Age-Friendly NJ Advisory Council: June 6, 2023

Topics: Technology; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Economic Security

Janet Sharma's Meeting notes

Before our next meeting (July 11), Council Members were asked to rank observations within 3 primary issues that cross all areas: **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; Technology; and Economic Security.** Randomized breakout groups discussed the 3 topics and reported out most important, easiest to implement and hardest to implement in each of the 3 areas.

Technology
#1 – Access to broadband and devices: Without that nothing else matters; this is also the hardest to implement
- Free education & training in access to the internet are essential
- Education about online security and how to avoid fraud and scams
- We need alternatives to technology for access to services, and hybrid access
- Easiest to implement: Work with AAAs to effectively distribute information

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
#1 – Increase the amount of accessible and affordable housing
- Expand presumptive eligibility for home and community-based services so people can get services before the bureaucratic process is completed
- Simplify the processes for determining eligibility
- Services for LGBTQ+ and immigrants are important
- Easiest to implement: Collection of demographic data

Economic Security.
#1 – Affordable housing – This is an issue that the state **must** deal with
- There are models of success (e.g., Elizabeth Davis, Tom Toronto)
- Housing subsidies: More Section 8 vouchers are needed. Recommended to partner with HUD and work with DCA to loosen up availability of apartments to Section 8 voucher holders
- The income level for eligibility of PAAD and other services needs to be reduced
- Income level for JAC needs to be increased so those with income just above Medicaid are eligible for in-home services
- Provide AAAs with funding to develop robust marketing plans to reach constituents through contracted services. Massive marketing efforts are needed to inform older adults about available services and to warn of fraud and scams.
- Increase availability of navigators/case managers to help older adults navigate healthcare and social service systems
- Hardest to implement: Housing
- Easiest to implement: Adjust eligibility levels

While these 3 areas cross all age-friendly issues, other areas are also important and will be discussed at the next meeting.