

Elderly Services

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Department Head:
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Additional Point Person:
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Positions:	GF- 6 FT, 4 PT
General Fund Budget:	\$ 671,562
Capital Fund Budget:	\$0
Special fund Budget:	\$25,000

Legal Authority: Code of Ordinances

New Haven Code of Ordinances: Section 16 ½-3 Establishes the Commission on Aging.

Legal Authority: CT General Statutes

Department of Elderly Services: Sec. 7-127b. Municipal agents for elderly persons.

Rental Rebate Program Administration: Sec. 12-170f. and section 12-170g

Connecticut Farmers' Market/Senior Nutrition Program: Sec. 22-6 q

Mission/Overview:

Mission: To assist people aged 55 and older to live independently and with dignity, to stay connected with family and community, to maintain health and wellness, to obtain services and financial assistance to which they are entitled, and to advocate for themselves.

Overview: There are more than 19,000 people aged 55 and up in New Haven. Of those, 12,000 are 65 and up, with 1,700 aged 85 or more. There are 3,853 units of elderly housing in New Haven and 631 nursing home beds, some occupied by younger persons with disabilities. According to the State of Connecticut Plan on Aging, 2010-2014, the US Census Bureau anticipates that between 2010 and 2015 in Connecticut the number of residents aged 65 and older will increase by nearly twelve (11.9) percent.

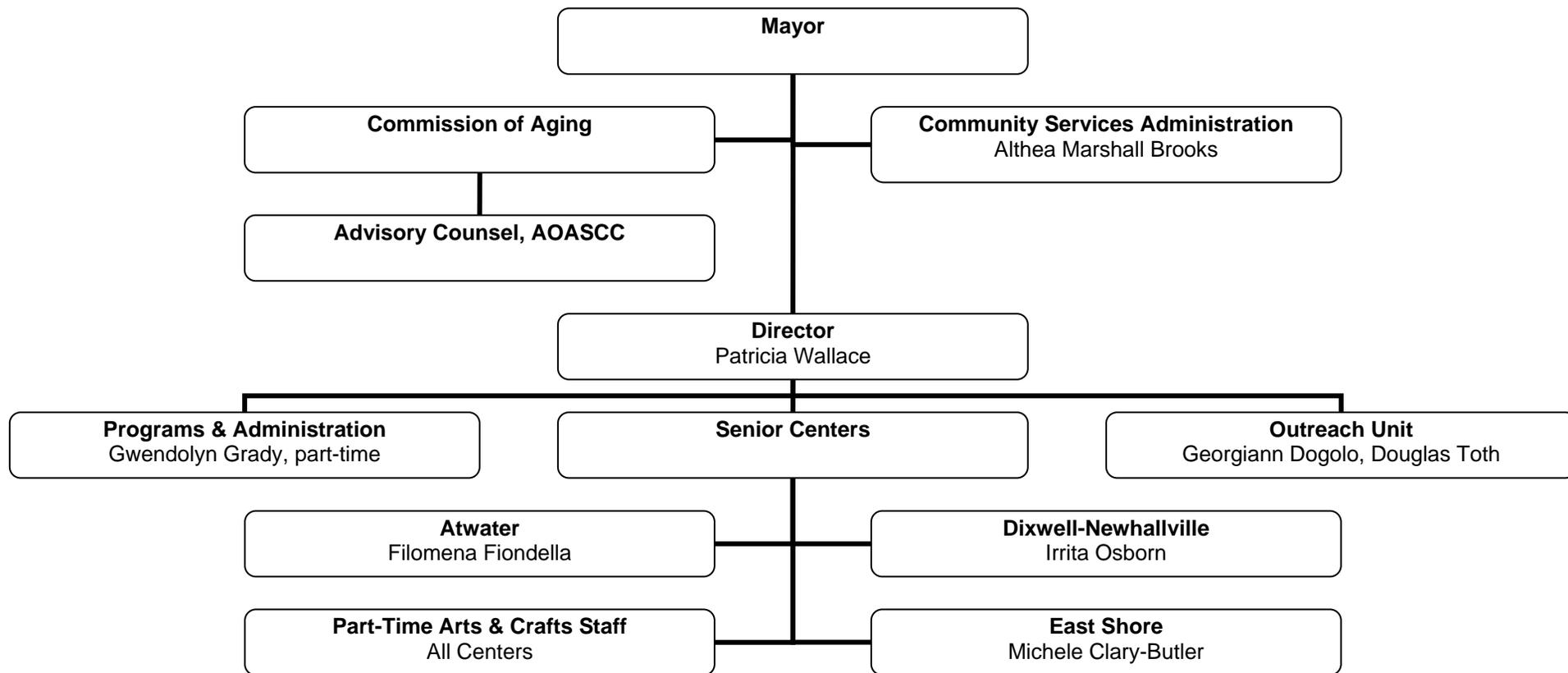
Elderly Services administers the State Rental Rebate Program in New Haven, serving 5,000 seniors and persons with disabilities, bringing in more than \$2 million in cash to these very low income people. We have recruited eighteen partner organizations to help us to take these applications. We operate from senior centers, senior housing complexes and all of the branch libraries. Home visits are provided when needed.

The City of New Haven operates three (3) senior centers Monday through Friday from 8:30 am-4:00 pm. These centers provide a hot, nutritious meal, as well as health and

wellness activities, exercise programs, speakers, local trips, educational and recreational outings, arts and crafts, games, benefits application opportunities, computer and internet access and training, and volunteer opportunities. One staff person operates each of the 3 Centers, takes applications for public benefit programs, and assists people with information and referrals. One of the staff is multi-lingual and speaks Spanish. Part-time City staff teach ceramics and sewing at the senior centers.. FSW, a non-profit based in Bridgeport, CT, provides a site manager to run the lunch program. Yale New Haven Hospital/St. Raphael Campus provides wellness checks. The City provides free wheelchair-accessible weekday transport to the senior centers from anywhere in New Haven via the Greater New Haven Transit District. Two staff do outreach. One ceramics instructor teaches a weekly class at Bella Vista. Administration consists of one-full-time director and one part-time clerk supplemented by interns. Payroll is done by CSA staff. The 8-page monthly newsletter is done largely by volunteers and 5,100 copies are distributed to all senior centers, senior housing complexes, nursing homes and libraries, and is posted online on the Department's web page.

Attention Required by March 31st:

- Review with Greater New Haven Transit District of the per-hour fee they charge based on their labor contracts and gas prices. Note: this contract requires annual review by Board of Aldermen.
- Review of Regional Rides agreement among area towns served by the Greater New Haven Transit District
- Bid janitorial services for senior centers
- Review of cost of vendor services for Tai Chi and Yoga in light of Special Funds.
- Preparation of draft contracts for churches from which we rent space for two of the senior centers.
- Promotion and all arrangements for Senior of the Year Luncheon Gala.
- Addition of new members to the Commission on Aging.
- Application for Farmers' Market Coupons; plan with City Seed for Mobile Market Truck stops
- Completion of all arrangements for Rental Rebate Program
- Agreement with the Parks Department for swim schedule and lifeguard services and for use of carousel and or fishing pier for senior events at Lighthouse Park.



Budget Summary:

Administration	
Salaries	
FT Director	69,178
FT Elderly Services Specialists (3) senior centers FT Elderly Services Specialists (2) outreach	252,036
PT Data Control Clerk (1)	15000
PT Ceramics Teachers (2) PT Sewing Teacher (1) Exercise instructors (tai chi, yoga)**	16009 16,770
Natural Gas (Atwater)	15,000
Water* including coffee supplies for senior centers	14,035
Telephone	4,320
Professional meetings	419
Equipment	2,000
General Office Supplies	2,200
Recreation supplies (senior center arts and crafts)	2,000
Transportation (daily transportation to senior centers on My Ride and very local day trips) (special trips to Holiday Hill, the Big E, Bishops Orchard)**	164,800 8230
Rental Land and Buildings (two senior centers)	78,965
Rental of equipment	5,600
Other contractual (custodial, extermination)	30,000
	696,562

* Water is an approved expense because of the restricted kitchen access due to meal preparation by the Elderly Nutrition Project. The need for is was certified by the Director of Health.

****Special Funds (CDBG)**

Summary of Open Items:

Client Database Management System	Have partially implemented. Still to be done: add data from programs other than Rent Rebate; provide staff training; enter data for Farmers' Market Coupon Program. Senior Center staff still do not have access to the server, and thus we can't implement such a program. We are waiting for IT to complete that project.
Integration of Senior Center Staff Desktop Computers onto City Server	IT is about to complete this project.
Atwater Roof Repair	About to begin, supervised by Engineering. Parks approved. Funds are available.
Volunteer Program	We rely on volunteers to assist in many ways and have elements of a volunteer program but it requires further development.
Anti-Hunger Initiative	Based on study, 2012. Partial implementation. Report available.
Arts Initiative	Partial implementation. Have built a partnership with Neighborhood Music School and Creative Arts Workshop. Have defined an implementation process and identified a foundation to which we need to apply.
Elderly Homelessness Initiative	Partial implementation. Working with CT Coalition to End Homelessness and local partners to plan joint training for case managers that work with elderly and with homeless people.
Walking Program	Partial implementation. Began program at Dixwell-Newhallville Senior Center, working with Health Department, YNHH and the American heart Association. Could be expanded with more staff time to invest.
Internal Food Pantry at Atwater	George Gillam of Trinity Church on-the-Green, in combination with the CT Food Bank, has implemented a twice-monthly food pantry for members-only. The Marett Fund has provided funds to buy a refrigerator. There are some steps to be taken before it can be installed. More shelving is needed for food storage.

Major Functions / Projects: Senior Centers

Staff: 3. (the Director, and outreach staff cover when they are out.)

Funding: General Fund with CDBG for exercise and trips (partial)

Partners: FSW, Inc. administers the Elderly Nutrition Program; YNHH operates Project ElderCare at Atwater Senior Center and provides wellness checks; Health Department provides flu shots.

Description: Senior Centers operate 3 days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and provide a mix of exercise, recreation, arts and crafts, trips, and other programs. Each has a computer lab. We offer trips to movies, plays, shopping, recreation or museums, etc. Senior centers are an essential platform from which to deliver a variety of services, particularly to low-income seniors. We take applications to the Rent Rebate Program, energy assistance and senior homeowner tax benefits. Each senior center has a different mix of programs, and could use more. Each senior center has an independent unincorporated non-profit senior association with elected leadership and bylaws. This allows them to do things beyond what the City can do for them. The City provides free daily round-trip transportation on weekdays for seniors from home to any senior center. Atwater is owned by the Parks Department. The other two centers occupy space that is rented from churches. All are cleaned on weekday evenings by a contractor.

The City continues to provide a weekly ceramics class at Bella Vista by agreement made at the time the City closed the senior center there. The City pays the instructor and pays for a few basic supplies. Bella Vista provides the studio space. The seniors pay for their own pieces. Casa Otonal considers itself a senior center. When it is possible to provide yoga or tai chi, we do so. We have also advocated for Casa Otonal and Bella Vista with the Elderly Nutrition Program when cuts were made in funds that cut into meals served.

The New Haven Free Public Library and the Parks Department both offer some programs that are “senior-center-type” programs. We publicize them in our newsletter and by email to senior housing complexes. Particularly because we do not operate senior centers in every neighborhood, it is important to collaborate with others who can help us to accomplish our mission.

Current Special Initiatives

Walking: We began a program at Dixwell-Newhallville in 2012, but need to expand elsewhere.

Arts: The arts can be very important in physical, emotional and cognitive health. The Director has worked Creative Arts Workshop, Neighborhood Music School and the 3 senior centers to explore joint program possibilities. A class at UNH has researched grants. We are exploring program possibilities and will submit funding applications soon.

Major Functions / Projects: Rental Rebate Program

Staff: All

Funding: Grants are paid for by the State. More than \$2 million in grants are made to 5000 very low-income people in New Haven. Local administration is paid for by the City. The program has been based at the State Office of Policy and Management but will switch to the new State Department of Housing in 2014.

Time Frame: April 1- October 1 with extensions granted for medical reasons through December 15

Partners: We have recruited 18 partner organizations including most senior housing complexes in the City. The Library and the Housing Authority are among our most important partners. People with disabilities are also seen by partners who serve persons with disabilities: (CMHC, Continuum of Care, East Seals/Goodwill, etc.)

Description: This program was sunset by the Governor and the CT General Assembly in the 2013 Session. That means that no one new may be added but people who have been on the program may continue to apply. The Commission on Aging of the City opposed the sunset action, and continues to organize to try to get the decision reversed. Between 4,000 and 5,000 people in New Haven have received grants of up to \$900 each year based on age, disability, income and expenses for rent and utilities. To complete their application, each applicant must be seen in person in a confidential setting. They must provide basic documents that prove their identity, income and rent and utilities for the prior year. Staff and partners trained by the State Office of Policy and management enter the information into a web-based program with restricted access. Copies of each applicant's income documentation must be kept by the City for 3 years in secure storage, and disposed of after the State gives written permission. Appointments for the program for those to be seen by City staff are sent out by mail, or are made through a central phone line. The City's phone system makes this challenging, but we have configured a set of inter-related numbers that work well enough. Spanish-speaking CSA staff answer the phone line for Spanish-speakers. People are assigned to a location for their appointment by age and by zip code. Only seniors are seen at senior centers. Otherwise our senior centers would be off-mission, and completely overwhelmed. Younger people who are permanently and totally disabled, or seniors who live in the Hill or the western half of the City, are seen at branch libraries near where they live. Our outreach staff see people at these sites and also do home visits. They use laptops and "hotspots" to connect with the internet. The appointment-setting process is managed through a data-based management system that has been custom-designed, and is very efficient. When staffing allows, we phone people a day ahead to remind them of their appointment. The appointments made in the past can be re-used in the future with adjustments made by formula by IT. Partner organizations handle appointment-setting in their own way, but see clients or residents for whom they already provide services that involve management of confidential information. Elderly Services has greatly increased the number of persons served despite major cuts in staff by recruiting partner organizations, and by marketing the program. People receive and use the funds in early November. Often it is used for heating oil or warm clothes or to pay for food for the holidays. It comes directly into the local economy.

Major Functions / Projects: Commission on Aging

Staff: Director of Elderly Services

Funding: None

Time Frame: Meets on the third Tuesday of the month, September through June. Meetings are held at Atwater Senior Center from 10-11:30 a.m.

Partners: Funds are raised annually to cover costs associated with the Annual Senior of the Year Luncheon Gala, held in May

Appointments: The Mayor appoints, the Board of Aldermen must approve the Mayor's nominations. Terms are for 3 years, renewable to a maximum of 9 years of service. There are limits on how many persons from one political party may serve simultaneously. People may ask for appointment or be nominated by others.

Description: The Commission on Aging has broad powers to review the state of older adults in New Haven, and to act to improve it as it sees fit. The Commission has been a magnet for able people with deep feelings for older adults, and convictions about right actions and policies that are needed to serve them. In the recent past, the Commission has considered pedestrian safety issues affecting older adults, hunger among seniors, a desire to expand the Farmers' Market Coupon Program, homelessness among elderly residents of our City, and the sunset of the Rent Rebate Program. The Commission co-sponsored forums with the State Commission on Aging at Gateway Community College. It always sponsors an annual luncheon to recognize outstanding leaders who volunteer their time and talent at senior centers and senior housing complexes. The Commission is staffed by the Director of Elderly Services but is independent. It is led by its Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Minutes are kept by the Secretary, but are often taken by the Director of Elderly Services. Notice of meetings is sent to the City /Town Clerk and electronically to all senior centers and senior housing complexes. Minutes are posted on the City website when available. The Commission advocates for the budget of the Department of Elderly Services when it wishes to do so.

Current Special Initiatives

Heal the Cut Campaign to restore the Rent Rebate Program: The Commission has promoted a letter writing campaign among people being turned away because of the sunset of the Rent Rebate Program. Hundreds of letters have been sent to Aging Commissioner Edith Prague. Other towns have signed on to work for restoration of the cuts.

Pedestrian Safety Improvements: The Commission has worked with Engineering to improve safety on Valley Street in response to initiatives by residents of Mountain Valley Place, Westville Village Renaissance and the Alderwoman. Work is ongoing.

Farmers' Market Coupons: The Commission would like to see a major expansion to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables during the growing season.

Major Functions / Projects: Outreach

Staff: 2 plus Director

Funding: General Fund

Partners: Resident Services Coordinators, Neighborhood Housing Services, Library staff, State DSS Elderly Protective Services, individual members of the Board of Aldermen, Aldermanic Committees and staff, Tax Collector and Assessor, New Haven Food Policy Council, CT Coalition to End Homelessness, Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, Agency on Aging, City Seed, Creative Arts Workshop, SCCCOG

Description: Two outreach staff take applications to the Rent Rebate Program in libraries, some housing complexes, and visit homebound people at home to take applications for Energy Assistance, the Tax Benefit Program, and other benefit programs. They maintain liaison with partner organization staff, particularly those who are new to the work. When time permits, they conduct monthly supermarket and pharmacy outreach on or near the third of the month when benefit checks are issued in order to reach a maximum number of people to inform them about food stamps, Benefits CheckUp, senior centers, and other important information. They also assist when possible with special initiatives, i.e, problems of hoarding, hunger and homelessness. They do outreach to organizations that assist grandparents raising grandchildren. Finally, they assist seniors in trouble with foreclosure, other housing problems, or who are a danger to themselves or others. They maintain contact with a caseload of persons who return each year to request a tax abatement from the Board of Aldermen in order to be certain that they are receiving all forms of help to which they are entitled. They assist with newsletter delivery. They submit applications to the Marett Fund. Because of limited staff, the Director of Elderly Services is directly involved in some of this casework and program development as well.

Special Outreach Initiatives

Hunger

We did a study in 2012 that showed that 41% of low-income seniors in New Haven said they were unable to afford to buy the kind of food they need in order to stay healthy. We have worked with partners since then to improve access to healthy food. See report.

Homelessness

With data from New Haven shelters provided by Nutmeg Consulting, we reported this year on the extent of homelessness among older adults in New Haven in a presentation to New Haven Opening Doors in July 2013. See powerpoint presentation. As a first step, we are working with partners to increase collaboration among case managers at homeless shelters and those that serve the elderly with a conference this fall. Additional steps are needed.

Hoarding

We sponsored a major conference for the region and built a common framework for action among City staff based on best practices nationally. The conference presentations are available on our website and on a DVD. There is informal networking among City staff that deal with hoarders but not a formal work group.

Major Functions / Projects: Philip Marett Fund

Staff: Director and FT Staff

Funding: Bequest left to the City in the 19th century administered by U.S. Trust

Partners: Referrals come from social service agencies in the region

Description: The value of the fund exceeds \$2.3 million. Interest earned on the principal of the fund is used to make small emergency grants, primarily to individuals. People must be aged 60 or older, very low-income, but not on Title 19. The grant must be no more than \$500, and a sensible expenditure. If it is a \$5,000 problem, \$500 won't be enough to fix the problem. Recommendations must come from a social service agency or our own staff. There is an application form. Funds must go directly to a vendor, never to the person him or herself. The need must be documented with an invoice. The grant is supposed to be given once, but not more than once a year, and not repeated more than twice within a two-year period.

The director is one of two co-trustees that must approve all grants, with the other one an employee of the US Trust, which was designated by the Probate Court to administer the funds. Regular reports are sent to the Director about the health of the fund, which are shared with the Finance Department. From time to time grants are made to non-profits for purposes in line with Mr. Marett's wishes. Hunger, and elderly people who had worked all of their lives but found themselves on hard times---these were of concern to him.

The fund is active, often requiring approvals a half-dozen times a week.

Investment of the fund to both maximize the return but also to protect the asset is important. It is an asset that belongs to the City of New Haven.

Major Functions / Projects: Publications

Newsletter

Volunteers: editor, writers, photographer, circulation manager

Staff: Director, with assistance from Outreach Staff for distribution. The PT Data Clerk maintains the online calendar used in the newsletters.

Funding: paper and ink provided by print shop

Description: The newsletter was created at a time when a commercial organization thought it could sell ads to make it self-sustaining. They were not very successful. We now self-publish, more or less continuing the format from before. The 15th of the month is the deadline for all entries. The heart of the newsletter is the calendar of activities. There are several of these: the next month's meals from FSW, activities from the Library and the Parks Department, our own online calendar. Page 1 is divided between a Mayor's column and the Director's column. The back page always has the list of contributors and some key phone numbers. The newsletter goes to print a week before the end of the month. It is distributed on the last day of the month or the first day of the new month. After it is printed it goes to Atwater for counting out for each location. There is a standard list of who gets what. Each is labeled. Once we bundle and deliver them, the Housing Authority distributes its own copies, as does Bella Vista and the Library. When we drop off the new, we pick up the old, in places where they are left out for the public to take. The old ones are re-purposed or discarded. Copies are put in each Alderman's mail slot in the office of the Board of Aldermen. A half-dozen are brought to the Mayor's office and staff. Copies are available at our front desk. Copies are delivered to FSW to be included with home-delivered lunches for the homebound.

Blue Book (English/Spanish)

The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut researches information for seniors and persons with disabilities. Elderly Services reviews it. CSA staff has translated it into Spanish. Wibur Cross High School prints 5,000 copies for the Agency on Aging and 6,500 copies for Elderly Services. This year it will include a section specific to New Haven in a book that is also generic to New Haven. In the past Youth-at-Work interns went door- to-door to distribute the books to persons aged 65 and up in CDBG-target neighborhoods. Outreach staff distributed them during supermarket and pharmacy outreach events. In the past, it was distributed at a senior expo done jointly with the Agency on Aging, no longer held because they do not have the capacity to co-sponsor. Thus this year we will distribute the booklets at senior housing complexes, libraries and senior centers in the way we do newsletters. We will also make them available to LCI Neighborhood Specialists and our Outreach staff will distribute them as outreach events.

Website

We use the web page as a basic tool to introduce internet users to Elderly Services and the online calendar as a way to introduce the activities at the senior centers. The Director transmits content for the web page to IT for uploading. The Data Clerk directly enters information from the Senior Centers into the City calendar.

Key Systems/Processes:

Database Management System:

- IT has created a template in Excel for Senior Center staff to use to report their work on a daily and monthly basis.
- IT has created a program in Access for the Rent Rebate Program for use in making appointments for the Rent Rebate Program to enable us to create lists of appointments by date and by site, and able to generate letters to be mailed to those given the appointments.

Newsletter (monthly)

- We use a template in Publisher created for us by a previous publisher of the newsletter.
- A volunteer editor receives feature articles, photos and recipes from regular volunteer contributors by the 15th of the month. She takes content from the City calendar and formats it for the newsletter template. She obtains calendar information from the Library. She obtains the lunch menu from FSW for the coming month. She adds other announcements, flyers and articles of interest.. She edits all copy and puts it into the template.
- The Director creates the front page.
- The Director transmits the newsletter to the Print Room in City Hall, and takes 5,100 copies to Atwater Senior Center where a volunteer oversees sorting and labeling for each site.
- The Director and Outreach staff take the newsletters to senior centers, senior housing complexes and libraries.

Annual Senior of the Year Volunteer Luncheon

- June: Commission evaluates luncheon, selects date for following year and makes reservation.
- January: Nomination forms go out to senior centers and senior housing complexes
- March: Nominations are received, along with bios, photos and payment for the luncheon of the nominees by those nominating them. Flyers and tickets sales information is sent out. Sponsors are solicited to cover cost of food for Commissioners and invited guests, flowers, etc. Transportation forms are sent to senior centers.
- April: Ticket sales close, all other prep work is done including printing certificates, programs and a two-page compilation of a photo and bio of each awardee. This also becomes copy for the June newsletter. Transportation forms are returned, and van and bus transport is arranged.
- May: Event is held. Commission presides. Each awardee receives a corsage or boutonniere, an award certificate presented by the Mayor, and a photo taken with Mayor as the award is presented. A color copy of the photo is printed and mailed to each awardee after event. Checks are deposited to the Elderly Services Trust Fund. Bill is paid.

System Deficiencies/Attention Required:

1. Strategic Plan: We do not have one. The role of the Commission on Aging includes leadership to plan for the needs of older adults in the City. The Commission on Aging is considering two processes. The World Health Organization (WHO) is promoting the development of global age-friendly cities.

http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2007/9789241547307_eng.pdf. Noting increased urbanization and rising percentages of older adults there are two trends that need to be looked at together as part of a recommended planning process that reflects the results of research done in 33 places across the globe. The introduction notes that "An age-friendly city encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age." The Who framework calls for policies, services, settings and structures that:

- recognize the great range of capacities and resources among older people
- anticipate and respond flexibly to the needs and preferences of people
- respect the decisions and lifestyle choices of people
- protect the most vulnerable
- promote inclusion of older people in all aspects of community life.

The WHO provides checklists in 8 topic areas for cities to use to assess how aging-friendly they are: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services. Their process calls for mayors and communities to commit to a serious self assessment and to change when needed. Coordination across different areas of policy and program is necessary so that they are mutually reinforcing. Seniors need to be central to the process, but information is also gathered from service providers. There is also an excellent strategic planning process, *Aging Well in Communities: A Toolkit for Planning, Engagement & Action*. The Commission has received both and will consider whether to recommend that funds be included in the next budget to hire a consultant to implement such a process.

2. Senior centers are still essential even though Baby Boomers may relate to them differently. Ours could use longer hours and more diverse programs. They offer people opportunities to give as well as receive. With our tiny paid staff, we could not operate the senior centers without volunteers, and people willing to take leadership to make things happen. We need to structure a real volunteer program to recruit, train, supervise, and recognize volunteers. Retired boomers and youth needing service hours will be looking for volunteer options. We should be ready with quality options. Lack of evening hours for programs limits our ability to reach out to people who are elderly but still working. We lack access to a pool, except for a few weeks in summer. An extension program of arts and exercise programs offered by senior centers at nearby senior housing complexes and in partnership with the Library and Parks Department would be useful.

3. Staffing: We need to expand a part-time data clerk position to full-time add funds for an intern for the Rent Rebate Program and add an additional full-time outreach position.

4. We need to complete the project of connecting senior center staff to the City server in order to maximize use of technology to increase efficiency.