



The Source for Seniors

Kent County Senior Millage Minder

about the Kent County Senior Millage
Summer 2009

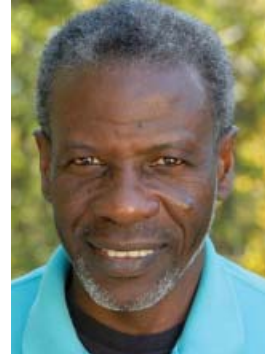


The following services are available to help older adults who have physical limitations or disabilities.

- **Vision Services-** comprehensive eye exam and personalized treatment plan to maximize remaining sight.

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (800) 466-8084

Cherry Street Health Services (616) 235-7272



- **Hearing-Services and Adaptive Equipment-** hearing loss rehabilitation, group education, lip reading classes and assistance finding devices, equipment and other resources.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (616) 732-7358



- **Home Delivered Meals-** nutritious meals provided to home-bound individuals who cannot prepare their own meals.

Senior Meals Program (616) 459-3111



Decrease in Millage Funding

Increasing unemployment and home foreclosures has decreased the amount of property taxes collected throughout Kent County. Since Senior Millage funds are collected through property taxes, the amount of funding for 2010 will be less than originally projected.

The Millage Review Committee will soon be looking at funding proposals and requests from agencies for 2010. Non-essential services may be eliminated or face funding cuts.

“When we look at the funding requests we will likely be looking at what services are absolutely essential for the health and well-being of seniors, and what services may be considered lesser priority;” says Nancy Kehoe

Nielsen, Chair of the Millage Review Committee. “These will be hard decisions that we take very seriously; never before have we been in a position of having fewer dollars than the previous year, and it will be painful to have to cut funding.”

Funds collected in 2009 were 3% less than projected. Senior Millage reserve dollars were used to make up the difference and prevent cuts to agencies providing services. This dwindled reserve dollars to one percent.

At the end of July 2009, projected funding for 2010 was \$6.6 million or \$500,000 less than the 2009 awarded funding.

The Millage Minder is published quarterly by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan.
For more information contact (616) 456-5664

Priority Services- in-home and nutritional services help the most frail and needy elders (including their family caregivers) maintain independence in their own homes

Supportive Services- strengthen and sustain priority services to lengthen the time frail individuals can remain living at home in a safe environment

Access Services- guide older adults and their caregivers to appropriate senior services

Preventive and General Services- include health promotion, disease prevention, first line support and volunteer opportunities

Emergent Needs- address needs typically based on weather emergencies, including home heating assistance

Legal Assistance

Seniors can access legal advice, counsel and direct representation under the Kent County Senior Millage. Assistance is available for: debt collection, bankruptcy, landlord/tenant issues, domestic violence, elder abuse and exploitation, and public benefits matters (i.e. food stamps, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SSI and pensions).

For more information contact:

Legal Aid of Western Michigan (616) 774-0672
Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors (800) 347-5297

Millage Service Eligibility

To qualify for Senior Millage services, persons must be at least 60 years old and a resident of Kent County.

Cost sharing may be required for individuals whose incomes are above \$21,660 or couples whose combined income is above \$29,140. Cost share fees are based on income and vary depending on service type.

Donations are always accepted and are put back into programs, allowing additional seniors to be served.

Foreclosure Intervention / Prevention

It seems we all know someone who has recently, or is currently, facing foreclosure and seniors are not exempt. The Kent County Senior Millage provides funding for foreclosure counseling and intervention services through Home Repair Services (HRS).

HRS meets with adults age 60 and over to provide budget counseling, an assessment of the individual situation and a plan to prevent home foreclosure. They also help homeowners seek out options with their lenders and connect them to additional community resources that may be able to help.

Seniors are encouraged to call sooner rather than later. "Most individuals wait to look for help until it is almost too late," says Traci Coffman, Senior Foreclosure Counselor at Home Repair Services. "If we are contacted earlier in the process we can help provide more assistance and there are more options available the sooner we get involved."

Contact Home Repair Services at (616) 241-2601.

Air Conditioner and Fan Program

Home Repair Services and Senior Neighbors are working together to keep seniors, with medical needs, cool. Home Repair Services will provide air conditioners and installation assistance to homeowners. Senior Neighbors will provide fans and air conditioners for rental properties.

Fans will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. A limited number of older adults with qualifying medical conditions and a physician's prescription will qualify. The program includes income guidelines. A small cost share may be required to maximize the number of individuals to be served.

For more information, contact:

Home Repair Services (616) 241-2601
Senior Neighbors (616) 459-6019

The purpose of the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan is to provide older persons, including those in the greatest economic need, with an array of human services designed to maintain independence and dignity in their homes and communities.