



**Name of Project:** Aging in Place” Reverse Mortgage Counseling

**Name of Organization:** Howard County Maryland Office on Aging  
Columbia, MD

**Description of Program:**

Through its Aging and Disability Resource Center, the Howard County Office on Aging is providing “Aging in Place” Reverse Mortgage Counseling which was developed by the National Council on Aging in cooperation with AARP to help counselors address the unique needs of older clients who are considering a reverse mortgage to help them to continue to live at home.

This counseling approach enhances traditional reverse mortgage counseling by including an assessment of risk factors that can limit a client’s ability to stay at home and benefit from a reverse mortgage. Questions have been added to help counselors rapidly evaluate the client’s health status, financial and social needs and resources, their desired length of stay in the home, and their dependence on the loan. This mini-evaluation is combined with essential information about reverse mortgage features and costs, to help clients effectively answer for themselves the question, “Is a reverse mortgage a good fit for me?”

Through this more in-depth counseling, potential reverse mortgage borrowers get a better sense of the social and health issues, as well as financial choices, which they need to think about as they consider a reverse mortgage. Counselors can also use this information to provide a customized counseling experience, to help clients “try on” various scenarios to get a better idea of the potential fit of a reverse mortgage. These questions are not a formal assessment, and the client is the only person who can make the decision about the suitability of a reverse mortgage for him/herself.

This program represents two priority areas of the Administration on Aging:

- Obtaining the tools seniors and their families need to make informed decisions about, and gain better access to existing health and long term care options in their communities, and
- Having more options to avoid nursing home placement so seniors can remain at home for as long as possible.

From June 2007 through March 2008, the Howard County Office on Aging has completed “Aging in Place” Reverse Mortgage Counseling with 404 individual 62 years of age or older. 204 of these persons are Maryland residents. Three staff members of our Aging and Disability Resource Center who have been trained by the National Council on Aging in collaboration with AARP both of whom developed this expanded Reverse Mortgage Counseling model are doing this work. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development is very involved in the implementation of this pilot program. Of the ten organizations across the United States involved

in this original pilot, Howard County Office on Aging has completed that largest number of counseling sessions. For more information, please contact Peggy Rightnour, Manager of Client Services at (410) 313-6052 or by email at [prightnour@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:prightnour@howardcountymd.gov) The website for the program is <http://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=250>