

# AAA Area Plan 2016-2020

## Berks County Area Agency on Aging



Building Partnerships  
Strengthening Communities  
Enhancing Quality of Life

**Edward B. Michalik, Psy. D.**

Executive Director

**Jessica M. Jones, BSW**

Deputy Director

### **Berks County Board of Commissioners**

Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair

Kevin S. Barnhardt

Mark C. Scott, Esquire

County Services Center  
633 Court Street, 8th Floor  
Phone: 610.478.6500  
Fax: 610.478.6886

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 3

II. INTRODUCTION ..... 5

III. AGENCY OVERVIEW..... 5

IV. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW .....6

    A. Population

    B. Social Characteristics

    C. Environment

    D. Other Factors

V. LOCAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS .....10

VI. NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND FINDINGS ..... 11

VII. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATIONS ..... 13

VIII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES ..... 13

    A. Goal: Promote Berks County Area Agency on Aging services

    B. Goal: Improve access to services

    C. Goal: Enhance the quality of services

    D. Goal: Empower the workforce

IX. OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES ..... 19

X. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART ..... 23

XI. SIGNATURE PAGES ..... 24

XII. NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AAA AREA PLAN PUBLIC HEARING ..... 27

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the size of the “over 60” population grows, so does the need for supports and services. It is projected that the “over 60” population in Berks County will increase by 14% over the next 4 years and 36% by 2030. The Berks County Area Agency on Aging in conjunction with its Advisory Council, the Berks County Commissioners, and state and federal legislators has developed a plan that comprehensively disseminates information and serves as an all-encompassing resource for the community. The plan draws upon demographic analysis and input received from surveys distributed to stakeholders, consumers, the general public, community leaders, and local officials. The survey was conducted from April to June 2016 and made available via the Agency website, stakeholder meetings, and mailings to contracted providers and the County’s nine senior centers.

Several areas stand out when considering the issues facing the elderly population in Berks County. The seat of Berks County, Reading, is ranked second in the nation as the poorest city in America with 40.5% of residents living below the poverty level. Currently the Agency has seen a marked increase in the need for Protective Services to address the rights and best interests of Berks County’s most frail and at risk population. The County’s large Hispanic population requires a high level of cultural sensitivity and knowledge when developing and promoting programs.

The purpose of this plan is to combine the priorities of The Pennsylvania Department of Aging, requirements of the Administration on Community Living, and the needs of older and disabled Berks County residents. The objectives and strategies were developed based upon the goals set forth by the Department of Aging’s Four Year Plan. For purposes of this planning period all of the Department of Aging-designated goals, local objectives, and strategies are inter-related and comprehensive.

The State’s goals are:

1. Promote existing services
2. Improve access to services
3. Enhance the quality of services
4. Empower the workforce

The BCAA operates on a \$9 million annual budget. These funds are primarily lottery dollars received from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. Since Fiscal Year 13/14 the Agency has received \$1,611,630 in OPTIONS special funding which has eliminated waiting lists for services and has provided additional programs that are tailored to individuals who require the support.

The main goal of the Agency is to support individuals in the community and meet their needs with home and community-based services. This plan has 13 objectives and corresponding strategies that have been developed to increase the promotion of services and supports available to the elderly and their caregivers. It also addresses internal areas to improve the delivery of services through ongoing staff trainings and sets a commitment to ensure all consumers have a point of contact with Berks County Area Agency on Aging to obtain resource education and assistance with linkage to services. In addition, it targets a continued commitment to the development and maintenance of a strong volunteer base for programs and services.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

The Berks County Area Agency on Aging (BCAAA), the Area Agency on Aging for Berks County, is mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) to produce a four-year Area Plan to help it attain the goals set forth in Pennsylvania Act 70 and the Older Americans Act. These goals are to develop greater capacities to provide comprehensive and coordinated services to serve older adults and persons with disabilities, and to use available resources more efficiently. The Plan will be effective October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2020.

The BCAA's Area Plan is a document that will educate and inform its stakeholders – consumers, the public, contracted vendors, community leaders, and local officials – about how it will respond to the challenges facing Berks County's older adults. BCAA has developed objectives and strategies that align with PDA's four recommended goals.

## **III. AGENCY OVERVIEW**

The BCAA was established as a department of Berks County government in 1974. As one of 52 Area Agencies on Aging within Pennsylvania, BCAA serves Berks County residents through a variety of services and programs. The Agency coordinates and maintains a comprehensive service system to meet the needs of all Berks County residents aged 60 and older.

The BCAA is governed by the Berks County Board of Commissioners. The Agency shares its Executive Director with the Berks County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities program, who reports directly to the Board of Commissioners. Additionally, the Agency has a 15-seat Advisory Council. The Council is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of individuals. Administrative staff and the Advisory Council oversee the annual planning meeting and public hearing. The Agency also convenes an annual Legislative breakfast meeting in order to solicit input from and provide information to local state and regional legislators.

The BCAA oversees programs required by the Older Americans Act. The current staffing structure includes 33 full-time and 2 part-time staff as noted in the Organizational Chart in Section X. The Agency provides some services directly and others through contracts. The direct consumer services provided include: Assessment, Intake and Referral, Public Outreach and Education, Ombudsman, and Protective Services.

Contracted services include Personal Assistance, Personal Care, Home Support, Adult Daily Living Center Services, Senior Center Services, Congregate Meals, Home Delivered Meals, Legal Assistance, Transportation, Consumer Reimbursement, Caregiver Support Program, Weatherization, Medical Equipment, Medical Interpretation and Care Management.

## IV. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

### A. Population

**Aging Population Trend:** Between 2010 and 2014 the percentage of persons living in Berks County who are 65 years old and older increased from 14.3% to 15.5% – from 58,881 out of a total county population of 412,053 to 66,604 out of a total population of 430,683. According to the United States Census Bureau, between 1990 and 2010 the percentage of adults living in Berks County aged 60 and older increased by nearly 26%. From 2015 to 2030, according to The Pennsylvania State Data Center, the percentage of adults aged 60 and older living in Berks County is projected to increase by over 36%. During the next four years alone, the percentage of adults in Berks County over the age of 60 is expected to increase by 14%.

**Minority and Foreign-Born:** Of the 98.9% of residents over age 60 who consider themselves as wholly of one race, 93.6% consider themselves white, 2.6% consider themselves black or African American, 0.7% consider themselves Asian, and the remainder consider themselves American Indian or some other race.

5.8% of residents of any race over age 60 consider themselves of Hispanic or Latino origin. 90.6% of residents over age 60 consider themselves white alone, and not of any Hispanic or Latino origin. The majority of Hispanic and Latino residents within Berks County reside within or near the city of Reading.

Of those Berks County residents who are foreign born, 3% entered the United States in 2010 or later, 14% entered between 2000 and 2009, and 83% entered before 2000. 72% are naturalized U.S. citizens, and 28% are not U.S. citizens.

89% of Berks County residents over the age of 60 only speak English. 11% speak a language other than English. Of those who speak a language other than English, nearly 6% speak English less than “very well”.

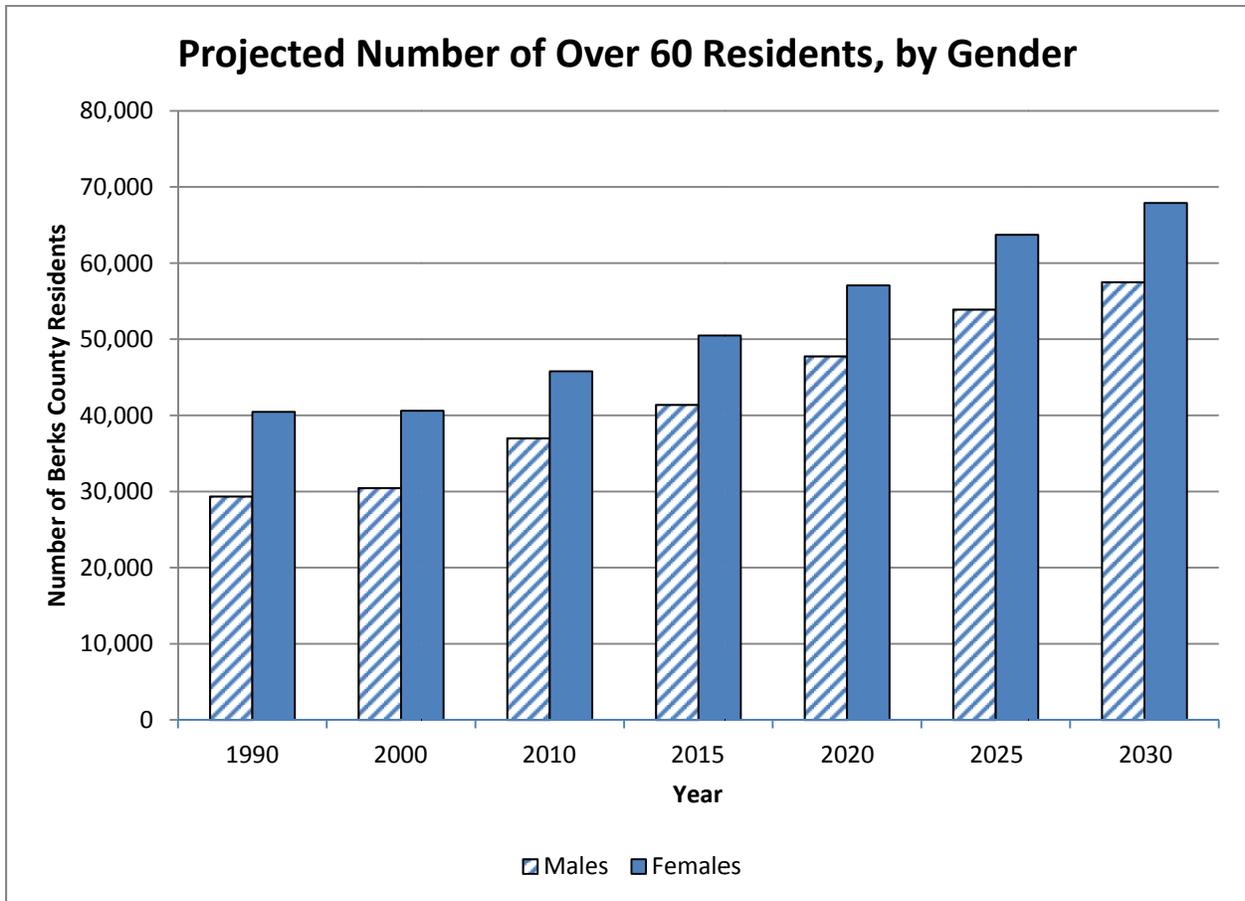
**Gender Trends:** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of males in Berks County aged 60 and older increased by 26% from 1990 to 2010. Over the same period, the percentage of females in Berks County aged 60 and older increased by 13%.

Over the next four years, according to The Pennsylvania State Data Center, the percentage of males aged 60 and older living in Berks County is projected to increase by over 15%. Over the same period, the percentage of females in Berks County aged 60 and older is projected to increase by 13%.

From 2015 to 2030, according to The Pennsylvania State Data Center, the percentage of males aged 60 and older living in Berks County is projected to increase by 39%. Over the same period, the percentage of females in Berks County aged 60 and older is projected to increase by 35%.

The total number of women in Berks County aged 60 years and older is still higher than men. Currently over 50,000 women versus over 41,000 men live in Berks County, and by the year 2030, 67,900 females over the age of 60 are expected to reside in Berks County versus 57,486 men. However, as the projections above indicate, while the overall

number of women living longer still outpaces the number of men, the percentage of men living longer is increasing and it appears that in Berks County men are slowly closing the historical longevity gap. This trend may be due to increased awareness about the effects of smoking, heart disease, and other health issues, increased access to senior services, or other factors.



## B. Social Characteristics

**Area Poverty Rates:** In 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau ranked the poverty levels of American cities with populations of 65,000 or more. Reading, the seat of Berks County, was rated the poorest city in America. Reading’s poverty rate of 41.3% placed it ahead of cities such as Detroit, Michigan and Camden, New Jersey. Employment rates had fallen by 10% between 2000 and 2010. As a result, Reading went from having the 32<sup>nd</sup> highest poverty rate in the United States to the highest within ten years. Updated data in 2013 placed Detroit at the top of the most impoverished list and moved Reading, with 40.5% of residents living below poverty, into second. Despite this slight improvement, conditions within Reading remain relatively unchanged.

83% of county residents over the age of 60 are at or above 150% of the poverty level. 9% are between 100% and 149% of the poverty level. 8% are below 100% of the poverty level.

**Education:** 21% of Berks County residents over the age of 60 did not graduate from high school, while 44% have earned a high school degree or equivalent. 17% have taken some college coursework or earned an associate’s degree. 18% have earned a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

In 2009 and 2010, the city of Reading and economic development organizations ramped up efforts to entice businesses to initiate new efforts within the city. However, what local employers and prospective manufacturing firms found was that Reading lacked enough people with adequate trade skills and vocational degrees and certificates to meet the demands of the job market. The Greater Reading Economic Partnership surveyed 96 local businesses and found that 47% identified lack of skills as a workforce problem. 26% specifically noted a lack of technical skills as a significant issue. Residents were not choosing educational paths that would lead to available openings. As the New York Times noted when originally reporting Reading’s top poverty ranking on September 28, 2011: “One of Reading’s more entrenched problems is education. Just 8 percent of its residents have a bachelor’s degree, far below the national average of 28%.”

**Migration:** Less than 1% of Berks County residents over the age of 60 moved to Pennsylvania from a different state or different country within the past year. Many rural residents of Berks County are able to trace their ancestry within the region over multiple generations. In fact, 80% of Berks County residents were born in Pennsylvania. With such long family histories, many residents also tend to stay within the county for the duration of their lives. The greatest level of flux is likely in the urban environment of Reading. However, more of this migration is being undertaken by younger generations. 7% of Berks County residents over the age of 60 were born outside the United States, while 11% of residents under the age of 60 were born outside the United States.

**Physical and Functional Health:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, compared Berks County to peer counties on a range of mortality, morbidity, health, and social factors.

Berks County rates in the most favorable quartile in regards to Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, and diabetes deaths. This means that Berks County residents are less likely to succumb to these conditions than residents of similar counties. Berks County also rates higher than peer counties in regards to whether seniors face cost barriers to health care, and whether their access to healthy food is limited in some way.

Berks County rates in the middle or moderate range in comparison to peer counties in regards to whether residents are likely to die from chronic kidney disease and coronary heart disease, and how likely they are to endure adult obesity, older adult depression, and older adult preventable hospitalizations. The county rates in the worst quartile in regards to stroke deaths, older adult asthma, and primary care contracted vendor access.

## C. Environment

**Living Arrangements and Home Ownership:** 79% of county residents over the age of 60 who live in housing units own their homes, while 21% rent. Of those who live in their own homes, 64% live in a family household either as part of a married-couple family or as a single householder living with other family. In contrast, 28% of renters are part of a family household. Likewise, 36% of homeowners over the age of 60 are part of a non-family household (either living alone or with a non-family member), whereas 72% of renters live as part of a non-family household.

As individuals age, incomes stagnate, and homes deteriorate, home improvements and modifications become more of a burden. 26% of homeowners aged 65 and older live in homes that were built in 1939 or earlier. 2% of homeowners aged 65 and older live in homes that were built in 2005 or later. See chart below.

**Percentage of Over 60 Householders by Year Structure was Built**

Built 2005 or later	2%
Built 2000 to 2004	5%
Built 1990 to 1999	10%
Built 1980 to 1989	7%
Built 1970 to 1979	11%
Built 1960 to 1969	15%
Built 1950 to 1959	17%
Built 1940 to 1949	6%
Built 1939 or earlier	26%

**Isolation:** This is an ongoing issue with the older adult population. This is happening because seniors are living longer, families are not local and there is less of a community support provided by neighbors and friends. Senior Community Centers are often the initial point of contact for older adults. They are viewed as the gateway into Aging services. The idea to support seniors, provide education and a sense of community can enhance the older adult's ability to remain independent in the community. Berks County currently has 9 Senior Community Centers, managed by three different providers. They strive to provide outlets to the senior population for community engagement and involvement. The centers are sensitive to the local community needs and culture. Senior Community Center programming is a vital component to Aging services and remains at the forefront of planning.

**Food Access:** Over \$1 million per year in BCAA supports congregate and home delivered meals services. These services play a significant role in enhancing food security for seniors in both rural areas and the city of Reading. Continuing to support these programs will be an ongoing critical function over the coming four years.

**Transportation:** Area public transportation is provided by The South Central Transit Authority. Improved access to transportation was one area of concern highlighted on the aging survey. Transportation continues to be an issue across the Commonwealth. In FY 15/16, BCAA will expend approximately \$70,000 on public transportation.

#### **D. Other Factors**

Substantial programmatic changes have occurred at the BCAA within the past three years. Service coordination for waiver services was discontinued at BCAA effective July 1, 2014. BCAA opted not to apply for the Foster Grandparent Program federal grant in FY 15/16. Management of the Foster Grandparents Program was awarded to Alvernia University through a competitive bid process. BCAA had previously managed this program for nine years. Demand for Protective Services continues to increase, with financial exploitation at the forefront of risks to older adults. Fortunately, the Agency does not currently have any consumers on any waiting lists, thanks in large part to the OPTIONS special funding.

An underserved population in Berks County is Reading's aging Hispanic community. However, a program initiated by the BCAA in collaboration with the Hispanic Center provides medical interpretation services to elderly Hispanic seniors. Many non-English speaking seniors are intimidated or confused by medical terminology and jargon. Through the medical interpretation program, a bilingual Spanish-speaking translator accompanies seniors on medical appointments and explains diagnoses and treatments in the consumers' native language. This program continues to grow. However, over the next four years the Agency should continue to identify other Hispanic-focused needs within Berks County.

Over the past ten years, Reading's economic base has been hamstrung by stagnant property values, lack of business growth, and high unemployment. As a result, less funding has been available for community services. The next four years seem likely to be a time of flux and change regarding aging services. It will be important for the Agency to continue identifying the most critical needs of Berks County's underserved over 60 populations both in rural and urban environments, and marshal resources to areas of the highest need within the programmatic and fiscal constraints of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and Office of Long Term Living.

#### **V. LOCAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

The BCAA has two main priorities as a state-funded entity in Berks County. The first is to provide education and services to consumers over the age of 60 and their caregivers. The second is to understand local needs, how they relate to changes in funding, and to advocate at the State and local levels for the senior population in Berks County. Each of the 2016-2020 area plan objectives touch these two priorities in some manner.

Objectives targeting underserved populations and promoting existing services have been the primary driving force of this plan. Given the growing elderly and impoverished populations in Berks County, it is vital to ensure that community education and stakeholder engagement is at the forefront of the Agency's short and long-term plans.

The need to address the impact of poverty levels in Berks County is critical. From 2011 to 2013 the city of Reading had the highest poverty ranking in the nation among cities with populations over 65,000, which has had a significant impact on residents' needs for services. This reality has

impacted the development of objectives and strategies since a full knowledge of services and supports is critical for the community. The ranking has also impacted the need to develop efficiencies to ensure services are being provided to the greatest extent possible and to those individuals who have the greatest need.

Advocacy for programs and funding continues to be a critical need. The introduction of Community HealthChoices (CHC) in Pennsylvania in 2017 will change access to home and community-based services for individuals across the Commonwealth. Although Berks County residents will not see CHC until 2019 it is important for providers, stakeholders, and legislators to understand the impact this will have on the aging population in Berks County. The Agency must remain engaged in the changes and potential impacts that CHC will have on its consumers.

## **VI. NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND FINDINGS**

### **Needs Assessment Process**

As part of the process to develop the Area Plan, a local needs assessment was undertaken seeking input from stakeholders, contracted vendors, consumers and residents of Berks County. Two surveys were created to assess the needs of the County. The 'consumer' survey specifically targeted older residents and current consumers of the BCAA. The 'provider' survey was created to receive stakeholder and vendor feedback.

The surveys focused on measuring how much the community already knew about the services that BCAA and its contracted vendors provide, the level of concern on a multitude of aging topics, the best way to spread news about relevant topics, public transportation availability and usage, senior centers, and current needs.

Six hundred (600) 'consumer' surveys were distributed to nine (9) senior centers in Berks County and made available via Survey Monkey on BCAA's website. The 'provider' survey was published on Survey Monkey and also made available via BCAA's website. A link to the 'provider' survey was e-mailed to the BCAA's 39 contracted vendors and Advisory Council. We also provided our vendors with a link to the 'consumer' survey and encouraged them to share it with their consumers.

Of the 600 'consumer' surveys that were delivered to the senior centers, 440 (73%) were completed. Additionally, 46 'provider' surveys were completed.

A legislative breakfast attended by 34 individuals was held at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Reading on April 29, 2016. The purpose of this meeting was to advocate for aging services, educate legislators about current needs, and solicit input for creation of the Area Plan. An area plan public hearing attended by 38 individuals was held on June 14, 2016 at the McGlinn Conference Center located at Alvernia University. The purpose of this meeting was to educate community stakeholders and contracted vendors about current services available to Berks County residents, and to seek their input regarding the needs of the elderly population in Berks County.

The following three questions were posed to discussion groups at both meetings:

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest needs currently facing older adults in Berks County?
2. What trends do you see unfolding over the next five years which have the greatest potential to impact the aging population in Berks County?
3. What do you consider to be a significant barrier for getting older adults to participate in Senior Center programs?

### **Needs Assessment Outcomes**

Not surprisingly, the outcomes of the surveys and meetings were very similar. Having enough income to afford long term care services, medication, insurance, food, and housing topped the list of the biggest immediate concerns. This was followed by maintaining a home residence while remaining independent, and transportation. A common concern among those that participated in the roundtable discussions at the planning meeting was the increase in aging consumers and how this will affect access to services.

The surveys also inquired whether consumers and vendors were aware of the programs which are available through BCAAA in order to gauge which need more promotion. 22% of consumers surveyed stated that they did not know how to contact BCAAA, while only 4% responded that they were not aware of any of the 26 programs that were listed in the survey. The most recognized services, of which more than 50% of respondents were familiar, included Senior Centers, Home Delivered and Congregate Meals, Farmers Market Vouchers, Tax Preparation Assistance, and Exercise Classes. The least recognized services, of which less than 20% of respondents were familiar, included the Ombudsman Program, Personal Emergency Response Systems, Protective Services, Nursing Home Transition, Caregivers Support Program, and APPRISE.

Providers fared far better with knowledge of these services, but less than 50% of respondents were familiar with PA Link to Aging and Disability Resource Center, Senior Center Activities such as Exercise, Computer, and Arts Classes, Primetime Health, and Medical Interpretation.

Consumers responded that the best way to communicate news, services, and updates to them were via the senior center that they attend/word of mouth, local TV broadcasts, newspapers, and e-mail.

Consumers (60%) and providers (80%) both considered transportation to be the largest barrier for getting older adults to participate in senior center programming, although 68% of consumer respondents stated that they have access to public transportation. 24% of consumers felt that there are no barriers, while 48% of providers felt that the stereotypes associated with seniors centers was a major barrier. Participants at the planning meeting also shared that center managers must continue to find new ways to engage their consumers and improve services to entice more participation.

47% of consumer's respondents stated that they have access to the internet and 40% have an e-mail account. Of the respondents that stated they have access to the internet, only 12% have used the internet to search for aging related information.

## **VII. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATIONS**

Student volunteers are a potential resource and collaborative partnerships shall be explored. Currently in Berks County there are five colleges and eighteen school districts. The use of student volunteers to promote intergenerational experiences could naturally enhance the volunteer base. A plan to meet with local colleges and the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) to discuss these possibilities is underway.

There was a 29% increase in the number of reported elder abuse cases in Berks County from FY 14/15 to FY 15/16. Given this increase, a focus on community education regarding elder abuse is underway in Berks County with the most recent reintroduction of The Elder Abuse Task Force. This task force is a diverse multi-disciplinary team consisting of 23 members which has developed a goal of community education with a focus on criminal justice. Resource development and support of this task force is still in its infancy. The task force offers great potential to support and educate critical first responders, such as EMTs and law enforcement.

## **VIII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1: Promote existing Berks County Area Agency on Aging (BCAAA) services**

---

**Objective 1:** Improve avenues to connect, communicate, and engage Berks County residents regarding services provided by BCAA

#### **Strategies:**

- Improve the BCAA's social media presence and website
- Continue to utilize local TV, radio, and newspaper to promote services
- Provide education to legislators through the BCAA's annual Legislative Breakfast and to the public through the annual planning meeting
- Participate in public health fairs and speaking engagements
- Maintain up-to-date information in the resource guides
- Update and develop brochures and relevant informational materials
- Increase BCAA's visibility on the internet by promoting programs and services through our website and YouTube page
- Develop a social media component of the promotion and outreach strategy to further disseminate information on resources and services available to the public
- Evaluate and assess the utilization of existing BCAA communication resources
- Utilize Senior Centers to increase awareness of BCAA resources
- Become more accessible and approachable to consumers, contracted vendors, government, and businesses
- Rebrand existing brochures and publications as needed. This includes redesigning existing brochures and publications and publishing them in languages to reach target populations

**Objective 2:** Promote OPTIONS, Caregivers Support Program, and Home and Community Based Services available to the residents of Berks County

**Strategies:**

- Provide information annually to local hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and home care agencies regarding program guidelines and eligibility updates
- Increase awareness of BCAA programs and services in order to reach Berks County residents ages 18 to 59 via print, TV, radio and social media
- Solicit consumer and contracted vendor input to have a continuing understanding of the needs of the community and follow trends
- Provide ongoing education and training to BCAA staff and contracted vendors to ensure consumers contacting BCAA for resource information are being screened comprehensively for the program and services that will best meet the consumer's needs

**Objective 3:** Coordinate promotion and outreach initiatives with senior community organizations, social services agencies, contracted vendors of aging services, and other County stakeholders to conduct outreach in the community

**Strategies:**

- Collaborate with organizations representing diverse communities to disseminate information regarding BCAA's programs and services
- Increase public knowledge about aging issues, BCAA, and the Aging network among organizations outside of the aging network and those serving older adults
- Schedule presentations at public and community events
- Schedule presentations with contracted vendors to enhance their knowledge of Aging services available
- Promote the goals and solicit further participation for The Elder Abuse Task Force
- Identify and utilize new outlets to promote programs and services, such as retail spaces and community health centers
- Pursue new collaborations that leverage promotional resources with the business, government, healthcare and nonprofit communities
- Continuously update and improve the promotion capabilities of the BCAA. This includes increasing accessibility of information on our website and other communication portals to non-English speaking individuals
- Participation in initiatives related to veterans to enhance multidisciplinary approach to services

**Objective 4:** Work collaboratively with contracted vendors of senior centers and congregate meals to increase program participation

**Strategies:**

- Develop strategies to reach the target population and focus on senior health and wellness
- Continue to work on brand development to remove the stigmas associated with senior centers and congregate meals
- Support and encourage program development with contracted vendors to increase program participation.
- Develop performance based initiatives for centers

---

**Goal 2: Improve Access to Services**

**Objective 1:** Target underserved populations in Berks County to increase access to services

**Strategies:**

- Collaborate with Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities to identify opportunities for supportive services
- Continue to support and develop new initiatives that target minorities and their needs, such as Medical Interpretation services available for Spanish speaking consumers
- Work cooperatively with programming that is relevant to emerging underserved populations such as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning), homeless, and other identified groups within the local service area
- Continued support of Berks, Lancaster, and Lebanon LINK to aging and disability resources

**Objective 2:** Identify areas of necessity to ensure funding is used efficiently and effectively to allow more services to older adults in Berks County

**Strategies:**

- Identify priorities in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging for current and future funding
- Engage contracted vendors and stakeholders in the development of future programs to ensure needs are being met

**Objective 3:** Provide advocacy for continued support and funding of Older American’s Act programming

**Strategies:**

- Meet with legislators annually to provide updates on current issues and funding needs
- Maintain current relationships with legislators and foster new relationships to ensure education and partnership
- Apply gained knowledge based upon consumer trends to advocacy strategies and approaches

**Objective 4:** Continue to assess transportation challenges in Berks County and explore varying modes of transportation

**Strategies:**

- Maintain partnership with the local transit authority by serving on their advisory board
- Utilize agency funding to maintain Shared Ride Program for qualified older adults in Berks County
- Educate and encourage local aging population of the benefits of utilizing public transportation
- Develop a plan to increase transportation services to underserved populations within Berks County

---

**Goal 3: Enhance Quality of Services**

**Objective 1:** Expand and further develop quality assurance standards for all programs provided directly by BCAAA or by a contracted vendor

**Strategies:**

- Develop program standards and policies for BCAAA programming
- Ongoing development of contracted vendor monitoring tools to ensure accuracy of services
- Monitoring internal efficiency of services and referrals

**Objective 2:** Provide community education and partnerships with local agencies to continue to serve the shared aging population within Berks County and increase service awareness

**Strategies:**

- Promote collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders and contracted vendors to ensure a single access point for consumers to increase efficiency
- Build partnerships through participation by serving on task forces, committees and advisory boards
- Encourage Aging Advisory Council members to provide community education and focus on the emerging needs of older adults
- Continue to promote BCAAA as the main point of access for aging services for aging supports and services information in Berks County by routinely providing up to date literature and service recommendations within the area

- Continue to strengthen and seek out working relationships with other contracted vendors within the county

**Objective 3:** Identify and apply new approaches for staff to understand underserved populations and other areas of need

**Strategies:**

- Seek and attend employee trainings (in person, webinars, etc.) related to underserved populations such as the aging homeless and LGBTQ to increase awareness and learn new strategies to apply to casework
- Continue to educate and stress the importance of consistency, empathy and efficiency regarding customer service within departments

**Goal 4: Empower the Workforce**

---

It might be argued that the fourth and final goal, empowering the workforce, is the most critical. An empowered workforce is the mechanism through which the first three goals can be met. An empowered workforce can enable promotion of existing services, help improve access to services, and enhance the quality of those services.

**Objective 1:** Promote existing services

**Strategies:**

- Ensure that intake and field staff are aware of all available services provided by the Agency and contracted vendors through updates, meetings, and trainings
- Encourage intake and field staff to consistently promote the Caregiver Support Program to eligible consumers
- Cultivate student internship program so that younger generations gain awareness of available aging services
- Update partners and contracted vendors at least annually with current services provided by the Agency
- Provide rebranded multi-lingual Agency brochures and publications to staff for wide distribution

## **Objective 2:** Improve access to services

### **Strategies:**

- Provide field staff with the tools and support they need to maximize their efficiency and better serve more consumers in need
- Strive to hire and train individuals oriented to the needs of aging consumers with unique languages, cultures, and needs
- Encourage staff to attend trainings and meetings and/or join initiatives which support and target underserved aging populations
- Educate community stakeholders and contracted vendors on the availability of aging services
- Educate stakeholder, contracted vendors and consumers on their ability to advocate for funding

## **Objective 3:** Enhance the quality of services

### **Strategies:**

- Promote employee attendance at quality improvement trainings that target underserved segments of the aging population (non-English speakers, homeless, isolated, etc.)
- Employ a multi-disciplinary approach to trainings so that field staff are better able to identify aging consumer needs across a broad range of functionalities
- Develop employee growth plans which promote professional development, focusing on quality service delivery, and the individual strengths of employees
- Ensure that the monitoring of contracted vendors follows a prescribed timeline and structured format with repercussions for all identified contracted vendor shortcomings
- Improve contracted vendor contract language to ensure that the highest-quality contracted vendors are delivering the highest-quality services

## **Objective 4:** Increase volunteer engagement

### **Strategies:**

- Empower and encourage Home Delivered Meals, volunteer transportation, and APPRISE contracted vendors to develop volunteer recruitment and retention plans
- Develop recruitment and retention plans for Volunteer Ombudsmen
- Ensure all volunteers are trained according to individual program regulations and they possess the skills needed to appropriately advocate and assist consumers
- Provide recognition and support to active volunteers

**IX. OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**Goal 1: Promote existing Berks County Area Agency on Aging services**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes and Performance Measures</b>
1. Improve avenues to connect, communicate, and engage Berks County residents regarding services provided by BCAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visits to our website and social media outlets</li> <li>• Number of speaking engagements</li> </ul>
2. Promote OPTIONS, Caregivers Support Program, and Home and Community Based Services available to the residents of Berks County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and awareness survey</li> <li>• Use of the services provided</li> </ul>
3. Coordinate promotion and outreach initiatives with senior community organizations, social services agencies, contracted vendors of aging services, and other County stakeholders to conduct outreach in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of informative presentations</li> <li>• Number of new collaborations</li> <li>• Awareness survey</li> </ul>
4. Work collaboratively with contracted vendors of senior centers and congregate meals to increase program participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of new programs created</li> <li>• Number of consumer senior center visits</li> <li>• Participation in new and existing programs and services at each senior center</li> <li>• Number of meals served</li> </ul>

**Goal 2: Improve access to services**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes and Performance Measures</b>
<p>1. Target underserved populations in Berks County to increase access to services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilization of LINK resources to broaden outreach of resources with the aging population includes MH/DD services</li> <li>• Service on the board for the Homeless Coalition</li> <li>• Attendance at special interest group meetings (such as LGBTQ)</li> </ul>
<p>2. Identify areas of necessity to ensure funding is used efficiently and effectively to allow more services to older adults in Berks County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding allocation to local services</li> <li>• Biannual survey of consumers to identify trends and needs</li> <li>• Continued transparency with stakeholders in regards to program funding and allocations in the annual agency report</li> </ul>
<p>3. Provide advocacy for continued support and funding of Older American’s Act programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in advocacy efforts developed by P4A and local initiatives</li> <li>• Continue to support, endorse and recommend senior centers located within Berks County</li> </ul>
<p>4. Continue to assess transportation challenges in Berks County and explore varying modes of transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer usage of transportation services</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance of transportation guides and continued distribution</li> </ul>

**Goal 3: Enhance the quality of services**

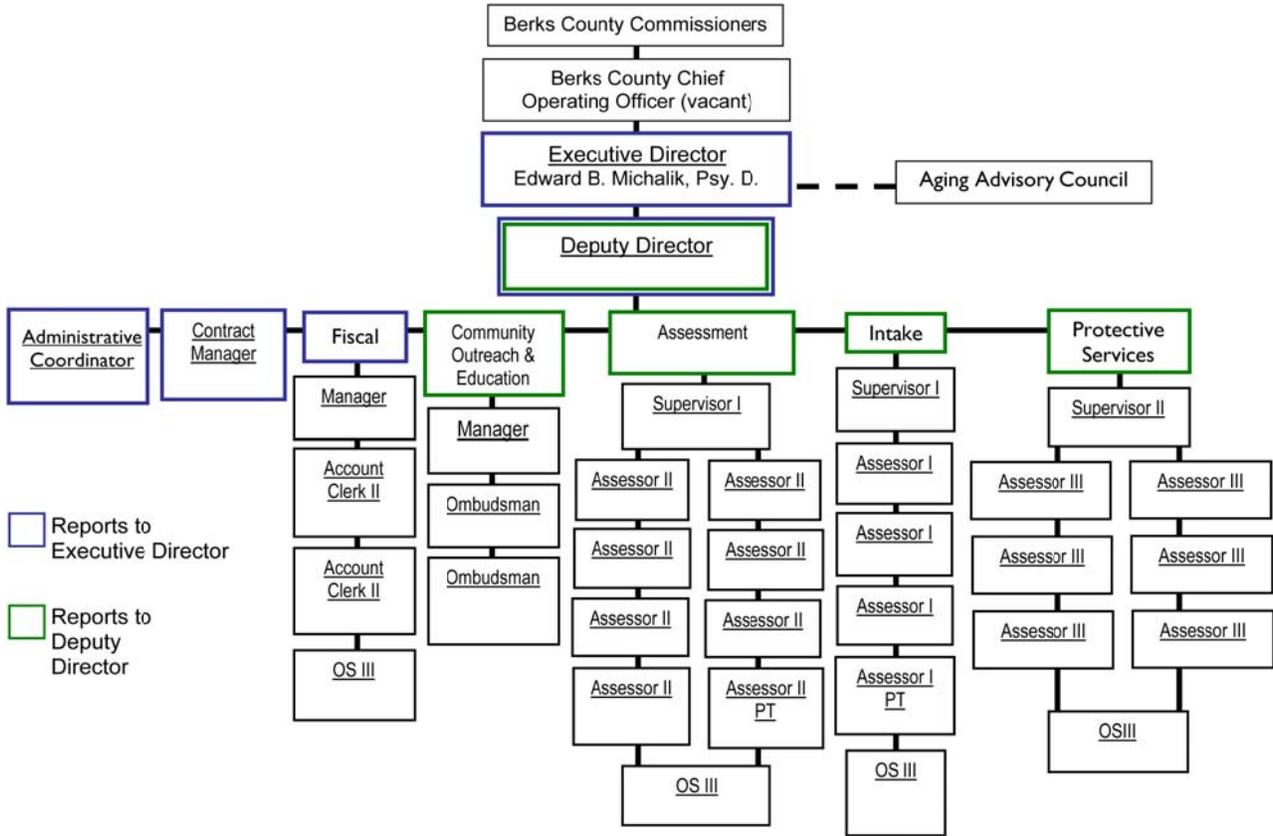
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes and Performance Measures</b>
<p>1. Expand and further develop quality assurance standards for all programs provided directly by BCAA or by a contracted vendor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate development of policies, program standards and monitoring tools and continue to improve on existing initiatives</li> </ul>
<p>2. Provide community education and partnerships with local agencies to continue to serve the shared aging population within Berks County and increase service awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education to Senior Centers to promote local BCAA services</li> <li>• Further development of Elder Abuse Taskforce</li> <li>• Continue educational outreach efforts (such as BCTV show, Advisory Board participation, Aging Parent Fairs)</li> <li>• Promote the LINK services to local consumers</li> </ul>
<p>3. Identify and apply new approaches for staff to understand underserved populations and other areas of need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in trainings to increase staff awareness of underserved populations</li> <li>• Implement new approaches in serving special groups amongst the aging</li> </ul>

#### Goal 4: Empower the Workforce

Objective	Outcomes and Performance Measures
1. Promote existing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• House a minimum of one intern per year</li><li>• Rebranded multilingual brochures</li><li>• Annual 10% increase in Caregiver Support Program consumers</li></ul>
2. Improve access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10% increase on awareness survey of consumers who say they have utilized aging services</li><li>• 10% increase on awareness survey of consumers who know how to contact the Berks County Area Agency on Aging</li></ul>
3. Enhance the quality of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tailored field staff growth plans in place which focus on quality of service delivery</li><li>• Timely contracted vendor monitorings</li></ul>
4. Increase volunteer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual 10% increase in volunteer recruitment</li></ul>

X. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

**BERKS COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING**



6/16 TE

**XI. SIGNATURE PAGES**

**FY 2016-20 Area Agency on Aging  
Four-Year Area Plan on Aging**

Berks County Area Agency on Aging  
633 Court Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor SC  
Reading, PA 19601

We certify that we are authorized to submit this Plan on behalf of the designated Area Agency on Aging and agree to abide by regulations issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. We further certify that the general public has had the opportunity to review and comment on this Plan through the public hearing process and that written policies, procedures or agreements, as appropriate, have been developed in accordance with Part A, Section 307 of the Older Americans Act, and are on file for review and approval, as appropriate, by Department of Aging officials.

We assure that services and programs of the Area Agency on Aging will be managed and delivered in accordance with the Plan submitted herewith. Any substantial changes to the Plan will be submitted to the Department of Aging for prior approval.

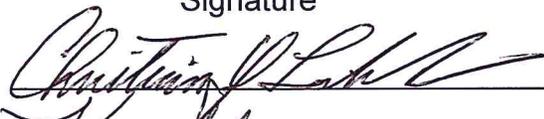
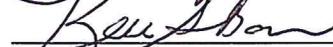
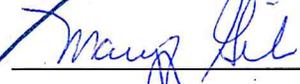
We hereby expressly, as a condition precedent to the receipt of State and Federal funds, assure:

That in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, as amended; and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance regulations):

- 1) We do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or handicap:
  - a) In providing services or employment, or in its relationship with other providers;
  - b) In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.
- 2) We will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

We further hereby agree that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require contractors to comply with these same provisions.

We certify that the advisory council of the Area Agency on Aging has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as herewith submitted.

Signature	Title	Date
	Commissioner, Chair	6/30/16
	Commissioner	6/30/16
	Commissioner	6/30/16
Attest: 	Chief Clerk	6/30/16
	Executive Director	6/30/16

Name of Person to Contact Regarding the Contents of This Plan:

Edward B. Michalik, Psy. D., Executive Director  
(Name)

610-478-3271  
(Area Code and Telephone)

**DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE AREA  
AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL**

PSA NO. **32**

NAME OF AAA: **Berks County Area Agency on Aging**

PLAN PERIOD FROM: **FY2016 TO 2020**

In accordance with 6 PA Code, Section 35.23, a.(1) and (2) and the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, I certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has had the opportunity to assist in the development of this Plan. I further certify that the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council has participated in at least one Public Hearing held on this Plan.

The Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council (does / does not) not recommend approval of this Plan.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Berks County Area Agency on Aging  
John F. Vogel, II, Acting Advisory Chair

6/29/16

Date

XII. NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AAA AREA PLAN PUBLIC HEARING



Berks County  
**Area Agency on Aging**

Building Partnerships  
Strengthening Communities  
Enhancing Quality of Life

Commissioners:  
Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair  
Kevin S. Barnhardt  
Mark C. Scott, Esquire

Edward B. Michalik, Psy. D.  
Executive Director  
Jessica M. Jones, BSW  
Deputy Director

**Berks County Area Plan Public Hearing/  
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes  
June 14, 2016**

- PRESENT:** Larry Cohen, Karen Fattore, Ann Marie Ferguson, Patricia Giles Kolin Good, Donald Greth, Linda Groff, Robert Kreitz, John Lichtenwalner, Sydney Malick, Barry Miller, James Miller, Karen Miller, John Vogel, Eric Wolf
- STAFF:** Dr. Edward B. Michalik, Jessica Jones, Todd Reinert, Toby Smith, Rochelle Wanner, Tracy Evans
- GUESTS:** Serafin Amancio, Tiffany Bachert, Kevin Barnhardt, Mary Buerer, Mitch Cabin, Gina Cooke, Mary Ertel, Terry Gordon, Sandy Graffius, Jessica Kemp, Christian Leinbach, Connie Malafarina, Bill Martin, Robert Melzi, Deborah Miller, Constance Morrison, LuAnn Oatman, Robert Patrizio, Sonia Rivera, Michele Ruano-Weber, Ron Rutkowski, Nancy Seiger, Lydia Singley, Whitney Venus

John Vogel, Acting Chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**A. Pledge to the Flag**

**B. Welcome – John F. Vogel, Acting Chair**

Nomination to renew the membership for Eric L. Wolf, Anne Marie Ferguson, Donald Greth, Sydney Malick, James P. Miller, John F. Vogel, II, current At-Large Members was made. Their new term will run through June 30, 2018. The motion was accepted by Pat Giles and seconded by Robert Kreitz.

**C. Opening Remarks – Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach  
Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt**

Commissioner Leinbach stated the County is active in both state and local associations. He recognized the work of an advisory council volunteer is so important and thanked them for their work.

Commissioner Barnhardt said we live in challenging times. He asked everyone to think how we can best serve the aging population as we prepare the four year plan.

## D. Four Year Plan Overview – Jessica M. Jones, Deputy Director

Goals were identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging for the AAA's to build their four year plans.

Four goals were identified:

1. Promote existing services
2. Improve access to services
3. Enhance quality of services
4. Empower the workplace

Berks County Area Agency on Aging (BCAAA) engaged stakeholders and consumers through surveys.

The purpose of the plan is:

- To educate and inform stakeholders
- To comply with Older American's Act requirements
- To ensure local needs and circumstances are integrated with state and federal initiatives and regulations
- To reflect the priorities of the AAA and the needs of the consumer
- To communicate to the Department of Aging the needs and circumstances of the local AAA

Berks County demographics of minority and foreign-born County residents were reviewed. Of the 98.9% of Berks County residents over age 60 who consider themselves as wholly of one race:

- 93.6 % consider themselves white
- 2.6 % consider themselves black or African American
- .7 % consider themselves Asian
- Remainder consider themselves American Indian or some other race

Of those Berks County residents of any race over age 60 consider themselves of Hispanic or Latino origin.

Of those Berks County residents who are foreign born:

- 3 % entered the United States in 2010 or later
- 14 % entered between 2000 and 2009
- 83 % entered before 2000

Eighty-nine percent of Berks County residents over the age of 60 only speak English – 11 % speak a language other than English. Of those who speak a language other than English, nearly 6 % speak English less than “very well”.

Area poverty rates:

- In 2011 – the US Census Bureau ranked the poverty levels of American cities with populations of 65,000 or more.
- Reading, with a poverty rate of 41.3 %, was rated the poorest city in America.
- Employment rates had fallen by 10 % between 2000 and 2010.
- As a result, within 10 years Reading went from having the 32nd highest poverty rate in the US to the highest.
- Updated data is 2013 placed Detroit at the top of the most impoverished list and moved Reading, with 40.5 % of residents living below poverty, to second.
- Currently, 83 % of Berks County residents over the age of 60 are at or above 150 % of the poverty level, 9 % are between 100 % and 149 % of the poverty level, and 8 % are below 100 % of the poverty level.

Objectives & strategies – need for promotion & outreach:

- Focus on collaboration with providers in Berks County to ensure an efficient multidisciplinary approach to services
- Focus on diverse populations to provide education to those consumers
- Increasing social media presence
- Monitoring of enrollment trends for all programs
- Promotion of senior center and congregate meal programs

Enhance the quality of services:

- Developing internal program standards for all services
- Continual improvement upon monitoring of providers
- Foster and improve partnerships with other community stakeholders

Empower the workforce – an empowered workforce can enable the promotion of existing services, improve access to services and enhance the quality of services.

- Enhancing staff training
- Improve efficiency of services
- Collaboration of services provided internally and by providers
- Support new and existing volunteer opportunities

## **E. Fiscal Update – Toby D. Smith, Fiscal Manager**

Fiscal update reviewed:

- The amount spent during calendar year 2015 (January to December 2015) verses county calendar year 2015 budget.
- Forecasted revenue in fiscal year 15/16 (July 2015 – June 2016) amended line item budget.
- Forecasted expense in fiscal year 15/16 (July 2015 – June 2016) amended line item budget.

## **F. Roundtable Discussions**

At this time each of the tables discussed the following questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest needs currently facing older adults in Berks County?
2. What trends do you see unfolding over the next five years which have the greatest potential to impact the aging population in Berks County?
3. What do you consider to be a significant barrier for getting older adults to participate in Senior Center programs?
  - Location of centers
  - Transportation to/from centers
  - Days and hours of senior center operations
  - Range of activities available at senior centers
  - Stereotypes associated with senior centers
  - There are no barriers
  - Other (please specify)

## **G. Discussion Wrap-up**

### **Next Advisory Council Meeting:**

Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at McGlinn Conference Center

Please remember to provide an RSVP to Tracy Evans concerning your attendance by return email at [tevans@countyofberks.com](mailto:tevans@countyofberks.com) or by phone at 610-478-6500. Thank you!