

Communication Services
5334 South Prince Street
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001
Phone: 303-795-4284
Fax: 303-738-7894
www.co.arapahoe.co.us

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Contact:

LINDA HALEY

Division Manager

Senior Resources

Direct: 303-738-8089

lhaley@co.arapahoe.co.us

or

HALEY MCKEAN

Communication Services Specialist II

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-726-6608

hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us

County seniors embrace help with household chores, transportation *Arapahoe County 2009 Senior Survey shows support services are valuable*

Littleton, Colo. – Arapahoe County seniors need assistance with basic housekeeping and heavier chores, as well as affording prescription medications and getting transportation, according to the 2009 Senior Survey conducted by Arapahoe County and the Arapahoe County Council on Aging.

The County and ACCOA today released the results of the second-ever survey of residents over age 60. The two agencies partnered to distribute the written survey to a broad spectrum of seniors between September and November 2009. The report is available at www.co.arapahoe.co.us under “What’s New.”

“The results of the survey revealed that a majority of seniors are active and functioning in the community, but many desire or already access nutrition, in-home assistance, transportation and financial services to address their unmet needs,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Jim Dyer. “We hope that these survey results will help inform local agencies about the types of support that is needed by seniors in our community, and how to reach them with word about services that are already available.”

The return rate for the survey was 24 percent, with a majority of the 363 respondents being between age 70 and 89 and residing either alone, or with one other individual in a private residence. The vast majority learn about services from their family and friends.

Household Chores

The greatest need of seniors was for assistance with heavy duty chores, yard work and routine home repairs, with 57 percent of senior respondents reporting that they can’t perform these types of tasks. This was followed by basic housekeeping, with 27 percent of respondents stating they need assistance with routine, light housekeeping.

“We encourage seniors who are facing difficult challenges in keeping up with their home to contact Arapahoe County’s Senior Resources Division,” said Dyer. “We offer free assistance with heavy duty chores through our Chore Service program, and no-cost help with routine, light housekeeping through our Homemakers Program.”

Seniors who need help with household chores can call 303-738-8080 to learn if they are eligible.

Prescription Medications

The survey also showed that 10 percent of seniors sometimes or never can afford their prescription medications, with 3 percent even going without due to the cost. Arapahoe County works to support this

need with its free prescription medication discount card. The cards can be used on retail-priced drugs that are not covered by Medicaid, Medicare, private or employer-sponsored health insurance plans. The cards are accepted at 90 percent of the county's pharmacies, and offer an average 20 percent discount. To request a card be sent to you, call 303-738-8080.

Transportation

In addition, the survey showed that seniors have a need for transportation to get to medical appointments and around town for groceries and errands. Arapahoe County works with First Ride to offer free transportation for seniors to medical appointments, senior dining centers, grocery stores and food banks on its small, wheel chair-accessible buses. For more information or to schedule a trip, please call 720-540-5566.

Other Key Needs

The survey also showed an ongoing need for community services that provide healthy, home-delivered meals to seniors, transportation to social activities, and assistance with tracking medications. Seventeen percent of respondents were victims of consumer fraud, showing the ongoing need for proactive education on fraud and identity theft for seniors.

Seniors also had strong interest in classes related to fall prevention, stress management, living with chronic conditions, healthy eating, active minds and low-impact exercise.

Finding Help

There are many more services in Arapahoe County that help seniors to remain independent and comfortable in their own homes. To find a service for you or a senior you know, please call the Arapahoe County Senior Resources Division at 303-738-8080 or visit www.co.arapahoe.co.us.

For more information about ACCoA, visit www.accoa.info.

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