

# 14 REASONS

## WHY WASHTENAW COUNTY NEEDS A SENIOR MILLAGE

1. **RAPIDLY AGING POPULATION.** The age 60+ population is growing by about 2,500 per year and we have more seniors than children under age 18.
2. **WAIT LISTS.** Over 300 seniors are on wait lists for home care and yard care services. People who can't receive these services are 5 times more likely to enter a nursing home and do not live as long.
3. **SENIOR CENTERS.** Nearly half of county senior centers do not have sufficient funding to open full time.
4. **FAMILY CAREGIVERS.** Family members caring for an older loved one need greater support, education and respite options to help them to provide care and avoid caregiver burnout.
5. **SERVICE GAPS.** A study found Kent County has 11 critical services funded through their senior millage that do not even exist in Washtenaw County.
6. **NUTRITION.** Congregate and Meals on Wheels programs do not have the capacity to serve those with cultural and chronic medical condition dietary needs such as meals that are gluten free, Kosher, no-sodium, etc.
7. **PREVENTION AND WELLNESS.** Existing services work to solve programs, not prevent them. There is no permanent support for senior wellness and prevention programs.
8. **ELDER ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION.** There is no funding support for elder abuse prevention or victim recovery.
9. **TRANSPORTATION.** An estimated 5,000 seniors report they have difficulty getting to places they need to go and approximately 2,700 have missed a medical appointment in the past 12 months due to lack of transportation.
10. **SOCIAL ISOLATION.** One in five older adults (15,000) say they do not have enough social activity and want to do more.
11. **ACCESS TO BENEFITS.** An estimated 9,000 seniors believe they are eligible but not receiving all available federal state and local social service, health, and income benefits that they are eligible for. Benefits Access Assistance is a service that can be provided through a senior millage.
12. **SERVICE RATIONING.** Counties with a senior millage are serving 2-3 times more seniors and providing 2-4 times more services than Washtenaw County.
13. **ACCOUNTABILITY.** The new Washtenaw County Commission on Aging will assure citizen input into the selection of senior millage services and hold providers accountable for service quality, efficiency, and outcomes.
14. **FALLING BEHIND.** 71 of Michigan's 83 counties have a county-wide senior services millage.

A Coalition of Washtenaw County organizations and individuals committed to advocating for adoption of a senior services millage to support home and community-based services for older Washtenaw County residents.