Between 1990 and 2000 the 85+ population in Kentucky increased by 25.7%.

KY is expected to experience a 46% increase in the number of people 85 and older between 2000 and 2025.

14.2% of the 65+ population in KY lives below the poverty level. 40.7% live 200% or more below the poverty level. For the United States 9.9% are below poverty level, and 30.7% live 200% or more below the poverty level.

Kentucky’s aging Boomers will be more diverse, more highly educated, and wealthier than previous generations. On average, a person born in 1940 will have experienced a seven fold increase in standards of living, over 862% in their lifetime.

The Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative seeks to develop information and provide support to Kentucky’s communities so that elders and their families are provided with the opportunity to age in place and enjoy the highest possible quality of life for the longest time possible.

Kentucky’s demographics will begin to change rapidly as Baby Boomers begin entering retirement. People are living longer, healthier lives and have needs and wants that have implications across all aspects of society including; health care, recreation, transportation, education, economy, housing, and business.

Growing Better Communities

To meet the needs of communities experiencing an increase in the number of elders, the KERI initiative brings together local organizations, community leaders, and citizens, to form partnerships and collaborations in an effort to:

- Identify community strengths and weaknesses with respect to preparedness for the aging of the Baby Boomer generation.

To assist Area Development Districts in creating local grass-roots solutions that enhance the ability of individual communities to provide age-appropriate outcomes with respect to:

- Community resource profiles;
- Health & safety;
- Life quality; and
- Community involvement;

To empower communities to create sustainable projects and programs that support elders and their families.

Bringing People Together

The KERI project will bring together representatives from:

- Aging Services
- Local and state government
- Faith communities
- Recreation
- Social Services
- Housing
- Transportation
- Health Care and Safety
- Economy
- Business
- Citizens

Focus groups and community forums will be held throughout the Commonwealth and will serve to build local collaborations, and provide a means for self-assessing the material and social capital of communities in meeting the needs of senior citizens.

Information from the meetings will be used to help local communities and state officials prioritize needs and make recommendations for improvement.