



Statement of Needs

The senior population in Santa Clara is growing and so is the number of seniors who struggle economically. The cost of housing, the limited number of affordable rentals, the negative impacts of living alone and the lack of availability of support services make it difficult for seniors with low-incomes to maximize their ability to function independently and live with dignity. The Mission of Senior Housing Solutions is to help low-income seniors meet their affordable housing and support service needs in our community. As you review the information below you will find that our mission addresses current needs and positions our organization to address specific trends in order to continue to meet the needs of low-income seniors in Santa Clara County.

The number of seniors living in poverty in the County is staggering. In the year 2000 the number of seniors 55+ years whose income was below \$22,000 annually was 179,000. The population of seniors living in the County has increased 33.6% since 1990; by 2010 the population it is expected to double. Declining incomes with advancing age is evident in nearly 58% of seniors 65 years of age or older. Our mission is to serve seniors whose annual income \$22,000 or less.

Even for those seniors with financial means there is stiff competition for existing housing but for those with limited income the number of affordable housing rentals falls far short of the need. Between 1992 and 2001 the Silicon Valley economy created 334,000 new jobs but only 50,100 units of new housing. As a consequence the competition for existing housing stock sent rents to dizzying heights and even with the current downturn in the economy the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,146 per month. There are 67,000 seniors in the County whose income is less than \$1,250 per month; just about the average cost to rent a one-bedroom apartment. For the majority of this group of seniors truly affordable rentals simply are not available. Twenty-six affordable senior housing developments County-wide provide rentals that cost \$600 per month; a rate at which this group seniors would have to pay half their income to afford. It is expected that between 2000 and 2020 the number of seniors who rent will grow by 111%. This means that the number of seniors needing rental housing will grow by more than 2,000 per year over the next 20 years; twice as fast as renters under the age of 55. Considering that today there are only 2,200 rentals that cost \$600 per month the shortage of affordable rentals for low-income seniors is extreme. Our mission is to provide housing affordable to seniors whose income is \$1,200 per month and to keep our rents at 30% of income or \$360 a month. Currently we operate eight single-family homes throughout Santa Clara County. The average age of our residents is 70 and the average income is \$886 per month. Current average rent including utilities, phone and cable connection is just \$266 per month!

Vacancies in affordable housing properties are virtually nonexistent and waiting lists are lengthy. None of the 26 senior housing developments mentioned above currently have vacancies

yet 13 are accepting applications for their waiting lists. The length of the wait list is between 3 and five years for these facilities. Currently there are 3,900 seniors on the Housing Authority's Section 8 waiting list and they will have to wait between one and five years before they can get an apartment. Approximately 50% of the City of San Jose's subsidized units are in jeopardy of being converted to market rate by 2010. To help further our mission, Senior Housing Solutions plans to develop 15 more rental units of affordable housing for seniors by 2007.

The likelihood of living alone increases with age and 25% of seniors 65 or older live alone. One major factor associated with risk of illness, injury and premature institutionalization is living arrangement, particularly living alone. In assessing the social needs of older adults, their living arrangement may dictate the need for additional services. Living alone is often associated with isolation and depression and suicide is one of the leading consequences of depression. Suicide per capita is highest among seniors and one of the 10 leading causes of death. As the number of seniors living alone increases, outreach services, transportation and case management will be key to assist this segment of the population to maintain their independence. In fact the second most often cited need among seniors in the recent Council On Aging (COA) survey was help dealing with agencies; a function of case management. The very limited supply of case management programs is principally the result of insufficient funding. The COA estimates that their Multi Services for Seniors Program meets only 5% of the current need. The mission of Senior Housing Solutions affordable housing is unique because the housing is provided in a group setting in single-family homes therefore none of our residents lives alone. It is also unique in that case management is provided. Of the 26 senior housing developments mentioned above only 4 offer case management services with their housing and none of the housing is offered in a group setting.

As you have read, the mission of Senior Housing Solutions provides a comprehensive and holistic approach in helping low-income seniors meet their affordable housing and support service needs. Through our Senior Group Residence Program we address the high cost of rental housing, the lack of an adequate supply of affordable rentals, the negative impacts of living alone, and the lack of availability of support services.

The following sources provided relevant information in the development of this community needs assessment: City of Milpitas Consolidated Plan 2002-2007; County of Santa Clara Housing Task Force Report 2002; Housing SCC www.housingscc.org 2002; City of Milpitas Senior Needs Assessment 2002; Santa Clara County's Older Adults: Key Indicators of Well-Being, 2001; Coming of Age in Santa Clara County 1998.

Senior Housing Solutions, Inc. ♦ 512 Valley Way, Milpitas CA 95035 ♦ Phone 408-416-0271

www.srhousingsolutions.org

Bob Campbell, Executive Director ♦ Bob@srhousingsolutions.org