SENIOR ACCESS POINTS OF LARIMER COUNTY

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Designing and Implementing a Senior Access Points Program in Colorado

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! These resources are intended to help you consider if Senior Access Points is right for your community, and to help with design and implementation if your community chooses to move ahead. This manual is composed of two elements:

1. This document which provides overview and guidance
2. Access to a folder of resources and sample materials you are welcome to adapt and use in your community

Senior Access Points of Larimer County was established in 2016 to connect older adults and caregivers to aging-related resources by reducing barriers to accessing information. The effort began in direct response to identified needs in Larimer County through CSU research: most older adults don't know how to access the information necessary to age well in our community, even though many aging-related resources are available to them. Aging research tells us that when residents and their families know what types of resources they can utilize in their local community to support changing needs as they age, they tend to be more satisfied with care decisions and experience less stress in decision-making processes. We also know that when older adults are pointed in the direction of reliable and accessible information, they avoid missing out on valuable resources and become more:

- Connected to solutions, answers to questions and resources to meet their needs,
- Supported by their community through reliable and trustworthy resources,
- Knowledgeable with the means to access the information they need to age well, and
- Comfortable with accessing information on their own

CSU's Larimer County Extension Office and faculty from the Human Development and Family Studies Department organized a community coalition which became known as Senior Access Points of Larimer County (SAP). The effort leverages community partners and university resources to empower older adults by making aging-related information available. SAP's website, LarimerSeniors.org, was built as a community-based resource that has since been used by thousands of older adults in Larimer County and their family members across the country. The SAP coalition has conducted extensive outreach to help educate members of the community about aging-related resources.

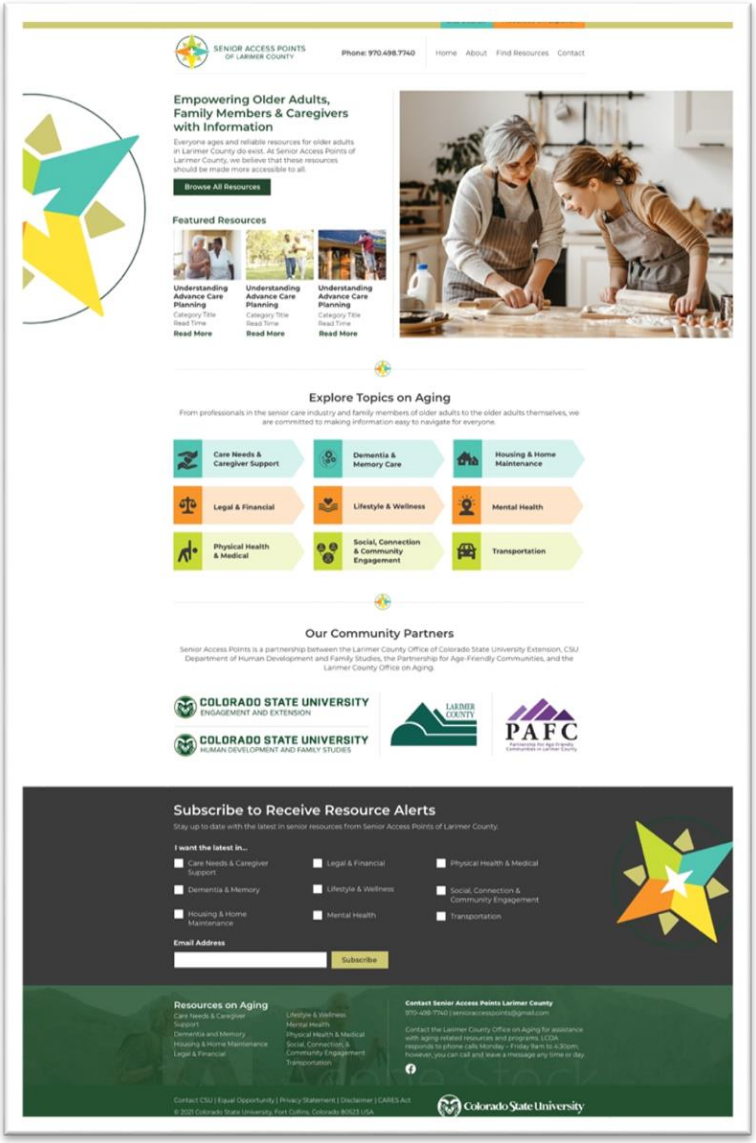

Figure 1: Website Page

This document provides an overview and roadmap for implementing Senior Access Points (SAP) in your community. The tools, samples and links provided are intended to be quick references for considering how to implement SAP in your county or region. At the same time, there are unique aspects to every Colorado community and you may find better alternatives for your particular situation. There will be strategies and ideas that are not mentioned here, and items offered that won't be relevant to your community. So use this manual creatively as a tool for thinking about what is needed or possible in your community, and you can help us build this resource for others!

The need for focused efforts to connect older adults to community resources in Colorado is growing: from 2020 to 2050, the Colorado State Demography Office estimates that adults aged 65-plus will nearly double in population from roughly 876,000 to more than 1.6 million.[1] Older adults are a vibrant and growing part of our Colorado communities. They also experience unique challenges to their economic well-being, health, and independence. National estimates indicate that sixty percent of individuals over the age of 65 will need to manage multiple chronic conditions by 2030.[2] The need for aging supports are increasing at a faster pace than supports are available, requiring additional resources for this growing population and placing pressure on caregivers.

The Senior Access Points coalition understands how complicated navigating aging-related information can be for older adults and their caregivers. We would like to share our lessons learned to help CSU Extension professionals across the state support their communities in aging well.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

The goal of the SAP model is to create effective and efficient ways for community members to become aware of and access resources. “The SAP model” is both a process *and* a set of products which help a community increase awareness of aging-related resources. The SAP model requires several basic yet essential ingredients:

- Support and involvement from the Colorado State University Office of Engagement and Extension
- Collaboration with an academic expert in gerontology, such as a faculty member within Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) or similar department
- Robust collaboration among community partners
- Clear understanding of your current community situation through effective assessment

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[1] Strategic Action Plan on Aging 2020 update: https://agingstrategy.colorado.gov/2020-strategic-action-plan-on-aging

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NCHS Data Brief: No. 100. (2012, July). Multiple chronic conditions among adults aged 45 and over: Trends over the past 10 years. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db100.pdf

- Methods for managing communications and outreach efforts
- Strong engagement of community and agency volunteers
- Strategies for evaluating and disseminating the results of your work
- Readiness for unexpected benefits and opportunities!

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

The resources and support of the Colorado State University Office of Engagement and Extension (OEE) and CSU's Human Development and Family Studies Department (HDFS) serve as the backbone of the SAP model in Colorado.

Colorado State University's Office of Engagement and Extension delivers on its land-grant mission by making the university's educational programs, services and resources accessible to all, enabling individuals to act as agents of change and together building thriving communities across Colorado and beyond. OEE's commitment to Colorado aligns directly with the goals of SAP:

- We make University resources accessible to individuals and communities across the state and beyond.
- We work in partnership and learn together to co-create solutions to ever-changing needs in our communities.
- We inspire engagement with CSU by removing barriers, building trust and innovating in our delivery to connect more people with university resources.
- We empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community challenges by effectively bridging university resources with community needs.

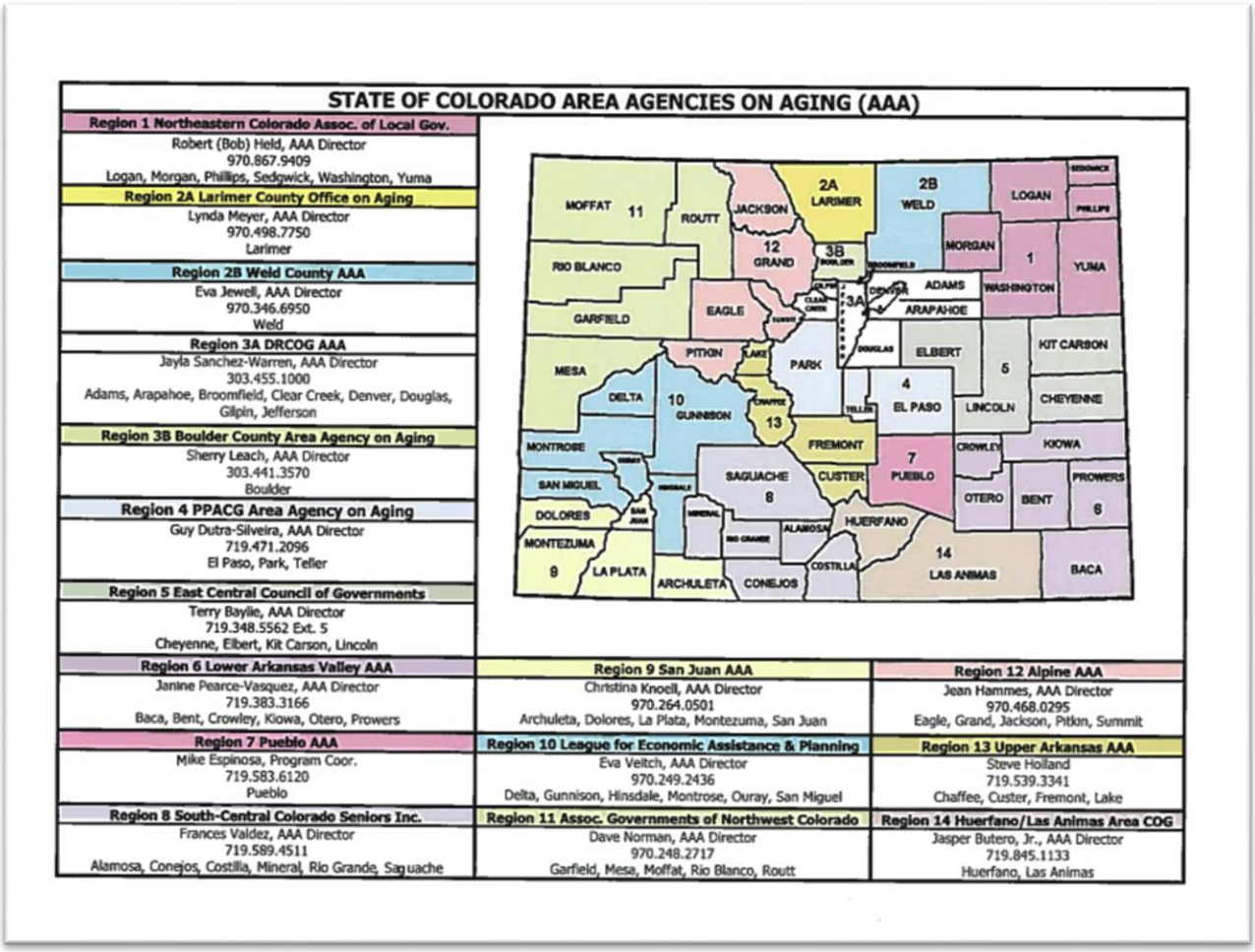
Colorado State University's Department of HDFS has provided content guidance, survey development, and project evaluation throughout the history of the SAP project. With a focus on lifespan developmental processes, expertise in aging and gerontology, and training in assessment and evaluation, the HDFS department is a key collaborator. Depending on your region's goals and the scale of the project you intend to pursue, collaboration may be feasible with an individual faculty member such as Dr. Allyson Brothers, or with a research scientist within the Prevention Research Center.

ROBUST PARTNERSHIPS

The experience of SAP in Larimer County clearly demonstrated the importance of some collaborators who are essential to success, and others who may be great contributors.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Colorado has 16 local Area Agency on Aging offices across the state responsible for activities in every community in Colorado and supported by the State Unit on Aging and



the federal Older Americans Act. The local offices are often referred to as the “the AAAs” (see http://www.c4a-colorado.org for a map and regional contact information). AAAs offer programs and services to support residents in living longer, healthier lives and remaining active members of their community, and AAA offices are required to provide a list of community resources under the Older Americans Act.

Figure 1: COB 2 AAA Regional Map

Some AAAs operate an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). These resource centers typically include a list of vetted options for community members who are 60+ or have a disability; an ADRC center may include trained staff who can assist with complex needs by meeting individually with community members to identify personalized options.

In the Larimer County SAP project, the AAA and ADRC staff are essential partners in maintaining accurate information and providing individualized assistance for complex cases. ***In this case, the SAP coalition refers individuals to the AAA phone number which is printed on outreach items like magnets and rack cards.***

EXISTING OLDER ADULT AND CAREGIVING SERVICES

To find potential collaborators in your area, the list of programs funded by the AAA office is a great place to start. Often AAAs will list the programs they fund as well as other resources they have vetted but do not directly fund. The AAA will be aware of the most-used programs and community-based solutions in your area -- such as Senior Centers, meal providers, and transportation providers. These partners can add insight and be very helpful in completing your community assessment process; you can help them by listing their services in your outreach materials, and you can help each other raise awareness of community resources.

Some of the original motivations for the SAP project were concerns highlighted by local service providers for older adults. In some cases, providers were overwhelmed with demand and needed their clients to know about other existing resources. In other cases, providers had excess capacity but needed help in raising awareness about their services. Over time, multiple benefits have accrued for organizations involved in SAP: there were increases in general awareness, communication and trust among the provider community, and better sharing of referrals and solutions. Collaboration improved and creative problem-solving increased in response to community needs.

OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

If you are considering initiating a SAP program in your county, it will be essential to contact your local county officials and review recent strategic planning documents to ensure that your efforts align with county-wide needs and goals. Additionally, other local-level government departments could be helpful, maybe even essential to your success. Examples include the County Health Department, the County Department of Social Services, a regional COG or Council of Governments (such as the Denver Regional COG), or an Economic Development Office. Other local entities, such as City Governments, Fire Authorities, School Districts, and Mental Health Centers have been critical collaborators in providing information for the SAP website, spreading awareness about aging-related resources and serving as coalition members.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Health care systems and health care providers often share common concerns and priorities with your efforts to support your community. You can learn about the priorities of hospitals and major health systems by starting with a Google search using your local health system's name + Community Health Needs Assessment (e.g.: UC Health's Community Health Needs Assessment). You could also try your local health system's name + Community Health Programs. The information you find will often be organized by your local hospital's service area. Engaging health system partners and providers in your SAP coalition will be helpful in reaching the populations you will be serving given that all older adults will intersect with health care services at one point or another.

Other health care providers include ambulatory medical clinics, federally qualified health care centers, dental offices, eye care specialists, chiropractic offices, pharmacies and those who assist with rehabilitation and therapy services. Health care providers can point you to critical resources, help to spread the word about the SAP website, share information with their clients on aging resources, and serve as coalition members.

SENIOR CENTER AND NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

If you are fortunate enough to have a senior center in your community, you will find an advocate for connecting older adults to aging-related resources. It will be important to see how the senior center shares resources and information and how you might collaborate to get the word out about the SAP website. Consider adding a senior center representative to your coalition, along with non-profit organization partners who may be serving older adults and caregivers. You might find that non-profit partners are delivering food, providing transportation, organizing volunteers, and offering legal services. It will be important to list these services on your SAP website along with engaging these partners in outreach.

Establishing and nurturing these community partnerships will provide the building blocks of an effective SAP initiative. These building blocks include your community assessment, your plan for the best ways to gather and share information about community resources, your outreach strategies, and your ability to raise funding and other support for your SAP project.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

With local collaborators identified, the next step is having an up-to-date community assessment of your current situation. Your county office or region might have recently

collected community needs assessment (CNA) data. It would be a helpful starting point to find out if aging issues and resource access were identified as needs in your local CNA. If a CNA has not been conducted, you can find helpful tools and recommendations for embarking on this process through CSU Extension's community needs assessment website: https://extension.colostate.edu/staff-resources/programming-and-reporting/community-needs-assessments/. Additionally, some community collaborators may have information at the ready, and most local partners will be willing to participate with you in establishing your community strengths and needs.

State-wide and local data are important components of your needs assessment. Relevant data sources may include:

- The periodic assessment completed by the Area Agency on Aging called the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA; available at http://www.c4a-colorado.org/casoa-reports/).

Figure 2: Snapshot of the C4A website with regional assessments

- The Colorado Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging (SAPGA) (https://agingstrategy.colorado.gov/) offers periodically updated information on statewide trends and plans in Colorado. The most recent plan is available here: https://agingstrategy.colorado.gov/2020-strategic-action-plan-on-aging
- Communities involved in Lifelong Colorado and AARP's Age Friendly Communities network often have local assessments and action plans; check

https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/member-list.html for more information.

- For your local community, your medical system, health department, county social services, and other service providers such as Senior Centers may have relevant data.

In order to customize web content and understand community resource needs in your local area, an SAP-specific assessment is recommended. CSU Extension and CSU's Department of Human Development and Family Studies have developed several assessment tools designed specifically to help determine the need for SAP as well as what content areas are most important to both community members and the network of resource providers. These are available in the resources folder included with this manual. The tools include:

- Initial community needs survey, which seeks to determine where and how community members seek resources and information
- Initial community needs survey in Spanish

Gathering input can be accomplished by a variety of methods. Surveys can be gathered at fairs, outdoor events like community festivals, and at libraries and community center programs. Promotion on local radio, and placement in print resources may be used to encourage a broad range of community participation, including by those who are not already engaged in community activities or receiving services. Collaborators and service providers who publicize the survey and ask for participation through their newsletters, events, etc. can significantly boost the number of responses. CSU Extension professionals can invite participants to complete the survey through affiliated volunteers and program announcements.

In the case of the Larimer County SAP program, community stakeholder meetings were vital to gathering information during the community assessment process. Stakeholders were invited to participate in focus group discussions addressing the following questions:

1. From your experience, what are some reasons why older adults and their family members may not be accessing services that could help them?
2. Identify 1-3 access points with relevance to a) the entire county; b) urban and rural communities; c) diversity of age, race, ethnicity, disability and need; and d) reaching isolated seniors.

The results from these small-group exercises directly informed SAP's outreach efforts as it pointed to critical but commonly overlooked barriers and outreach opportunities. These meetings were also crucial for building collaboration and stakeholder involvement

in long term SAP efforts. These same stakeholders were key collaborators in distributing outreach information once the project was up and running.

Figure 3: PPT slide of barriers to access

Organizing and assessing results from resources such as the CASOA, your community survey, and your stakeholder input process will allow you to determine if there is a need for a Senior Access Points type of effort in your community, and what key gaps and challenges exist. Equally important, the SAP community assessment process and tools can help you better understand how communication and awareness of resources is maintained in your community.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

If your assessment process indicates that it would be helpful to increase awareness of aging-related resources, and your community members would like to work together to accomplish this goal, then SAP may be right for you. As a result of the assessment phase, you will be able to answer these questions: Are community members aware of the aging-related information relevant to them? How do they find it? How might they find it? Would having a SAP website benefit your community? What content should be included in resource lists or a SAP website?

You will also have more clarity on resources available in your area and the capacity of potential partners to join the effort. The SAP model is designed to be customized for your community, yet there are a few universal themes and design considerations for every SAP effort to incorporate:

- For all of your materials, consider the guidance offered by Changing the Narrative Colorado (https://changingthenarrativeco.org/) around reframing aging

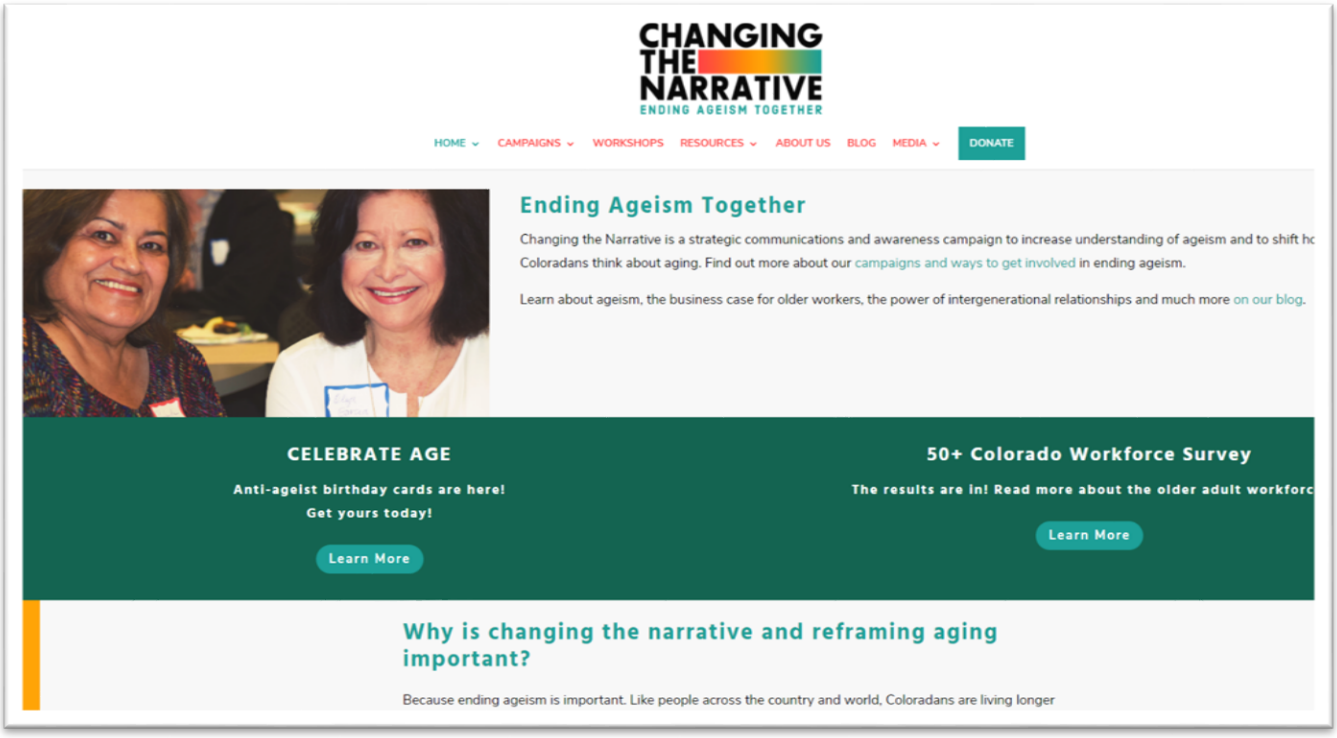


Figure 4: reframingaging.org

- Contact the Office of Engagement and Extension Communications Department to request that a Senior Access Points logo is made for your county or region. This logo will be critical for brand identification and for consistency with SAP communications across the state.

Figure 5: SAP of Larimer County

- Solicit collaborator involvement in building web and print materials, and link to their missions and content.
- Select your content based upon topic areas that were prominent in your survey results

WEBSITE

Sharing information with the public via a locally customized website is likely to be the core element of your SAP effort. CSU's Office of Engagement and Extension has built a web template for you to customize and a landing page for all SAP websites in Colorado. Using the relationships built and the information discovered during your assessment process, you can customize content for your community and link to relevant local and statewide resources by using the SAP website template. One of the benefits of having a website developed within a University system is that the website is trustworthy and safe, which reduces worry for caregivers, older adults, and their families.

Our efforts to maintain consistent branding on the website and other materials you produce help people to identify Senior Access Points in the community and across the state. To that end the Office of Engagement and Extension will provide you with a SAP logo that notates your county or region. This logo will not only mark your website but you can use it in your outreach materials and communications.

As you develop your website content, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Select your core topics based on your survey results
- Solicit involvement from your coalition in establishing website content and linking to related sites.
- Consider and determine your inclusion/exclusion criterion. As your project launches, and then moves forward over time, you will be approached by individuals representing national agencies and for-profit companies looking to share their website through your channels to build wider audiences. It is important to have a clear policy ready to share and use in decision making (see resource folder for sample). Policies can differ depending upon community need. For instance, one community might only include non-profit services and organizations vetted by the AAA network or SAP team, while another community might actively seek all types of businesses and services for older adults and have their own process/policy for vetting information posted. See the resource folder for an example Inclusion/Exclusion criteria developed by the SAP team in Larimer County.
- Decide how “dynamic” your content will be, and the mechanisms for updating -- such as when, who, and how updates will be made. These decisions will likely be based upon an agreement you have with your community collaborators and volunteers, and the needs that you have determined in your community. These choices will also influence your budget and potential fundraising plan.
- Decide on special features to include such as event calendars, blog posts, etc. As noted above, these decisions will require balancing community needs and available staffing/resources. There are trade-offs for you to consider: the special features and dynamic content can increase traffic to your site, keep community members interested and engaged, and help your goals of supporting healthy aging and awareness of resources. Yet, the level of dynamic content and extensive site management can be limited by time and resources available. Your community may be better served by modest expectations and accurate, limited content which gives them connection to basic resources.

RESPONDING TO REQUESTS

Lessons learned from the SAP pilot effort indicate that by far your most effective and important tool will be your SAP website. However, there are other communication methods you should prepare for and address, including assisting someone who prefers printed material, through email, or by telephone/in-person conversation.

Communication/requests will typically be of three distinct types:

1) "Consumer requests" - a community member seeking information from your SAP website or other resource in order to improve their awareness of and access to services.
2) "Partner related requests" - a community partner requesting SAP materials to distribute, or a presentation, or offering content for the website.
3) "Promotional requests" come from companies wanting to include their content on the website or have you promote their product.

"Consumer requests" - helping a community member gain access to information is the primary purpose of your SAP effort. Most of the time this will be handled independently via the person searching directly and independently on the SAP website. You should also be prepared - and you'll see tips below and resources in the resource folders - to handle questions directly. Sometimes you'll receive email questions, and you can respond via email by referring to the SAP website, or perhaps attaching a PDF version of resource options.

Requests via phone calls can be more complex, and your responses will depend upon your local resources. In the SAP pilot project, the local AAA (Larimer County Office on Aging) already had a team of trained personnel who could provide resource information, navigation and counseling via telephone. Through collaboration, the AAA agreed to allow SAP develop and promote a distinct phone number that was publicized and tracked through SAP outreach. This helped direct new traffic to the AAA, allowing community members to access these valuable resource navigation services. This also increased community awareness of this valuable service while at the same time allowing SAP to track the impact of outreach efforts.

Partner related requests are most often offers of collaboration - a collaborator requesting rack cards or magnets to share with their public or wanting to share messaging through newsletters/social media, etc. There are resources and sample presentation templates included for your adaptation and use. In the SAP pilot project, the relationships built and ongoing communication proved very valuable as the community struggled to adapt to the presence of COVID-19. The community coalition and culture of working together were one of the most beneficial offshoots of the effort to provide the community with information through SAP.

Promotional requests may come from companies wanting to include their content on the website or have you promote their product. They are often not local, and many are hoping for more sales or clicks to their own website. This is a good reason why it is important for you to have a website inclusion/exclusion criteria document ready. You

may also want to have a “no thank you” note available to send when you get requests that you do not want to accommodate.

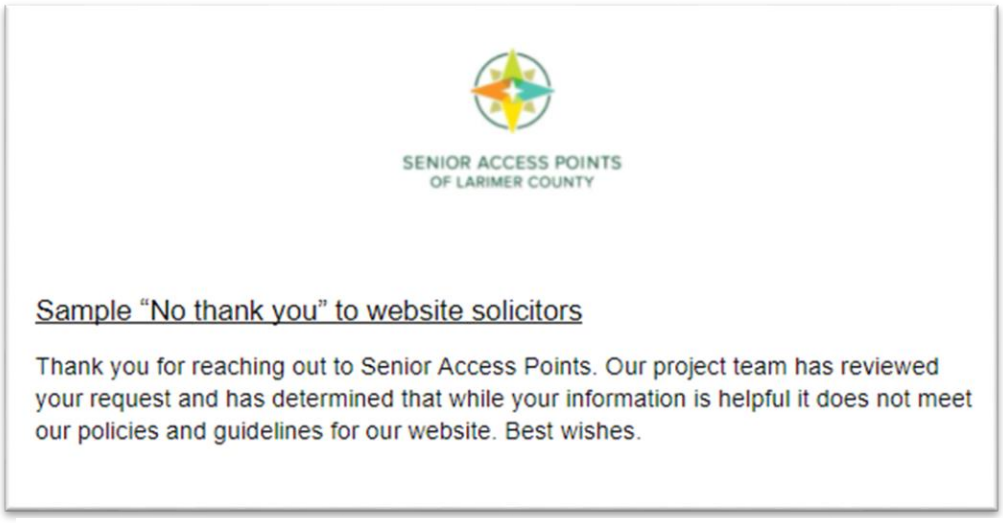


Figure 6: Sample No Thank You to web solicitation

PRINTED MATERIALS

The most important printed materials developed during the SAP pilot project were designed for community members to take home and place on their refrigerator or coffee table. The essential items included a basic information “rack” card, refrigerator magnet and business cards with the SAP logo, website and phone number printed on them. We later produced SAP tote bags and pens for distributing at outreach functions. These outreach items were intended to help community members become aware of the website and phone number and to know to access them when they needed information on community resources. As the SAP of Larimer County project expanded, we developed Spanish language versions of these materials to share with the Spanish speaking population.

Figure 7: Outreach tools (Spanish and English)

In some cases, community members don't use a computer or are just more comfortable with paper copies of information. How to assist someone who responds best to "paper" will depend upon the needs and resources in your community. In the Larimer County SAP project, the Larimer County Office on Aging, which was one of the lead partners for SAP, published a detailed and regularly updated Answers on Aging Resource Guide, with free distribution. Our outreach team provided the Guide to residents who preferred paper copies of resources. However, the written guide was overwhelming to some, and the SAP Ambassador would copy only a few pages and provide those to the consumer. In other cases, a SAP Ambassador would find the resource on the website, and print out the entries for the consumer.

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media provides another opportunity for awareness. Depending on resources, capacity, and time allocation, there are many other social media platforms that can be used. The mainstream ones worked best for us:

Nextdoor: This app for residents may be available in your neighborhood or community. Nextdoor is an efficient way to share information locally. In the case of Larimer County, county-wide Nextdoor posts generated significant spikes in web traffic to the SAP website. The posts are quick to create and always include targeted messaging designed to increase website awareness.

Facebook: Facebook marketing takes a bit more time to create and manage, but can be highly effective, relatively low cost, and an easy way to involve partners and supporters. Typical steps include:

- Creating a page (it takes some time to build an audience)
- Tagging community partners, service provides and other organizations (need to "Like" those pages first)
- Sharing content from community partners and service providers' pages
- Engage in partners' pages by leaving comments or a Like as your page (there is usually a drop down box on the right under the post to select how you want to interact)

It is helpful for Extension offices and community partners to post specific content given that they tend to have a strong following. They might:

- Add posts to community group pages (need permission to join the group). Photos of the rack card, add comments/feedback to a conversation interacting as a Page Manager to further brand name recognition
- Ask interns or 4-H youth to help by adding fresh content and sharing to different news feeds to broaden younger audiences (intergenerational promotion)
- Ask community volunteers to join their neighborhood groups and tag your FB page to help build “Likes”
- Purchase Facebook ads which are inexpensive and effective

Twitter: Twitter is another quick, easy way to involve collaborators and supporters in marketing SAP. Tweets about upcoming events or presentations, celebrating successes, or publicizing an event/message from a collaborator can improve awareness and web traffic.

Over time, and with input from your collaborators, you’ll discover the best approach to customizing messages for various subgroups.

EVENTS & PRESENTATIONS

In-person and virtual events and presentations help build awareness, relationships with collaborators, and a sense of trust in SAP resources. There are many opportunities to share resources with the community. These are just a few examples:

- Set up a booth at your county fair or local health fair
- Ask medical administrators and directors if you can present to clinical and front desk staff so they can pass on your resources in the clinics
- Ask your local library, senior center or community center to allow you to present to their staff and/or give a talk to community members at these sites about aging resources
- Find out if you can join a local volunteer firefighter meeting and share your resources
- Connect with local homeowners associations to request time to present during a meeting
- Locate social clubs, book clubs, women’s groups, and meet ups and request to share your information

Examples of presentation slide decks are included in the resource folder. Again, it will be helpful to customize these samples to align with the key issues and messages identified during your community assessment process.

AGENCY AND VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS

All of these communications and outreach strategies can be leveraged significantly when you utilize volunteers. In Larimer County, SAP's most effective outreach strategies involved the community partners and volunteers who helped to spread the word about the SAP website and local aging resources.

AGENCY AMBASSADORS

SAP community partners, representing organizations and agencies identified in your community assessment as trusted resources for information, can be excellent outreach supports. You might find partners among AAAs, Senior Centers, county offices, home health care agencies, medical/dental offices, etc. SAP in Larimer County developed an "Agency Ambassador" program whereby some of our most committed partners received training on SAP outreach efforts and were asked to keep a supply of SAP outreach materials on hand and share them with older adults, family members, and caregivers. Because of their level of commitment to the SAP project and the training that was provided to them, they received the designation of "Agency Ambassador" which signifies greater commitment to outreach than our community partners.

Agency Ambassadors may be able to help in other ways by placing articles in their newsletters, allowing for presentations or SAP presence at their events, and providing a display of SAP materials on their countertops (and helping educate their clients about aging-related resources). When community partners know enough to describe the SAP website and offer someone a card or magnet, they can be among your most effective outreach allies.

The SAP pilot project also discovered many new collaborating partners who were grateful to have SAP resources to share. Doctors, support staff and non-emergency medical providers are often asked for answers they don't have (as highlighted in the community assessment), and front desk personnel were grateful for resources to share along with firefighters and EMS personnel (the majority fire calls are about *something other than fire).*

VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS

SAP of Larimer County also developed a "Volunteer Ambassador" program to formalize the role of volunteers in conducting community outreach. This person-centered, personalized outreach approach is informed by the assessment process that shaped SAP: barriers to seeking information/resources include residents not realizing that they

need help, not self-identifying as a “caregiver,” not realizing that help is available, and only beginning to look for help when a crisis arose.

Learning about SAP from a familiar and welcoming person is shown to be one of the most effective ways to close the gap between a person with needs and the information and resources to help. The Volunteer Ambassador role can be effectively filled by community volunteers recruited and trained through your SAP efforts.

Figure 9: Ambassador training.

Volunteer Ambassadors can conduct virtual or in-person outreach depending on the volunteer's preference and comfort level. A brainstorming session is helpful in identifying potential outlets and then volunteers can set a schedule for conducting their outreach. They might choose to visit places where they already do business like libraries, hair salons, pharmacies and book clubs. Or they might choose to bring outreach items to places they have never been.

Monthly meetings are team building opportunities and a great way to share successes, ask questions, build momentum and provide the supplies needed. Some activities have quick outcomes such as dropping off materials at hair salons and eye centers while other efforts may require more relationship building such as including SAP information as part of a local community college program or including SAP materials in realtor's folders.

In this context, "Volunteer Ambassadors" are distinct from "Agency Ambassadors" in several ways:

- Volunteer Ambassadors are local volunteers, and they could act as an outreach agent for SAP in a wide variety of contexts. An Agency Ambassador, on the other hand, assists with SAP outreach in their particular context and as a small piece of their other duties (a Senior Center Front Desk Greeter, for instance, who shares SAP resources as part of her job duties to share resources).
- Volunteer Ambassadors may need a level of screening and training that is consistent with CSU Extension requirements. For example, Volunteer Ambassadors working with the Larimer County Extension Office, are screened, trained, and act under general guidelines which are consistent for all of the volunteer programs operated by the office.
- Volunteer Ambassadors can have a range of connections and networks in the community. It can be helpful to review your assessment results about where individuals seek out resources, and recruit community volunteers specifically to address those areas. For example, you might recruit a medical professional, a realtor, or someone involved in rural farming depending on what populations you would like to reach.

There are common activities and techniques that will work to support and thank both Agency and Volunteer Ambassadors. These include:

- Provide adequate initial training/orientation; help them understand the basics of SAP and local aging resources so they can be comfortable sharing with others
- Keep them stocked with materials for distribution; check in regularly to see what is working best and what they need

- Maintain ongoing communication - put them on your e-newsletter distribution; check in individually or organize group check-in meetings
- Help support their goals and share their "value" - use social media to promote their efforts or feature their work, share success stories, etc.
- Notice their specific efforts, follow-up to learn about their experiences, share a story of how their efforts helped a community member
- Thank them for their efforts

The resource folder contains a set of documents that can help you consider how to set up your Ambassador programs. Included are:

- Agency Ambassador training powerpoint
- Volunteer Ambassador training powerpoint
- Volunteer Ambassador description
- Volunteer Ambassador recruitment blurb
- Volunteer Ambassador introduction letter

The SAP of Larimer County project discovered the importance of maintaining strong relationships and communication with the community coalition over the life of the project. Examples include:

- Periodic meetings: In-person or virtual meetings can help to maintain relationships and communication, share progress and opportunities, introduce new initiatives, and thank and honor key volunteers and partners.
- Quarterly reports and updates via an e-newsletter is a good way to keep community partners and volunteers engaged and informed about SAP successes, needs, and opportunities.
- Video projects: Your local Extension office may have a YouTube channel already, or it's fairly easy to create a channel or account on YouTube. This can be used for SAP videos as well as sharing content from collaborators to show support for their goals.

MANAGING AND EVALUATING SAP

As your SAP effort grows from an assessment to development to ongoing operations, you will be getting an accurate picture of local needs, building partnerships, developing content for your website, training agency partners and community volunteers, and implementing outreach and communications strategies that will work best for you. That is a lot!

Consistent evaluation efforts are important for many reasons and should involve the tracking of both *process* and *outcomes* metrics. *Process metrics* refer to the "how" - what are the strategies and activities you engaged in, such as where materials were distributed. *Outcomes metrics* refer to the impact of the activities, such as the number of monthly phone calls received and the number of monthly website users. Outcome data can help you know if you are driving new traffic to your website or if your community is utilizing your outreach materials to help you know to what extent your outreach strategies are working. You can utilize this information to continually adjust your work plan and outreach activities. Monthly reports are essential in tracking impact over time. Annual reports can be shared with funders and utilized for new funding proposals. The resource folder contains a variety of sample tools that may help you to evaluate your SAP effort over time and document your progress. These tools include monthly report templates and suggested methodology for tracking your website analytics and outreach efforts.

Figure 8:COB 10 Screenshot of 2020 impact report

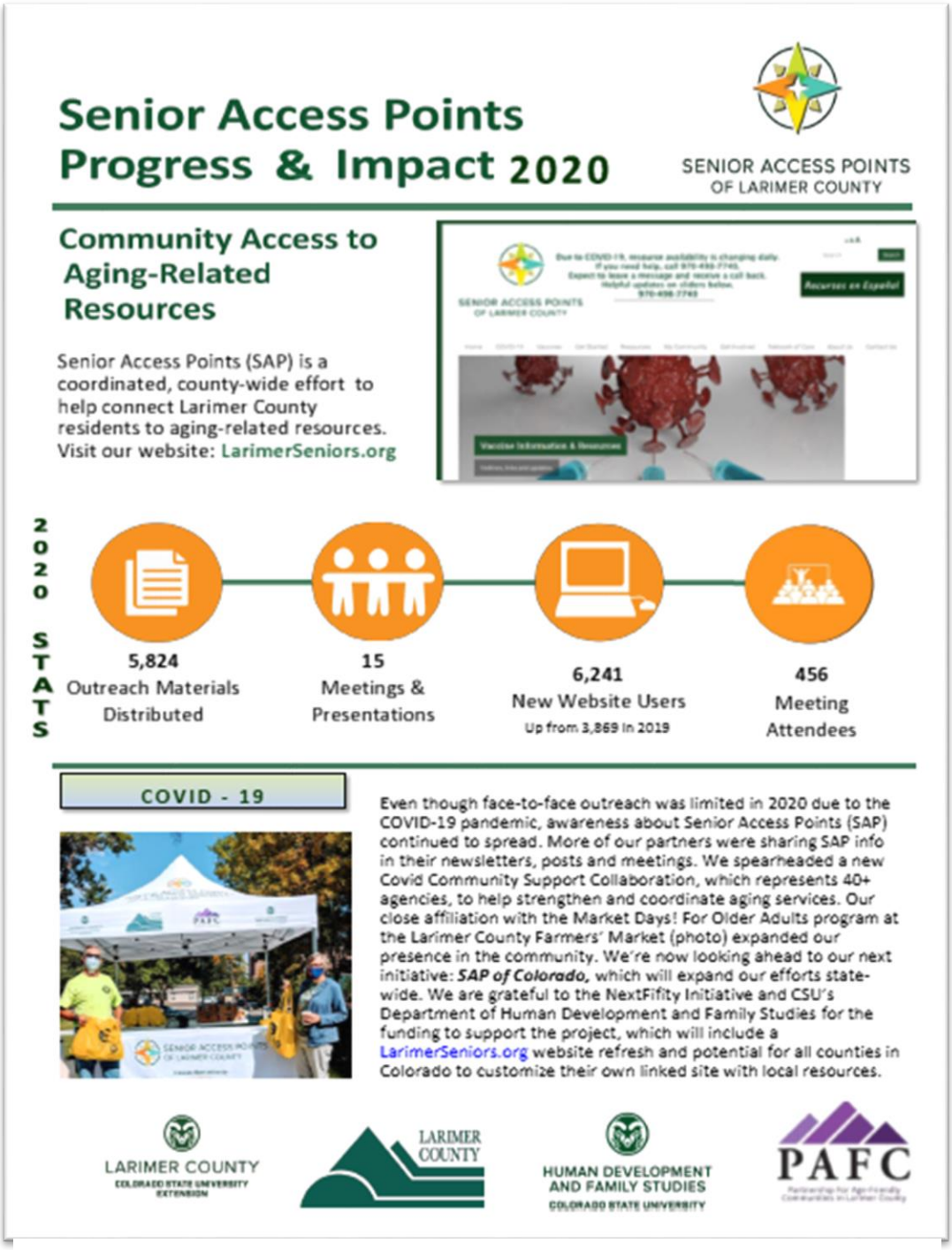


Figure 9 COB 10 2020 Impact Report

NEXT STEPS

For communications questions and help with starting your SAP Program, contact the Office of Engagement and Extension Communications Department: https://colostate.sharepoint.com/sites/OEE-Engage/Staff-Resources/SitePages/Communications.aspx

RESOURCES

We have developed a folder of sample resources for you to adapt and use in your community.

- SAP survey – English
- SAP survey – Spanish
- Example presentation local 2019 (PPT)
- Example presentation local 2020 (PPT)
- SAP Agency Ambassador training (PPT)
- SAP Ambassador training (PPT)
- SAP Ambassador training survey (Word)
- SAP Ambassador position description (Word)
- SAP Ambassador recruitment blurb (Word)
- SAP Ambassador intro letter (Word)
- SAP website inclusion/exclusion criteria (Word)
- 2019 SAP Impact Report (PDF)
- 2020 SAP Impact Report (PDF)
- Sample of “no thank you” to web solicitation (Word)
- Sample of Facebook post (JPG)
- Samples of print ads (Word)
- SAP audio presentation (wmy)
- Web analytics – Dec. 2020 (PPT)
- Web analytics – End of Year 2020 (PPT)

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