



Serving Detroit, Hamtramck,
Harper Woods, Highland Park
and the five Grosse Pointes



Report on Increasing LGBT Cultural Competency of Area Agencies on Aging | 2014-2015

In January of 2014, three aging service agencies and a community coalition came together to find a way to better serve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults in Southeast Michigan – Detroit Area Agency on Aging (1-A), Area Agency on Aging 1-B, The Senior Alliance (1-C), and the LGBT Older Adult Coalition. This report summarizes the accomplishments of this project.

1. Staff Training for all call center operators/staff at three AAAs with cross-agency training and creative solution building

A total of 41 staff were trained from AAA1-A (Detroit), AAA1-B, and AAA1-C (The Senior Alliance) over the course of the 18-month project. The training included:

- 4-hour LGBT older adult cultural competency training from the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging
- 3-hour custom-designed training to discuss and practice asking callers about their sexual orientation / gender identity over the phone.

Guidance Documents were prepared to help agencies with staff training after project completion for project sustainability and are available at www.LGBTOlderAdults.com

- *LGBT Cultural Competency Training Recommendations*
- *How to Gather Information from LGBT Older Adults*

2. Procedural changes permitted Resource Specialists to collect and record sexual orientation and gender identity demographic information more easily from callers.

- Each agency added database variables to record information about sexual orientation and gender identity.
- A round of “secret shoppers” was scheduled with community volunteers so Resource Specialists could practice taking calls and getting comfortable asking about sensitive information.

- Creative approaches for letting callers know about LGBT-affirming resources were developed.
- One best practice identified: add “we’ve recently added LGBT referrals to our resources” to automated hold-message for each agency.



3. Each AAA made policy changes to include sexual orientation and gender identity non-discrimination statements at staff, client and contract levels.

- Provided list of policies to review for inclusiveness
- Provided sample language

4. Development and implementation of broad-based PR and marketing campaign to build awareness and availability of LGBT-friendly referrals.

It was essential to consider ways to inform LGBT older adults and their caregivers that the new LGBT-affirming resources were available at our AAAs. In order to get the word out, all three agencies participated in a communications campaign that included:

- Three short films featuring LGBT older adults and the AAAs
- Print media / reporter coverage
- Web visibility
- Print materials – rack card

5. Sustainability

The program has come to a close. On-going care must be taken to ensure continuance:

- Training
- Communications
- Resource/Referral building