

Living the Questions
Listening to Leaders Session
Leaders in the Housing Community
December 2, 2005

Living the Questions

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging is a collaborative of thirteen leading nonprofit organizations with statewide service and advocacy presence. Formed in 2004 to advocate for home and community-based services the Council has met with community leaders to raise awareness of and discuss the demographic, social and economic issues related to the aging of the Baby Boom generation through an initiative called *Living the Questions*.

Through a series of *Listening to Leaders* dialogue sessions, the Council is gathering information about community aging issues as viewed by foundations, civic groups, education officials, transportation representatives, faith communities, disability organizations, business and industry, and others.

More information about the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging can be obtained from www.mnlcoa.org.

Background

The Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) and the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) co-convened a *Listening to Leaders Session* of housing and community development representatives with assistance from the Vital Aging Network and the MN Housing Finance Agency.

Representatives at the *Listening Session* included city, county and state community development personnel, public housing officials, affordable housing advocates, private developers, congregate housing providers, vital agers, consultants, senior services providers and others.

Mary Jo Schifsky, Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging Certificate Program enrollee, opened the meeting with a presentation of information about the Metro region's growing older population and their dispersion related to developing, fully developed and central cities. She also summarized housing options available by type and cost – adult affordable, adult market rate, congregate, assisted living, and memory care. Mary Jo concluded her presentation with information about the incomes of older homeowners and renters.

Key Questions

1. How can communities increase the amount of affordable housing that is available to older adults as well as other community members?
2. Will baby boomers have adequate and stable income in their “retirement” years? What can be done to increase the probability of this happening?
3. What can be done to increase the awareness of older adults, caregivers and advocates of available information about housing and in-home service options and related choices?
4. How can society address the differing needs of three generations of older adults that spans 40 years? Similarly, how can society fully utilize and deploy the varying resources and capacities of these three generations?

Other Questions

- How can advocacy and policy folks at the national, state and local level come together to educate elected officials about the big picture?
- What are the “95% messages” that will inform and activate society to address affordable housing and other serious housing issues?
- What housing issues are amenable to joint action and support by multiple agencies?
- How can a cabinet level appointment for senior advocacy at the federal level be achieved?

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging exists to coalesce the resources and power of senior consumer, advocacy, social and health service organizations, and the individuals we serve and represent, to boldly advocate for and achieve positive system changes for elders in Minnesota.

www.mnlcoa.org