Enhancing Village Capacities: 
The Role of Local Government

Pazit Aviv, MSW
Village Coordinator
Aging and Disability Services
Montgomery County Health and Human Services

Brian Footer, MPA
Director of Policy, Planning and Evaluation
DC Office on Aging

Patricia J. Rohrer, MSW
Long Term Care Program Development Coordinator
Fairfax County Health Department
Local Government recognizes the value that villages add to the well-being of citizens.
Three Common Roles

• Design policies to assist the development and delivery of services in the community
• Offer technical assistance and coordination to ensure sustainability in the community
• Create opportunities for collaborations
Benefits of Local Government Support to Villages

- Build capacity collectively (not in a vacuum)
- Offer access to county resources (expertise, facilities, funds)
- Reduce barriers to development of new villages and sustainability of existing ones
- Serve as connector between villages and community providers
- Best practices (learn from each other)
Fairfax County
Village Support

• Established Village Liaison in 2007
• Village webpage, village video, & access to national website
• Provide guidance and technical support:
  • Facilitate community forums showcasing village possibilities
  • Meet with village explorers & lend planning guidance
  • Share questionnaire samples, business templates & other planning tools
  • Arrange mentorships with existing villages
  • Facilitate Fairfax Area Village Leader meetings to share ideas
• Encourage Collaborations to avoid duplication:
  • Connect to neighborhood & county resources
    • Facilitate partnerships with community-based senior serving organizations & faith communities
• In-kind/Financial Support
  • When available, offer office space & other in-kind support
  • Inform about county funding and other grant opportunities
Fairfax County
Looking Ahead

• Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) Outreach
  • Purpose - Educate neighborhood & faith groups about the benefits of and how to begin neighbor-helping-neighbor programs
  • How - Easy to use PowerPoint and handouts are being created for Homeowner’s, Civic & Community Associations, Houses of Worship, etc. to show to their members
    • Targeted promotion region by region
  • Why – Board of Supervisor’s 50 Plus Plan Initiative
    • County recognizes the huge difference villages are making

• Interactive Maps: Making it Easy to Find Villages
  • Creating GIS maps on the county’s website where by clicking on or entering an address, can find a village, volunteer driver or similar community-based programs for older adults. Program contact information and brief program description will appear.
District of Columbia Work Over the Past Year

• Sought to answer
  • *How can DC Villages and the DCOA work together?*
  • *What is DCOA’s role in supporting DC Villages?*
• DC Villages identified three major areas where DCOA can play an important supporting role:
  • Increasing Awareness: DCOA can be an internal champion among the D.C. agencies to promote connections between agencies goals and the work of the Villages.
  • Leverage Partnerships: DCOA has the unique opportunity to convene and connect a variety of stakeholders to define mutual goals and efficiently leverage resources.
  • Build Capacity: DCOA is in a distinctive position to build local leadership through assistance, training, and other connections to local funders and community resources.
District of Columbia Moving Forward

- Redesign DCOA website and fliers
- Identify high potential neighborhoods for developing a village and coordinate community leaders
- Disseminate the “How to Start a Village in the District” and recruit partners
- Host quarterly learning exchanges for village development
- Educate government agencies about the critical role villages play in the continuum of care
- Work with sister agencies to promote corporate social responsibility with external stakeholders
Montgomery County
Big Picture Policies

- Create a staff position within Aging and Disability Services
- Create a small fund to support Village initiative in diverse communities.
- Disseminate information on villages in different venues
- Offer use of space at specific government facilities (recreation centers, libraries)
- Support villages financially through community grants
- Make staff from various department available for presentations and workshops (Safe Seniors for example)
- Consider livability from a planning/built environment perspective
Montgomery County Coordinator’s perspective

• Website with interactive map which indicates villages boundaries, media, resources and links
• Monthly email updates with funding opportunities, events, job openings, meetings announcements and more.
• Speaking engagements in small and large forums
• Collaborations facilitation (BCC villages, HEALTH Partners, Catholic University, Leadership Montgomery)
• Conference organization
• One on one consulting and connecting to pro bono consultants
• Focused work with villages in diverse communities.
Looking to the future

- Varying philosophies about local government role
- Suggestions on how to engage/involve your local government