seniors
- Rigorous selection of instructors to maintain high and consistent quality of programming

Other examples of and resources for the Lifelong Learning and the Arts Model:

- Center for the Arts, Nashville, TN  
  www.seniorarts.org/
- Whitney Senior Center  
  www.ci.stcloud.mn.us/CommSvcs/Whitney
- North Carolina Center for Creative Aging, Ashville, NC  
  www.cca-nc.org/
- Center for Creative Aging  
  www.creativeaging.org

Impact of the Lifelong Learning and Arts Model:

- Enhances partners’ programming and facility use by offering senior programs
- More (and new) seniors access services because of off-site location
- Stimulating brain-fitness program helps keep minds alert
- Increases partnership opportunities with other agencies (libraries, arts organizations)
V. CONTINUUM OF CARE or THE TRANSITIONS MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Senior centers play a vital role as the focal points of coordination of information, access and service delivery to the aging population.
- Comprehensive services and programs that meet the changing needs of consumers as they “age-in-community”.
- State-of-the-art services that are characterized by incremental, as well as structured plans that allows for greater dependence on resources and focus as participant’s age.
- Services/Programs grounded in evidence-based theory and practice.
- Inter-disciplinary, comprehensive collaboration with healthcare institutions, healthcare providers, AAA’s, State Offices of Aging and Mental Health, researchers, educational institutions and community-based service providers to create a unique system of care.

Example #1: Avenidas, Palo Alto, CA

Avenidas Village ([www.avenidas.org](http://www.avenidas.org)) offers:
- Home-based membership services
- One-call resource with concierge level service- health and wellness, daily living, arts and culture, community connections
- Access and discounts with pre-screened vendors
- Medical transportation
- Daily telephone check-in
- Free emergency preparedness review
- Member-only forum, activities, directory
- Volunteer opportunities

Example #2: Ann Arundel County Maryland, Senior Center Plus Program

The Senior Center ([www.aacc.edu/seniors/centers.cfm](http://www.aacc.edu/seniors/centers.cfm)) offers:
- Respite Care for homebound seniors
- Integrated programming for frail and healthy/active seniors
- Transportation services
- Services staffed by Geriatric Nursing aides, Coordinator, and P/T Social Worker

Example #3: St. Joseph’s McAuley Center and Express Care Clinic

Hot Springs, Arkansas

The Senior Center ([www.saintjosephs.com/services/occupational/](http://www.saintjosephs.com/services/occupational/)) offers:
- Clinical and Social Continuum of Care Model of Care
- Healthcare Clinic within a Senior Center – provides rent to the Senior Center
- Critical healthcare services in a rural setting
- Services to all community members
- Community healthcare staffed by LPN, NPs and Physician’s Assistant

**Impact of the Continuum of Care/Transitions Model:**
- Serves as a conduit to incremental care for community-based seniors
- Promotes independent living
- Introduces community members and seniors to the Senior Center
- Creates a foundation for a Continuum of Care (very preliminary)
- Increases viability of the role and impact of senior centers (even as members age)
VI. THE NEXT CHAPTER MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Life planning programs to explore future possibilities and goals as people age
- Engagement through paid work and volunteer service to help find meaning and purpose
- Recognition that seniors prefer to use their skills and experience in flexible work or service opportunities
- Continued learning for new direction, enrichment and retooling
- Peer and community connections of all ages

Example #1: Newark Senior Center, Newark, Delaware (www.newarkseniorcenter.com)

The Newark Senior Center:
- Provides project consultancy services (for a fee) for nonprofits
- Participates in NCOA Wisdom Works, an evidence-based health promotion program
- Recruits and trains self-directed volunteer teams to enhance civic engagement
- Developed a volunteer database to match senior volunteers with area nonprofits
- Provides trainings (for a fee) in Nonprofit 101, Self-Directed Teams, How to be a Good Consultant, How to be an Effective Board Member
- Developed a marketing plan, wrote rental contracts, re-wrote a volunteer manual, developed a disaster recovery plan, and assisted a senior center with the NISC accreditation process

Example #2: Senior Center Services of Bartholomew County, Columbus, IN: (www.seniorcenterservices.com)

- Senior Products- a hobby venture became subcontracted manufacturing operation
- Developed a business plan and now the operation generates employment and income
- Program is self-supporting with potential to generate real income
- Offers temporary employment service
- Established a partnership with a staffing company for employment services
- Established partnerships w/area employers to increase opportunities

Other examples of The Next Chapter model:
- Fergus Falls Senior Center (MN) senior employment program www.ffsenior.org
- Coming Of Age (PA) Philadelphia. “Inspiring Opportunities for adults over 50” www.comingofage.org
- Senior Center, Inc (VA) The Next Chapter www.seniorcenterinc.org/next
- NorthShore Senior Center (IL) Life Options. www.nssc.org
- Mesa (AZ) Life Options www.mc.maricopa.edu/community/communityed/crs_mlo.htm
Impact of the Next Chapter Model:

- Seniors feel a sense of purpose, productivity, vitality
- Seniors feel physical and mental health is better
- Seniors enjoy making new friends, camaraderie of professional work environment
- Vital community resource of seniors wisdom and experience is mobilized
- Better senior buy-in to projects when choosing their own to work on
- Volunteer services at low-cost to nonprofits
- Income generation through product development, trainings and consultancy
- Promoting the senior center as vital, vibrant focal point for seniors of all ages and abilities
VII. ENTREPRENEURIAL MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:
- Focus on philanthropic funding rather than public funding
- Generating earned income
- Positioning in the marketplace as a focal point
- Use of successful business models from the for-profit and non-profit world
- Use of strategic management tools for continuous improvement
- Use of technology to enhance effectiveness and efficiency
- Contemporary, ‘hip’ facilities that are new or remodeled
- Very consumer driven -open non-traditional hours to attract diverse consumers

Example #1: Lou Walker Senior Center, Lithonia, GA

The Lou Walker Senior Center (www.co.dekalb.ga.us/humanserv/lou.htm):
- Received HUD ‘pre-award’ CBDG funding for a 40,000 sq. ft. facility opened in 2006
- Created a facility with a contemporary design- glass, steel, stone, digital screens
- Designed a comprehensive facility to meet changing needs of the present and future
- Ensured a non-institutional look for facility -not a traditional nursing home design
- Established ‘Corridors of Life’, a transitional program to ensure a continuum of care-seniors receive progressive level of services as they age (independence to long term care)
- Created Citizen Planning Committees that are vital to facility development and community patronage

Example #2: Lowcountry Senior Center, Charleston SC

The Lowcountry Senior Center (www.ropersaintfrancis.com/seniorcenter):
- Offers health promotion programs such as health fairs for all community members
- Collaborated with Roper St. Francis-Community Health Care and City of Charleston to design and implement community health fairs
- Used these health fairs as opportunities for positioning, branding, and marketing

Example #3: Senior Center, Inc., Charlottesville, VA

The Senior Center, Inc. (www.seniorcenterinc.org):
- Receives no government funding
- Raises 50% of its budget through philanthropy: (individual, foundations, corporate)
- Raises 50% of its budget through earned income- member and program dues/fees, newsletter ads, facility rental
- Strategic marketing focus on position in community through innovative ad campaigns
Example #4: Medford Senior Center, Medford, OR

The Medford Senior Center:
- Is a nonprofit center
- Built new facility with HUD grant and private donations
- Receives 94% of total funding from donations, meal program fees, thrift store, fund raising, bingo, travel club commissions
- Receives only 6% funding of total funding from city and county grants

Other examples of the Entrepreneurial Model:
- Iowa City (IA) and Madison (WI) produce their own TV shows. [http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/senior/facilities.html](http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/senior/facilities.html) [http://icsctv.uiowa.edu/](http://icsctv.uiowa.edu/)
- Evergreen Commons (MI) private fitness club subsidiary. [www.evergreencommons.com](http://www.evergreencommons.com)
- Sunshine Center (FL) on-site pharmacy [www.stpete.org/seniors](http://www.stpete.org/seniors)

Impact of the Entrepreneurial Model:
- Increased control over funding
- Greater independence through self-sufficiency
- Independence allows for rapid adaptability in a rapidly changing environment
- Increased financial security
- Increased program stability and sustainability
- Increased sense of ownership
VIII. CAFÉ MODEL

The defining characteristics of such senior centers are:

- Retail approach to programs
- The café is the centerpiece
- Programs that are offered in addition to café at various sites
- Smaller, neighborhood-based focus
- Cafes are open to all community members – allows for introduction of new participants to other programs and services

**Example #1: Mather LifeWays, Chicago, IL**

The Mather LifeWays Model ([www.matherlifeways.com](http://www.matherlifeways.com)):

- Provides award-winning concept and design
- Provides opportunity for a neighborhood-based, retail orientation
- Addresses needs of lower- and working-middle class consumers
- Provides an experience open to entire community
- Provides a warm, inviting, “ageless” environment
- Offers programs geared for age 55+
- Allows for a consumer driven menu and services
- Requires licensure and fees associated with development

**Example #2: Borchardt Cyber Café, St. Barnabas Senior Center (SBSC) Los Angeles ([www.sbsslca.org/CyberCafé.html](http://www.sbsslca.org/CyberCafé.html))**

The Borchardt Cybe Café:

- Provides a popular location (café) for community members to gather and socialize
- Promotes a lifestyle of learning, using computers to reach broader goals of healthy living
- Creates a supportive social environment, where learning is experiential and community is as important as content
- Respects diverse adult learning styles by teaching students what they wish to learn, and encouraging them to explore creative possibilities
- Makes technology dynamic, by making it available in its infinite variety, e.g., webcams, games, shopping, downloading music, information seeking, blogging, digital photography, film making

**Impact of the Café Model**

- Attracts younger seniors (60% are 69 or younger at Mather’s)
- Rigorous training provides extraordinary customer experience and employment
- Engages participants to improve quality of life, promotes personal enrichment
- Provides/promotes good nutrition
- Social connections stave off cognitive decline
- Promotes partnerships with agencies focused on independent lifestyles and connecting older adults to resources
APPENDIX D – INNOVATIVE SENIOR CENTER PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The NISC report on Emerging Models of Senior Centers included additional findings in the form of Innovative Projects and Programs. The following are excerpts from that report.


Other Findings of the Study

In addition to the various models that were proposed by this study, several innovative projects and programs were reported by the respondents. Here is a summary of some of the innovative ideas that have been divided into categories by type of innovation:

i. Facility Design
   - Designing a large senior center within a long-term care facility
   - Creating large, modern fitness centers with state-of-the art equipment
   - Creating an outdoor space for programming and to rent out for a fee
   - Creating a gallery space to display member art, as well as to rent out for a fee

ii. Multi-generational Programming
   - Hosting Inter-generational “National Issues” Forums
   - Adopt-a-class program (with local schools)
   - Student Pen Pal program
   - Local High School students meet their community service requirements by volunteering with the senior center
   - Inter-generational Community Gardening Project
   - “Bird-Houses in Public Parks” Project
   - Inter-generational Spring Ball
   - Multi-generational Holiday Parties and Carnivals

iii. Civic Engagement and Volunteering
   - Chore Corps – senior volunteers assisting the homebound elderly
   - Golden Angel Tree Program – gift service for homebound, low-income elderly
   - Multi-cultural Community Volunteer Training Program
   - Highway Maintenance
   - Senior Volunteer Corps
   - Senior Grievance Committee

iv. Utilization and incorporation of new technology
   - Online TV Program in association with University of Iowa
   - “My Senior Center” software to streamline data collection and analysis
   - Automation of program reservations and meal orders to track member preferences
   - Using “Skype” to connect seniors around the world

iv. Attracting boomers
   - Partner with local hospital and pharmacies for health promotion
   - Fitness Centers and Computer Classes
   - Creating an “Active Wellness Center”
   - Visual Arts Programs
   - Hosting Bridge Tournaments
   - Cultural Programming (Opera, Theater, Writing, Pastels Paintings)
v. Innovative Marketing

- March for Meals Expo, Hawaiian Picnic and Autumn Dance to attract seniors
- News articles covering various stories about programs and participants
- Participation in community events
- Offering the facility for community events
- Partner with citizen coalitions
- Partner with social service agencies

vi. Fund Development

- Creating a contribution pool among current members
- Offering fee-based programming
- Operating fitness centers
- Creating products for sale
- “Tree of Life” sculpture
- Thrift Store
- Offering group discounts on purchase of theater tickets

vii. Collaborations and Partnerships

- Developed a joint program with the local YMCA
- Collaboration with Association for the Blind for free vision screenings
- Collaboration with pharmacy for free medication education and screenings
- Collaboration with local businesses for conference sponsorship
- Collaboration with local universities and colleges to offer lifelong learning programs
- Collaboration with cultural institutions (museums, art institutes, theaters, etc.)

viii. Programs

- Holiday Meals for Homebound Elders
- Cultural Trips (museums, theater, etc.)
- Computer Classes
- Wine Tasting and Cooking Classes
- Unique Walking and Hiking Programs
- Music Bands
- Fee-based lunches
- Health Promotion and Education Programs
- Senior Job Fair
- Temporary Employment Service Corps
- Chronic Disease Self Management Programs
- Emergency Preparedness Training
- Family Caregiver Support and Respite Programs
- Men’s Program Planning Group
- Indoor Golf Simulator

ix. Pursuing Recognition of Excellence
- NISC Accreditation
- NISC Membership
- Non Profit Standards of Excellence
- Accounting Standards Excellence
- Health Promotion Standards of Excellence
- Business Bureau Certification
- Community, Regional, State and National Recognition

A Unit of the National Council on Aging

ACCREDITED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SENIOR CENTERS
Implications of the Study

Common Themes That Unify Forward-Thinking Senior Center Administrators

Implications of this Study

The purpose of this study was to document current practices in the senior center field. Our goal was to collect data on innovative strategies and emerging models and disseminate that information to practitioners in our field. We found many inspiring stories of change, growth and innovation across the nation. Our comprehensive analysis of the various submissions yielded some common themes that unify forward-thinking senior center directors and administrators. These are:

(i) **Collaboration**: The ability to form strategic partnerships with universities, colleges, high schools, social service agencies, businesses, hospitals, healthcare providers and other entities are integral to the sustainability of senior centers. If senior centers want to be viewed as community focal points, they must position themselves as a viable and legitimate community agency. Engaging in collaborative efforts will enable senior centers to expand their reach and enhance their influence in the community-level, decision-making process. Furthermore, community collaborations allow senior centers to offer a broader cross-section of services and programs to their target population – community-dwelling older adults.

(ii) **Responsiveness**: A common characteristic of innovative senior centers was their high level of responsiveness to their community needs. These senior centers engaged in comprehensive assessments of community resident profiles, needs, interests and resources. These strategic assessments, often conducted in coordination with other entities within the community, allowed the senior centers to engage a diverse group of older adults and offer meaningful
experiences to their consumers. Almost all senior centers who offered data-driven programming reported an increase in participation and revenue.

(iii) **Accountability:** Most of the senior centers in our sample created structures for consistent feedback from their Board of Directors, staff, consumers and community members. This process allowed them to be responsive and accountable to their constituents. Accountability was also encapsulated in their efforts to streamline data collection and analysis as it related to service delivery. Program evaluation, a critical component of evidence-based programs, allowed senior centers to demonstrate their efficacy and impact on their communities. Some senior center administrators reported receiving recognition for their efforts to improve standards of service and reporting. These accreditations, awards and certifications not only increased visibility and membership, but also attracted new sources of funding.

(iv) **Creativity:** Given the limited resources, manpower and increased market competition, most administrators relied on their own creativity and that of their staff to envision and implement change. Ingenuity, resourcefulness and zeal are the hallmarks of our field. Most respondents utilized cutting-edge ideas and information from the aging service field and incorporated these into their own innovative designs. As clichéd as it sounds, thinking outside the box enabled administrators to expand and enhance their programming, fundraising, marketing and operations.

(v) **Passion:** There is nothing more enabling and motivating than passion when we talk of change. Innovation and change are difficult, often frustrating, slow processes beset with
frequent missteps. It is during those difficult transitions that passion and drive help us push through. We found that all our respondents demonstrated a high level of confidence in the overall purpose and future of senior centers. These respondents were passionate about the impact that senior centers have on the lives of older adults and other members of the communities they serve. They strove to re-imagine, re-position, and re-purpose senior centers, thereby ensuring their continued significance, influence and viability for generations to come.