



To: Sara Truse, ADRC Regional Quality Specialist, Dept. of Health Services

From: Pat Bruce, Milwaukee County ADRC Governing Board

CC: Dept. of Aging Interim Executive Director, Jonathan Jawnoski; Disabilities Services Division Administrator, Shakita LaGrant McClain; Dept. of ARC Program Manager, Rachel Kaehny-Frank; DRC Program Manager, Karin Bachman

Date: December 15, 2020

RE: 2020 ADRC Listening Sessions and Survey Report

On behalf of the Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Resource Center Governing Board, thank you for supporting our 2020 listening sessions and county-wide survey with your attendance and participation. The board has adopted the attached report and is forwarding it for your review and use. The report includes a summary of findings, a list of recommendations based on the findings, and a compilation of comments from all three sessions as well as county-wide survey responses.

We invite you to consider the recommendations within the 2020 Governance Board Listening Session and Survey Report and share your thoughts about next steps. We welcome responses in writing.

If you wish to send responses, have any questions, or require additional information, please contact ADRC Board Chair Pat Bruce at pbruce99@hotmail.com.

We look forward to your insights and partnership as we move forward!



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Milwaukee County Aging and Disability
Resource Center Governance Board

2020

Listening Sessions and Survey Report



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Introduction:

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are authorized under s. 46.283 of the Wisconsin Statutes and subject to the requirements contained in Chapter DHS 10 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

The Milwaukee County ADRC Governing Board was established to assist and support the Aging Resource Center (ARC) and Disability Resource Center (DRC) in fulfilling their mission. The state contract assigns many duties to the governing board, four of which include:

- Gather information about possible unmet needs of the ADRC's target populations for long term care and other services;
- Report findings and recommendations to the ADRC Director, local officials, the Department, and other interested parties as appropriate;
- Collaborate with other advocacy groups;
- Provide well-advertised opportunities for public participation in the board's information-gathering activities.

The 2020 ADRC Governing Board consumer listening sessions and county-wide survey fulfill all four of the above duties. This report lists the findings from these endeavors. (Note that within this report, the ARC and DRC will be referred to jointly as ADRC hereafter.)

Acknowledgments:

The ADRC Governing Board would like to thank all the consumers who participated and shared their experiences. We also acknowledge the following people and organizations that made the listening sessions and survey meaningful and possible:

Community Partners: LGBT Community Center - Christin Carter, Older Adult program Coordinator; Project Return - Wendell Hruska, Executive Director; Independence 1st - Deb Langham, Chief Operating Officer and Brian Peters, Community Access & Policy Specialist; Dr. Justin Kuehl (Behavioral Health Division) and Eric Collins (Housing Division), both of whom presented information during the listening session hosted by Project Return; all those agencies and programs who helped distribute the flier and surveys: Able Trek; Abuse in Later Life Group; Autism Society of Southeast WI; Creative Employment Opportunities (CEO); Commission on Aging/Committee List; Countryview Group Home; Cream City Foundation; Curtis Center Day Program; Easter Seals; Going Beyond Travel; Goodwill; Handy News & Notes - Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD Newsletter); Long Term Care Providers (Community Care, My Choice Family Care, iCare, Advocates4U, Connections, First Person, TMG); League of Progressive Seniors - Diane Barton; Lutheran Social Services; Mental Health Task Force; Milwaukee Center for Independence; Milwaukee County Board; Milwaukee County Department on Aging Contracted Vendors: Alzheimer's Association, Family Caregiver Support Network, Legal Action/SeniorLaw, Goodwill, Milwaukee Christian Center, Hmong American Friendship Association, Greater Galilee, Eras Senior Network, Life Navigators, Jewish Family Services, Muslim Community Health Center, Serving Older Adults, United Community Center, Asian American Community Center, Indian Council for the Elderly, Vital Voices, Social Development Commission, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Able Access; MICAH - Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope; Milwaukee Muslim Coalition; Milwaukee Pride Group; Milwaukee Public Schools Rec; Municipal Senior Centers (Shorewood, Hart Park, Grobschmidt, West Allis, OASIS); Osher - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at University of Wisconsin; Senior Centers (County-Owned: Clinton Rose, Kelly, McGovern, Washington, Wilson); Sikh Community; Special Olympics - Milwaukee Public Schools, North Suburban, Wauwatosa; St. Anne's Center for Intergenerational Care; United Community Center; Will-O-Way.

ADRC Governing Board members: Pat Bruce, Chair; Debra Jupka; Richard Zimmerman; Jacqueline Haessly; William Meunier; Rachael Bush; Veronica Azi; ADRC Board volunteers: Mary Neubauer, David Lillich and Kent Mayfield.

Department of Aging/ Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center Staff: Department on Aging, Bekki Schmitt, Communications; ARC Program Manager, Rachel Kaehny-Frank; DRC Program Manager, Karin Bachman; DRC Support staff: Nancy Surdyk, Ryan Bamberg, Laura Pittman and Hazel Miller.

The IRIS Consultant Agencies (ICAs) and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs): Advocates 4U, Community Care Family Care, Partnership and PACE; First Person; iCare- Partnership; IRIS Connections; My Choice Family Care, and TMG.

Interpreters: Thank you to our sign language and Spanish interpreters who made it possible for all to participate.

Background:

The ADRC governing body hosted three virtual listening sessions in 2020, rather than in-person sessions due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. This report consists of direct comments of consumers, providers, caregivers, staff, and state level administrators who participated in a virtual listening session as well as responses collected from both online and paper surveys available to the public.

The objectives for the 2020 listening sessions and survey focused on obtaining consumer, care partner and provider input regarding the ADRC services and note whether the overall experience and concerns about the publicly funded long term care (LTC) system has changed significantly since 2018.

Purpose:

The survey and listening sessions provided an opportunity to identify gaps in services, point out barriers in obtaining services, and share experiences, needs and ideas about the ARC, DRC, and the long term care programs serving older adults and people with disabilities. The ADRC Governing Board offers this report to state and community partners in the hopes of both improving the experience where needed and sustaining that which works well for the people we serve. This report identifies the trends, successes, and concerns of people in Milwaukee County in relation to services provided by the Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

The governing board approved a plan to host these three listening sessions virtually, two in the afternoon and one in the evening. The format included a brief overview of the services provided by the ADRC, and a facilitated response to specific questions and needs of those in attendance. Informational materials about the Aging and Disability Resource Centers were available upon request. ADRC staff were available to offer guidance to consumers who had questions about long term care services. Board members engaged in the discussion as well so that the sessions resembled more of a community conversation, rather than a traditional listening session or public hearing. The response to this approach was positive. A written survey was also conducted to gather feedback, both by mail and online. Taking of the survey was encouraged at each of the listening sessions to gather more specific feedback from individuals.

Accessibility/Diversity:

The governing board felt strongly that the listening sessions needed to reflect and welcome diversity. They made the following suggestions: Use language and promotion that values all participants regardless of color, background, religion or sexual identity; seek in-put on issues that are of concern to different groups of the larger community of consumers; encourage board members, staff, community partners, and participants to offer input on diversity and inclusion issues particular to these topics: transportation, LGBT, housing, racial justice, stigma, support network needs, immigration, language barriers, feeling welcomed/included in the ADRC/LTC service system.

Planning was coordinated by members of a Listening Sessions Subcommittee of the ADRC Governing Board, ADRC staff, and community partners.

Public notice was given through community partners, social media, staff, email and flyers. The listening sessions were publicly noticed according to law through the Milwaukee County Clerk's Office.

Outreach Methods:

The Milwaukee County Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center board and staff promoted both the survey and the three listening sessions to the following groups via emails, mass mailings, printed fliers, newsletter ads, church bulletin announcements, announcements in Facebook groups, and verbal communications:

- Able Trek
- Abuse in Later Life Group
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ARC and DRC)/Milwaukee County Department on Aging Staff
- Advocates4U
- Autism Society of Southeast WI
- Creative Employment Opportunities (CEO) Commission on Aging/Committee
- Countryview Group Home
- Cream City Foundation
- Curtis Center Day Program
- Easter Seals
- First Person Care Consultants
- General Public (Via ARC and DRC website and Facebook)
- Going Beyond Travel
- Goodwill
- Handy News & Notes - Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD Newsletter)
- iCare
- Independence First
- LGBT Community Center
- Long Term Care Providers: (Community Care, My Choice Family Care, iCare, Advocates4U, Connections, First Person, TMG)
- League of Progressive Seniors - Diane Barton
- Lutheran Social Services (LSS)
- Mental Health Task Force
- Milwaukee Center for Independence
- Milwaukee County Board

- Milwaukee County Department on Aging Contracted Vendors: Alzheimer's Association, Family Caregiver Support Network, Legal Action/SeniorLaw, Goodwill, Milwaukee Christian Center, Hmong American Friendship Association, Greater Galilee, Eras Senior Network, Life Navigators, Jewish Family Services, Muslim Community Health Center, Serving Older Adults, United Community Center, Asian American Community Center, Indian Council for the Elderly, Vital Voices,
- Social Development Commission,
- Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
- Able Access
- MICAH - Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope
- Milwaukee Muslim Coalition
- Milwaukee Pride Group
- Milwaukee Public Schools Rec
- Municipal Senior Centers
- (Shorewood, Hart Park,
- Grobschmidt, West Allis, OASIS)
- Osher - Osher Lifelong Learning
- Institute at University of Wisconsin
- Project Return
- Senior Centers (County-Owned: Clinton Rose, Kelly, McGovern, Washington, Wilson)
- Sikh Community
- Special Olympics - Milwaukee Public Schools, North Suburban, Wauwatosa
- St. Anne's Center for
- Intergenerational Care
- St. John's on the Lake
- United Community Center
- Will-O-Way

Data Collection Methods:

The Aging and Disability Resource Centers Governing Board sponsored three virtual listening sessions. The LGBT Community Center, which serves people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender, hosted the first Listening Session on Microsoft Teams. This was a private session for recipients of services, staff, and volunteers, held on September 30, 2020 from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Project Return, which serves people returning from prison, hosted the second Listening Session on Microsoft Teams. This was also a private session for recipients of services, staff, partner agencies, and volunteers. It was held on October 12, 2020 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Independence First hosted a Public Listening Session on October 14, 2020 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., using the Zoom platform, as this platform lends itself well to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and captioning for people who are deaf/hard of hearing. This was a public session for recipients of services, staff, and volunteers. The responses from these three Listening Sessions, which were recorded, form the basis for this report. The Aging and Disability Resource Center Governing Board also distributed both online and paper surveys with the support of partner organizations, and the report also includes responses from these surveys.

Findings Summary:

Listening session participants reflected a mix of consumers, care providers, community organizations and staff. Attendees and survey respondents identified the types of support, problems and challenges that exist. Consumers could describe the experience with the ADRC from the "outside in." Customers described positive experiences with ARC and DRC Human Service Workers. Sometimes there is a wait for the initial contact due to the number of requests for eligibility screens. Consumers described many additional barriers, particularly around the areas of mental health treatment and Internet access, that go beyond the scope of these programs.

Staff and providers described the issues from the "inside out." Providers concur that there is a gap between those who do and do not have Internet access, particularly in the times of COVID-19, when events and meetings are happening in the virtual space.

Comments indicated that outreach and education about resources are still needed in the community. Consumers say they have friends who do not know they can get help to stay independent and they do not report problems. This is particularly the case for those living in nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Participants responded to four open-ended questions, asked by the facilitator during each of the three Listening Sessions and included on the paper and online surveys:

1. What is going well for you in terms of services that you receive? Was there a change as a result of COVID-19?
2. What helps you live independently in the community?
3. What needs have you identified that are currently going unmet in Milwaukee County? Is this a change because of COVID-19?
4. If you have experienced any barriers and/or challenges when contacting ADRC or your provider that have made it difficult to access Aging and/or Disability Services in Milwaukee County, please identify these barriers and then provide examples.

Listening session and Survey Questions and Answers:

The report lists responses from participants to each question according to the listening session attended, followed by responses from both online and paper surveys.

Question 1: What is going well for you in terms of services that you receive? Was there a change as a result of COVID-19?

ADRC Listening session, hosted by the LGBT Center on Wednesday, September 30, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

People from this listening session valued the "Fifty and Better" LGBT support group. They said the weekly virtual coffees over Zoom have helped them stay connected, as well as going to pick up dinners from the LGBT center.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Project Return on Monday, October 12, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants from this listening session said that the Project Return group, 12-step program, and support groups all meeting through Zoom are going well. The Food Share program has assisted these individuals as well.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Independence First on Wednesday, October 14, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. via Zoom:

Participants appreciated the assistance that ADRC Benefits Specialists provide, before and during COVID-19.

Survey Responses for Question 1:

Some survey participants said that light housekeeping services, services from Personal Care Workers, FoodShare access, other food resources such as the extra veggie box, and the support phone calls from senior centers are going well. Changes due to COVID include not being able to go outside the home, receiving phone calls and Zoom meetings instead of visits, and decreased hours when a Personal Care Worker can work in the home.

Quotes:

"It has been a lifeline. The [Fifty and Better] group is a family to those who come and it helps us get what we need."

– LGBT Listening Session participant

Question 2: What helps you live independently in the community?

ADRC Listening session, hosted by the LGBT Center on Wednesday, September 30, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants said their involvement with the LGBT Community Center helps them live independently.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Project Return on Monday, October 12, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants had little to offer in response to this question, though they pointed out many barriers, highlighted in later sections of this report.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Independence First on Wednesday, October 14, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. via Zoom:

Participants from this listening session said that FoodShare, information provided through Independence First about Social Security benefits, jobs, and assistance from family members and friends help them live independently.

Survey Responses for Question 2:

Survey respondents said support from family members, convenient access to grocery stores and pharmacy, financial aid through IRIS, transportation, the right/ability to make decisions, assistance with paperwork, Personal Care Workers, and having someone come to clean in the home helps them live independently.

Quotes:

"Family Care and Community Care programs have been invaluable; case management is a lifeline. As a Registered Nurse, I know that case management and nurses are really important to people being able to be independent."

– Independence First Listening Session Participant

Question 3: What needs have you identified that are currently going unmet in Milwaukee County? Is this a change because of COVID-19?

ADRC Listening session, hosted by the LGBT Center on Wednesday, September 30, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants noted that one challenging aspect of serving the LGBT community, particularly in care facility settings, is that only 22% will self-identify as being a person who lives the LGBT experience, because they are scared to self-identify. Reaching people living in nursing homes or long term care facilities has grown increasingly difficult due to COVID-19. A participant asked

how moving in with family members would impact state and federal benefits their family member receives. Participants presented the ongoing need for ADRC staff to undergo sensitivity training and education about those who live the LGBT experience. People with this lived experience have a need to belong and might not have family support of those who have a more typical family structure.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Project Return on Monday, October 12, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants noted that a lack of housing remains an issue, as many people who are formerly incarcerated are homeless at the time of release. Housing has gotten even more unavailable due to COVID-19. Mental health also continues to be a concern for many people who are formerly incarcerated, since they likely experience PTSD and chronic stress. Their family members have mental health needs currently going unmet as well. They said that more marketing needs to be done to spread awareness of crisis centers. There is also a need for food resources since COVID-19, because a lot of places that used to provide meals are serving increased numbers of people who have mental health needs/medical needs/hunger needs.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Independence First on Wednesday, October 14, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. via Zoom:

Participants noted that it is difficult for ADRC staff to connect with and serve people who are in institutions, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities, since COVID-19 restricts entry into these facilities. They also noted a technology gap between those who can and cannot afford laptops, cell phones, Wi-Fi, and cell phone and Internet services. They also cited the shortage of affordable housing due to increased evictions. Once someone has an eviction on their record, it is almost impossible to find new housing. Limited transportation is a concern, especially since Milwaukee County buses are transporting a limited number of passengers on each trip due to COVID-19. Many of the avenues for renewing and signing up for services are inaccessible to people with disabilities to use independently. The need for staff to come to their homes and assist with renewing and signing up for services is a need that is not being met. Social isolation is also a concern and is a difficult need to meet due to COVID-19.

Survey Responses for Question 3:

Participants noted needs for overnight respite care for those with Alzheimer's, housing options for adults with special needs, safe and reliable methods of transportation services other than Transit Plus (like Lyft and Uber), comprehensive mental health services for the aging population, a designated staff person in group homes to plan enrichment and exercise activities, technology to participate in virtual opportunities, and increased time for caregiver support.

Quotes:

"I have a friend who is in an assisted living facility center. She is sad and lonely because there seems to be a member who used to bring her to the Fifty and Better group; she does not have transportation or Internet access to attend functions now. I don't know what to do to help."

– LGBT Listening Session Participant

"The county bus used to stop a block from our home; the stop was moved to more than 3 blocks away. To go to the university where Dan still sometimes teaches takes 10 minutes by car; it would take 90 – 120 minutes by three buses. This is both unreasonable and unacceptable. Some bus stops require passengers to cross busy freeway on- and off-ramps to transfer from one bus to another. To transfer from a freeway flyer near Brown Deer and Port Washington to a city bus, a passenger has to cross two on-ramps, two off-ramps, and then walk an additional four blocks. This is dangerous, especially for elders or for people using canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or scooters. Milwaukee has a fabulous lakefront, with a wonderfully newly designed and accessible Bradford Beach. As fabulous as it is, it is TOTALLY INACCESSIBLE for people who do not drive. There is no public transportation to this beach, or to most other areas of this beautiful lakefront, or to most of our public parks. Our right to access such beautiful places is currently going unmet in Milwaukee County."

– Survey Participant

"I desire to have MCDA invest in restarting the Senior Ambassador Program. Between the closure of some of the Interfaith Neighborhood Outreach offices and the loss of a formal Senior Ambassador program, I have seen a reduction of touch points in the community for older adults to access information. I also request that consideration is made about nutritional value of meal services. I'm concerned that they are too high in carbohydrates and lacking in fresh veggies. The veggies are mushy. I think lots of people are not utilizing current meals because they are mainly cold sandwiches. I recognize that it is challenging to serve mass-meals and not have these issues."

– Survey Participant

"People look at me and address me differently because of what I did. This compounds mental health and self-esteem issues. There is a lack of economic opportunities available to people who are formerly incarcerated."

– Project Return Listening Session Participant

Question 4: If you have experienced any barriers and/or challenges when contacting ADRC or your provider that have made it difficult to access Aging and/or Disability Services in Milwaukee County, please identify these barriers and then provide examples.

ADRC Listening session, hosted by the LGBT Center on Wednesday, September 30, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

One participant noted that they called several times at various times of day and the phone was not always answered. When they did get through to a person, the person could not figure out what resources would meet their needs. (This issue was addressed immediately by ARC and DRC staff.)

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Project Return on Monday, October 12, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams:

Participants did not say they had issues contacting the ARC or DRC, so Jackie (the facilitator) asked what they wanted people answering the phones to know. They said they wanted people to be aware that the justice system gives longer and harsher sentences to people who are Black or Brown than for people who are white. People who are formerly incarcerated are economically disenfranchised; they cannot get jobs and they have limited housing options-- many needing to resort to living in a vehicle. As mentioned above, mental health is an ongoing concern. COVID-19 restrictions are damaging for people who are formerly incarcerated because their freedoms are being restricted, which makes them feel like they are in prison again. COVID-19 is also being brought into the prison system, which is a healthcare crisis.

ADRC Listening Session, hosted by Independence First on Wednesday, October 14, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. via Zoom:

Homelessness can be a barrier if people lack a rental history and cannot find a place to live. People on low incomes who need accessible housing face housing unavailability. The waiting period between the first call and receiving services is sometimes a barrier. For people who have severe communication disabilities, it can be hard for the provider to understand them and what their needs are. People with mental health concerns also face barriers to getting services since there is a stigma around mental illness. Barriers also exist in housing and employment for people who have criminal records, participants from this listening session also noted. Participants discussed the siloed nature of programs, because people might need services for which they do not appear eligible.

Survey Responses for Question 4:

The paper and online survey included a chart (incorporated below), which provided Milwaukee County respondents an opportunity to indicate one or more barriers, if any, that hinder them from receiving services from the ADRC agency.

If you have experienced any barriers and/or challenges when contacting ADRC or your provider that have made it difficult to access Aging and/or Disability Services in Milwaukee County, please check all that apply and then provide examples below.

	Age		Finances		Language		Physical Ability
	Criminal Record		Gender Identity		Medical Condition		Race
	Educational Level		Gender Orientation		Mental Health		Religion/Faith
	Ethnicity		Homelessness		Nationality		Sexual Orientation

Participants noted mental health (8 respondents), race (5 respondents), ethnicity (5 respondents), criminal record (3 respondents), age (10 respondents), homelessness (4 respondents), education level (2 respondents), finances (4 respondents), physical ability (5 respondents), language (3 respondents), sexual orientation (1 respondent), religion/faith (1 respondent), none (19 respondents).

Quotes:

"I felt like I should have tried to call about services when I was 40 or 50 instead of when I was 70. I'm glad I didn't give up and that I kept calling."

– LGBT Listening Session Participant.

"We have a homeless issue in Milwaukee and seniors make up many of the homeless. Getting help for a physically sick and mentally disturbed homeless person is a real challenge. They might not be able to get transportation, food, or healthcare services. (Services checked: Criminal Record; Finances; Homelessness; Mental Health). The items I checked are often interrelated."

– Survey Participant

"I have feedback related to the Call Center. I feel like there is a lack of collaborative problem solving for calls. If someone calls with a complex issue, staff do not always slow down and work through it. Rather, they are likely to say, 'We don't do that' or to quickly refer elsewhere without follow-up. I also feel they could ask more questions for wraparound support. For example, if someone calls to report they are experiencing homelessness, can you provide housing info as well as information about food resources and other benefits to assist someone who has limited resources?"

– Survey Participant

Gaps and Barriers to Service

To identify gaps in service and how to address them, ARC and DRC staff and board will review the survey and listening session results and will arrange a follow-up plan. This will be an ongoing project.

Participation – By the Numbers:

ADRC private listening session hosted by LGBT: Wednesday, September 30, 4:00-5:00 p.m.:

- 20 participants total.
- 8 members of the public
- 5 ADRC Governing Board members: Pat Bruce, Board Chair; Rachael Bush, Board Vice Chair; Jacqueline Haessly, board member and Listening Sessions Facilitator; Bill Meunier, board member; Richard Zimmerman, board member
- 6 staff: Karin Bachman, Disability Resource Center Manager; Rachel Kaehny-Frank, Aging Resource Center Manager; Nancy Surdyk, ADRC Staff; Christin Carter, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center; Mary Neubauer, Behavioral Health Division; Ryan Bamberg, Disability Services Division Supervisor
- 1 guest of the board: David Lillich

ADRC Private listening session, hosted by Project Return, Monday, October 12, 1:00-3:00 p.m.:

- 29 participants total
- 15 Participants from Project Return and the public
- 5 ADRC Governing Board members: Pat Bruce, Board Chair; Rachael Bush, Board Vice Chair; Jacqueline Haessly, board member and Listening Sessions Facilitator; Bill Meunier, board member; Richard Zimmerman, board member
- 6 staff: Karin Bachman, Disability Resource Center Manager; Rachel Kaehny-Frank, Aging Resource Center Manager; Nancy Surdyk, ADRC Staff; Laura Pittman, Disability Resource Center Services Office; Dr. Justin Kuehl, Behavioral Health Division; Eric Collins, Housing Division
- 3 Guests of the board: Sara Truse, Kent Mayfield, David Lillich

ADRC Public listening session, hosted by Independence First, Wednesday, October 14, 2-3:30 p.m.:

- 24 participants total
- 5 members of the public
- 5 Independence First Staff (Maria Isberner, Mary Coleman RN, Julie Alexander, Brian Peters, Phillip Corona)
- 3 ADRC Governing Board Members: Pat Bruce, Board Chair; Jacqueline Haessly, board member and Listening Sessions Facilitator; Bill Meunier, board member
- 6 staff: Karin Bachman, Disability Resource Center Manager; Rachel Kaehny-Frank, Aging Resource Center Manager; Nancy Surdyk, ADRC Staff; Hazel Miller, Disability Services Division Staff; Kevin Fetch, IRIS Connections; E. Rahdri, Legal Action Wisconsin
- 4 Interpreters, Spanish language (2) and ASL (2)
- 1 guest of the board: David Lillich

ADRC survey, open September 1 – October 18, 2020:

78 responses total

- 23 family members/guardians
- 26 recipients of services
- 11 providers
- 18 who chose not to disclose

Of the 78 responses, 36 were submitted online | 42 submitted via paper copy

A Note on the Number of Survey Responses:

A multi-pronged approach was taken to gather feedback, with public input sessions, an online survey, and paper copies distributed by mail and community sites. When the opportunity for both electronic and in-person/on site materials is provided, a higher response rate can be expected. In 2020, a survey mailing was sent out and various agencies agreed to disseminate the survey. Due to the lack of access to senior centers and other in-person venues, this response rate was lower, which is also not surprising during the COVID environment when older adults and the entire community are more isolated and we're having to work a lot harder to get information into their hands.

Conclusion

The **mission** of the ADRC is to provide its consumers the resources needed to live with dignity and security and achieve maximum independence and quality of life. The **goal** of the ADRC is to empower individuals to make informed choices and to streamline access to the appropriate services and supports. (WI Dept. of HHS) 2020 has been besieged with the COVID19 pandemic. Life as we all knew it changed within the first quarter of the year. ADRC consumers could not access or receive services in the manner to which they were accustomed. Service access to current and new consumers had to be redesigned if they could be provided at all. Staff had to readjust seemingly overnight to new and different work and service provision environments. They had to apply professional skills in a service arena that was changing with updated medical guidelines daily. Lives were and still are at stake. Suddenly, void of a meeting location, the ADRC Board could have stopped gathering. It did not. With the help of staff and technology, it, too, adjusted. On its agenda for 2020 was a listening session. The Board's "2020 listening session" subcommittee and staff chose to try and capture how people were receiving services, what needs were going unmet, and if "something was broken" to respond. Not since the beginning of long-term care services has the work of the board been so important. So, we met, designed, worked outside the box, and "listened."

Participants of the listening sessions, whether attending virtually, online or through paper survey expressed the need to be able to participate in the activities of life and not be shut out or isolated. Both participants and advocates expressed the concern about those who were feeling isolated and not able to make choices. As noted in the report, there are other difficulties, barriers and gaps to address. However, there was also very good news which came in the form of affirmation. Each group, a number of individuals and known advocates also gave indications of what was good, what was working and indicated quite positively that they had no complaints about the ARC or DRC.

Next Steps and Recommendations

1. Any of the immediate individual concerns, needs or requests brought forth in the sessions or surveys were and are being addressed by the ARC and DRC staff.
2. It is recognized that some of the needs expressed may be best addressed by other professionals and groups: Those working in mental health, housing, legislation, transportation, parks and recreation, and county government to name a few. It is our recommendation that the report be shared with our community partners (most identified earlier in the report) and those individuals and groups to be identified at the December 8, 2020 'follow-up' meeting.
3. Several Board members and staff will meet virtually on 12/8/2020 at 1 PM to review the report to identify specific follow-up actions.
4. The 2018 Listening Sessions report "needs" summary was looked at earlier in this 2020 process. It will be reviewed to see if there are any issues or concerns which have again surfaced. This may indicate a persistent problem that needs to be further addressed.

5. We recognize that the COVID19 Pandemic will carry into 2021 if not beyond. The ADRC Board will, as directed in the “Scope of Services”, early in 2021 again explore the best avenues to gather consumer feedback and identify unmet needs of the populations served by the ADRC to determine if there is a need to change policies or otherwise improve performance (Section V.B.3e). This will also once again tell us what is working and what calls for continued support, especially during this unprecedented time.