



# 2017 Nationally Accredited Senior Centers



Accredited by   
National Institute of  
Senior Centers

January 2018

## Building Excellence

Meet the 12 senior centers that achieved  
NISC National Senior Center Accreditation in 2017.

# NISC National Senior Center Accreditation

## Purpose

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To advance the quality of senior centers nationwide, the National Council on Aging's **National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC)** developed **nine standards of excellence** for senior center operations. These standards serve as a guide for all senior centers to improve their operations today—and position themselves for the future.

## History

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Among NISC's many accomplishments is the development and publication of national standards for the senior center industry in 1978. Initially, the standards were a reference tool for communities interested in developing senior centers and a guide for existing centers. The initial senior center self-assessment served as a guide for program development, assessment of program quality, and identification of areas that needed improvement. NISC has since completed revisions of the national standards in 1990, 1996, 1999, and 2010. The next set of revisions is in process and is expected to be completed in 2018. The national standards function as a guide for developing and implementing senior center programs and serves as the core of NISC's accreditation.

## Process

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The self-assessment is the first step in the accreditation process. The purpose is to evaluate how well the senior center meets the standard criteria as indicated within each of the nine standards. The senior center measures itself against the information contained in the standards section of the manual and completes a notebook containing all needed documents.

After the accreditation notebook is complete, peer reviewers conduct an on-site assessment. The peer reviewers have experience with the senior center self-assessment process in their own professional context and have been certified in conducting comprehensive on-site peer review visits. The visit provides an opportunity for the reviewer to observe first-hand the staff, programs, and services referred to in the documentation. The peer reviewer then submits a report and makes a recommendation to the NISC Accreditation Board.

The NISC Accreditation Board consists of trained and certified senior center professionals who review the report and recommendation presented by the peer reviewer and then vote on the recommendation.

## 2017 Accredited Senior Centers

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12 senior centers achieved National Senior Center Accreditation in 2017. The 12 senior centers came from ten states (Connecticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Tennessee) each center is a unique operation but all accredited centers operate effectively from a common philosophy and adherence to the established NISC senior center standards of excellence. To learn more about NISC National Senior Center Accreditation, please visit [www.ncoa.org/NISC](http://www.ncoa.org/NISC).

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# Amesbury Senior Community Center – Amesbury Council on Aging

Amesbury, Massachusetts

The Amesbury Senior Community Center is located in Amesbury, MA. Amesbury is located in Essex County, Massachusetts on the left bank of the Merrimack River. The 2010 census noted 16,283 residents. Out of 3200 older adults age 60 and older, over 94% have been reached by the Amesbury Senior Community Center and Council on Aging (ACOA), by phone, email, home or office visit, in person or through participating in the center’s activities and programs.

Councils on Aging (COA) provide a place for older adults to remain independent, productive and in the community. They provide socializing, learning and wellness opportunities and a place to “give back”. They are also the community focal point for social and support services for older adults, families and caregivers in 349 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

The center is located in a shared community building, but the senior center has priority of use during hours of operation. They have occasional weekend and evening hours. The two floor facility has approximately 12,000 square feet of usable space and is fully accessible. The first floor has a reception area, great room, library, office spaces and a full commercial kitchen. The second floor has an adult day program room, arts and crafts room, lounge, thrift store, and hosts the office of veteran’s affairs, youth services and health department as well as the main COA offices. The space is owned by the regional Transit District and is leased to the City of Amesbury.

The peer reviewer noted these strengths of the senior center:

- A new building that is cared for and in a central location
- An involved Council on Aging Board who are committed to the mission of the senior center.
- A very experienced and dedicated staff with good ideas for programming and collaborations.
- Extensive community connections and collaborations. The reviewer noted that it is apparent that a lot of effort has been made by the staff to look for every opportunity to partner with others to provide new and improved programs and services.
- A very active volunteer program and strong staff commitment to volunteers. A promising practice is their “Hidden Gems” volunteer recognition program.
- An amazing intergenerational program that is grant funded through the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging. It is curriculum based and volunteer led.
- A social model [Adult Day Program](#) for persons with memory impairment. It is a great mix of inclusion and separate programming led by a very creative, dedicated group of staff and volunteers.



## Mission

To advocate for older adults, to identify their needs, to meet their health, economic, social and cultural needs, to encourage maximum independence and to improve their quality of life.

## Davidson County Department of Senior Services

The Davidson County Department of Senior Services leads two senior centers. Both have been also accredited as “Center of Excellence by the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services

### Lexington Senior Center

Lexington, North Carolina

**The Lexington Senior Center** is found in the town of Lexington, NC which is the county seat of Davidson County. It is known as the “Barbecue Capital of the World.” The population is 18,931 (2010 census).

The Senior Center opened its doors in 1975. They are located in a suburban area just outside the center of the city. The center is located in a modern, one-story building. It operates programming in two different buildings at this location.

They serve an average of 450 participants monthly through a variety of ongoing activities and special events. The Center’s average daily attendance is 146 participants. The center serves a population of 55 and older with 50% between the ages of 65 and 74.

### Thomasville Senior Center

Thomasville, North Carolina

**The Thomasville Senior Center**, located in Thomasville, NC, opened in 1995 and is found within the Davidson County Campus. The population of Thomasville is 10,944 (2010 census). The center offers special events and 32 ongoing activities and services. The Center is open 40 hours a week, with occasional evening or weekend special activities.

The Center is 5,000 sq. ft. located in a building with other services. They serve 274 participants monthly. The average daily attendance is 81 participants. They serve a population of 55 and over with 50% between the ages of 65 and 74.

The two senior centers work in partnership to serve the Davidson County residents. They are independent, but plan event and activity calendars together to prevent duplication of programming within the county.



Lexington Senior Center

#### Mission Statement

o support, assist and advocate for older and disabled adults and their families by offering an evolving array of programs and services to meet their present and future needs regarding their well-being, independence, involvement in their community and the ability to remain in their own home

The peer reviewer noted these strengths at both of the senior centers:

- They have a well thought out plan of work and report on it regularly to the Advisory Board.
- Their Conflict of Interest document spells out how to handle any conflicts of interest.
- The staff is very skilled in making the best use of the resources they have.
- They have a needs assessment that is done by non-participants at various events where non-participants attend.
- They have a well-developed sponsorship program for local businesses that has brought in extra funding to the organization.
- Their Volunteer Handbook is written clearly and concisely and provides the information a volunteer would need.
- Numerous very attractive bulletin boards with information for participants line the hallway.
- Their Policy and Procedures handbook for programs at the senior centers is well thought out and would be considered a best practice.

A few comments from the self-assessment committee included that the accreditation process allowed them to look at “where we have been, where we are and where we want to be. The Standards give a template for achievement. The process encouraged change and helped develop partners.”



**Thomasville Senior Center**

### **Mission Statement**

to support, assist and advocate for older and disabled adults and their families by offering an evolving array of programs and services to meet their present and future needs regarding their well-being, independence, involvement in their community and the ability to remain in their own home

## Enfield Senior Center

Enfield, Connecticut

The Town of Enfield Senior Center is located in a suburban community north of Hartford. Enfield started as a rural community but has grown to be a community home to many corporations and businesses. The town is 33.8 square miles with a current population of 45,246. One fourth of the population is over 55 years old.

The Enfield Senior Center has been in operation for 38 years. For the first 25 years, the Senior Center was located at 25 High Street. In June of 2003, the staff of the Senior Center moved into a 25,000 square foot, state of the art facility offering congregate meals, transportation, home delivered meals, caregiver education, health and wellness programs, arts and cultural programs. The Prime Fitness Center is a unique part of this facility. It boasts a variety of fitness equipment and trained staff that assist participants with a work out plan, guidance and support.



### Mission

As a focal point for aging services, the Enfield Senior Center provides social, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities as well as links to resources to enrich the mind, body, and spirit of older adults in an open and accepting atmosphere in order to promote independence.

### The peer reviewer noted the following strengths of Enfield Senior Center:

- The staff is very experienced, dedicated and enthusiastic with great ideas for programming and collaborations.
- Mission statement is clear and concise. There is a well-written and detailed annual report.
- Innovative and dynamic list of programs, like the 50+ employment fair, speed dating, Pickle-ball, “Boxing and More: Exercise for individuals with Parkinson’s” and the “Death over Dinner” program.
- Diverse health, wellness and fitness programs. The Prime Fitness Center is a valuable resource.
- Offers successful monthly live entertainment program that is affordable with 350+ in attendance.
- Offers extended open hours (8-8 Monday-Thursday and 8-5 on Friday) that makes the Center accessible to people who are working.
- Great attendance with an average of 600+ coming to the Senior Center daily.
- Extensive and diverse evaluation tools are used.
- Supportive Advisory Board and Friends of the Senior Center group.
- Extensive community connections are made by the staff. They look for partnership opportunities in order to offer new and improved services.
- Excellent volunteer handbook! Should be used as a model for other Senior Centers.
- Exceptional marketing plan which includes the use of the website, [Facebook](#), You Tube, Pinterest, a senior center brochure and newsletter.
- Great facility. Appropriate space for socializing and classes both large and small.

During the accreditation review, the Town Manager, Bryan Chodkowski, was very complimentary of the Senior Center. He said, “Our center has comprehensive and robust programming—innovation happens here.”

## FiftyForward Donelson Station

Nashville, Tennessee

FiftyForward is a 501c3 organization and leads seven FiftyForward centers in Middle Tennessee. Five of which are nationally accredited. **FiftyForward Donelson Station** is located 15 miles east of downtown Nashville. It is the oldest and largest of the centers in the agency serving seniors in the community since 1979. The neighborhood is urban with shops, restaurants, businesses and housing. Members access the center via their own means, bus or AccessRide, which serves persons with disability.

Staff includes full time Center Director and Program Director and two part time office managers. Weekly participation is 90-100 members and on Saturdays, 30-50 members.

The center is also home to Senior Center for the Arts, a wholly owned subsidiary of FiftyForward which operates the Larry Keeton Theater. This community theater offers evening and weekend dinner shows six times annually (typically musicals). In addition, FiftyForward Travel Coordinator works out of Donelson Station. The travel program is open to all center members and offers organized trips both nationally and internationally.

FiftyForward is a 501c3 funded through Title III-B, United Way, Foundations, membership and fee for service, fund raising and endowment. Unique to Donelson Station is the facility usage by three local businesses; Donelson Café, Ladies and Gents Salon, Middle Tennessee Gem and Mineral Society (MTGMS). The center receives revenues through rental arrangements and also from classes and jewelry sales from MTGMS.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the FiftyForward Donelson Station which included:

- FiftyForward is a recognized brand for quality senior services in middle Tennessee. Marketing materials are inclusive of the seven senior centers, home care, adult day, meals on wheels, and conservatorship.
- Leadership Development Training is available for center managers. (DISC)
- Surrounding Donelson community is supportive of the center.
- Donelson staff and members exude a welcoming and inviting spirit. New members are embraced and become part of the Donelson family.
- Center Director, Angela Bryan, is well qualified and dedicated. Since 2014 membership has doubled under her direction.
- Facility rental to outside business exposes the center to a wider base of the community and brings in revenues.
- Exercise programs cover all levels of abilities. Expansion of technology classes assists seniors in staying up to date.



### Mission

FiftyForward supports and optimizes the aging experience

## Heritage Center of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City

Overland Park, Kansas

The Heritage Center at the Jewish Community Campus (the J) is located within the City of Overland Park, Kansas. The City of Overland Park's population is 186,515. The Heritage Center serves the City and also serves the surrounding area including the City of Leawood, Olathe, Merriam, Mission and Southwest portions of Kansas City, Missouri. Overland Park resides within Johnson County, which is projected to have the largest growth in 65+ population in the metropolitan area in the next 20 years.

The Heritage Center is a gathering place for senior adults age 65 and older. They operate a five day a week program offering a multitude of programs and classes. From art classes to holiday celebrations, the Heritage Center caters to all interests. The mission of The Heritage Center of the Jewish Community Center is to encourage senior adults' age sixty-five and above to participate in educational, cultural, spiritual, fitness and social programs in order to decrease the potential for isolation and to increase connection to the Jewish community. The focus of the program is on self-determination and self-direction in order to promote independence. The center is open to all faiths. The center serves over 700 unduplicated individuals with an average daily participation of 85 to 90.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the Heritage Center of the Jewish Community Center. These included:

- The Strategic Imperatives Planning Document is well written and easy to follow.
- The Center is a well-run and organized program with all of the policies and procedures in place needed for national accreditation.
- They offer a wide variety of excellent programs that were well organized with qualified instructors.
- The Center has a dedicated and caring staff that has the love and appreciation of the participants.
- A beautiful facility with tremendous opportunities for future programming.
- Excellent marketing material with professional and eye catching newsletter and fliers.
- A large accreditation team that completed the process in 3 months.
- A supportive Advisory Committee who give the credit for the success of the facility to the staff.

The entire self-assessment committee at Heritage "felt great value in participating in the self –assessment." The committee developed recommendations in 8 standards with were implemented prior to submission of their notebook.



### Mission

The mission of The Heritage Center is to positively impact our community by creating opportunities for healthy aging in a welcoming Jewish environment.

# Lake Oswego Adult Community Center

Lake Oswego, Oregon

The [Lake Oswego Adult Community Center](#), a division of the City of Lake Oswego's Department of Parks and Recreation, is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization located in the First Addition Neighborhood in Lake Oswego. It is a multipurpose facility offering recreation, education and social services programs for adults. Established in 1970, it was the first senior center in Clackamas County and is now the third senior center to be awarded National Accreditation. The population is 38,469. The center has over 1,700 active users with an email list of more than 4,000. The average daily attendance is 150.,



## Mission

The Center provides citizens ways to enrich their lives.

One item the peer reviewer noted was the wonderful use of language to describe programs and activities at the Center. The three values of programming are: Stewardship (caring for people and the environment), Inspiring connectivity (building community), and creative engagement (enriching lives).

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the Lake Oswego Adult Community Center. These included:

- The strategic plan process was multi-leveled and involved many good shareholders. It created three actionable goals and the update log is a detailed and specific document to track accomplishments.
- The Accreditation Committee made a specific effort to continue to meet over the 5 years between peer reviews. The "A Team" was continually reviewing and updating items to meet center excellence.
- The Cost Recovery model is of note. It removed the emotional factors out of evaluating programs and based decisions on cost effectiveness and participant numbers.
- A promising practice of using a "Fitness Intensity Guide" for physical fitness programs.
- Overall, the Lake Oswego Adult Community Center is very visionary, forward focused and guided by premiere senior services, including, but not limited to:
  - The Aging Mastery Program
  - Facility enhancement designed by Life Span Designs
  - Evidence Based Programs
  - Extensive Community partnerships

At the Lake Oswego Adult Community Center a very compelling story of how one individual found her purpose while attending an Aging Mastery Program (AMP) was told: "Esther moved to Lake Oswego from CA to help babysit her young grandchildren. Within a few years she was no longer needed as a babysitter and she had no other connections in the area. She started to wonder, "Why am I still alive?" and contemplated suicide. She was lucky and she found the AMP program and along with it a friend Nancy. The session on volunteering saved her life. She realized there was plenty for her to do and there was a place where she belonged. She now has the half dozen volunteer jobs...including AMP trainer for the volunteering class, and is an active participant at the center."

## Munson Center

Las Cruces, New Mexico

The [Robert Munson Senior Center](#) (also known as the Munson Center) is located in the heart of the City of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The Munson Center was the first senior center in the state of New Mexico to receive national accreditation. The center offers recreational activities, games, educational programming, lifelong learning classes, fitness program, special events, volunteer opportunities, support groups, arts and crafts. In addition, the center provides information, referral and assistance services, health promotion, comprehensive case management, respite care, senior nutrition (including congregate and home delivered meals), homemaker services, caregiver support and chore services. The center serves an average of 600 per day.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the Munson Center. These included:

- Very caring staff that work together well and love working with their senior population by putting their needs first.
- Even though the Munson Center is approaching its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the very same footprint when it first opened in 1977, it has been well maintained and remains very warm and inviting.
- The staff strives for improvement in the community by making it more sustainable with green initiatives like solar power, becoming a community shelter with a newly added backup generator and exploring the purchase of adjoining property for a new wellness center.
- Their primary goal of addressing hunger in their community (for all ages, but especially seniors) is to be commended. They have several examples of recent creative initiatives that showcase their commitment including providing pet food & veterinary services for MOW clients, food drives & distribution coordinated with other local non-profits and their community garden project also distributes fresh produce.
- Very strong support from the city both financially and inter-departmental relationships which also has extensive and comprehensive policies & procedures for personnel as well as organization operations.
- Impressive volunteer program with great oversight, volunteer manual and several programs utilizing self-directed teams. The City's Volunteer Network office is housed in the Munson Center and recruits, trains and assigns adult volunteers throughout the city with a focus on providing them for Senior Programs operations.
- Excellent community partnerships with other non-profits, city departments, county agencies, aging network and social service organizations. Recently the Fire Department realized that most of their 911 calls involved seniors so they have assigned one of their staff to work directly with the Senior Programs section to coordinate their efforts in helping seniors' access resources



### Mission

The mission of the City of Las Cruces Senior Programs and Munson Center is to promote and enhance the physical, intellectual, creative, and social well-being of individuals 50+ in order to improve their quality of life.

## Philadelphia Senior Center on the Avenue of the Arts

The Philadelphia Senior Center is located in the center of Philadelphia. Center City is the heart of the city and region geographically, historically, culturally and economically. PSC- Arts location is also unique in that it stands on the Avenue of the Arts, Philadelphia's signature street, alongside landmarks such as City Hall, the Kimmel Center, the Academy of Music and the University of the Arts. This is one of the most vibrant and successful performing arts, residential, educational, commercial, and tourist destinations.

The center is a member of the NewCourtland Senior Services Network, a subsidiary of the Presbyterian Foundation for Philadelphia. NewCourtland is a non-profit provider of affordable housing, home and community based services, and skilled nursing care for seniors of Philadelphia. The main funding source is the local area agency on aging, the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging as well as NewCourtland Senior Services.

As the third oldest senior center in the United States and one of the largest, members come to the site from Philadelphia and the surrounding counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The center has an average of 211 participants daily.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the center these included:

- It is a great center doing good work with diversity, outcome and affecting seniors' lives.
- The NewCourtland merger in 2009 was beneficial and provided a strong foundation with added financial and administrative stability.
- A beautiful facility with lots of art, activities, a wonderful courtyard and big windows. It is an inviting space and well utilized.
- The large amount of volunteers, many long-term, which provide a strong asset since they assist in and increase the number of activities being offered.
- The center recently successfully transitioned the Coffee Cup participants to the PSC-Arts facility. The manager, along with a united and dedicated team, was noted as being instrumental in this success.
- The center draws participants from a wide area.
- The center accommodates a large number of participants by offering meals at two sessions per day and also offers afternoon tea and snacks.

The reviewer noted the following participant's comments during her tour: "I go to this center because it is the best! It's a pleasure to be here! I do things I never did before. This center changed my life!" Those statements were memorable even to the center director of 30 years.



### Mission

To advance and support the well-being and personal growth of all person age 55 and older in Greater Philadelphia by connecting them to services and resources to learn, grow and discover new ways to be actively engaged in living.

## Rocky River Senior Center

Rocky River, Ohio

Rocky River is located in a suburb or Cleveland, Ohio, just 20 minutes west of the City of Cleveland. The 2010 census reported a population of 20,213 with approximately 51% of the population fifty plus.

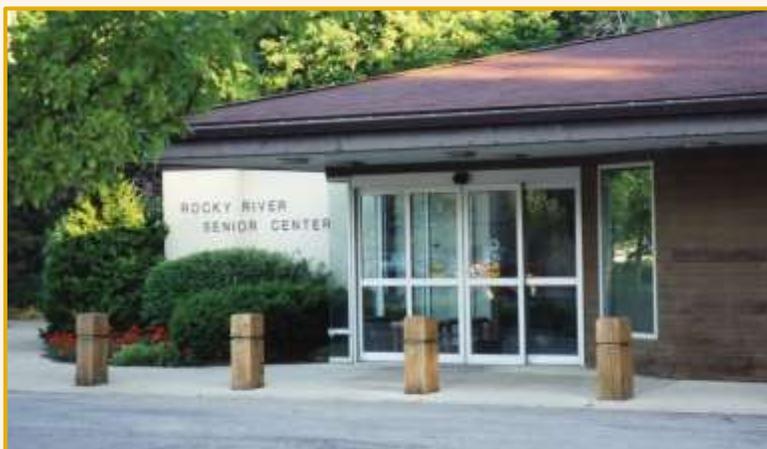
The Center offers a variety of services and activities including one day and overnight tours, deli luncheons, monthly luncheons and programs, and special events featuring prominent speakers, entertainers and musicians. A wide range of classes offered include a variety of art classes, ceramics, language classes, exercise classes, informational classes, dance classes, travelogues and golf leagues. Health screenings and a Monday health clinic are available to complete the resources for seniors

The Senior Center is staffed by five full time positions and 16 part time positions. In addition, instructors are contracted to provide specific classes and programs of interest to seniors. Volunteers provided over 15,000 hours of service.

### **The peer reviewer noted the following strengths of Rocky River Senior Center:**

- Extensive, thorough, volunteer-led Self-Assessment Process
- Strong support of the Mayor, City Council, and other City administrators
- Very active Senior Council
- The Action Plan allows for flexibility when opportunities for new programs arise
- Good community connections, collaborations, and involvement
- Active volunteer base with demonstrated commitment to the Center
- Volunteer jobs structured to allow them to use their talents and skills and to feel purpose
- Job Descriptions well written and comprehensive
- **Great Program diversity** and variety for people of different interests and abilities
- Evaluation Plan provides a good base, giving people a voice and demonstrating that their ideas matter when implementing changes
- Attractive and informative marketing materials in the Welcome Packet and The Quill newsletter.
- Well maintained and attractive facility

The reviewer noted that “the entire Team of Rocky River Senior Center took the Self-Assessment process very seriously and have established a solid foundation for future growth and better positioned their Center to meet the needs and interests of future seniors and boomers.



### **Mission**

The mission of the Rocky River Senior Center is to positively impact our community by creating opportunities for healthy aging through social engagement, physical well-being, civic involvement, creativity and lifelong learning.

# West Ouachita Senior Center

West Monroe, Louisiana

The West Ouachita Senior Center, Inc. (WOSC), is a 501 © 3 non-profit United Way Agency which was established in 1979. The Senior Center began as a cooperative endeavor between the Ouachita Parish School System and the City of West Monroe to serve as a cooperative focal point where older adults can come together for services and activities which enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage involvement in and with their community. The WOSC is one of the oldest and most successful Senior Centers in the State of Louisiana.

West Ouachita has a population of almost 13,000. The Ouachita Parish has an estimated 28,000 seniors age 65+. The Center serves 5,644 annually with an average daily attendance of approximately 200.

The Senior Center building is a beautiful 33,000 sq. ft. facility. It is located in a busy part of town, next door to a school, farmers market, recreation center and a gazebo for community activities and concerts.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of West Ouachita Senior Center these included:

- The superior transportation system provided to older adults is a strong Senior Center asset. Rides are coordinated, especially for those coming a distance, to allow the rider to access multiple needs. For example, during one trip an older adult might attend a doctor's appointment, go grocery shopping and attend a senior center activity.
- The Senior Center staff does a superb job in accessing grants and funding from multiple sources to support, not only the transportation system, but also infrastructure at the senior center and to support programming needed for low income older adults that use the center.
- Admirable use of the Older Worker Program to supplement the Senior Centers staffing needs, and to also provide outstanding job training for many older adults who are enrolled in the program.
- The partnership with the University of Louisiana at Monroe is to be commended. Not only do the two organizations support each other, they support older workers, students, research and administrative development of Senior Center policies.
- The role of "External Evaluator" is a vital linkage between the University and the Senior Center and works very well.
- Each year staff persons develop an individual Action Plan to outline goals and objectives. This is a best practice that should be replicated by other Senior Centers.
- Policies and procedures, along with other Senior Center administrative are comprehensive and encompassing. The Center is extremely well prepared to operate in every circumstance.

City staff people involved in the process learned about the center and got to understand the impact the senior center has on individuals in the community.



## Mission

The West Ouachita Senior Center's mission is to act on behalf of older persons to offer, secure and provide linkage to community supportive services which meet basic human needs, foster independence, and promote financial stability.

## Wood County Committee on Aging Bowling Green, Ohio

The [Wood County Committee on Aging, Inc. \(WCCOA\)](#) is a self-incorporated non-profit organization (which is tax supported) committed to providing services that help elderly people in Wood County maintain their independence in their own homes for as long as possible. Located in a very rural and agricultural county, it serves over 1,500 people across 618 square miles with nutrition, transportation, programming and social services.

At the Wood County Senior Center the average daily attendance is 138. The massive stone building, a historic post office, is centrally located in Bowling Green, Ohio, and has been remodeled many times over its 102 year lifetime. It is home to the senior center and to the core of the WCCOA staff.



### Mission

The mission of the Wood County Committee on Aging, Inc. shall be to provide older adults with services and programs which empower them to remain independent and improve the quality of their lives.

Extensive program and service offerings are available 51 hours weekly, 1 Saturday monthly and alternate Sundays, and they are developed in conjunction with a Board Program Planning and Evaluation Committee. A Community Needs Assessment seeks biannual information of participant interests and their recommendations for programs.

The Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the Wood County Committee on Aging, Inc. These included:

- The development of a Strategic Plan and Review, guided by an “appreciative inquiry” method, has set the agency on an excellent course for future development.
- Numerous community partnerships; 150 identified with many other joint collaborators and cooperative planning initiatives. This senior center is sought out as an important partner in their community.
- Strategic effort to improve the effectiveness of the Board and its function. Reducing the number of members has produced excellent leadership from the existing members, committee members and the new Advisory Council.
- Offering consistency and quality programs, not only at the Wood County Senior Center, but in satellite areas, by identifying and monitoring standards for program operation.
  - Excellent utilization of multiple techniques for evaluation and participant feedback, e.g. focus groups, surveys, interviews, etc.

## 4 Reasons to Pursue National Senior Center Accreditation

### #1 Improve your organization

The accreditation process improves and strengthens overall senior center operations. It results in official recognition that a senior center is meeting its mission in a nationally accepted, professional fashion.

### #2 Connect to the community

During the self-assessment process, staff, participants, board members, aging service agency representatives, and the community come together to look at the senior center and compare it to the standards that have been established by NISC. Together, the center and the community identify strengths and areas that need improvement and develop a strategy. Many centers report that this has led to funding opportunities, new collaborative partners, and an increase in programs or participation.

### #3 Develop a plan for the future

Throughout the process, centers have access to a specially designated accreditation hotline to get the information and guidance they need to develop a vision for the future. They are provided with a written strategic plan, and receive technical assistance in determining outcome measurements to improve overall senior center operations.

### #4 Enhance your center's image

Accreditation creates an opportunity to establish your senior center's position as a leader in positive aging. You can use this national recognition strategically to heighten awareness of the importance of your center and showcase your excellence to funders, participants, families, and other key people in your community. Collectively, accreditation raises the bar for all of us. It legitimizes senior centers as professionally managed, relevant, and vital resources for older adults.



**NISC supports a national network** of over 3,000 senior center professionals dedicated to helping older adults remain active, engaged, and independent in their communities. NISC is setting the standard for the future of senior centers by promoting cutting-edge research, promising practices, professional development, and advocacy. NISC also offers the nation's only National Senior Center Accreditation Program. Accreditation provides official recognition that a senior center meets nine national standards of senior center operations. Learn more at [www.ncoa.org/NISC](http://www.ncoa.org/NISC).