

## Section 3

### “A LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY”

The seven parishes subcontracted with the North Delta Area Agency are predominantly rural. Therefore, we obtained the most recent census data over the past ten years. This data consisted of demographics outlining the Median Income, Income Below Poverty Level, Percentage with a Disability, Population 60 and over along with other important data. Our primary concern is to concentrate on the seniors with Greatest Economic Needs, Greatest Social Needs, Low Income, and Low Income Minorities.

The main source of industries within the service area consists of farming cotton/soy beans, paper mills, catfish ponds, and industrial parks. Each Council-designated Senior Center which is classified as Focal Points for senior 60 and over has its own “bare roots” and history. These focal points are included in the Area Plan.

Because of the pending percentages, the strengths of these rural towns are the relationship developed with various service providers. Actually, there remains a “one on one” relationship. Their mission is to assist other in need (other than finances). Collaboration of services is shared among the regions, especially for the poor economical areas such as East Carroll Parish. The weaknesses of these parishes and other special needs are limited resources which deter in the need of the elderly, including adequate funding.

1050 copies of the Needs Assessment designed by the Governor’s Office were disseminated throughout the service area. A total of 641 were returned with very good information shared. The purpose of the Assessment was to review the needs of seniors within each community. The needs of the seniors living alone and without informal support, the special needs of older low-income minority people in the service area; and the needs of older seniors residing in rural areas were also reviewed. After the accumulation of the data, an analysis was done on the 1<sup>st</sup> most needed service, 2<sup>nd</sup> most needed, and the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Totals were also counted in this order. Assessments were mailed from the Area Agency Offices to Council on Aging Board Members, North Delta Regional Planning District Board Members, Advisory Council Members, politicians, police jurors, Aging Disability Resource Center participants, caregivers, SenioRx participants, waiting lists, Community Meeting Clientele recommended, targeted demographic areas, present participants, and also Office walk-ins. We also coordinated (Needs Assessment - Part 2) with other Service Providers (both public and private) within the service area. This section along with Part 1 assisted us in the gathering of information. Staff members of North Delta assisted the Area Agency in the manual calculation of these Assessment forms.

There were interesting comments shared from the designated groups as a result of the Needs Assessment. The Priorities were:

- Difficulties in meeting the cost of living
- Utility bills constantly increases
- Additional Caregivers hours to relieve the individual providing care
- Care/Services for a disabled senior

- Penalties relating to Medicare Part D
- Van for each service area
- Eligible services for seniors not qualified for Medicaid
- Assistance with finances so seniors can remain in their homes
- Home Health services need monitoring
- Provision of Transportation for church services
- Waiting list maintained (need ongoing follow-up)
- No coverage for hearing aids

The North Area Agency Information & Referral data base was also used to forward Needs Assessments to Public and Private Service Providers within the service area. This group consensus focused on the needs of low-income socially and economically seniors, also minorities who do not have adequate transportation to medical facilities outside of the area where they reside. The Area Agency maintained a file on each Council explaining the comments from the Needs Assessment. The provision of these items will be reviewed for future references and services for seniors.

A Community Meeting was held at the Union Council on Aging on December 14, 2010. Personnel from local hospitals, dialysis centers, rural clinics, Sheriff Office, Fire Department, Home Health Agencies, and Council on Aging Board, as well as the general public (represented from minority older seniors and older individuals) were also invited. The purpose of the Community Meeting was to involve people and groups not traditionally associated with Aging Programs, and to obtain information on the Area Agency's role in the service area along with the initial process and implementation of the Area Plan.

The Agenda was as follows:

Purpose of Community Meeting (Census-Data-Establish Plan of Action)

Summary of Needs Assessment (Part 1 & 2)

Advisory Council Involvement

List of Unmet Needs

Specific Target Groups

Transportation Service in Area

Coordination/Delivery of Services

Strength-Weaknesses

Comments-Questions

The above agenda will aid us in providing a clear and concise description of the Area Plan and service areas, also various targeted groups along with resources.