



**Name of Project:** Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative

**Name of Organization:** Department for Aging and Independent Living  
Frankfort, KY

**Description of Program:**

The Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative was a partnership between the Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living and the University of Kentucky Graduate Center for Gerontology. This two year project was developed to address the lack of data for the state regarding expectations of Baby Boomers for their entry into the over 60 age cohort and whether or not communities in the state were preparing for this graying tsunami.

The project began in the summer of 2005 with a circuit of two focus groups and community forums in each of the fifteen (15) Area Development Districts within the state. The focus groups were small invited groups that included community leaders both public and private, providers and advocates. The community forums were open to anyone with an interest in participating in what often became lively discussions about current gaps in services as well as concerns about the future needs of a quickly growing consumer population.

The second year of the project included a mailed random survey of 9600 adult residents of the state. This was conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Kentucky. The response rate of 33% gave Kentucky a valid look at how individuals are thinking about their needs (or not) and how communities are planning to provide for the services and supports the citizens are expecting.

The final part of the project was to take the individual regional report back to the community so that the planning process could begin. Results from the survey generally showed that the majority of the baby boomers have no idea there is going to be such a huge number of elders in the community in the next ten years and communities have not begun to develop the services and supports this fast growing group will need to remain in the community. The seeds were planted. Many community leaders have been sensitized to how aging could affect their decisions about such issues as street signs and sidewalks and how this enormous group of individuals with strong ties to the community may as well be an asset as they plan for parks and other such amenities.

The final report is being presented to the legislators of the state and to the Governor as they too begin to plan for Kentucky's aging Baby Boomers. One of the changes seen in the report is that the participants in this study plan on staying close to their family roots in Kentucky. Out migrations of elders will not occur as has been the history of the state in

the past. This will have a huge affect on future policy makers as they grapple with the issues both positive and negative of Kentucky's doubling of its aging population.

By increasing awareness of the size of the population, Kentucky has begun a process to provide future elders better access to supports and services they will need as they age in their communities. Key partners in this effort include Kentucky Area Agencies on Aging, the University of Kentucky Graduate Center for Gerontology and Area Development Districts

For more information about the Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative, please contact Deborah S. Anderson, Commissioner at 502-564-6930 or by email at [deborah.anderson2@ky.gov](mailto:deborah.anderson2@ky.gov)

The Website URL for the program is <http://www.mc.uky.edu/gerontology/keri.htm>