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## ***First collection of older adult data offers Washtenaw County a tool for planning***

**Ann Arbor, MI** – The number of older adults in Washtenaw County is growing at a rapid pace. Older adults currently represent 19% of Washtenaw County residents and projections suggest the number of older adults will climb significantly to double in number by 2025. Younger retirees are also choosing to live in Washtenaw County; nearly half of older adults are in the 55-64 year range. In 2008 the County’s largest city, Ann Arbor, was named the healthiest place to live and retire in the United States by AARP. This growing trend adds a sense of urgency for gathering statistical data on the older adult population as a tool for community development in Washtenaw County.

The Blueprint for Aging recently published the *Older Adult Data Book 2009* for Washtenaw County. This is the first such data published for Washtenaw County describing older adults. It provides data on older adult demographics, housing and transportation, income, employment and health. The *Older Adult Data Book, Washtenaw County, 2009* is available via the web and in print.

Statistics show that as Washtenaw County’s older adult population grows, younger age groups do not keep pace. Because there will be fewer younger adults to care for aging relatives, pay taxes, or make charitable donations to services for older adults, the needs of older adults will overwhelm support services systems unless there is collaborative change. Washtenaw County Administrator Bob Guenzel says, “The Blueprint for Aging has developed a great and timely new resource for Washtenaw County. There is no doubt that the population of seniors is growing rapidly and issues of aging will be more and more relevant. This Senior Data Book enhances the quality of information about local seniors and provides a valuable tool in guiding the county’s response to the needs of seniors and their families.”

Viewers may access the *Data Book* from the Blueprint for Aging's homepage, [www.BlueprintForAging.org](http://www.BlueprintForAging.org), under the section titled Of Special Interest. Printed copies can be requested through Blueprint for Aging at 734.712.2718. Viewing the *Older Adult Data Book, Washtenaw County, 2009* will bring access to exciting and reliable data describing older adults living in Washtenaw County.

The Blueprint for Aging is a partnership of citizens, businesses, local government, nonprofit agencies, and funders working together to build community and improve quality of life for older adults in Washtenaw County. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supports the Blueprint through its Community Partnerships for Older Adults (CPFOA). This initiative funds community partnerships to develop leadership, innovative solutions, and options to meet long term care needs of older adults.

The Blueprint for Aging offers hard copy and electronic versions of the *Senior Data Book 2009* for key stakeholders and the community-at-large to better understand the strengths and challenges facing our county and its older residents.

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