



A Tool to Assess Housing Residents' Needs

by [Alisha Sanders](#)

Senior Policy Research Associate, LeadingAge Center for Applied Research
Managing Director, LeadingAge Center for Housing Plus Services

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The LeadingAge Center for Applied Research has released an easy-to-use tool that senior housing properties can use to assess the health and functional status of their resident populations.

The Resident Assessment Tool, developed by the center in partnership with [Enterprise Community Partners](#), gives housing providers the information they need to design programs and services that can help residents remain healthy and independent for longer.

"Whether by choice or by lack of choice, people in senior housing are aging in place in their homes," says Cheryl Gladstone, program director for senior housing at Enterprise Community Partners, which has raised and invested approximately \$1.7 billion to develop more than 30,000 affordable senior housing units since 1982.

"Enterprise has already seen how structured services can transform the lives of formerly homeless people living in our supportive housing properties," Gladstone said. "We wanted to see how services could improve the lives of low-income seniors living in our properties."

Resident Assessment Package

The Resident Assessment Tool represents a good first step for housing providers interested in integrating services into their housing communities. The tool is included in a 4-part package that LeadingAge members can download by clicking on these links:

- A [Guide to Conducting Resident Assessments](#) offers direction on using the self-assessment tool, which residents complete themselves or with help from housing property staff or an outside community partner. The guide also provides strategies that properties can use to respond to the needs identified through the survey process. [guide](#)

[Click here](#) to access the following:

The ***Resident Assessment – Core Survey*** collects information about residents' health and functional status, as well as their social support network.

- The ***Resident Assessment – Program & Activity Interest*** captures activities that interest residents, including services and programs in which they would willingly participate.
- The ***Resident Assessment Results Spreadsheet*** helps housing properties tabulate the assessment results and view, in one place, an overall picture of their resident populations.

Years in the Making

The Center for Applied Research developed the Resident Assessment Tool during the course of several research projects that called for an assessment of resident health and functional status. After modifying the tool for use by housing properties, the center asked [Presbyterian Senior Living](#), a LeadingAge member in Dillsburg, PA, to test the tool and recommend modifications.

“Conducting a resident assessment will help housing properties gain a comprehensive picture of their residents,” says Alisha Sanders, senior policy research associate at the LeadingAge Center for Applied Research. “This picture can help housing properties engage partners and focus on bringing the services and resources to their property that will meet the specific needs and interests of their community,”

Since 2005, the Center for Applied Research has been studying the role that housing with services could play in meeting the growing need for health and long-term services and supports among low-income elders. As part of that effort, Enterprise and the center collaborated on the [National Summit on Affordable Housing and Services](#) in May 2010 and the [Summit on Aging in Public Housing](#) in March 2011.