



Services for Seniors & People with Disabilities

**Presented to the City of Hyattsville Mayor and Council on
March 21, 2016**

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Introduction

This report seeks to inform the City of Hyattsville Mayor and Council as they make decisions concerning services for seniors and residents with disabilities. It was requested by the Mayor and Council when the senior and disability services position expanded from part-time to full-time in fiscal year 2015. The report includes results of the recent senior survey (conducted in-house) and relevant information learned from meetings with community groups and residents. Further, to help Council consider possible service trajectories, the report also includes summaries of the senior services and associated staffing and resources of other nearby cities.

Methodology

Two primary methods were used to gather information for this report. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with seniors and residents with disabilities, community organizations and officials of other cities. Also, a bilingual printed opinion survey was mailed to all addresses within the City – approximately 8,000. The City received near 600 responses.

Demographics

Of the City's nearly 18,500 residents, just over 7% are seniors age 65 or older and just over 8% of residents have a disability. Combined they comprise 13% of residents. (The groups have significant overlap, as 42% of senior residents have a disability.)

However, more residents are impacted by senior issues, as nearly 17% of the City's households include at least one senior member, and just over 12% of the City's population is age 55-64, and possibly already thinking about their own lives as seniors.

Finally, among senior residents, 11% live below the poverty line.¹

History of the City's Senior and Disability Services

The City has offered curb-to-curb Call-A-Bus service to seniors and residents with disabilities for many years. However, it expanded senior service provision in 2011 by hiring a part-time senior and disability services coordinator. In 2014, this position was expanded to full time. The coordinator position's duties have changed from year to year, as the position stabilized. An overview of current service offerings follows.

Senior and Disability Services Currently Offered by the City of Hyattsville

Benefits Assistance – supports seniors and residents with disabilities to understand Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid Waiver, other health insurance plans, prescription programs including Medicare Part D, medical providers, and entitlement programs.

Information and Referral Service – provides information and referrals to resource providers on issues including health, finances, transportation, family issues, housing and other areas of concern.

Transportation Service – curb-to-curb reduced-cost service is offered by the City's Call-a-Bus which operates within a six-mile radius of the city during business hours. Transportation is provided to medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, and occasional additional shopping venues. Regular nutritional trips are made to Price Rite and the Hyattsville Farmers Market. Special appointments outside the six-mile radius are considered upon request.

¹ All demographic statistics are from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Educational Programming – educational presentations – generally on health issues – are coordinated regularly throughout the year.

Exercise Class – Ageless Grace exercise classes are offered twice weekly year-round.

Recreational Programming – nearly every month a social trip or program is coordinated by the City. Coordination may include planning and hosting the event, or coordinating participation and transportation of residents to an event hosted by another government or third party. Additionally, seniors at the Friendship Arms housing facility are regularly involved in service projects with student Volunteers.

Staff & Vehicles Utilized:

- 1 FTE Senior & Disability Services Coordinator
- 1.25 FTE Call-A-Bus Driver
- .25 Administrative Aide/Schedule CAB Transport
- .33 Community Services Manager

Total = 2.83 FTE
1 Bus

Services of Prince George’s County and Maryland National-Capital Parks and Planning

The County and MNCPPC are the other local governments that provide services to Hyattsville residents. An overview of their services follows. Services marked with an asterisk (*) have a waitlist.

Information Service – provides information about senior opportunities, services and service providers to seniors and their family members.

Family Caregiver Program – assists caregivers in making decisions, identifying benefits and respite care, and solving problems for seniors losing their ability to live independently.

Health Insurance Counseling – offers free health insurance counseling concerning Medicare, Medicaid, Medigap-Supplemental, HMO plans, physician and hospital bills, and long-term care insurance.

Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy Program* – subsidizes costs for low- to moderate-income seniors to live in an assisted living/group home facility. *Waitlist is based on availability of annual subsidy allocation.

Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver* – allows services that are typically covered by Medicaid only in a long-term care facility to be provided to seniors in their homes or assisted living facilities. *Applicants are assessed, and those with most critical need receive service first.

Community First Choice* – provides enhanced Medicaid services to help seniors stay in their homes. Services can include meal delivery, accessibility adaptations, emergency response, and nurse monitoring. *Applicants are assessed, and those with most critical need receive service first.

Senior Care* – provides services to seniors at risk for nursing home placement, including personal care, adult day care, and financial help for medications, medical/personal supplies and emergency response systems. *Applicants are assessed, and those with most critical need receive service first. Applicants who do not receive services immediately are reassessed annually, or after a medical event or emergency.

Ombudsman Program – helps protect and advocate for people living in nursing homes and other long-term care centers by investigating complaints, ensuring resident rights, mediating disputes between family members and nursing home staff, and educating staff and families.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Treatment – provides short-term counseling and connections to additional support.

Public Guardianship – provides in-depth monitoring and ensures the safety of senior wards appointed by the Court.

Money Follows the Person – assists seniors transitioning from nursing homes to an apartment, private home or small group setting.

Senior Community Service Employment Program – a federal initiative that provides job training and improves the well-being of low income seniors.

Retired Senior and Volunteer Program – helps seniors put their skills and talents to work in their communities.

Foster Grandparents Program – seniors work with at-risk youth and young adults to help them grow, gain self-confidence and become productive members of our communities.

Telephone Reassurance – utilizes senior volunteers to place daily check-in/reassuring phone calls to isolated seniors.

Large-Scale Socials – twice a year, these events bring together residents county-wide to share a meal, learn about county services, dance and exercise.

Senior Activity Centers and Community Centers – Offerings vary by center, but can include special events, meals, trips, classes, health programs, fitness rooms, walking tracks, pickle ball, golf discounts, pool, and information and referrals. The Prince George's Plaza Community Center is located inside the City of Hyattsville. The closest Senior Center is in North Brentwood. Three other centers are within the six-mile radius accessible by the Call-A-Bus.

Senior and Disability Services Offered by Other Communities

Below is an outline of services provided by three nearby communities. The information is provided as reference points and/or benchmarks for the Mayor and Council as they consider current and potential service levels of the City of Hyattsville.

Bowie

The City of Bowie has been serving seniors since the mid-1990s, but in 2000 it greatly expanded service by opening a nationally accredited senior center. There are two subsidized senior housing facilities in Bowie, and two that are market rate, and two more market rate developments in design/construction phases. None of the facilities are owned by the City.

The City does not supplement social work services, but provides many other services on a large scale. Those services include information and referrals in the areas of healthcare, finances, family issues and housing; curb-to-curb Call-A-Bus service; health and wellness activities and a health newsletter; support groups and activity groups; continuing education provided by Prince George's Community College; hot lunches; social and recreational trips and events.

According to census data, the City of Bowie's population is roughly three times that of Hyattsville, and 11.6% of the population are seniors. Still, Bowie's senior staffing level is proportionately much higher than the City of Hyattsville.

Staff & Vehicles Utilized:

1 FTE Senior Services Manager
1 FTE Assistant Manager
1 FTE Transportation Coordinator
1 FTE Wellness Coordinator
1 FTE Senior Nutrition Aide
1 FTE Information & Referral Specialist
2 FTE Maintenance Personnel
4 FTE Program Assistants
10 FTE Bus Drivers
Total = 22 FTE
9 Buses, 1 Van

College Park

The City of College Park began serving seniors in the early 1980s by providing Call-A-Bus service. The community is home to two federally-subsidized senior housing buildings.

Currently, the City's programming includes **information and referral** services and **casework support** at two federally subsidized apartment buildings for seniors. **Educational presentations** are also coordinated and a **monthly health newsletter** is distributed. Finally, the City subsidizes **eight social trips each year** – covering about half the cost so that residents only pay \$20-40.

Staff & Vehicles Utilized:

- 1 FTE Seniors Program Manager
- 1.5 FTE Driver
- .5 FTE Caseworker (only serves senior housing facilities)
- .5 FTE Administrative Aide
- 1 FTE Family Services Director

Total = 4.5 FTE
3 Buses

Greenbelt

In the early 1970s the City of Greenbelt launched Greenbelt CARES, the arm of the City that serves youth, families, seniors and people with disabilities. The City owns one federally-subsidized senior apartment buildings.

The City's offerings include **Call-A-Bus service, 7 days/week**, limited to the boundaries of the city, **information and referral services, benefits assistance, educational presentations** and **health activities** (including an annual flu clinic, health fair and mental health screening day, a memory support group, brain fitness program, Ageless Grace, a community nursing program, and provision of prescription drug discount cards). Social activities are organized and staffed by the City's recreation department.

Additionally, Greenbelt has opted to supplement **social services** offered by Prince George's County. The City offers **casework and social work** on topics including in-home care, housing, care-giving, and more. Additional support includes a weekday **hot-lunch program** (provided by the County), monthly food distributions and sliding-scale subsidies for home equipment. These services are reserved for City of Greenbelt residents only.

Staff & Vehicles Utilized:

- 1 FTE Community Resource Advocate
- 1 FTE Geriatric Case Manager & Counselor
- 1 FTE Service Coordinator (serving residential facility)
- 1 FTE Case Manager/Service Coordinator
- 1 FTE Driver

1.5 FTE (3 pt. weekend drivers)
Total = 6.5 FTE
1 Bus, 1 Car

Resident Survey

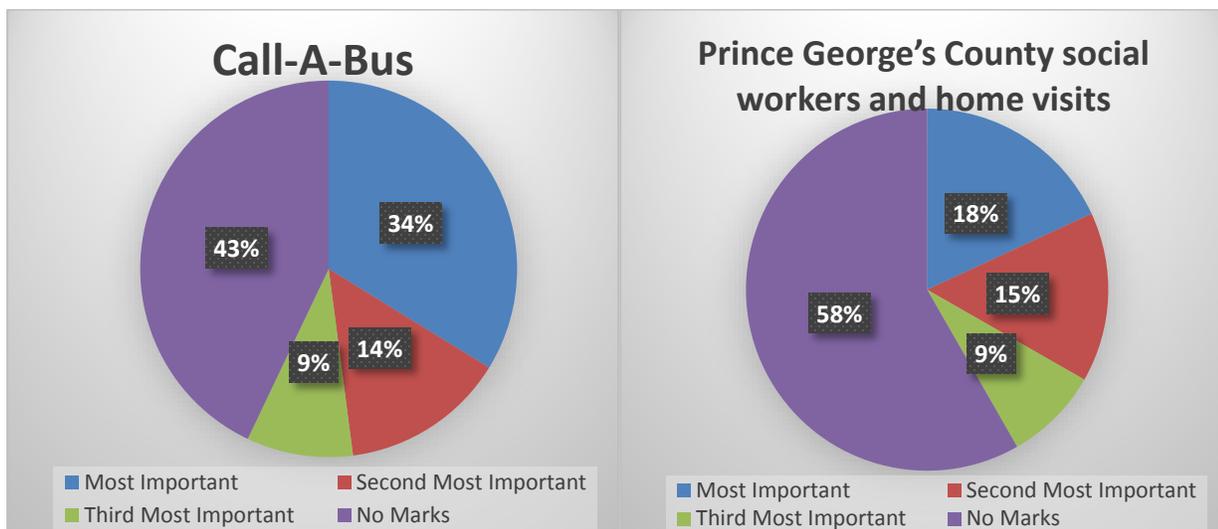
In January, the City mailed a survey to all residents seeking their opinion of current and potential services offered to seniors and people with disabilities. The survey was mailed in English and Spanish with a postage-paid return envelope. Approximately 600 responses were mailed back, 51% of which were filled out by people age 60 or older. Below are the key findings of the survey, followed by answers to all questions.

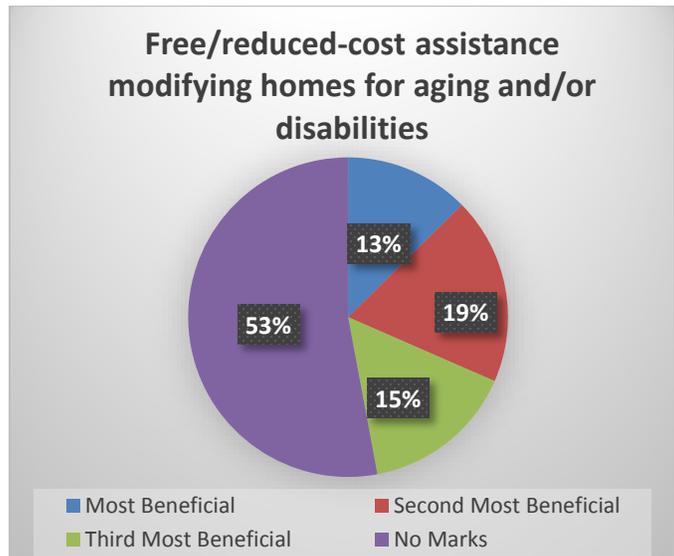
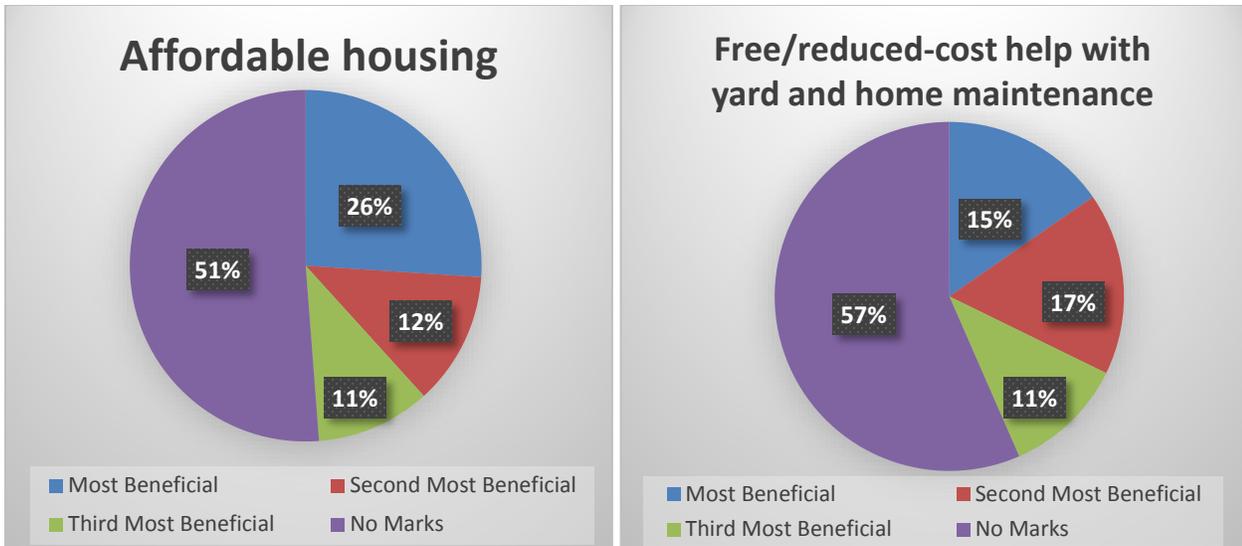
Key Findings

Throughout the survey, residents were asked to rank what services they thought were most important – including services that are currently provided and those that could potentially be provided in the future. Of the 19 services named in the survey, five outscored the others by considerable margins. The five services that residents considered most important are:

- Call-A-Bus (current)
- Prince George’s County Social Workers and Home Visits (current)
- Affordable Housing (potential)
- Assistance with Home/Yard Maintenance (potential)
- Assistance with Home/Property Modification (potential)

The charts below show the percentage of respondents that considered these services important. Each of them was ranked as the first or second most important service by more than 30% of respondents, which is significantly higher than the 14 remaining services included in the survey.





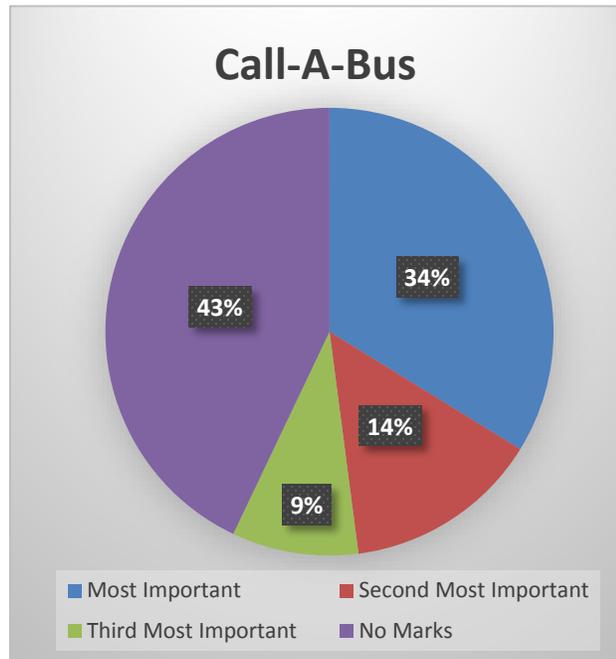
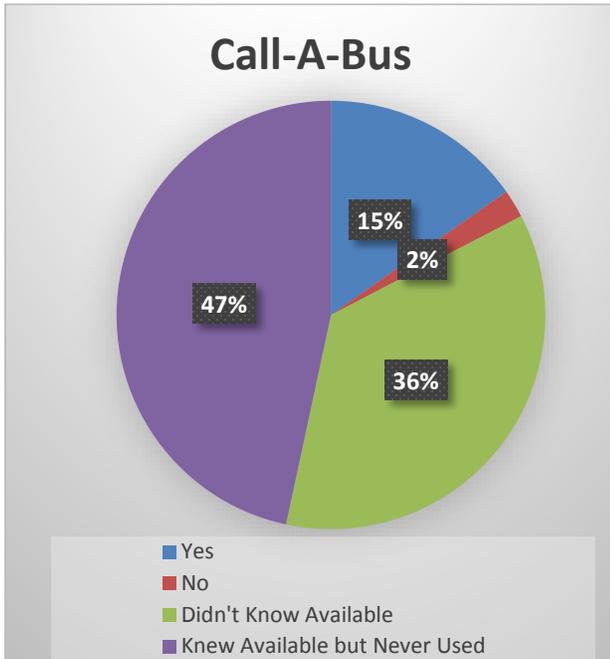
Responses to All Survey Questions

The charts below show the responses to all the questions asked in the survey.

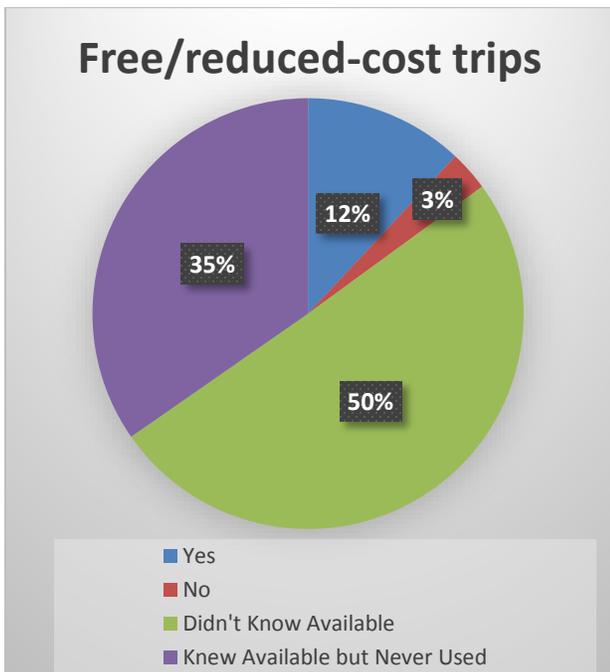
Question 1.

The charts on the left show the answers to the question, “The following services are available in the City of Hyattsville for seniors and residents with disabilities. Are you satisfied with them?” The charts on the right show answers to the question, “Which THREE of the items above do you think are most important?”

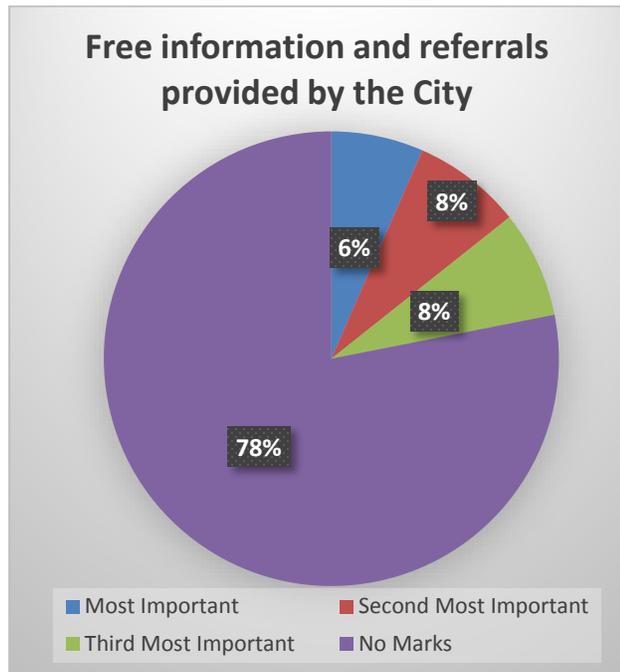
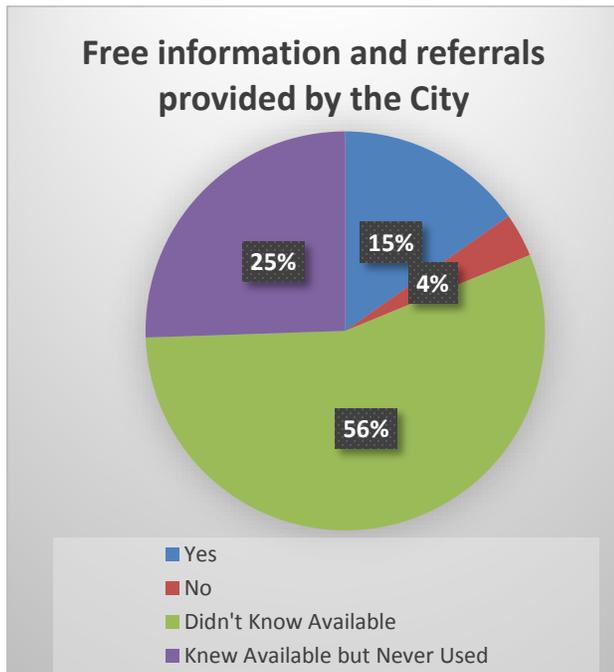
1A. Free/reduced-cost Call-A-Bus service.



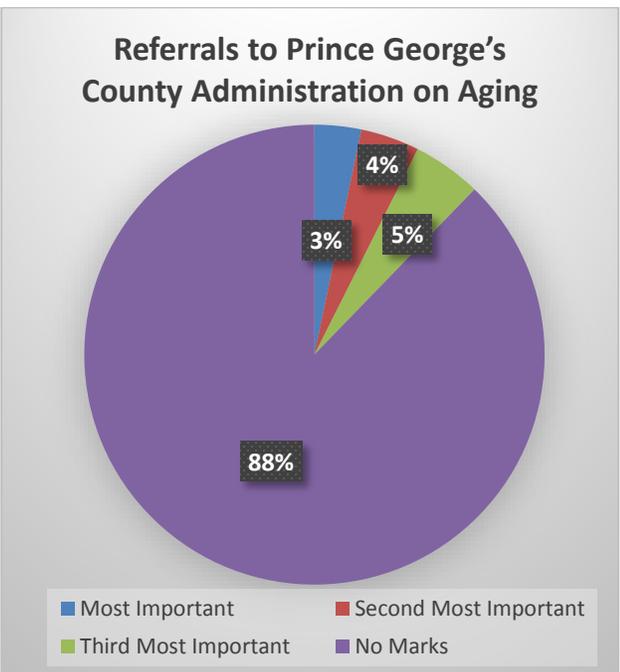
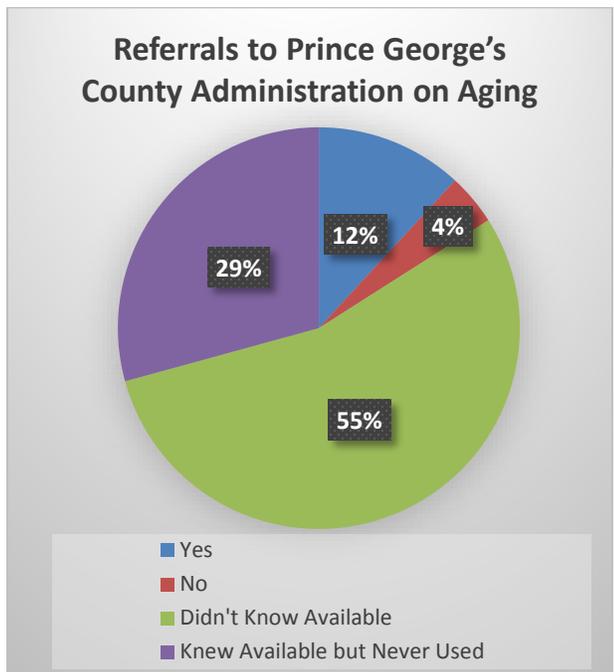
1B: Free/reduced-cost trips (for socializing, entertainment, shopping)



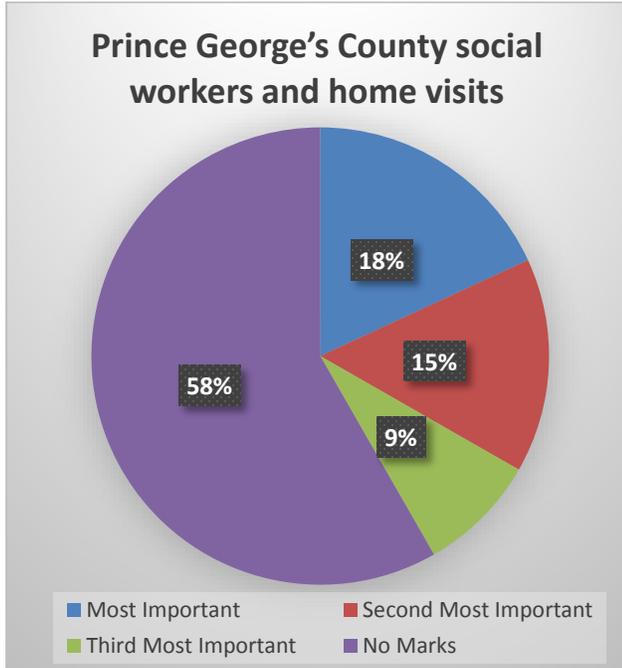
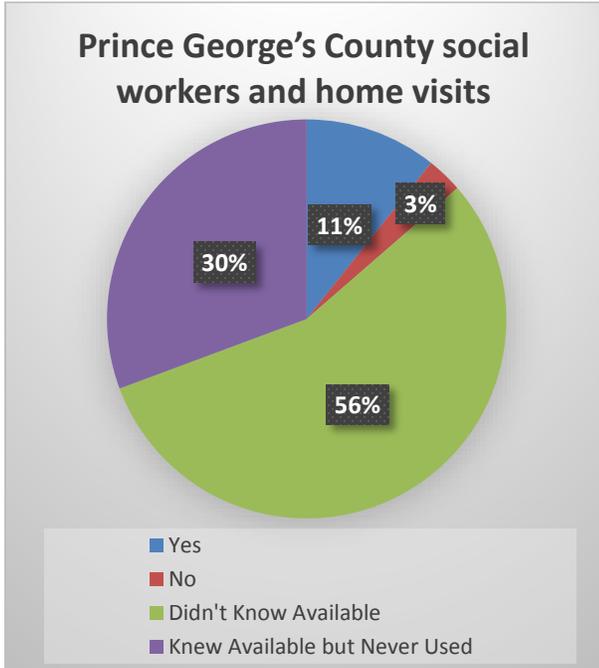
1C: Free information and referrals provided by the City.



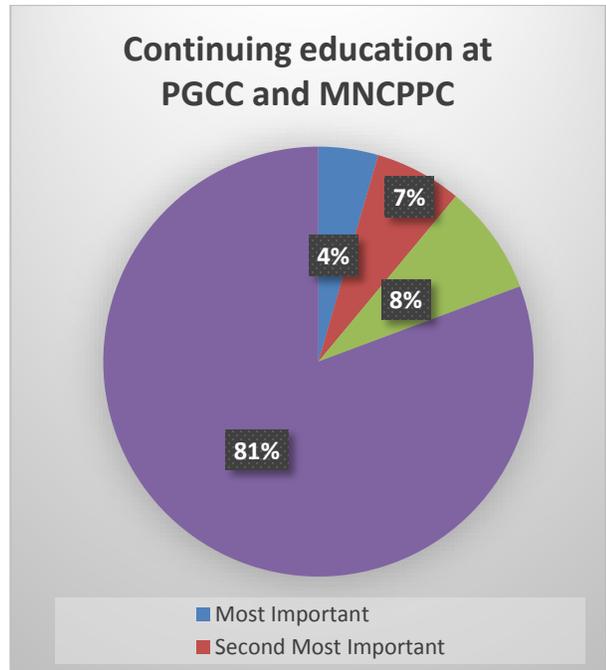
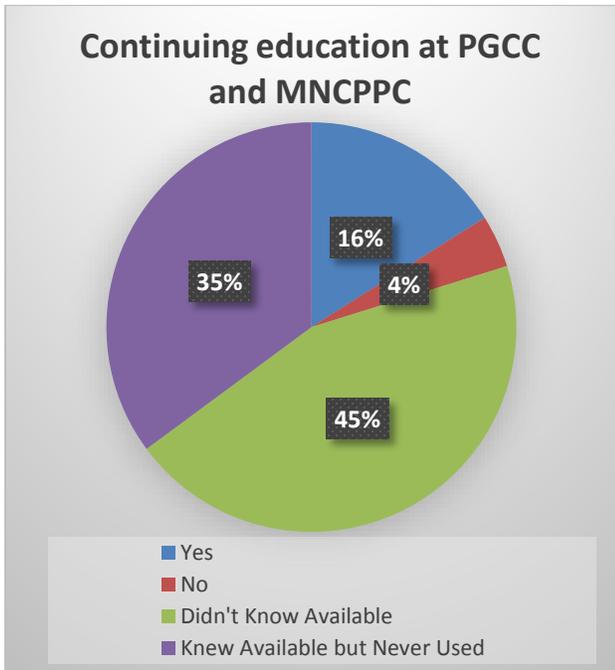
1D: Referrals to Prince George's County Administration on Aging.



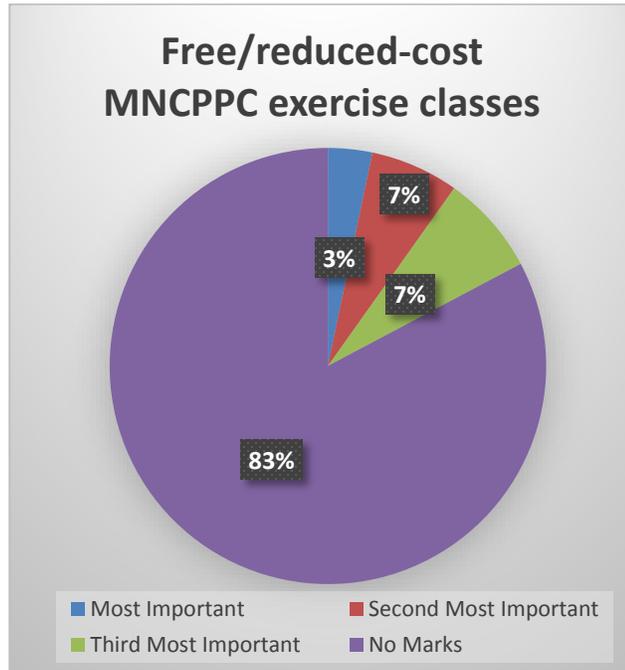
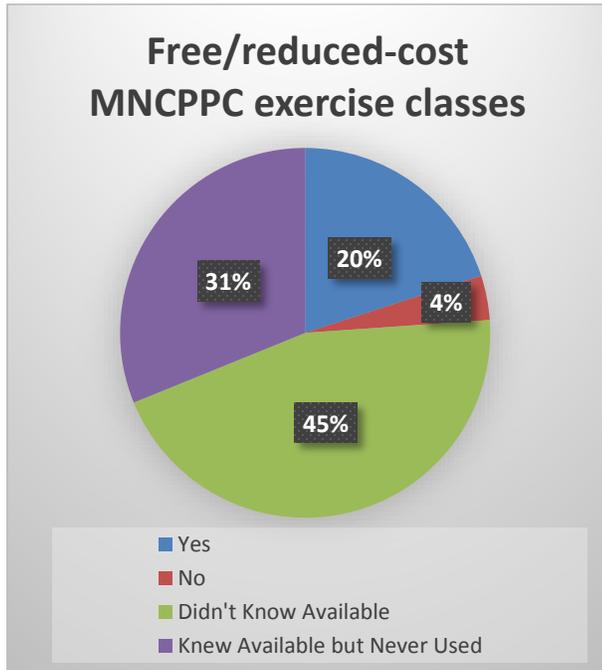
1E: Prince George’s County social workers and home visits.



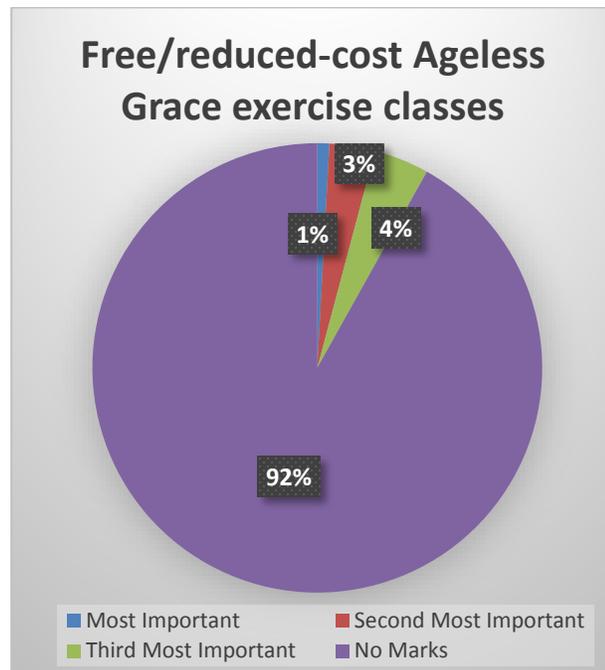
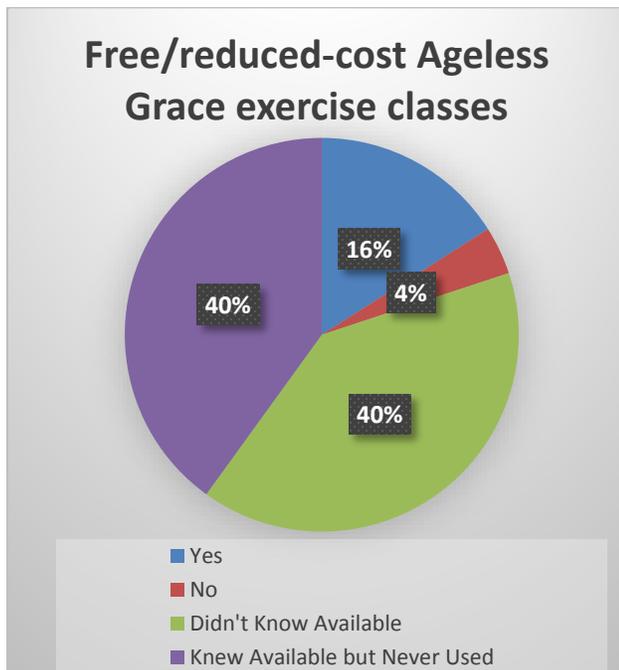
1F: Free/reduced-cost continuing education at Prince George’s Community College and Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)



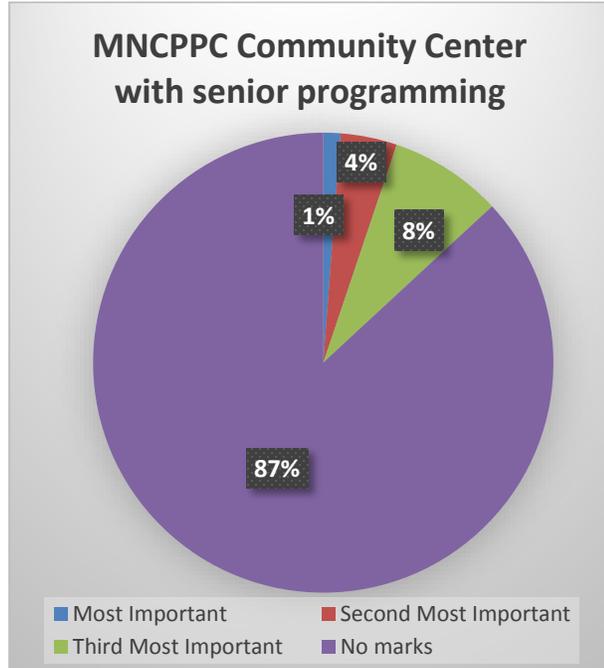
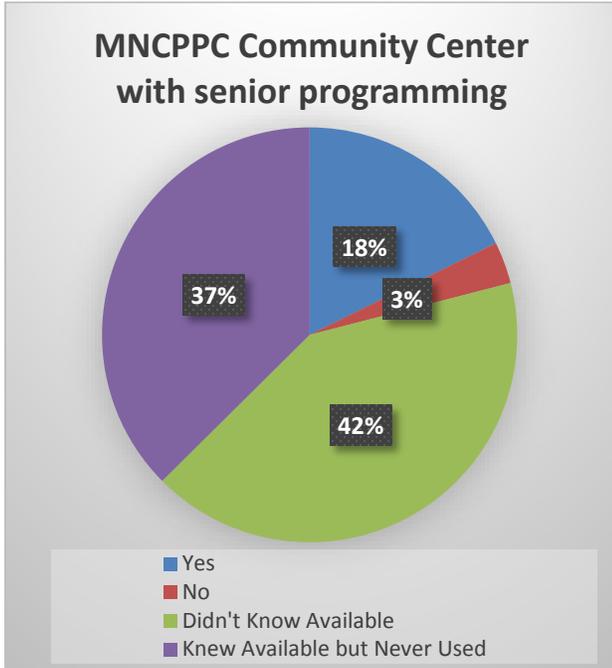
1G: Free/reduced-cost MNCPPC exercise classes.



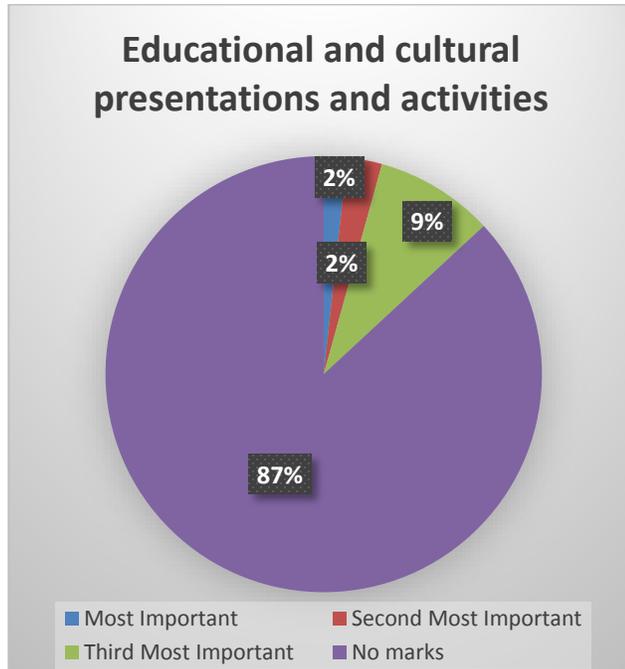
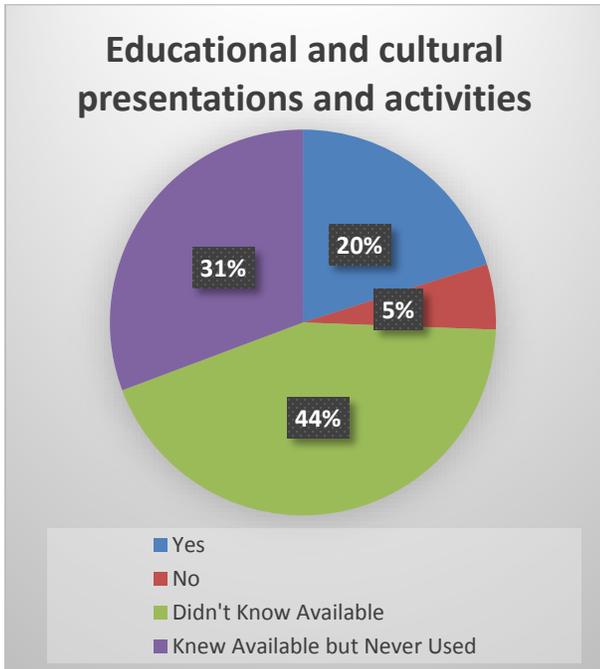
1H: Free/reduced-cost Ageless Grace exercise classes.



1I: MNCPPC Community Center with senior programming.



1J: Educational and cultural presentations and activities.



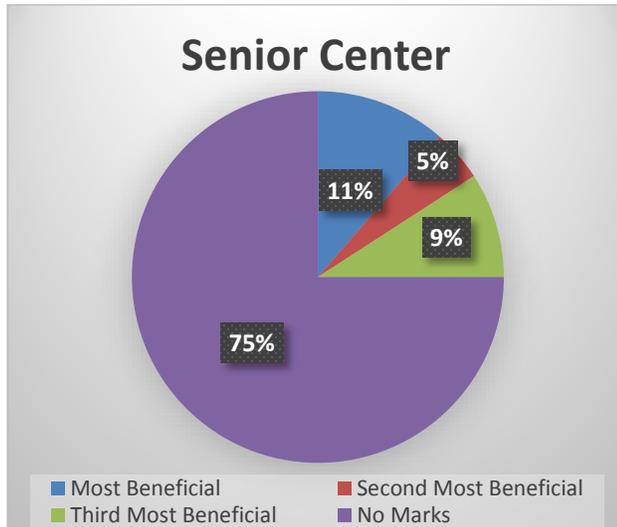
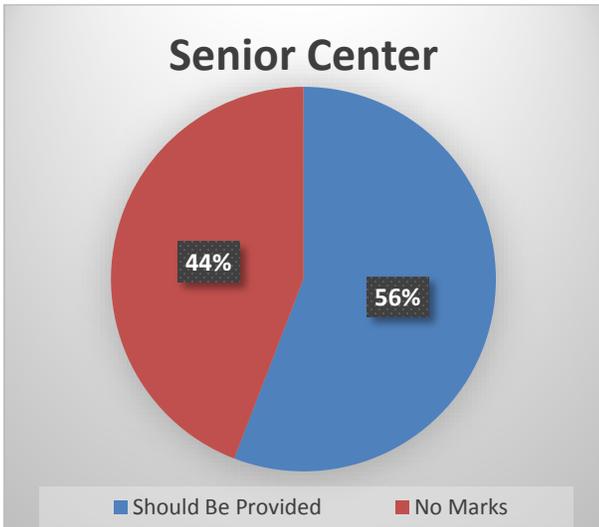
1K: Is there another service you want to include? Please write it in here and say if it satisfies you.

There were 89 responses to this question, all of which are available upon request. The most frequently mentioned services were snow removal (six responses) and transportation (six responses).

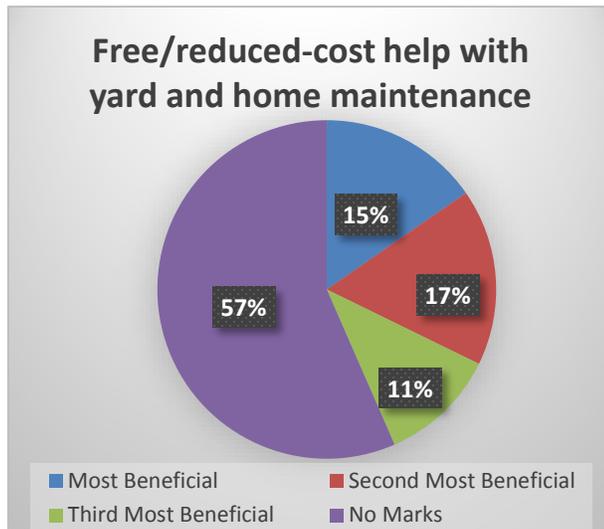
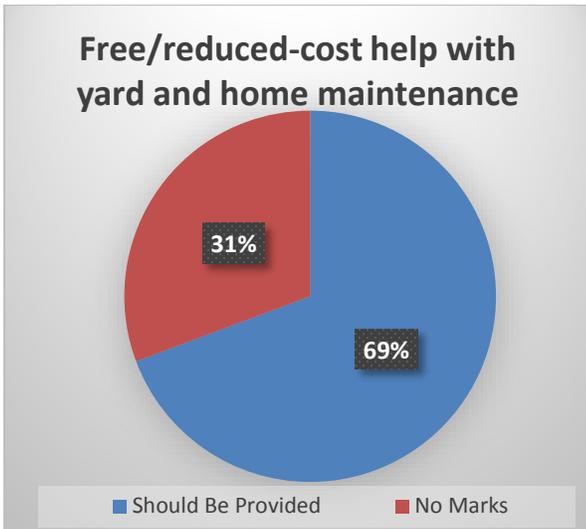
Question 2.

The charts on the left show the answers to the question, “Which of the items below do you think should be provided?” The charts on the right show the answers to the question, “Which THREE of the items above (A-K) do you think are most beneficial?”

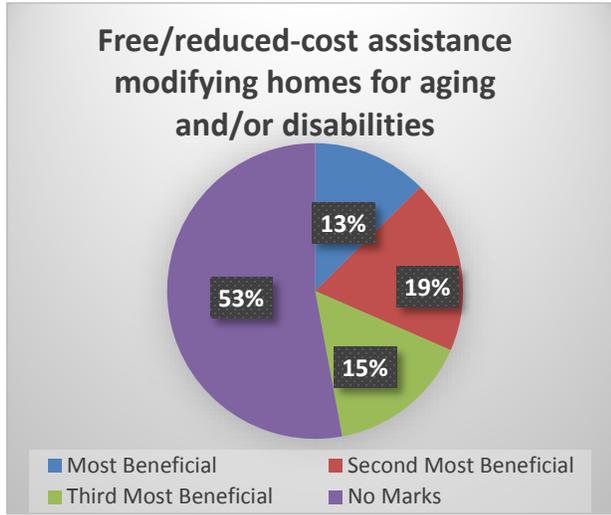
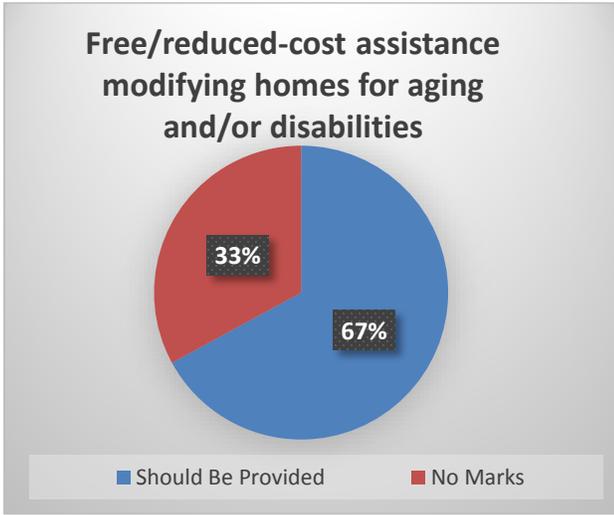
2A. A senior center



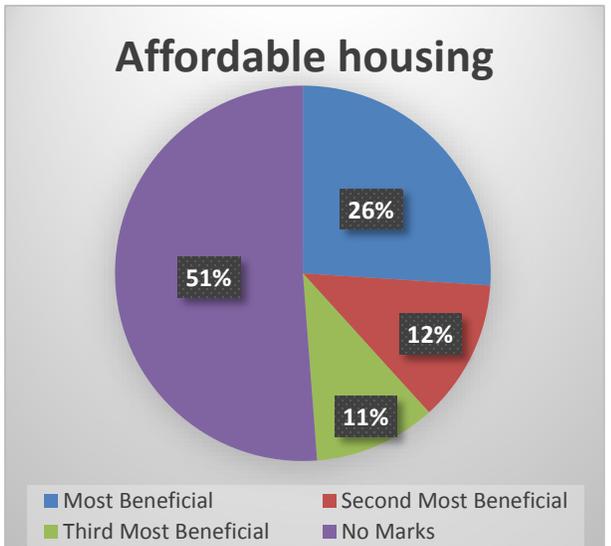
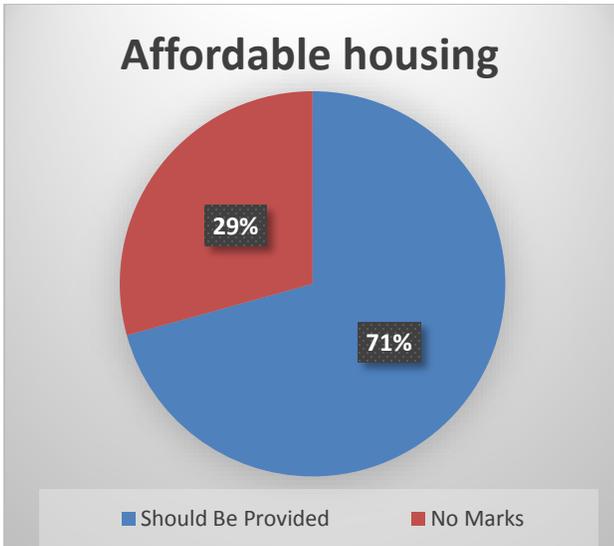
2B. Free/reduced-cost help with yard and home maintenance



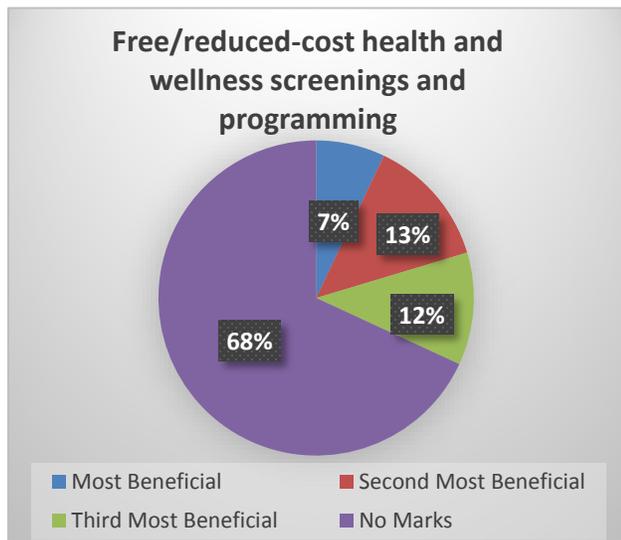
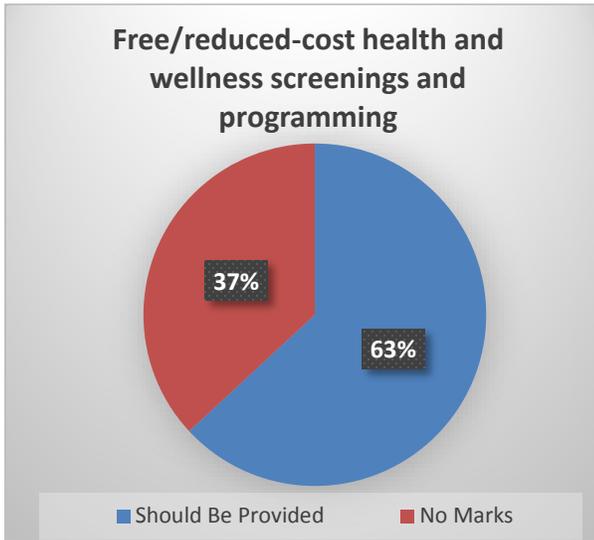
2C. Free/reduced-cost assistance modifying homes for aging and/or disabilities (installing wheelchair ramps, grab-bars, first-floor bedroom, etc.)



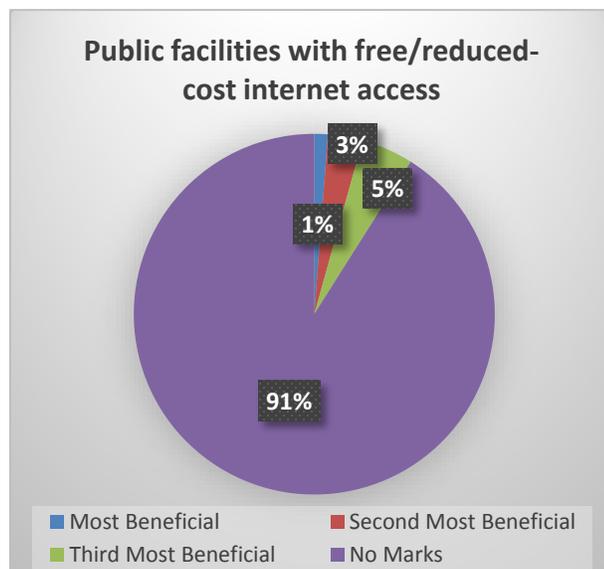
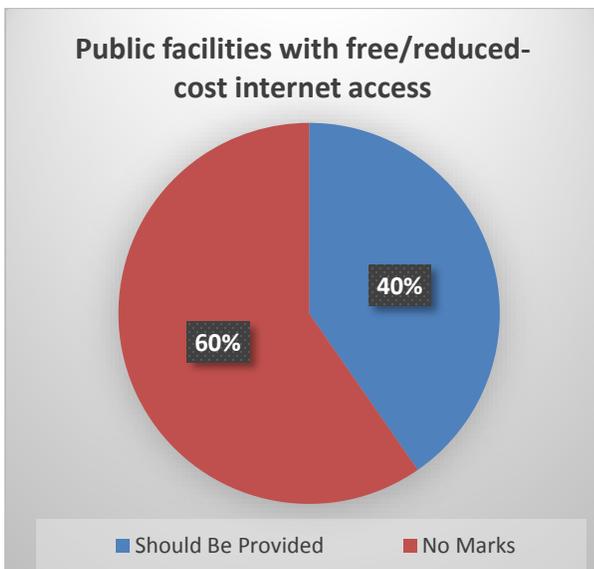
2D. Affordable housing options for seniors and people with disabilities.



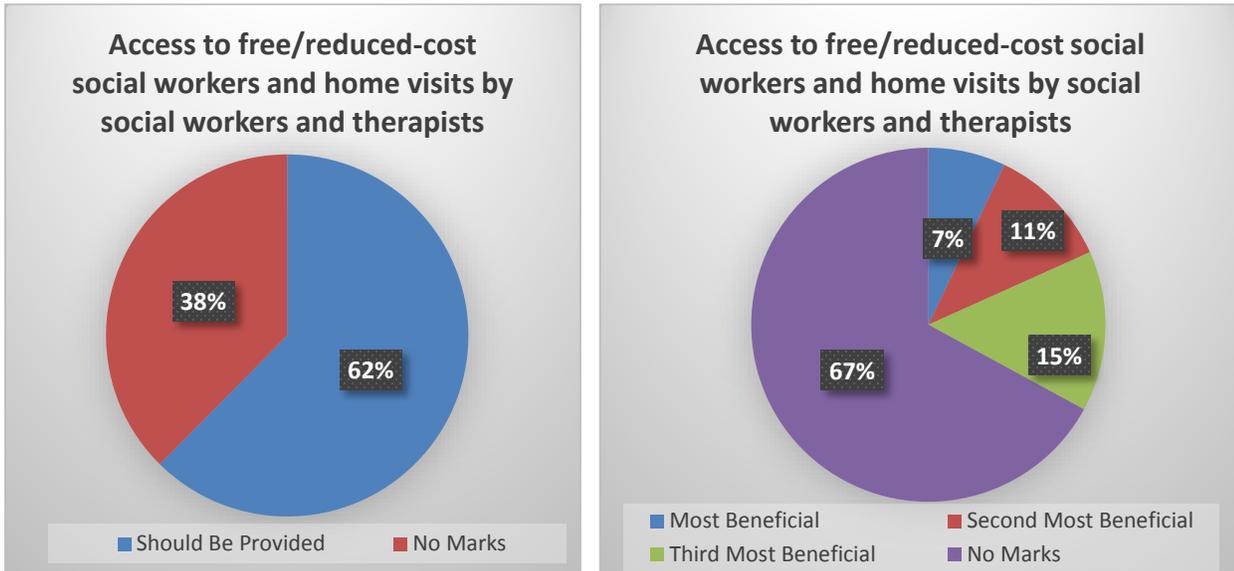
2E. Free/reduced-cost health and wellness screenings and programming



2F. Public facilities with free/reduced-cost internet access



2G. Access to free/reduced-cost social workers and home visits by social workers and therapists

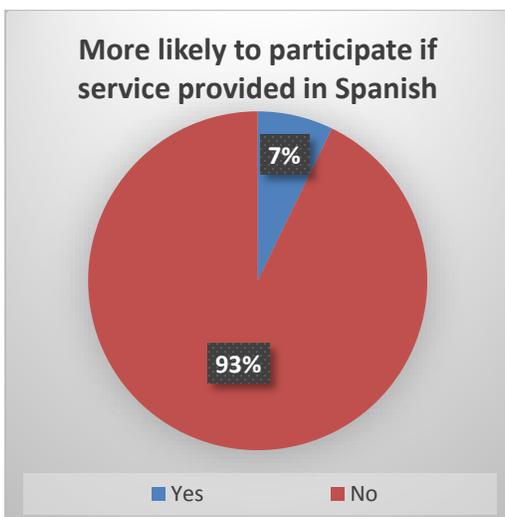


2H. Are there other services that you think should be provided? If so, please write them here.

There were 84 responses to this question, and the opinions are diverse. The popular opinions were snow shoveling (eight), medical and dental services and help (e.g. free visit, reduced-cost bills) (seven), help with IT (e.g. computer and/or smartphone class, subsidized cost of connectivity) (six), volunteers/coordinators visits (four).

Question 3

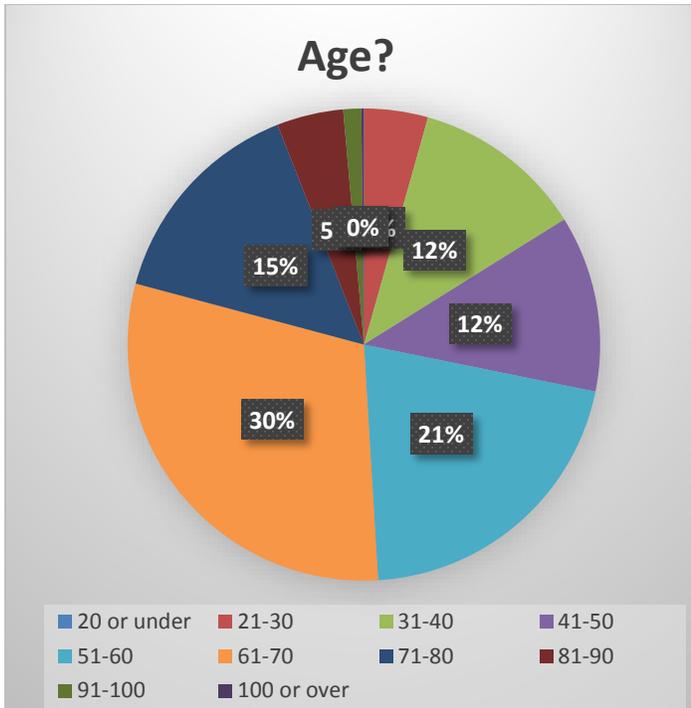
Would you be more likely to utilize services/activities if they were provided in Spanish?



Of the nearly 600 responses the City received, only 22 were in Spanish.

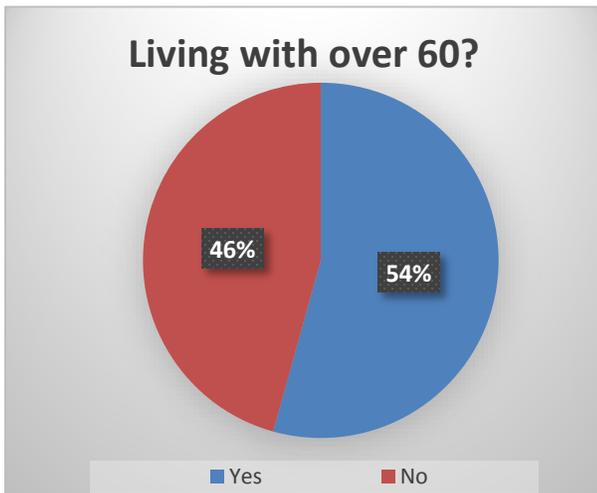
Question 4

What is your age?



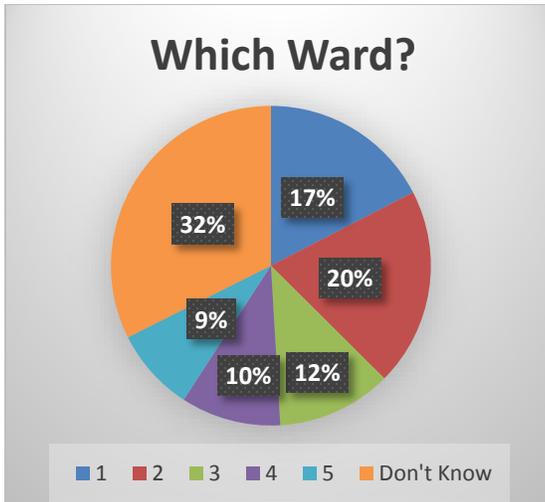
Question 5

Is anyone living in your home over the age of 60?



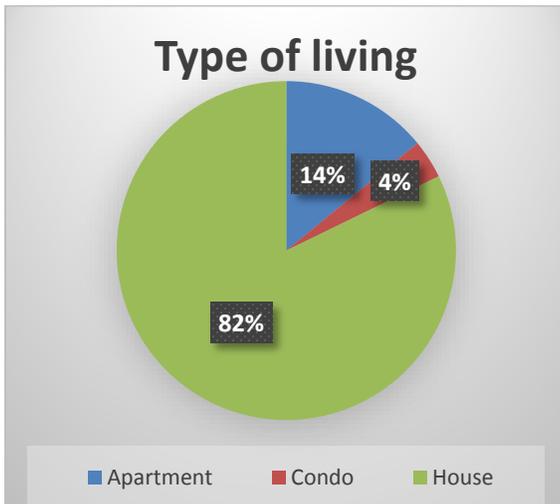
Question 6

Which ward do you live in?



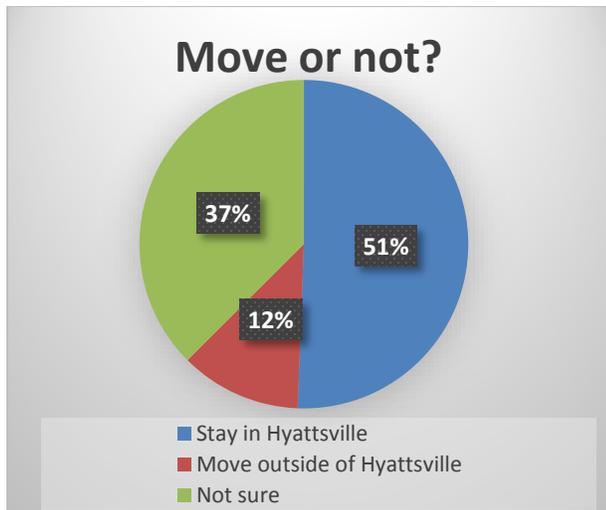
Question 7

Do you live in an apartment, condo or house?



Question 8

In retirement would you like to continue living in the City of Hyattsville, or move elsewhere?



Question 9

If you plan to move elsewhere, where and why?

A wide variety of responses were received. The most common reasons people said they would move was to find a lower tax rate and cost of living (43), and warmer climate (19), less traffic congestion (18), and poor walkability of the city (9).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on analysis of the information in this report. They are provided as a starting point for further consideration and development.

1. Many residents do not know about the senior and disability services the City offers, and the low response rate among Spanish-speaking residents suggests we are not connecting with this community through mailers. Community Services is planning to expand outreach through churches, schools, automated phone calls, and flyer distribution Citywide.
2. Per capita, the City dedicates less resources to senior and disability services than nearby communities. If the City were to expand services in a significant way, additional resources and/or personnel will be required. At this time, no such expansion is planned.
3. Few residents cited a dearth of senior service provision as a reason to move away in retirement. This suggests that such services should be considered a benefit the City provides – possibly one

that builds good will and well-being among residents – rather than a requisite that will determine the life decisions of many residents.

4. The County provides services and facilities that are of significant interest to Hyattsville residents. Some cities replicate these services, in part because of the waitlist for County assistance. Community Services will explore expanding Call-A-Bus service to County offices and events (as some of them are located outside the Bus's six-mile service radius). The department will also continue to monitor and evaluate how frequently residents are waitlisted for County services, and if there is sufficient demand for replication. The department will also explore partnering with other cities to reduce costs and respond to the demand for such services.
5. Residents seek assistance with weather-related yard maintenance and home modifications. The former of these the City is hopes to address with a no-cost "Good Neighbor" program that will be launched in coming months. Community Services will also do further research on the home modification programs offered by Greenbelt and the County, to determine if and how the City should create a similar programming.
6. Residents also expressed a desire to have affordable housing for seniors and people with disabilities. This is an area that will require additional research and exploration.