



**Name of Project:** Aging Well

**Name of Organization:** Aging Well is a partnership of older adults, local businesses, not-for-profit organizations and governments. The host and fiscal agent of the partnership is AgeOptions. Aging Well is located in Oak Park, IL

**Program Description:**

Aging Well is a partnership in greater Lyons Township dedicated to working with communities to create an environment in which people can age well. The partnership consists of over 130 partners serving 20 suburban Chicago communities. The area has approximately 32,000 people over the age of 65. Hundreds of older adults have participated in partnership activities and thousands have benefited from its work.

Through asset-based community development surveys, focus groups and community forums, the community prioritized the need to make information more available, easier to locate, more comprehensive and accessible. Partners serving on the workgroups include older adult residents, lawyers, business owners, leaders of not-for-profit organizations, financial planners, police officers, librarians and social workers, among others. Through this partnership model we are best able to leverage our resources and utilize the knowledge, experience and wisdom of the community.

A large majority of Aging Well's work falls under the goal "to ensure older adults and their families have access to community based supports to maintain their independence in the community." Community service providers, older adults and their families were uncertain about where to call when they had questions about services and programs. A workgroup established criteria for an enhanced central access point, identified a local agency to serve as the enhanced central access point and has begun marketing efforts so that everyone will know where to call for information about senior services.

Another workgroup developed a transportation guide showing all available transportation options, hours of operation, and costs of services in the area. Nearly 4,000 copies of the transportation guides have been distributed. Plans are to provide training to an information specialist on mobility management and develop a training program to assist older adults in the transition from driving to using public transportation options.

A supportive community finds ways to connect older adults to the resources they need. Aging Well Volunteer Senior Ambassadors educate service providers about services and programs available to older adults and their caregivers. As a result, bank tellers, grocery store managers and others inform older adults who may not have regular contact with the aging network about services and programs available to them. Under our program, over 200 police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians have been trained in identifying and referring at-risk older adults. Those trained have responded by dramatically increasing their referrals of at-risk older adults.

Aging Well believes that our partnership model is developing a strong, healthy and supportive community. Older adults play an active role in developing and disseminating programs and information to the community. Businesses and local governments have come to value older adults and have worked with traditional members of the aging network to enable older adults to remain active and involved in the community. Future plans include translating information into Spanish so that the growing immigrant community can access services and promoting comprehensive personal planning through panel presentations and a comprehensive planning guide with local and national resources.

Aging Well is one of 16 partnerships nationwide to receive funding from Community Partnerships for Older Adults. Community Partnerships for Older Adults is a national program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to help communities develop leadership, innovative solutions, and options to meet the needs of older adults over the long term. Aging Well is funded locally by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Community Memorial Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust and the Township of Lyons

For more information about Aging Well, please contact Rob Mapes, Aging Well Coordinator at 708-383-0258. The Website for the program is [www.agingwellpartnership.org](http://www.agingwellpartnership.org)