



John Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

120 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Senior and Disabled Center



Dianne Stone
Director

Strategic Plan 2007

Vision

We are Newington's premier community resource for mature adults, recognized for our expertise in aging, innovative, engaging programs, professional services and welcoming environment.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Newington Senior and Disabled Center is to support older adults and people with disabilities in the Town of Newington in maintaining and enriching their independence, well-being and quality of life. We accomplish this by:

- Promoting their full inclusion in the community
- Facilitating access to a comprehensive choice of services and activities
- Ensuring that services and activities respond to the diverse needs and interests of the population we serve
- Providing ongoing opportunities for life long learning and growth.

Plan Development

The Newington Senior and Disabled Center became the first Center in the State of Connecticut to achieve National Accreditation in 2003. This was recognition of the Center's success and achievement and was the product of a great deal of effort by many people. It demonstrated our commitment to providing quality services and programs that were responsive to the needs and interests of our community in a professional, effective manner. In order to continue to succeed, we recognize a need to plan strategically; to identify

Phone: (860) 665-8778 Fax: (860) 667-5835
srcenter@newingtonct.gov
www.newingtonct.gov

First in State of Connecticut
Fully Accredited by the National Institute of Senior Centers

future trends and needs, review and revise our operations and to prioritize issues.

The 2003 Strategic Plan was developed by staff with the assistance of a consultant and approved by the Commission on Aging and Disability. That plan was reviewed and it was identified in the third year that it was becoming irrelevant and at risk of becoming a 'shelf' plan. Drawing on the goals of that plan, focus groups with members, the Senior Advisory Committee, and staff, a new plan was created developed and approved by the Commission on Aging and Disability in 2007.

Plan Framework

This strategic plan is initiative based. There are five broad strategic goals. Each has its own set of initiatives or strategies. Some of these strategies are fairly clear cut; others will require further evaluation, discussion and research before there is a formal plan of action. A separate Action Plan to operationalize each initiative will be developed to provide timelines and accountability. While having these documents is important, the true value is in the process that was used to develop it and in the implementation of the strategies. While we hope to accomplish many of these initiatives over the course of the next year, the strategic goals can guide us for the next several years. It is important to note that the initiatives in this plan are not an exhaustive list of the projects, programs or innovations that the Center may undertake. This is a living plan and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Strategic Goals

1. Create a welcoming environment and provide excellent customer service.

It is a simple fact that people are more likely to view the Center favorably and to return to the Center if they feel welcome and feel that they are treated well. Regardless of how meaningful or exciting our programs are, people will not attend if they do not feel welcome in the facility. We must establish a culture where all staff and volunteers reflect a positive, helpful outlook. In order to do this we need to establish expectations through well articulated standards of service. We need to provide the training and support to ensure that all staff and volunteers are successful in providing good customer service. The physical layout of the Center also creates some barriers to creating a welcoming environment. The office, in spite of increased signage, is not as visible as we would like. As recommended in the needs assessment of 2002, we will have a reception counter installed in the foyer by the cafeteria that will be staffed by volunteers who will serve as greeters. Finally, we will continue to review the facility itself and make improvements as identified to ensure that the Center's appearance is attractive.

Initiatives

- Adopt Standards for service
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Welcome/reception area

2. Enhance the professional services of the Center

One of the recommendations of the needs assessment of 2002 was that the Center develops an identity as the local resource for information and linkage. This was based on the finding that information was the most important service that we could offer. As such, we have developed the Information and Referral Center by physically renovating space and strategically placing relevant information in a user friendly atmosphere. To further enhance the effectiveness of this program, we need to staff this area. In the absence of funding, we will recruit and develop volunteers in this role.

The Senior and Disabled Center has enormous potential to implement model programs that are in development across the nation and to pursue grant funding to further our work. We lack the record keeping mechanisms to fully participate. Our current system is ineffective for cost benefit analysis or even for recording simple outputs. In order to improve our capacity we need to acquire new technology. Implementation of new technology will include a review of our membership system.

Initiatives

- Information and Referral Center
- MySeniorcenter.com
- Policy review

3. Enhance Public Image and Awareness

We fully recognize that one of the barriers to participation in the Senior and Disabled Center is a poor social image. Although the boomers have begun to revolutionize aging, it is still viewed negatively. There is an association between attending a senior center and facing decline. Other departments, agencies and the community at large are not aware of our resources and expertise. While we try to promote a positive image, we need a more concentrated effort to shift public perception. We need to identify the message that we want to spread and ensure that we carry it through everything that we do.

Initiatives

- Develop Public Relations plan (a plan that will ensure that the public has a favorable image of us)
- Develop marketing plan (everything that we do to attract new people and to keep people coming back-the public relations plan is part of this)

4. Build foundation of resources

The Senior and Disabled Center is funded almost entirely by the Town of Newington general fund. As a municipal department, we hope to continue to rely on the support of the Town to fund our operating

expenses. Realistically, we acknowledge that we cannot expect funding for enhancements to our services. Accordingly, we will look to develop alternative resources. This includes human resources through volunteer development as well as fund development.

Initiatives

- Volunteer management-investigate civic engagement model
- Fund development plan
- Build network of collaborative partners both within the Town of Newington and externally.

5. Develop Programs and Services

Regardless of anything else we do, without quality programs and services that meet the needs and interests of our community, we will not succeed. We have identified areas of and general guidelines for program development.

Initiatives

- Develop program standards including guidelines for collaborative planning
- Conduct a needs/interest assessment including literature review and focus groups
- Review program evaluation process and incorporate outcome measures
- Develop and implement programs that are attractive to younger seniors including:
 - Mental Fitness
 - Adventure programs
 - Evidence based programs
 - Health Year Round
 - Fitness
 - Retirement planning