

**Kentucky**

**Elder**

**Readiness**

**Initiative**

**Area Agency on Aging  
Toolkit**

# What is the Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative?

The **Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative (KERI)** 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.

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

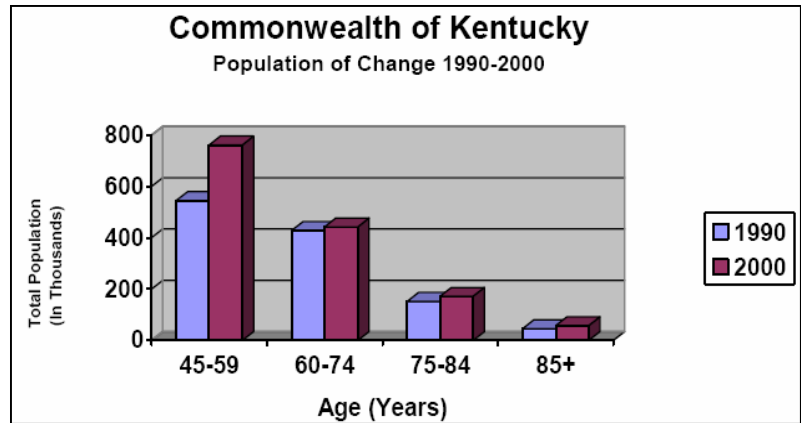
To meet the needs of communities experiencing an increase in the number of elders, the KERI initiative brings together local organizations, community leaders, and citizens, to form partnerships and collaborations in an effort to:

**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 and Safety
- Life Quality
- 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, Safety
- Economy
- Business

Focus groups and regional 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.

## **General Information on Focus Groups**

KERI will be holding 2 focus groups and 1 community forum in all 15 Area Development Districts. The dates and times for each event has been scheduled and can be seen on the KERI calendar you received as part of this e-mail.

There are two focus groups to be held; one for community leaders and public officials, and the other for providers. A listing of potential invitees and KERI domains is included in this packet. Each ADD will be responsible for identifying and inviting focus group participants, hosting the focus group event, and providing light refreshments. Each focus group should have no less than six and no more than ten participants. Two members of the KERI team will facilitate the focus groups and will bring with them all necessary equipment.

The purpose of the KERI focus groups is to identify critical issues related to preparing our community for 2030 when the full impact of the aging baby boomer population will be felt in communities across the Commonwealth. An effort should be made to carefully select individuals that can represent both the geographic diversity of your ADD as well as perspectives related to the 4 domains. Please identify and formally invite potential participants early and expect that not all people will be able to attend. This toolkit contains two sample letters that may be customized and sent to invitees as well as a contact information sheet that you may elect to use. In order to prepare focus group invitees for their participation we suggest and encourage you to provide them with information regarding KERI as well as state and local data and or statistics for their review. The Kentucky State and ADD fact sheets as well as the KERI brochure are examples of the types of documents that should be shared with invitees prior to the focus group date.

## **General Information on Community Forums**

KERI will hold one community forum in all 15 Area Development Districts. The dates and times for each event has been scheduled and can be seen on the KERI calendar you received as part of this e-mail.

The Community Forum is an opportunity for the public to meet, share, and discuss issues relevant to aging in their community and region. There is no limitation on who can attend the forum. It is expected that at least 25 people be present for the Community Forum. Formal invitations can be sent to key individuals. The forum is also an opportunity to increase community awareness about aging. Please make an effort to publicly announce the community forum. You may advertise in local media outlets, notify churches, civic groups, and other organizations or post the information on your web page.

Each ADD will be responsible for community forum recruitment, providing the space, and for light refreshments.

## **Questions and Concerns**

If at any time you have questions or concerns about planning and hosting a focus group or forum, you can contact anyone in our office.

Hollie Sands  
859-257-1450 ext. 80183  
[Hollie.sands@uky.edu](mailto:Hollie.sands@uky.edu)

Heather M. Wallace  
859-257-1450 ext. 80144  
[Hmwall3@uky.edu](mailto:Hmwall3@uky.edu)

Graham D. Rowles  
859-523-1863 ext. 80145  
[Growl2@uky.edu](mailto:Growl2@uky.edu)

## **Who To Invite**

These are the types of invitees that although not exclusive that are appropriate for each focus group:

- **Community Leaders**
  - Banking and insurance officials
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Church leaders
  - City Managers
  - City Planners
  - Community colleges or schools
  - Fine Arts community
  - Judges
  - Minority Representatives
  - Newspaper reporters and editors
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Philanthropic organizations
  - Retail and business owners
  - Transportation
  
- **Providers**
  - Adult education
  - Architects
  - Caregivers
  - Emergency Management Services
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Food services
  - Funeral services
  - Hospice and palliative care providers
  - Hospital Administrators
  - Law Enforcement
  - Legal services providers
  - Librarians
  - Mental health providers
  - Pharmacists
  - Public Health Officials
  - Real estate and housing representatives
  - Senior housing officials
  - Subcontractors
  - Victim advocates
  - Volunteer organizations
  - YMCA or other civic groups

## **KERI TOPICAL DOMAINS**

*When selecting invitees remember the domains we want to address include:*

### **Community Resources**

- Demographics
- Population trends and expectations
- Built environment: sidewalks, streets, accessibility, culture, housing, transportation, etc.
- Economic indicators
- Environmental features
- Political infrastructure
- Geography

### **Health and Safety**

- Service infrastructures including fire, police, emergency response, public health, community health, public assistance
- Health care providers
- Health profiles
- Availability and knowledge of health services
- Mobility issues, access to affordable and nutritious food.
- Elder Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Mental health
- Environmental Health

### **Quality of Life**

- Continuing education
- Library services
- Parks and recreation
- Cultural resources
- Faith organizations
- Transportation
- Volunteer and work opportunities
- Family structure
- Culture

### **Community Involvement**

- Personal perceptions of empowerment
- Local decision making
- Opportunity for engagement in community involvement (social, spiritual, political, and recreational).

## **SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER 1**

Dear:

The Kentucky Aging Research and Information Service at the University of Kentucky, in cooperation with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Area Agencies on Aging, are preparing to conduct focus groups as part of the Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative (KERI) that was announced by Governor Fletcher on August 15, 2005. More information about KERI can be found in the enclosed brochure. We invite you to participate in a KERI focus group for community leaders and public officials (or community providers).

In 2000, baby boomers accounted for 26% of Kentucky's total population, while another 23% of the population was 60 and over. KERI is focused on helping Kentucky communities work to prepare for the rapidly increasing aging population and the pending retirement of the baby boom cohort by identifying and removing barriers, improving public perceptions and attitudes about aging, and enabling communities to develop and incorporate elder friendly strategies into their planning.

KERI focus groups are being conducted in all 15 Area Development Districts across the Commonwealth. The project will bring together representatives that serve in a variety of fields, including: Aging, government, faith organizations, recreation, social services, housing, transportation, education, health care, safety, economy and business.

Each focus group, made up of 6 -10 community leaders and public officials (or community providers), will meet 1 time on (Insert date) to determine and prioritize critical issues related to baby boomer aging for the region. The purpose of this focus group will be to identify critical issues related to preparing our community for 2030 when the full impact of the aging baby boomer population will be felt in communities across the Commonwealth.

Your contribution of personal knowledge and experience within your community and field of expertise will help us to better investigate local and regional resources and to assess overall community preparedness. We also hope that your participation may serve as a catalyst for collaborating with other community leaders

The enclosed information describes KERI in more detail. We very much hope that you will be able to attend and participate in this focus group held:

Date:

Time:

Place:

A map with driving directions is enclosed. Please RSVP by (DATE) to \_\_\_\_\_ at: 999-999-9999 or by e-mail: e-mail@yourisp.comu indicating your ability to attend.

Sincerely,

## **SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER 2**

[date]

Through the Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative (KERI), communities are encouraged to engage in efforts that will improve their ability to respond, collaboratively, effectively and efficiently, and to use community assets to prepare for the future when our aging population will double in size. Your participation in a KERI focus group is requested. This regional group, made up of 6 -10 community leaders and public officials (or community providers), will meet 1 time on (Insert date) to determine and prioritize critical issues related to baby boomer aging for the region. The purpose of this focus group will be to identify critical issues related to preparing our community for 2030 when the full impact of the aging baby boomer population will be felt in communities across the Commonwealth.

KERI seeks to identify key issues in four domains: Community resources, Health and Safety, Quality of Life and Community Involvement. Your input in regard to these broad issues will be used to help identify key focus areas in your region and to assist in the development of a more detailed questionnaire.

The Focus Group will be held:

DATE

TIME

LOCATION

Please let me know of your interest in serving on a KERI Focus Group by e-mailing or calling [lead contact] by [RSVP deadline]. Your expertise will contribute greatly to the identification of critical issues, and the soundness of the policy recommendations that result from this process. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
Lead Contact

## **Getting the Word out about the Community Forum**

You can use your local newspapers, radio and television stations to invite the public to attend your community forum and raise community Awareness about the aging of the population. Here are some tips for working with the media in your area:

### **CONTACT LOCAL EVENT CALENDARS**

Many media outlets compile community calendars of events in the area, especially smaller newspapers. However, they need to know about your event weeks in advance. To be included on these calendars, draft a one-page media advisory that includes the date, time, location and a brief description of the event and fax, mail or email it to the outlet. A sample media advisory is included in this toolkit.



### **EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREE ADVERTISING**

Talk with the advertising staff at local radio Stations and weekly community newspapers. Often they provide free or discounted advertising for public service announcements. Send an announcement or flyer to public places for distribution and or display. These include churches, senior centers, libraries, and community health centers.



### **REACH OUT TO HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS REPORTERS**

You may already have relationships with reporters or editors at your local newspapers and radio and television stations. If you are unfamiliar with your local media contacts, health reporter and consumer affairs reporters may be the most appropriate. You can find these reporters and editors by calling each media outlet or visiting their Web sites.



### **USE LOCAL FACTS TO TELL THE STORY**

Reporters will want local stories and facts. If possible, try to provide a one page document with local statistics on seniors. You may want to use the Kentucky state fact sheet and your local ADD fact sheet, provided in this packet.



### **BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT**

Reporters are often under deadline pressure. They may not answer your calls or emails immediately. However, if you don't hear from a reporter within a few days, don't hesitate to contact him or her again. Make multiple copies of this contact sheet for group members, to help keep track of contacts.

Name of organization/contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Will Follow Up: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by/position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Will they attend the forum? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization/contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Will Follow Up: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by/position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Will they attend the forum? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization/contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Will Follow Up: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by/position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Will they attend the forum? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization/contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Will Follow Up: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by/position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Will they attend the forum? \_\_\_\_\_