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# Community Services Satisfaction Study

## Multnomah County Aging, Disability, and Veterans Services Division



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April, 2015

### Executive Summary

This report describes the results of a consumer satisfaction study conducted by Portland State University's (PSU) Institute on Aging with users of sites where congregate meals and activities for older adults are offered in Multnomah County. The study gathered information about older adults' perceptions of services they receive at Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division (ADVSD)-contracted District Senior Centers, congregate meal sites, and Enhancing Equity agencies (culturally specific services), including clients' satisfaction with and knowledge of services and activities at sites that offer congregate meals. The study was intended to facilitate understanding, from the clients' perspective, of how well services are being delivered and how clients are being treated by staff and volunteers. It further intended to provide guidance concerning what might be done to improve clients' experiences. Data for this survey were collected in October, November, and December, 2014.

This Executive Report overviews the study's methods, summarizes the key findings, and presents the study team's conclusions and recommendations.

### Study Method

A random sample of willing consumers at each of 13 sites, which included district senior centers, agencies that serve racial and ethnic minority older adults, and congregate meal sites were interviewed, with approximately 10 surveys per site completed (N = 131). The interview guide used was developed by County staff, modified in concert with PSU project staff, vetted with advisory groups of older adults, and further modified to take into account their suggestions. Consumers attending sites selected by ADVSD on a day chosen by the research team and the site manager received a numbered drawing ticket, and a drawing of 10 numbers was conducted to select respondents. Interviews were conducted in separate rooms to the extent possible, or in the corners of the room if not, with precautions taken to protect the confidentiality of respondents' answers (e.g., pointing to response options on a card when appropriate, rather than asking the respondent to state the response out loud). For clients who were not comfortable with being interviewed in English, Multnomah County or the site provided an interpreter. Upon completion

of the interview, the survey participant received a \$5 Fred Meyer or Safeway gift card as a token of appreciation for his or her time and support.

### **Respondent Characteristics**

All participants were adults aged 18 or over. Of the 131 participants, 56% were women. Ages ranged from 48 years to 94 years, with a mean age of 72 years and a median age of 75. Just under half of the respondents identified themselves as White (49%), with others identifying themselves as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black, Native American, Arab/Middle Eastern, Multi-racial, Pacific Islander and/or Other.

## **Findings**

On balance, the findings from this study indicate that the majority of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with their experiences at the sites they attend for meals, activities and socializing. There were a few reports of poor treatment and discrimination by staff, volunteers, or other participants, and some sites serve meals less frequently than others and provide fewer services or have had to cut back on services. Language is a barrier at times, with some respondents expressing a need for more bilingual staff or translators. In this section, the study's major findings are highlighted, and based on these findings the project team offers the following recommendations.

### **Language and Culture**

Multnomah County Consumer Satisfaction Survey participant responses highlight the importance of increasing accessibility to nutrition services, honoring unique cultures and languages, and providing a comfortable, inclusive environment where people can meet and interact.

### **Disability and Access**

Most of the sites are doing a good job accommodating older adults' functional limitations and most participants found that their site's building provided easy access to eating areas and bathrooms, and had aisles wide enough for wheelchairs and walkers to navigate comfortably without fearing and risking falls.

Some respondents with mobility limitations who attended sites with interior and exterior steps discussed their need to move slowly on stairways, take breaks, or avoid an area altogether. Lack of parking in the site lots proved to be difficult for some participants.

Many participants use public transportation as their primary means of getting to and from the site, and access to busses and MAX trains is necessary for these individuals.

## **Participation, Treatment and Empowerment**

Most people interviewed indicated they were better off due to their involvement at the sites. Several desired outcomes resulting from participation were identified including gaining a better understanding of ways to stay healthy by attending workshops, lectures, and exercise classes, and having a place to connect and feel at home.

Most participants are greatly appreciative of staff and volunteers who treat them with respect and courtesy and offer assistance in finding avenues to obtain needed social supports and services.

We found two sites where participants did feel racially discriminated against. At one, one group said the other got better treatment by volunteers who shared the better-treated group's race/ethnicity and that those volunteers saved bread for that group but not for the other. At another participants were angry and felt they were discriminated against by volunteers who did not share their race/ethnicity.

Most respondents are comfortable talking with managers, assistant managers, other staff, and volunteers about things they would like to see added, improved, or changed, and staff address concerns and requests with consideration and regard for cultural preferences. However, at the two locations where racial discrimination was reported, some participants believe that their requests would not be acknowledged, or that they would be regarded as unimportant.

## **Respondents' General Likes, Dislikes, and Overall Satisfaction**

Many participants were appreciative of staff that speak their language and are able to interpret for them and help with paperwork. At other locations, several respondents who spoke little English suggested that those in charge should be fluent in the language spoken by most, and some reported they would benefit from English language classes.

Many of those satisfied with their sites would like to see more of the same types of meals, services and activities offered, and on more days, and more transportation provided to and from the site.

## **Recommendations**

### **Language and Culture**

- Continue providing a comfortable environment where participants can socialize, experience culturally-appropriate meals, participate in activities, and find a gateway to needed services.
- Increase capacity so that more culturally-appropriate activities are offered at locations that serve several different cultural groups.
- Increase staff awareness and sensitivity to the needs and preferences of diverse groups participating at their site.

- Increase the number of interpreters and bilingual staff able to communicate with non-English speaking participants.

### **Disability and Access**

- Exterior entrances with stairs and interiors with stairs to meeting rooms should be monitored at the times that older adults arrive and leave the location, and support should be offered for those with mobility limitations, visual impairment, and those who use assistive devices to go from place to place.
- Adequate parking for people who drive should be provided whenever possible, and when parking is limited staff and volunteers should designate specific times to assist participants who have to navigate uneven sidewalks and pavement during arrival and departure times.
- More LIFT bus rides for disabled participants who are unable to walk safely to and from bus stops would be very beneficial, as would having more time at the site to eat in a more leisurely fashion and socialize.
- Funding for bus tickets and passes that can be provided free of charge or at a reduced rate for individuals with limited financial resources is needed.

### **Participation, Treatment and Empowerment**

- Continue to provide culturally-specific meals and activities that target the needs of different ethnic/racial groups.
- Have Multnomah County ADVSD staff do spot checks at sites to ensure that each location serves its diverse populations equally, without favoritism, and without discrimination.
- Provide training to managers, staff, and volunteers of sites that address racism, bias, and unfair treatment.
- Increase staff and volunteers who are fluent in the languages most spoken at specific locations.

### **Respondents' General Likes, Dislikes, and Overall Satisfaction**

- The ability to connect and communicate is key in addressing participants' needs to socialize and more easily integrate into the greater community, so increasing capacity to provide regular English language classes at sites where participants speak little or no English is an important consideration.
- Participants greatly valued the opportunity to socialize with other participants. The time allotted for meals, however, was a constraint. Allowing more time at the sites for the meals program would be appreciated by participants, as would having beverages available before and afterward. Because some participants rely on TriMet and LIFT to get to the sites, coordinating the meals and activities program schedules with TriMet/LIFT schedules would be helpful.
- Multnomah County ADVSD is doing a good job of providing a means for individuals to get their nutritional and social needs met. Increasing the number of days meals are

- offered at sites where meals currently are provided one or two days a week would facilitate health and well-being for a wide range of marginalized minority individuals.
- Increased financing for public transportation for participants with limited financial means (e.g., providing TriMet tickets or passes) would enable them to more easily and regularly access their site and obtain the services they need to maintain health and quality of life.

# **Community Services Satisfaction Study – 2014**

## **Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division**

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April, 2015

### **Introduction**

This report describes the results of consumer satisfaction surveys conducted by Portland State University's (PSU) Institute on Aging with users of congregate meal sites in Multnomah County. The study gathered information about older adults' perceptions of services they receive at Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division (ADVSD) contracted District Senior Centers, congregate meal sites, and Enhancing Equity agencies, including clients' satisfaction with and knowledge of services and activities at sites that offer congregate meals. The study was intended to facilitate understanding, from clients' perspective, of how well services are being delivered and how clients are being treated by staff and volunteers. It further intended to provide guidance concerning what might be done to improve clients' experiences.

### **Study Method**

The research design called for randomly selecting and interviewing 10 clients at each of 13 sites, which included district senior centers, agencies that serve racial and ethnic minority older adults, and congregate meal sites. Appendix A lists the names of sites where interviews were conducted and the number of interviews done, the names of providers who sponsor activities and offer services, days and times meals are provided, and activities and services offered at the site. Respondents who had limited proficiency in English were provided interpreters by Multnomah County or a contracted agency. The interview guide was developed by County staff, modified in concert with PSU project staff, vetted with advisory groups of older adults, and modified to take into account their suggestions. Appendix B contains the survey instrument.

Multnomah County ADVSD sent a letter of introduction to each of the 13 sites informing the director about the study. The PSU project manager then telephoned the director to schedule the interview date and time, answer any questions he/she had, and confirm the details of the visit, including the possible need and arrangements for interpreters. Upon arriving at the site, the project manager and director introduced themselves to the agency/program director, reiterated

the purpose of the study and explained the data collection process. Willing consumers attending the sites selected by ADVSD on the day that had been chosen received a numbered drawing ticket, and a drawing of 10 numbers was conducted. The study was explained individually to each participant, and informed consent to participate was obtained prior to beginning the interview (see Appendix C, Informed Consent).

Interviews were conducted in separate rooms to the extent possible, or in the corners of the room if not, with precautions taken to protect the confidentiality of respondents' answers (e.g., pointing to response options on a card when appropriate, rather than asking the respondent to state the response out loud). For clients' who were not comfortable with being interviewed in English, Multnomah County or the site provided an interpreter. In some sites, 10 interpreters for 10 different languages were required. Overall, interpreters for 13 different languages were used at 8 sites. Interviews averaged 15 to 20 minutes in length. Upon completion of the interview, the survey participant received a \$5 Fred Meyer or Safeway gift card as a token of appreciation for his or her time and support.

The goal was to complete 10 interviews at each of the 13 sites selected by Multnomah County. A total of 131 interviews were completed; 10 were completed at 9 sites, 9 were completed at 2 sites, 11 were completed at 1 site, and 12 were completed at 1 site (see Appendix A). At one of the sites where only 9 interviews were completed, only 9 consumers chose to participate. At the other site where 9 interviews were conducted, one of the 10 participants who had been randomly selected ultimately decided to not complete the survey rendering that survey invalid. At the site where 11 interviews were conducted, most consumers did not speak English, and although interpreters were present, one consumer misunderstood the random sampling process and insisted that his or her ticket number was called. Since this consumer was frustrated and confused, PSU staff decided to conduct the additional interview at this site. At the site where 12 interviews were conducted, two husband-wife couples did not speak English and did not understand the random sampling process, believing that if one of their tickets was selected, they would both be interviewed. In both cases, interviewers were unaware of this misunderstanding and assumed that each of these individuals' tickets had been drawn in the random sampling. After the interviews were completed and the project manager realized what had happened, she decided to thank all four respondents, offer them each a gift card, and accept their completed surveys since it was unclear which of each couple's tickets had actually been drawn in the random sampling.

The research team's observations concerning the study method and process and recommendations for future similar studies are presented in Appendix D.

## Findings

### Respondent Characteristics

All participants were adults aged 18 or over. The introduction to the interview described the purpose of the study (to learn how participants feel about the services), assured confidentiality of participants’ responses and declared that their involvement would not affect the services they were receiving in any way. Participants were further assured that their participation was voluntary and that they could stop the interview at any time. They were asked to sign two copies of the consent form; one of the copies was left with them for their records (see Appendix C).

The tables that follow present information about participant responses to the survey questions. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error. Sample sizes for responses to each question are included. Differences in number of responses for each question are related to whether participants answered the question they were asked, and whether they gave multiple responses to one question.

The demographic characteristics of each group at the 13 sites are aggregated in Tables 1 and 2. Of the 131 participants who completed interviews, 73 (56%) were women. Ages ranged from 48 years to 94 years, with a mean age of 72 years and a median age of 75. Just under half of the respondents identified themselves as White (49%), with others identifying themselves as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black, Native American, Arab/Middle Eastern, Multi-racial, Pacific Islander and/or Other. Those who defined their race or ethnicity as Other included who reported they were Armenian (1), Bhutanese (1), Ethiopian (1), Jewish (3), and Uzbekistani (2).

**Table 1. Characteristics of Participants**

Total Sample (N=131)	
Participants	
Sites	13
Number	131
Mean Age	72
Median Age	75
Women	73 (56%)
Men	58 (44%)

**Table 2. What is your race or ethnicity?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
	#*	%*
White	64	49%
Asian	23	18%
Hispanic/Latino	15	11%
Black	10	8%
Native American	7	5%
Arab/Middle Eastern	2	2%
Multi-racial	2	2%
Pacific Islander	2	2%
Other	8	6%

\* Multiple responses were possible

## Language and Culture

Sites providing congregate meals as one of their services intend to provide nutritious meals in an environment that honors participants' diverse cultural preferences. Participants were asked if they usually spoke a language other than English. Sixty-three (48%) said they did (see Table 3). The languages other than English are presented in Table 4. In the "other" category, the languages identified were Hebrew (1), German (2), Japanese (1), Tagalog (2), Nepali (1), and Ethiopian (1). Sixty-eight (52%) of participants spoke English as their primary language. Responses to this question reveal the need to recognize the various cultures represented at the 13 locations surveyed.

**Table 3. Do you usually speak a language other than English?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
	#	%
Yes	63	48%
No	68	52%

**Table 4. What is the language?**

Subsample (n=63)		
	#	%
Spanish	17	26%
Cantonese	17	26%
Russian	12	19%
Korean	5	8%
Ukrainian	3	5%
Vietnamese	1	2%
Other	8	13%

To understand whether respondents felt that their cultural needs and preferences were being addressed, participants who were non-White or who did not speak English as their primary language were asked whether staff and volunteers celebrate or honor their language and culture at the site (see Table 5). Of the 66 participants who responded to this question, 45 (68%) indicated that the site honored their language and culture in a variety of ways. Over half of the respondents identified culturally-specific meals, events, celebrations and holidays as ways their traditions were honored (see Table 6). Other responses reflected participants' desire and need to connect with people who speak the same language and who have emigrated from the same country, and participants' appreciation of staff members who interact with them respectfully. The ability to communicate with staff who speak the participant's native language and who are able to help with official forms and paperwork were important to many of those who responded to this question, as well. The following comments reflect these attitudes.

*Interpreter: “She feels honored [to be here]. To freely speak her native language. She lives alone so she feels at home here, and it is good for her mental health”.*

*Interpreter: “He feels proud that he is honored...Volunteers here are nice about how little English he speaks. It is hard because out in the world people make him feel low, but here he feels good about himself.”*

*Interpreter: “Special cooking, special dishes, borage [a Russian herb] is the most important.”*

**Table 5. How do the staff or volunteers celebrate or honor your language and culture at this site?**

Total Sample (n=66)		
Participants	#	%
Honor	45	68%
Do not honor	21	32%

**Table 6. If so, what are these?**

Subsample (n=65)		
	#	%
Culturally-specific events, celebrations, and activities	19	29%
Culturally specific food	18	28%
Inclusive (non-discriminatory), respectful	11	17%
Culturally-specific socialization, friendship, support	7	11%
Interpreter/translator on site	4	6%
Activities/workshops/lectures	2	3%
Communications - general	2	3%
Print material in native language is provided	1	2%
General positive comment	1	2%

\* Multiple responses were possible

Twenty-one respondents (16%) said that their language and culture were *not* honored at their site (Table 5). Those who gave a reason specified that there was a lack of ethnic meal choices or that too few people of a specific culture or ethnicity came to the site to warrant special events. The following comments illustrate the reasons participants felt their language and culture were not honored at their site.

*We are not asked here. Staff and volunteers do not ask. There are very few [people of my race/ethnicity] at the center.*

*Not really. They try Mexican food, but there are other cultures besides mine.*

## Disability and Site Access

Survey participants were asked if they have a disability, and if they responded “yes,” they were asked to describe the disability. Sixty-two (48%) participants said they have a disability (Table 7). When asked about the type of disability (see Table 8), most individuals discussed mobility limitations, including the need to navigate the site with the use of assistive devices such as canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One person said,

*I use a walker. I get very frustrated with a lot of people...it can be hard to get to restroom.*

Some respondents have mobility limitations due to severe arthritis, heart problems, and/or chronic pain. Approximately the same number of participants experience visual and hearing limitations. Visual disabilities include macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma, and blindness, while some respondents with hearing limitations discussed the need for a hearing aid due to age-related hearing loss or surgery and work-related hearing loss. Thirty-nine (45%) participants pointed to limitations resulting from medical conditions such as diabetes, heart conditions, kidney disease, back pain and other spinal disorders. Nine reported limitations due to mental health issues.

**Table 7. Do you have a disability?**

Sub-sample (n=130)		
	#	%
Yes	62	48%

**Table 8. Disability type**

Sub-sample (n=86; multiple disabilities)		
	#	%
Visual	11	13%
Hearing	9	10%
Mobility	27	31%
Other	39	45%

Most participants with a disability said that they thought it was very easy or easy for someone with their disability to get around and participate in activities at the site where their interview was conducted. Of the 67 respondents who answered this question, 32 (48%) said that it was very easy and 19 (28%) said it was easy. Only 7 (10%) found it difficult, and none found it very difficult to get around at their site (see Table 9).

**Table 9. How easy or difficult is it for someone with your disability to get around here and take part in activities?**

Subsample (n=67)		
	#	%
Very easy	32	48%
Easy	19	28%
Neither easy or difficult	9	13%
Difficult	7	11%
Very Difficult	0	0

**Table 10. Could you please explain why you say this?**

Subsample (n=45)		
Reason	#	%
Access	29	64%
Assistive devices	10	22%
Staff assistance	7	15%
Negative	9	20%
Other	3	7%

Forty-five participants offered 58 responses when asked why it was easy or difficult for them to get around and take part in activities at their site (see Table 10). Participants who found it very easy or easy discussed easy access most often. Locations that facilitated easy access provide assistive devices or aids such as grab bars in hallways and bathrooms, chair lifts, elevators and ramps. Some participants commented that their site has wide doorways and hallways, and large rooms. One facility provides meals and activities all in one room so that participants didn't need to navigate stairs. In addition, some participants noted that staff members assist participants by bringing meals to tables and provide comfortable places for them to sit while waiting for rides or for activities to begin. The following comments typify those made by respondents who found getting around to be easy at their site.

*It is all laid out well. The building is very accessible.*

*They have an elevator and the bathroom is close. It's so convenient. You can see the tables and chairs...*

*They bring the food to a table, which is nice because it's too difficult to walk and carry a tray with a walker.*

*Everything is ground level. Everyone is helpful...*

Respondents who found it difficult to get around at their site discussed the lack of available parking, uneven sidewalks around the building, and the difficulty of navigating stairs, among other things. One person with vision impairment suggested providing more signs in Braille. Four people discussed having difficulty with transportation due to the site location. As one respondent noted:

*The walk to the bus can be difficult at times. I have to stop a lot between [the site] and bus because of my heart.*

Still other participants discussed difficulty with mobility even at sites that are easy to access due to the participant's age-related physical limitations or injuries. These individuals use assistive devices such as canes and walkers and described chronic pain and joint issues that limit their mobility, regardless of the setting.

### Length and Frequency of Participation

The range of years that participants had been attending the site extended from 1 to 35 years. Most had been participating for approximately 6 years. Those who had been going for less than a year ranged from 1 to 8 months, with most attending for approximately 6 months (see Table 11). A total of 118 participants attended at least weekly, with most going all five days if meals were available five days a week (see Table 12). Another 12 participants reported attending at least monthly, between 1 and 16 times per month, with the median number of times 10 per month.

**Table 11. How long have you been coming to this site?**

Subsample		
	Years (n=117)	Months (n=22)
Average	6	5
Range	1 to 35	1 to 8
Median	5	6

**Table 12. How many times a week or a month do you come here?**

Subsample		
	Per week (n=118)	Per month (n=12)
Average	3	9
Range	1-7	1-16
Median	5	10

Participating in activities was important for most of the people interviewed at the 13 sites, and most were satisfied with the wide range of activities offered. Among the activities specified were games, exercise classes, lectures, workshops, and presentations. (See Table 13; note that the number of responses is greater than the number of survey participants due to some participants' involvement in more than one activity.)

**Table 13. What activities here have you participated in over the last month?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
Activity	#	%
Exercise	39	30%
Bingo, board games, card games, puzzles	30	23%
Classes, workshops, presentations	13	10%
Special events - movies, pizza parties	10	8%
Activity-general	9	7%
Health and medical lectures, workshops, and check-ups	9	7%
Trips	8	6%
Volunteer	8	6%
Celebrations - holidays and birthdays	6	5%
Socializing	5	4%
Support services	4	3%
Support groups and clubs	4	3%
Church activities	3	2%
Culturally specific clubs and activities	3	2%
Reading/library	3	2%
Interpretation/translation	2	1%
Meals only	28	21%

\* Multiple responses were possible

The following comments reflect the wide range of activities and services that participants mentioned.

*I have meals, read on my own, go on field trips, especially to the Gorge, drink coffee, and play Ping-Pong.*

*Watching movies, playing games. Somebody from PSU comes to take blood pressure. Somebody will help me to get new glasses.*

*Chair exercise, Tai Chi...books to check out. A wonderful selection..., reduced rate bus passes, bingo, delivers food to those eligible.*

*I eat. I found a bridge game here. That's why I'm here...!*

*Physical check-ups...they provided check-ups and then they informed us of the results.*

*I listen to workshops. Many subjects like health, what to eat...*

*Here it's easier to sit and socialize. I play Bunko every week.*

Some participants expressed the desire for meals or activities to be offered more times per week, and more consistently, and some expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of availability of certain activities and services. Specifically, one participant wanted discontinued computer classes to be offered again, and two others wanted to again have Bingo offered at their site. One person felt resentful that she was not allowed to join a writing class because it had “been going on too long.” Two participants mentioned being unable to afford the cost of certain activities, and three participants wanted exercise classes offered more days. One participant would like meal service increased from 2 to 3 days per week. The comments below express participants’ feelings about the lack of some activities and services. When interpreters were used, the responses appear in the third person.

*I would like computer classes. They cut the computer classes.*

*Interpreter: “She wants to do the writing class, but they won't let her in. They say the class has been going on too long. She feels hateful and offended about it.”*

*Exercises. They had this activity before. We miss it now.*

*Meals were 2 days, now [it's] just one. It was cut to one day. We would like 3 days a week.*

## **Satisfaction with the Site**

One focus of the study was to determine how well sites were providing resources that meet the unique nutrition and service needs of culturally diverse populations. An indicator was whether participants’ experiences were positive. To assess this, respondents were asked what they liked about their site. As shown in Table 14, all but two of the 131 participants listed things that they liked at their site. Aspects mentioned most often included the ways the staff treats the participants (47%), the ability to meet, build relationships, and socialize with friends, (42%), and the meals (42%).

**Table 14. Could you please name some things you like about this site?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
Likes	#	%
Staff (friendly, courteous, respectful, good service, communication with, general positive)	61	47%
Relationships with friends*	55	42%
Food	54	42%
Activities, classes, entertainment, lectures	41	31%
Location/access	18	14%
Environment	15	11%
Services (e.g., translation, free bread)	9	7%
Volunteer staff	8	6%
Support	5	4%
General likes/fun	4	3%
Other: General resources, print material	3	2%
Negative comment	3	2%

\*Note: Relationship with friends usually referred to connecting with friends of similar culture and language.

The following comments are representative of the activities and services respondents reported liking, and the benefits they experienced as a result of their involvement at the site.

*I lost my wife 6 years ago, so I'm alone. Here I get to communicate with people. It makes a difference. Eating and interacting are equally important. They serve healthy food and controlled portions.*

*The location is easy to get to, accessible. [There are] interesting groups of people to be with and eat with, and you're not by yourself.*

*The people here understand what I'm talking about. The location - everything's nearby. The food is excellent; I only had one bad meal in 12 years...*

*...great staff here, including translation, and hanging out with friends...*

*... I like the people here. It's an international place. We use a lot of sign language.*

*Interpreter: "He likes the services, staff, good attitudes. They treat him very warmly, as if he was at home. The staff will wave and say "hello." When they first arrived, they couldn't communicate, but they got help from the manager. When they need help filling out forms they have been able to kindly get support and help from staff."*

*People here are very patient in helping us solve problems... The older generation needs help. I came here to seek help.*

*Fellowship, friendship, choice of meals, gaining of knowledge.*

*... we have our people. This is more comfortable for us - This is our support people...*

Only three respondents talked about things they disliked about the site they attend. Those complaints addressed the noise (too much yelling), the fees for services offered (too high), and the food quality (“up and down”).

## General Likes and Dislikes

To address areas that might need improvement, respondents were asked what the staff and volunteers could do to make people who come to the site feel more at home. Many respondents expressed gratitude for staff members who treat them with respect and provide a place to socialize with friends while being served a warm, nutritious meal that honored their cultural preferences. Most (53%) said that no improvements were needed (see Table 15).

**Table 15. What are some of the things the staff and volunteers could do to make you feel more at home here?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
	#	%
Food (variety, amount, preparation, cost)	9	7%
Space/environment (parking, room size, facility use, interactions)	7	5%
Activities (more trips, competitive games, music, TV, literature in other languages, medical check-ups)	7	5%
Address the language barrier	4	3%
Other ( more staff, transportation, bus passes)	2	1%
Nothing; no improvement needed	69	53%
No comment	33	25%

Respondents who made suggestions about ways in which meals could be improved indicated that they would like larger portions, seconds, more vegan and vegetarian options, or asked that more beverages such as coffee, tea, and hot water be available before and after meal times. One person wanted greater variety in the menu options, and some respondents who attend a site that provides meals only one day per week wanted the number of days meals are served to be increased. At one culturally diverse site that serves people of several different Asian cultures, it was suggested that using less oil during meal preparation would better suit the tastes of Korean participants. Respondents also addressed language differences, space issues, and desired changes regarding meals and activities.

Language:

*Offer English language classes [requested by a participant who spoke little English].  
Before, there was an interpreter, a young woman who told us about what was available,  
what was going on.  
Those in charge should know Spanish [requested by a participant who spoke little  
English].*

Environment:

*They could improve the size of room and amount of computers available...  
Squished! Too tight! More space, but that's not their fault.  
Parking is a problem. Not enough space.*

Meals:

*I would like to have Mexican food.  
I'm happy, but I would be more happy if it were more than once per week.  
15 minutes more to serve meals, because old people eat slow.  
Sometimes food is "skimpy," and you can't get seconds.*

Activities and services:

*[I would like] activities outside, travel, [the] park, going out!  
...they used to give us money for transportation.  
Get more volunteers.*

## Treatment by Staff and Volunteers

Most participants praised staff for their friendliness, respectful treatment, and efficiency in providing services. Some participants (n=18; 15%), however, reported that they had been treated rudely or badly by staff, volunteers, or other participants at their site (Table 16). Six percent (n=7) of participants discussed the specific ways in which they had been treated rudely by other participants either directly or indirectly. These comments pertained to issues with hygiene (“he wet his pants”), theft (“someone took my cane...” and “someone stole my purse”), and rude behavior (“She...causes havoc”).

The 3 (2%) of participants’ comments about being treated rudely or receiving poor service by staff included unfair treatment, as exemplified in these comments:

*They let some people do whatever they want. Other people, they treat you [badly]. They [Multnomah County] need to check in here.*

*They serve my table last.*

Another comment described displeasure about being told what to do or not do by a volunteer.

*One of them thinks he has the right to tell me what to do. For a couple of years, I came to help set up tables and make coffee. He would try to take the tables away from me because he thought I shouldn't lift.*

**Table 16. Have you ever been treated rudely or badly by staff or volunteers here at this site?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
	#	%
Yes - participant to participant	7	6%
Yes - volunteer to participant	4	3%
Yes - staff to participants	3	2%
Yes - poor service	2	2%
Yes - general comment	2	2%

Next, participants were asked who they would talk to at the site if they had a question or concern about something at the site. The majority of respondents (61%) reported that they would talk to the site manager (Table 17). This was often because some of the managers are bilingual and are more able to address non-English speaking participants' needs. Overall, people who come to the sites expressed a great degree of trust and confidence that those in charge and other staff members would listen to them respectfully and respond to their requests.

**Table 17. If you had a question or concern about something at this site, who would you talk to?**

Subsample (n=99)		
Position	#	%
Manager/director/administrator	59	60%
Staff/office person/food server	11	11%
Receptionist	8	8%
Community health worker/therapist	3	3%
Coordinator	3	3%
Friends	3	3%
Outreach coordinator, senior services	3	3%
Volunteer	3	3%
Cook	2	2%
Assistant manager	1	1%
No concerns	2	2%
Negative- Staff would not address concerns	1	1%

**Table 18. If that person were not here who would you talk to?**

Subsample (n=52)		
Position	#	%
Staff	18	35%
No one else – would wait for manager	8	15%
Social services: case manager, I&A specialist, elder care lawyer, social worker	5	10%
Receptionist	5	10%
Staff interpreter	5	10%
Volunteer	5	10%
Assistant manager	3	5%
Director	3	5%

If the manager or other preferred person to address questions and concerns were unavailable, those participants who would seek someone else out for help reported that they would seek out another staff member (35%). Others said they would wait for the manager to return (15%) or find a social services worker or some other specific staff member (see Table 18). Two respondents reported that they would not seek out help for a concern (n=2; 2%) because that they had no questions or concerns or stated that they would simply ask a friend. One participant felt strongly that his concerns would not be addressed. He said,

*No one. It would be like talking to the floor. He [the manager] doesn't care. He's not held accountable for his actions. Some people get benefits. Some don't. When the guy was playing with the TV [the rule is that this is not done and he complained to the director], she said, "If the TV's going out the door, let me know."*

## Empowerment

To better understand whether participants feel empowered in requesting and receiving needed services, respondents were asked to describe a time when they had suggested the site add an activity or do something different. Of the 131 participants from the 13 sites where interviews were conducted, 35 (27%) people surveyed had made a suggestion (see Table 19). As shown in Table 20, those 35 participants made 42 suggestions.

**Tables 19 & 20. Tell me about a time when you suggested the site add an activity or do something different. What happened?**

Sample (N=131)			Subsample (n=42)		
	#	%	Suggestions	#	%
Made a suggestion	35	27%	Activities	22	52%
Never made a suggestion	96	73%	Food	4	10%
			Transportation	4	10%
			Services	5	10%
			Language	2	5%
			General	5	12%

Twenty-two people suggested adding activities, including more exercise classes, field trips, music, culturally-specific events, internet access, and movies. Eight of these activities-related requests had been granted; 7 participants were still waiting for a response, and 1 was refused.

Four participants had made requests relating to the food served. Food requests that were granted include adding a specific meal to the menu and increasing the number of choices on the menu. One participant said that his or her request for fewer Asian meals and a more diabetic-friendly menu was not granted.

Transportation-related requests had also been made, including a request that a shelter be provided for people waiting for the bus and requests to provide MAX and bus tickets. These requests were granted to those who asked. One person requested that activities be coordinated to coincide with the bus schedule. This request was not granted. One person is waiting for an answer to a request that participants be provided with bus passes rather than bus tickets. One participant made a general statement that he or she felt satisfied that requests are always addressed, and another said that he or she did not get what he wanted but decided not to pursue it any further. Two participants reported that they had requested a language interpreter be added to the staff but the requests were not granted, and one of those who asked was “answered with disdain.”

The following comments demonstrate the range of responses that participants received when requesting additional services that meet their needs and preferences.

Positive outcomes:

*I asked for a better menu, and more choices were offered.*

*We never had a formal meeting, but off and on they talk about improvements, classes, and help with citizenship.*

*Lots of people come to this site, so the participants suggested to have MAX tickets, and also suggested to go on tours - MAX tickets were introduced...*

*We provide input, and they [staff] do something about it if they can.*

Still waiting for the outcome:

*I am waiting for a response [to my] suggestion to have a room to do music.*

*Bus passes - we need them. They are better than tickets. Nothing has happened yet.*

Negative outcome:

*I am blind. I don't know what is going on. I don't know where the books are to fill out to go [on field trips]. I don't know how the system works. I don't get anywhere when I make suggestions, so I just don't participate. [Assistant manager] didn't help me.*

Some requests were not honored if they put participants' safety at risk, or if site resources were too limited.

*We went on outings, but they stopped because some seniors would wander to the street or wouldn't come back with the group.*

*I suggested adding aesthetic details to newsletter. Nothing happened. It's all about money.*

Overall, most sites appeared to be attentive to participants needs and wishes. When staff members were able, they were generally seen as desiring to meet requests in a timely, friendly manner. However, at two sites, some participants believed that their requests were not given the same attention as some other participants', and they reported that they feel discriminated against. These comments reflect racial differences and preferences and possible prejudice.

*Nothing happens when I suggest a different food item. Food is very boring because there are more Asian cooks and Asian participants at meal sites around the county. We prefer different menu options. The white rice is not diabetic friendly.*

*Interpreter: "He suggested a Russian [translator] and was answered with disdain."*

*Sometimes there are meetings. Last time was a long time ago. There are arguments; for example, some services are not available to White people.*

*I suggested a person like us - a bilingual person. Nothing happened.*

## Information about Services and Activities

Participants learn about the services and activities offered at the sites in a variety of ways, and some reported several ways in which they find out about happenings (see Table 21). Most (55%) reported that they first hear about them through friends or word of mouth, followed by announcements at the site (37%). A newsletter was another common means of learning about services and activities (30%), as was a flier or bulletin board (24%). A calendar at the site (13%), or a website (7%) were also mentioned, but less frequently. Other ways included knowing about the site by walking by, living in the neighborhood, and “just knowing” what was going on because the person had been coming for a long time. One participant had learned about the site as a volunteer driver who brought participants to the site.

**Table 21. How do you learn about the various types of services and activities that are available here?**

Total Sample (N=131)		
Method	#	%
Friends/word of mouth	72	55%
Announcement at site	48	37%
Newsletter	39	30%
Flier or bulletin board	31	24%
Calendar at the site	17	13%
Other	11	8%
Website	9	7%

\* Multiple responses were possible

## Awareness of Fees or Charges for Services

Responses to a question about whether there were charges or fees for services at the site varied. The majority of participants surveyed reported that there are no fixed charges or fees for using a service or participating in the activities offered at the site they attended. Some specified that a donation of \$1.00 to \$3.00 was requested. Others reported offering a small, voluntary donation for coffee (see Tables 22 & 23).

*I don't think you have to pay, but they ask you to donate.*

*Only if you make a lot of money.*

*They haven't told us about any charges or fees.*

*Everything is free.*

Some of the people surveyed at two sites reported that there is a fee for certain activities, such as exercise classes, card games and field trips, and at one site, some participants said they pay a mandatory \$24 yearly membership fee, while others reported that the fee was voluntary. Examples of these comments include:

*Games and activities have a fee, but meals are donation.*

*There is an annual membership fee of \$24; there's a transportation fee for the trips.*

*[There are] only suggested donations and a voluntary, suggested membership fee of \$25 and a lunch suggested amount of \$3.*

One participant expressed dissatisfaction that he could not participate in certain activities because he could not afford them. Two people were dissatisfied with the way that free food is distributed, reporting that some people are charged, unfairly, for take-home food items while others are not. One reported that some participants and volunteers steal food, eating utensils, and salt and pepper shakers.

*People [who work here] don't care about the senior citizens. Bread that we are supposed to get, they do whatever they want [with it]. Volunteers take the potato chips for themselves. Senior citizens have to pay \$1 for chips. [The site manager] backs them up. They used to give [food] out [for free].*

*People steal salt shakers. Pastry goes in the back room first. I don't know where the food goes; out the back door, stolen.*

**Tables 22 & 23. Are there any charges or fees for using the services or participating in the activities here? Do you have to pay for anything here?**

Total Sample (N=131)			Subsample (n=62)		
	#	%		#	%
Yes	42	32%	Donation	40	65%
No	82	63%	Fee for activities	7	11%
Don't know	7	5%	Donation for meals	5	8%
			\$24/year membership	3	5%
			No fee	3	5%
			Coffee	1	1%
			Negative comment	3	5%

To determine whether participants believed they could access services if they were unable to pay any required fees, a question was asked about whether they believed someone could still take part in the activity if they could not pay the cost (see Table 24). Of the 73 respondents who answered this question, fifty-three (73%) believed that those who can't pay are able to participate; 7 (10%) said that participants who are unable to pay are not allowed to participate in activities at the site, and 13 (17%) did not know.

**Table 24. If someone can't pay the cost of an activity, can they still participate?**

Subsample (n=73)		
	#	%
Yes	53	73%
No	7	10%
Don't know	13	17%

## Overall Satisfaction with Services

Overwhelmingly, people were very satisfied (73%) or satisfied (25%) with the meals and activities at their site. Only 3% of respondents were neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (see Tables 25 & 26). Most respondents felt welcome and respected by friendly, helpful staff members and volunteers. They found the meals nutritious, appreciated the menu variety and ethnic choices, and were grateful for the free bread, pastries, and snacks that many were provided to take home. At all sites, participants expressed gratitude for having a place to meet friends and socialize, stating that it “feels like home,” and provides a “sense of friendship and security to have a place to go.” Most had positive things to say about the environment, citing cleanliness, lack of prejudice, and that it was “suitable for the elderly” as reasons. The following comments illustrate the reasons participants gave for being satisfied with the services and activities offered:

*... It's nice to have a place to go where you're not overrun with young people.*

*We are not discriminated against here...Games and books are here... Everybody respects you.*

*They're on top of things here...Here, they come around and serve. I think they're spoiling us...!*

*Interpreter: “...if services were not available, they would be at home watching TV or gardening alone. Coming to visit and make new friends is important, as she was suicidal and feels that this program has helped her find a social group that has helped her feel better.”*

*It's like family, everybody knows everybody. Get along well. Food is good and service is good.*

*Interpreter: "How they treat and respect her, teach her about U.S. culture, but also learn about other cultures; they always take good care, call them if they don't come to the site to hear what's going on."*

**Table 25. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you receive at this site?**

Total Sample (N=130)		
	#	%
Very satisfied	95	73%
Satisfied	33	25%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	<1%
Dissatisfied	1	<1%
Very dissatisfied	1	<1%

**Table 26. Could you please explain why you say this?**

Subsample (n=111)		
	#	%
Volunteers	55	50%
Food/beverages	33	30%
Support-general	30	25%
Socializing, friendship	18	16%
Environment/atmosphere	18	16%
Activities, games, lectures, celebrations, workshops	16	14%
Services	15	14%
General satisfaction	14	13%
Treatment/inclusive/respectful	11	10%
Staff: friendly, helpful, positive	8	7%
Location	4	4%
Place to go, welcoming	3	3%

A small number of people (< 1%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with food, food portions, and/or food service. The service was reported to be too slow at one site, the food too oily at another, a lack of menu options was cited at another, and portions were seen as too small at another. One person was dissatisfied with prejudice encountered at the site. At one site, a participant believed unfair practices by management existed:

*Too much garbage goes on. They (the County) need to check-in here, so citizens are equal on the totem pole. It's not right. It's who you know. Some people get no benefits at all. Some people [staff] have been here too long. [The manager] has volunteers who are relations working here. That shouldn't be. They are partial to him*

Still, as exemplified in the following comment, even those who were dissatisfied in these areas often followed complaints with positive comments.

*[I am satisfied] mainly because the volunteers do a good job despite the prejudice of upper management.*

## Conclusions

On balance, the findings from this study indicate that the majority of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with their experiences at the sites they attend for meals, activities and socializing. Most found the meals nutritious and satisfying, and placed a high value on having a place to share common language, interests, and backgrounds. Respondents generally feel well treated and respected by staff and volunteers and feel that their cultural backgrounds are honored. There were a few reports of poor treatment and discrimination by staff, volunteers, or other participants, and some sites serve meals less frequently than others and provide fewer services or have had to cut back on services. Language is a barrier at times, with some respondents expressing a need for more bilingual staff or translators. The following sections summarize the findings and offer recommendations.

### Language and Culture

Multnomah County ADVSD funds district senior centers, agencies that serve racial and ethnic minority older adults and congregate meal sites to provide activities, education, and/or nutritionally sound meals in culturally appropriate ways to older adults with significant social and economic needs. It further intends to provide a pathway to social services for older adults who are resource poor and lack the ability to navigate the complex service system. Multnomah County Consumer Satisfaction Survey participant responses highlight the need to increase accessibility to nutrition services, honor unique cultures and languages, and provide a comfortable, inclusive environment where people can meet and interact.

The sites strive to provide important resources to address these multiple needs in culturally appropriate ways. Nine of the 13 facilities where we interviewed are designated Enhancing Equity sites and host more than 10 different ethnic groups speaking more than 15 languages and dialects. Most importantly, they provide a place for participants to meet and communicate with others having a common heritage and language and common interests. Individuals noted culturally-specific events, celebrations, activities, lectures, workshops, and print material as ways in which they felt their language and culture was honored. They valued the respectful, inclusive environment that promotes socializing, friendship, and support that most experienced.

Some respondents, however, did not believe their language and culture were honored. They were not provided with ethnic meal choices or cultural celebrations or events, since people of their culture were either underrepresented at the site where they ate their meals, or there were too many different ethnic groups to focus on just one.

## **Disability and Access**

Older adults are confronted with numerous age-related health challenges, including vision, hearing, and mobility limitations which can make it difficult for them to get to desired locations providing services and social support. Most of the participants interviewed reported their site was doing a good job accommodating older adults' functional limitations by limiting the need to access buildings and rooms using stairs, by providing elevators and lifts, by ensuring enough space in activity and dining rooms, and by equipping bathrooms with grab bars and stalls for the disabled. Most participants found that their site's building provided easy access to eating areas and bathrooms and had aisles wide enough for wheelchairs and walkers to navigate comfortably without fearing and risking falls.

At two locations, however, respondents did need to use stairs, and they discussed the need to move slowly, take breaks, or avoid an area altogether. Building exteriors with steps at the entrance were challenging for some with mobility limitations due to chronic pain, chronic health conditions, and previous injuries and illnesses. Lack of parking in the site lots proved to be difficult for participants who felt they risked falls on uneven pavement and sidewalks when having to park and walk a distance.

At many of the locations participants use public transportation as their primary means of getting to and from the site, and access to busses and MAX trains is necessary for these individuals. For some, walking the distance to the public bus stop is difficult. For others, ticket costs for public transportation can limit their ability to attend, while for others, bus schedules prohibit them from remaining at their site to participate in afternoon activities.

## **Participation, Treatment and Empowerment**

The core functions of the nutrition programs are to not only provide meal service but to serve older adults from ethnic communities, engage them in meaningful activities, reduce isolation, and enhance good health and well-being. Most people interviewed indicated they were better off due to their involvement at their sites. Several desired outcomes resulting from participation were identified, with those attending receiving multiple benefits from their involvement. People reported gaining a better understanding of ways to stay healthy by attending workshops and lectures on disease management, and ways to reduce health risks, and by taking part in exercise classes. Some expressed appreciation for health screenings offered at some locations that they might not otherwise be able to afford. For individuals with limited ability to speak and understand English, the sites provide a place to connect and feel at home. Throughout the interviews, participants identified a great need to socialize with friends and expressed gratitude to have a place meet and communicate with people with whom they have common interests and culture. Many commented that they were less isolated, had something to look forward to, and enjoyed having a place that is "just like home" as a result of their participation at the sites.

Most participants are greatly appreciative of staff and volunteers who treat them with respect and courtesy and offer assistance in finding avenues to obtain needed social supports and services. Some said the staff was “like family.” PSU interviewers noted that the culturally diverse locations provided a safe haven where people were able to relax, trust, and feel free of discrimination and prejudice.

We found two sites where participants reported feeling racially discriminated against. At one, where there are two distinct ethnic groups, one group said the other got better and special treatment by volunteers who shared the better-treated group’s ethnicity. At another site participants of one race were angry and reported that they were treated unfairly, with hostility, and were racially discriminated against. These individuals reported that management is charging some and not others for take-home food items, and that management and volunteers allow food and utensils to be stolen.

Twenty seven percent of participants made suggestions to staff and volunteers requesting additional activities, meal choices, additional transportation options, and ways to address language issues. The responses indicate that most respondents are comfortable talking with managers, assistant managers, other staff, and volunteers about things they would like to see added, improved, or changed. At most sites, suggestions are usually addressed with consideration and regard for cultural preferences. Many of those requests were granted, or if they were not, reasons included a lack of funds or that the request presented a safety risk to participants.

As noted above, at two locations some participants reported experiencing racial discrimination, and believe that their requests would not be acknowledged, or that they would be regarded as unimportant. These individuals were angry and had given up on asking for support from staff and volunteers. At one of these locations, PSU interviewers were told by the manager that interpreters were not needed, yet, when we arrived to interview, there were several participants who were fluent in a language other than English, and spoke little or no English. At another location, PSU interviewers were told by the manager to expect only English-speaking participants, but approximately one third of participants did not speak English. It appeared that the managers who scheduled interview times and dates were either unaware of or lacked consideration for non-English speakers.

## **Respondents’ General Likes, Dislikes, and Overall Satisfaction**

Interview participants had mostly positive comments about their experience at sites. In addition, several expressed ideas about ways to make improvements in the areas of language, environment, meals, activities and services.

The ability to communicate with others is a central need for participants at all of the 13 locations. At some sites, participants seeking citizenship and a greater ability to communicate in their

communities reported they would benefit from English language classes. Many were appreciative of staff that speak their language and are able to interpret for them and help with paperwork. At other locations, several non-English speaking respondents suggested that those in charge should be fluent in their language as well as English, as many participants there spoke that language.

Many of those satisfied with their sites would like to see more of the same types of services and activities offered, and on more days. Participants requested more meals that reflect their ethnic tastes, increasing the number of days meals are provided, and increasing the number of days their preferred activities are offered. Transportation issues were raised, indicating a need to address costs and access.

## Recommendations

### Language and Culture

- Continue providing a comfortable environment where participants can socialize, experience culturally-appropriate meals, and find a gateway to needed services.
- Increase capacity so that more culturally-appropriate activities are offered at locations that serve several different cultural groups.
- Increase staff awareness and sensitivity to the needs and preferences of diverse groups participating at their site.
- Increase the number of interpreters and bilingual staff able to communicate with non-English speaking participants.

### Disability and Access

- Exterior entrances with stairs and interiors with stairs to meeting rooms should be monitored at the times that older adults arrive and leave the location, and support should be offered for those with mobility limitations, visual impairment, and those who use assistive devices to go from place to place.
- Adequate parking for people who drive should be provided whenever possible, and when parking is limited staff and volunteers should designate specific times to assist participants who have to navigate uneven sidewalks and pavement during arrival and departure times.
- More TriMet LIFT complementary paratransit services for disabled participants who are unable to walk safely to and from bus stops would be very beneficial, as would having more time at the site to eat in a more leisurely fashion and socialize.
- Funding for bus tickets and passes that can be provided free of charge or at a reduced rate for individuals with limited financial resources is needed.

## **Participation, Treatment and Empowerment**

- Continue to provide culturally-appropriate meals and activities that target the needs of different ethnic/racial groups.
- Have Multnomah County ADVSD staff do spot checks at sites to ensure that each location serves its diverse populations equally, without favoritism, and without discrimination.
- Provide training to site managers, staff, and volunteers that addresses racism, bias, and unfair treatment.
- Increase staff and volunteers who are fluent in the languages other than English most spoken at specific locations or ensure interpretation and translation services are available.

## **Respondents' General Likes, Dislikes, and Overall Satisfaction**

- The ability to connect and communicate is key in addressing participants' needs to socialize and more easily integrate into the greater community, so increasing capacity to provide regular English language classes at sites where participants speak little or no English is an important consideration.
- Allow more time for participants to eat meals and socialize. In doing so it would likely be necessary to modify LIFT bus schedules or provide TriMet passes since some participants rely on these methods of transportation to attend activities and enjoy mealtimes.
- Multnomah County ADVSD is doing a good job of providing a means for individuals to get their nutritional and social needs met. Increasing the number of days meals are offered at sites where meals are provided one or two days a week would facilitate health and well-being for a wide range of marginalized minority individuals.
- As discussed earlier, increasing financing for public transportation for participants with limited financial means would enable them to more easily access their site and obtain the services they need to maintain health and quality of life.

## Appendix A – Study Sites, Providers, and Service Details

# Interviewed	Site	Providers		Activities Offered
10	East County congregate meal site - Ambleside Center	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	Enhanced Fitness
		Gresham Sr. Ctr. /YWCA		Board Games; Bingo; Walk with Ease; more
10	Asian Health and Service Center culturally-specific congregate meal site	Asian Health And Services Center contracts with restaurants	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F); home delivered meals	Evergreen Club (exercise; discussions; health info.; travel guide; cultural celebrations); Portland Senior Club; Mandarin-Speaking Club; Vietnamese Senior Group; Korean Portland Healthy Friends Clubs; Chinese Opera; Dance Club; Home Care Training; Tax Aid; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion
		Asian Health And Services Center	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	
12	IRCO Mid County congregate meal sites – Cherry Blossom	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F); home delivered meals	Enhanced Fitness; Options Counseling, Older Americans Act Case Management, Recreation, Volunteer Services Games, Book Club
		IRCO		
10	El Programa Hispano; Catholic Charities culturally-specific congregate meal site	Catholic Charities	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F); home delivered meals	Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; Recreation; Volunteer Services; Congregate Meals.
10	Elm Court Center congregate meal site	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch Su-Sat); home delivered meals	Board Games; Aerobics; Yoga; Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance; Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others
		Neighborhood House		
10	Fook Lok	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F); home delivered meals	Enhance Fitness
10	North/Northeast Consortium/District Center Hollywood Senior Center	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals Lunch (T; Th)	Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act

		Hollywood Senior Center, Urban League of Portland, and Native American Youth and Family Center		Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance; Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others.
11	IRCO Mid County congregate meal sites - Glisan St.	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch Tu; Wed)	Focal Point Leadership, e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion, e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education, Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, Arthritis Exercise, Walk with Ease, and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others.
		IRCO		
9	NE Multicultural Senior Center congregate meal site - Martin Luther King Jr. Center	Meals on Wheels People and Urban League of Portland	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	Focal Point Leadership, e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information and Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; Evidence-based Health Promotion, e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education, Tai Chi; Moving for Better Balance, Walk with Ease, Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others.
	Urban League of Portland	Urban League		Fitness classes; Tai Chi; Games; Celebrations; Home Visits; Guardian Assistance; Money Management Services; Congregate Housing Services; Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance; Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others
10	Metropolitan Community Church LGBT culturally-specific congregate meal site	Meals on Wheels People site	Congregate meals (Lunch W)	Outreach and center programming.
10	West District Center /Consortium- Neighborhood House	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	Food Boxes; Information and Assistance/Referral Senior Transportation and Volunteer Driver Program; Activities; Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance; Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others.
		Neighborhood House and Friendly House		

9	NAYA Family Center culturally-specific congregate meal site		Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	Congregate Meal
		NAYA		Potlucks; Exercise; Educational Services; Trips; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance; Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others; Recreation; Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management;
10	Impact NW congregate meal site – Belmont Center	Meals on Wheels People	Congregate meals (Lunch M-F)	Enhance Fitness;; Belmont Boutique; Open Mic; Focal Point Leadership; e.g. outreach and senior center programming; Information & Assistance; Transportation Scheduling & Coordination; OPI Case Management; Options Counseling; Older Americans Act Case Management; Evidence-based Health Promotion; e.g. Chronic Disease Management & Education; Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance;
		Impact NW		Arthritis Exercise; Walk with Ease; and Powerful Tools for Caregivers and others

## Appendix B – Survey Instrument

### Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans' Services Community Services Satisfaction Study - 2014

Meal Site ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
month / day / year

Time began: \_\_\_\_\_

Time ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

*DATA ENTRY INFORMATION ONLY: INTERVIEW IS:*

\_\_\_ Complete (1)

\_\_\_ Incomplete (0)

Present study information and follow informed consent process. If person agrees to participate, ask him/her to sign forms, you sign as well, and give person one copy.

*Thank you for being willing to talk with me today. The interview starts with just a few questions about you.*

Basic demographic information

1. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? [Ask only if you are not sure.] Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your race or ethnicity?  
  
White \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_\_ Arab/Middle Eastern \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_ Multi-Racial \_\_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Language and culture

4. Do you ***usually*** speak a language other than English?  
  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ What is the language? \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_ **[SKIP to Q. 6]**
5. How do staff and volunteers celebrate or honor your language and culture here at this site?  
  
Yes: Celebrate: [PROBE: Are there special activities, events, or foods that are connected with your language or culture? If so, what are these?]  
  
No: Do not celebrate \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Information + access

6. Do you have a disability?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No **[SKIP to Q. 7]**
- 6.a. Could you please describe your disability in a few words? **[Do not read disability types.]**
  - a. Visual \_\_\_\_\_

b. Deaf or hard of hearing \_\_\_\_\_

c. Mobility \_\_\_\_\_

d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6.b. How easy or difficult is it for someone with your disability to get around here at [this site] and take part in activities? [**READ categories.**]

a. Very easy to get around [**SKIP to Q. 7**]

b. Easy to get around [**SKIP to Q. 7**]

c. Neither easy nor difficult

d. Difficult to get around

e. Very difficult to get around

6.c. Could you please explain why you say this? [**PROBE:** For example, is there any difficulty with access to the bathroom, access to other parts of the facility, activities that don't take into consideration this disability, anything like that?]

7. How long, in months or years, have you been coming to this site?  
\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

8. How many times a week or a month do you come here?  
\_\_\_\_ per week \_\_\_\_ per month

9. What activities here at [this site] have you participated in over the last month?  
[**PROBE:** Any others?]

Frequency of participation

10. Could you please name some things you like about [this site]?  
[**PROBE:** Anything else?]

Intensity of participation

11. What are some things the staff and volunteers could do to make you feel more at home here? [**PROBE:** Anything else?]

General likes and dislikes

Treatment

12. Have you ever been treated rudely or badly by staff or volunteers here at [this site]?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No [**SKIP to Q. 13**]

12.a. Could you please tell me about that?

Empowerment

13. If you had a question or concern about something at [this site], who would you talk to?  
[**CHECK** here if no name/position \_\_\_\_ then **SKIP to Q 13.b.**]

Name and/or position:

13.a. If that person was not here, who else would you talk to? [**CHECK** here if no one:  
\_\_\_\_]

Name and/or position:

13.b. Tell me about a time when you suggested the site add an activity or do something  
different. What happened?  
[**CHECK** here if has never made a suggestion \_\_\_\_]

14. How do you learn about the various types of services and activities that are available  
here? [**CIRCLE** all that apply.]

[**PROBE:** IF person says "I don't know," say: "For example, do you learn about services  
and activities here through ... [**READ LIST**]

- a. Newsletter
- b. Calendar at the site
- c. Announcements
- d. Friends/word of mouth
- e. Website
- f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Are there any charges or fees for using the services or participating in the activities here?  
[**PROBE:** Do you have to pay for anything here?]

Yes

No [**SKIP to Q. 16**]

15.a. If someone can't pay the cost of an activity, can they still participate?

Yes

No

Don't know

16. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you receive at this site? Would you say you are:

a. Very satisfied

b. Satisfied

c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

d. Dissatisfied

e. Very dissatisfied

Ultimate  
satisfaction  
question

16.a Could you please explain why you say this? [**PROBE:** Anything else?]

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you so much for helping us today.  
Now let's go and get your gift card.

## Appendix C

### INFORMED CONSENT MULTNOMAH COUNTY AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICES SATISFACTION STUDY - 2014

#### Goal:

- We are from the Institute on Aging at Portland State University. We are helping Multnomah County Division of Aging and Disability Services to study clients' satisfaction with community services
- To better understand clients' needs and their experience at the congregate meal site.
- We will ask questions about how **you** feel about the services here, and the kinds of things that happen here.

#### Process

- The questions will take 15 - 20 minutes.
- The questions are about how you feel about the services here, the kinds of things that happen here.

#### Confidentiality

- You do not have to participate, and if you do, you can stop at any time. You can also choose to not answer questions that you don't want to answer.
- Your answers are confidential – they will not be shared with the staff, volunteers, or Multnomah County.
- We will be talking with over 100 clients, and we will join together all clients' comments and report them together as a summary. No one will be able to tell specifically what you said.
- **IF** you talk about being harmed or harming others, though, I must report this. The County will investigate while trying to keep your identity confidential

#### Benefits

- You will receive a \$5.00 gift card for taking part in this study. Also, clients in the future may benefit, since the study will help the County staff learn about ways to improve the service for people who use congregate meal sites.

#### Questions or concerns?

- Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships, Market Center Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, (503) 725-4288.
- Dr. Margaret Neal, at (503) 725-5145 or [nealm@pdx.edu](mailto:nealm@pdx.edu), or at her office: 470Q Urban Center, 506 SW Mill Street, Portland, Oregon, 97201.

Before we begin, please sign or initial this page and a second one for your records. Your signature indicates that you understand what I have read and agree to take part in this study. You may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and by signing, you are not waiving any legal rights as a research participant.

---

Respondent's signature  
or initials or sign

Date

---

Interviewer's signature

## **Appendix D**

### **Researchers' Observations and Recommendations Concerning Study Methods and Process**

#### **Random Sampling**

Originally, the PSU research team was to conduct random sampling on a day and time scheduled with the site manager. Then, after drawing tickets for 10 participants, the team was to schedule a day and time the following week to administer surveys to those individuals. We found, however, that when we returned to interview the selected sample, 50% of the participants did not come to the site on that day. After speaking with the manager at that site and another one, we realized that at some locations, participants' attendance was inconsistent. We revised our sampling plan, and modified our Human Subjects Research protocol accordingly with the PSU Institutional Review Board, so that surveys would be administered immediately following random sampling. This resolved the issue. It created other problems, however, specifically with respect to time (see Recommendations).

As noted above, at one site the survey team had difficulty getting 10 people to participate in the study. Some people there were apprehensive, and one was overtly suspicious of our motives. We were able to interview nine people at this location. At another site, a participant who was not selected in the random sampling was disturbed by our presence, saying he felt intimidated when the group of interviewers walked in with no suitable introduction from the site manager (even though the manager had, in fact, introduced us using a microphone). An interviewer listened to his concerns. After this incident, the PSU team decided to wait outside of the dining area until the site manager introduced us and the PSU project manager had explained our purpose for being there.

#### **Issues with Volunteers**

Volunteers were not included in the random sampling. Although this group eats meals at the sites, their participation in set-up, meal preparation, and serving provides them with unique perspectives regarding site activities and interactions. Therefore, the survey was administered to individuals who receive meals only, and not those who serve or prepare them as well.

Some volunteers became angry when they were excluded from the random sample drawing. One told an interviewer that she had "hurt him" by not allowing him to participate, and some volunteers wanted the opportunity to be chosen to interview because they would receive the \$5.00 gift card. To resolve this problem, we revised our introduction at the sites. We asked the manager to announce to volunteers before our arrival that participants only, not volunteers,

would be interviewed. Next, when we arrived at the site, the manager introduced our team, and we expressed our thanks to the volunteers, letting them know that we recognized and appreciated the work they were doing, but that at this time we were able to interview just participants. We had no further problems with this issue thereafter.

## Language Interpretation

PSU interviewers used interpreters to translate survey questions and responses at six of the 13 sites. There also were two other sites where interpreters were needed, since there were some participants who did not speak English, but were not available. This occurred because when the PSU project manager contacted the managers at these two locations to schedule interviews, she was told an interpreter would not be necessary. At these sites, however, non-English speaking participants were selected during the random sampling process. As one of our interviewers was fluent in the language spoken by two participants who were selected at one of the sites (Spanish), she was able to conduct and translate those interviews. At the other site, one selected participant spoke only Russian. We relied on a participant who spoke both English and Russian to translate. Although the interviews went well, and neither of these two sites is designated as a culturally-specific congregate meal site, it appeared that the managers lacked awareness of, and sensitivity to, some minority group participants' needs.

## The Survey Tool

Some questions did not work as well as others in eliciting the type of information desired or for conducting the survey smoothly. Following completion of the interviews, the research team met to identify these problematic questions and make suggestions for changes. These are presented in the final bullet point below, in our recommendations.

## Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to the possibility of revising the time when interviews are conducted. Holding interviews with participants at the sites during the meal time was challenging for several reasons.
  - Meals were served for a limited period of time, and participants needed to eat during that time. Although interviewers tried to wait until the selected participants were finished eating, some participants needed to leave right away to get to their bus or TriMet LIFT ride and/or the site had another activity planned and the space needed to be vacated by participants and interviewers.
  - There also was a lack of private space in which interviews could be conducted in most sites.
  - Randomly selecting participants for interviews was difficult given the limited time available to (a) describe the study, (b) distribute the tickets for possible selection into the study, (c) call the numbers selected and identify the

individuals holding the selected tickets, and (d) ideally, move to a private location.

- Interviews needed to be conducted in two waves since 10 interviews were to be conducted and there were five interviewers. Although it would have been possible to have 10 interviewers, even with only five some participants reported feeling intimidated when the study team arrived, as there were so many of us.
- There also were logistical constraints such as the lack of adequate amplification for announcing the ticket numbers chosen in many sites and the fact that selected ticket numbers had to be announced in many different languages.
- Interviewing during the lunch time appeared to carry an implication that the meals programs were the primary focus of the study, when this was not the case.
- In sites where participants from several different ethnic groups were present, random selection of participants did not always result in selection of members from each group. Stratification by ethnic or racial group might be considered in the future to best represent the diversity of participants at the sites, although this would be challenging to implement in a practical sense.
- Interviewing a larger number of participants would result in more robust findings at the site level. It is difficult to generalize from only 10 interviews per site.
- Volunteers who assist with meal preparation, serving, and clean-up should be notified by the site manager prior to the survey team's arrival that the survey is designed for participants only and that volunteers will not be included in the random sampling.
- Revisions to several questions are recommended to help interviewers more easily identify items in categories with large numbers of response options and/or to facilitate clarity in participants' responses. These include:
  - Reformatting question 3 to list the 9 response categories in 2 columns, with check boxes preceding the response
  - Rewording question 5 to more effectively determine ways in which language and culture are recognized and celebrated
  - Rewording question 9 to better identify what participants come to the site to do.
  - Eliminating question 10, since questions 16 and 16a address the same content.
  - Rewording question 11 to better identify changes that would improve participants' level of comfort at their site.
  - Rewording question 13 to ask more directly about participants' questions or concerns, and who they would talk to about them.
  - Adding a question to identify the types of transportation participants use to get to and from sites and difficulties those means of transportation present.