Report: Needs Assessment for Older Adults

Office of Aging and Disability Services

January 11, 2024

CITY OF RICHMOND

Office of Aging & Disability Services

WHO WE SERVE: Older adults/seniors (55+) and adults (18+) with physical disabilities.

Trending Concerns:
- Housing Instability
- Affordable Housing
- Food Insecurity
- Affordable Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Assistance Applying for Benefits
- Memory Care
- Employment
- Loneliness

Executive Summary

In March 2023, the City of Richmond contracted with Knowledge Advisory Group (KAG) to partner with the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) and a Lead Consultant with Human Services from the City of Richmond to complete a needs assessment for older adults living in the City of Richmond (age 55+), including recommendations to improve conditions for those in need.

The City of Richmond is comprised of nine voter districts as shown in the adjacent map. OADS expressed a particular interest in the needs of residents in traditionally underserved areas of the City of Richmond, specifically Districts 6-9.

2022-32 Richmond Voter Districts Map
Richmond Virginia, U.S.A.
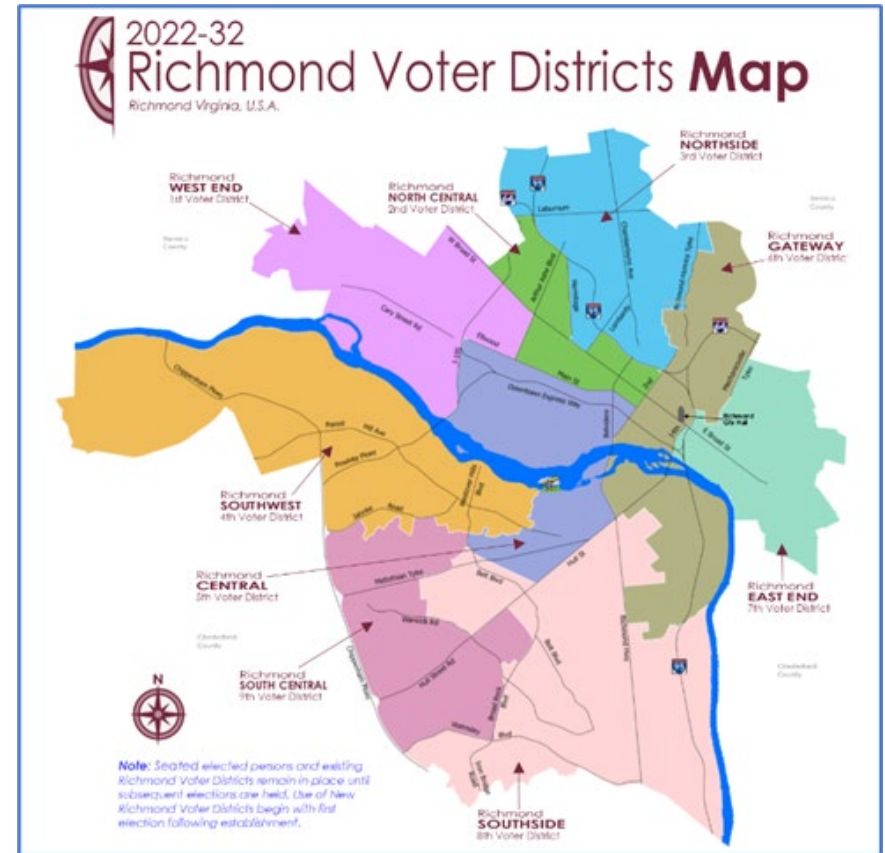
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Methodology

Preliminary background research for this assessment included interviews with key informants from six organizations to identify the needs and resources available to older adults in the City of Richmond. This information was used to identify key issues to explore further on a senior survey completed by 495 city residents (age 55+). The survey findings were supplemented by focus groups of older adults and representatives from organizations that serve older adults to develop recommendations to address community needs.
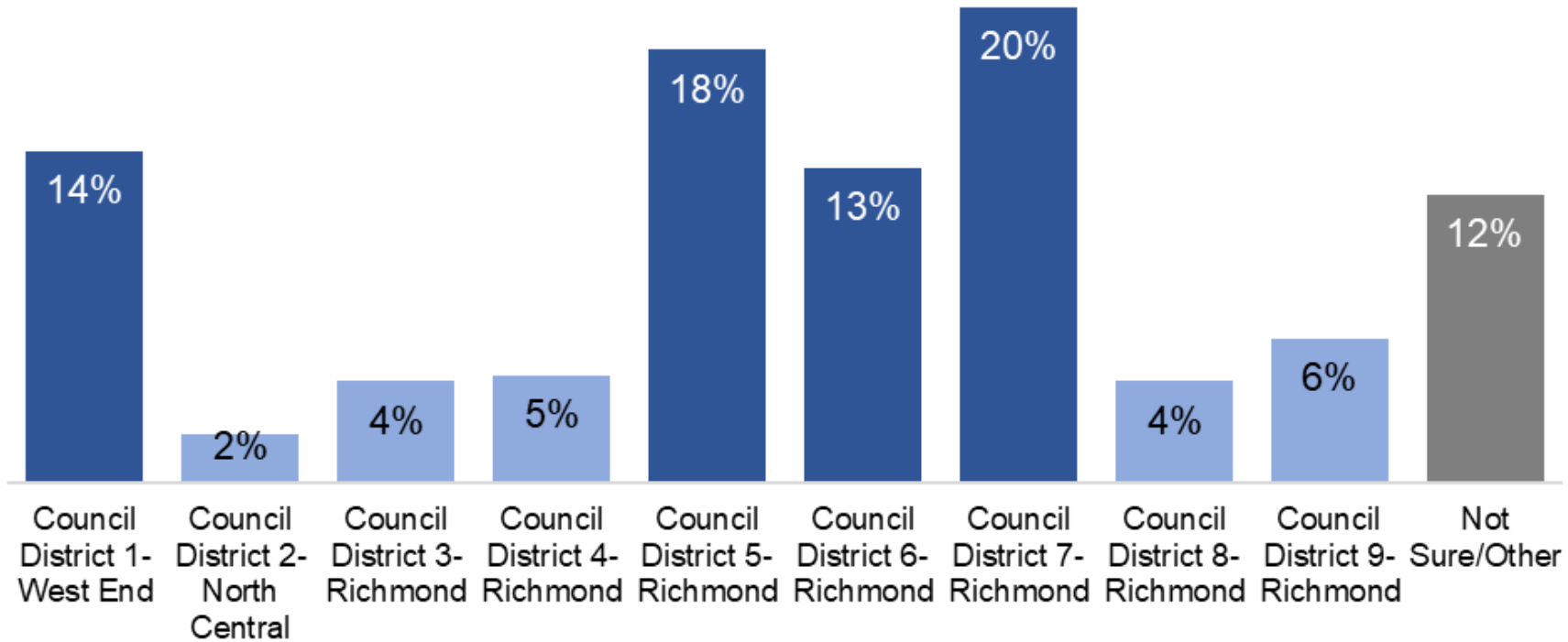
Other sources of information examined for this assessment included:

- Published data on the health, income, isolation, housing status, and neighborhood conditions of adults in the City of Richmond.

- A review of information provided by Virginia Navigator on the resources available to older adults in the City of Richmond.

- Existing research reports from Homeward, LeadingAge Virginia, and the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation.

- Research compiled by AARP, the Milken Institute, and the World Health Organization (WHO) to identify best practices for addressing the needs of older adults.

Survey Participants: Demographic Profile

Where do you currently live? (N=439)

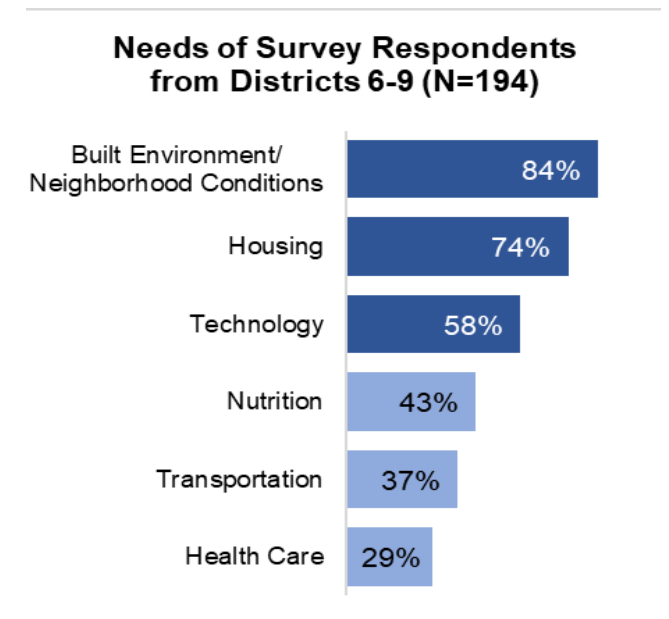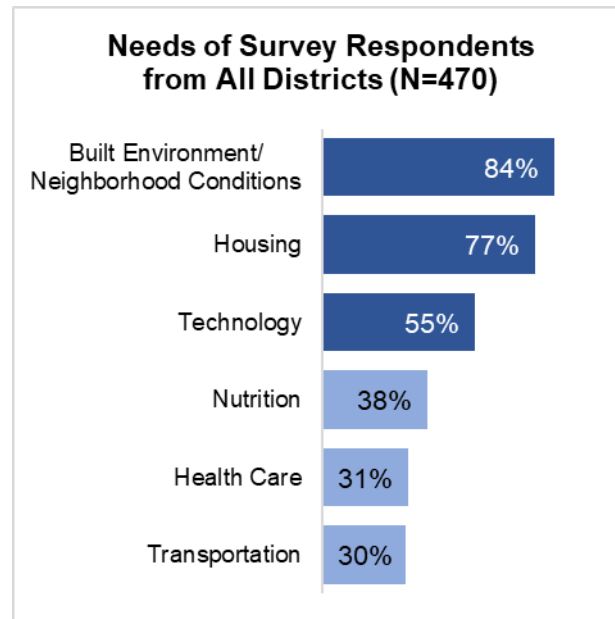| District	Percentage
Council District 1- West End	14%
Council District 2- North Central	2%
Council District 3- Richmond	4%
Council District 4- Richmond	5%
Council District 5- Richmond	18%
Council District 6- Richmond	13%
Council District 7- Richmond	20%
Council District 8- Richmond	4%
Council District 9- Richmond	6%
Not Sure/Other	12%

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Key Findings

Key Finding #1. The most common needs identified by older adults were related to **Built Environment/Neighborhood Conditions, Housing, and Technology.**

Key Informant Comments:
- Residents in powerchairs have to ride them on the street because there are no sidewalks in certain parts of the city.
- There is a 3-year wait list for senior public housing.
- There will continue to be a need for access to technology, including Wi-Fi in every senior living building.

Needs of Survey Respondents from All Districts (N=470)

Category	Percent
Built Environment/ Neighborhood Conditions	84%
Housing	77%
Technology	55%
Nutrition	38%
Health Care	31%
Transportation	30%

Needs of Survey Respondents from Districts 6-9 (N=194)

Category	Percent
Built Environment/ Neighborhood Conditions	84%
Housing	74%
Technology	58%
Nutrition	43%
Transportation	37%
Health Care	29%

Key Finding #2: The top activities seniors are interested in doing in their communities include **Fitness/Exercise, Adult Enrichment Classes, and Cultural Events.**

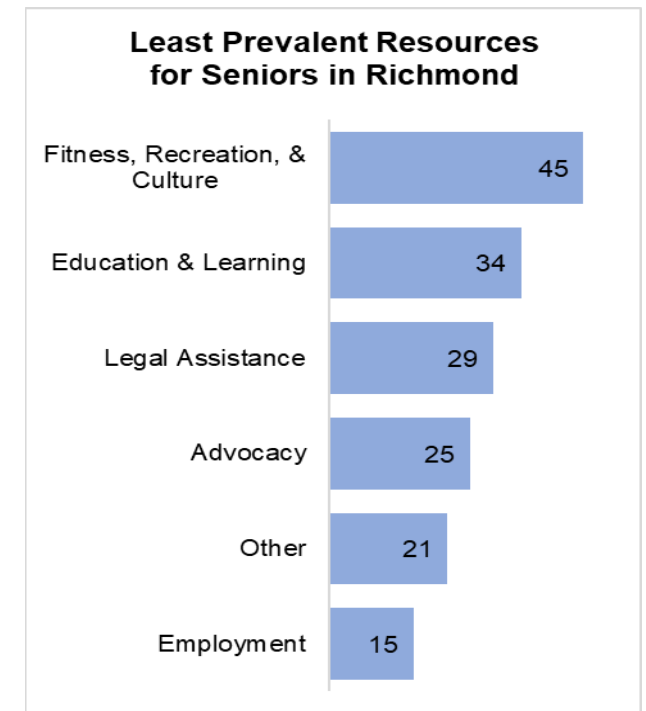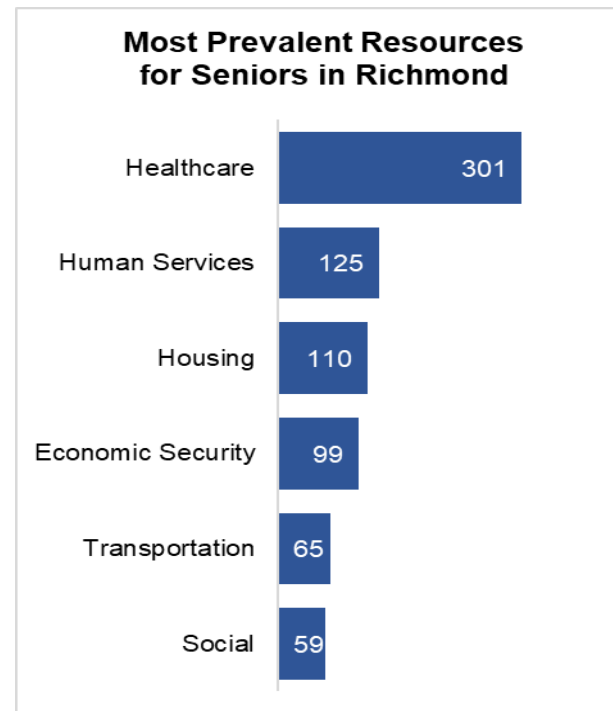**Key Finding #3: Services are not easily accessible** to all the seniors who need them.

Key Finding #4: A majority of older adults rated the City of Richmond's **communication about services as Good or Fair**. 46% prefer 'Written Information Sent by Mail'.

Key Findings

Key Finding #5. There are **over 900 Resources for Seniors in Richmond**, although information on **capacity** and **usage** are **not readily available**.

Key informants indicate that older adults do not now about many of these services and that some have waitlists that prevent seniors from receiving services for months or years. This information is found in the SeniorNavigator document provided by VirginiaNavigator. Virginia Navigator does not maintain information on the usage and capacity of these resources so their availability is unclear.

Most Prevalent Resources for Seniors in Richmond

Category	Value
Healthcare	301
Human Services	125
Housing	110
Economic Security	99
Transportation	65
Social	59

Least Prevalent Resources for Seniors in Richmond

Category	Value
Fitness, Recreation, & Culture	45
Education & Learning	34
Legal Assistance	29
Advocacy	25
Other	21
Employment	15

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

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Recommendations to Address Key Findings

Recommendation #1. To address Build environment concerns, create a strategy to repair unsafe sidewalks in senior-centric neighborhoods and expand support for senior home repair and modification programs.

Recommendation #2. Increase availability of subsidized housing for older adults and availability of assisted living facilities.

Recommendation #3. Expand the delivery of technology courses specifically for seniors at accessible locations in senior-centric neighborhoods.

Recommendation #4. Increase food pantries in neighborhoods with a high population of seniors and incentivize development of grocery stores in food deserts.

Recommendations to Address Key Findings

Recommendation #5. (1) Increase the availability of adult day programs, respite services, and capacity for safety checks for seniors living alone, **(2)** increase the availability of trained certified nursing assistants (CNAs) through no-cost training, **(3)** developing incentives to increase the number of geriatricians in the City, and **(4)** offering training to primary health and human service providers to address the social and emotional needs of seniors.

Recommendation #6. Develop strategies to improve older adult mobility within Richmond by subsidizing more quality transportation options, such as CareVans and paratransit, and expanding utilization of existing programs.

Recommendation #7. Review community assets related to senior engagement activities to determine if there is sufficient capacity to meet the demand for participation.

Recommendation #8. Improve awareness of services that are available to seniors in the City among residents and service providers by incorporating multiple communication methods and implementing specific strategies to enhance information provision to older adults.

Recommendation #9. Expand and coordinate research findings and create a funding strategy to better address services for older adults.

Next Steps

1. Key Findings and Recommendations are being shared with appropriate City departments and offices to:
   - **Reduce instances of duplicated efforts.**
   - **Increase cross-departmental alignment** with a faster, more focused resolution.
   - **Identify proper implementation of multiple communication options.**

2. Expand research efforts for more detailed information on **service capacity and waitlists for senior program offerings**. Identify a comprehensive view of needs, **barriers to service access**, and **best practice strategies**.

3. Identify available funding sources to support the continued work for older adults. This may include **grant funding**, **inter-departmental collaboration, community partnerships**, and others.

Richmond residents are encouraged to contact the
Aging and Disability Services Help Line
to connect with services and resources.

(804) 646 - 1082

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