

# **Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC)**

## **What Is a NORC Program?**

A NORC program is an innovative model that coordinates a broad range of social and health care services to support the senior residents of a NORC. The overarching goal of a NORC program is to maximize the health of its community. NORC programs take a proactive approach, seeking to deepen the connections older adults have to their communities before crises occur. This model stands in sharp contrast to the traditional systems by which services are delivered – an approach that is generally reactive, time-limited, and disconnected from the communities in which older people have built their lives.

A NORC program operates through multidisciplinary partnerships that represent a mix of public and private entities and provides on-site services and activities. Each component of the partnership is familiar – but the concept of them working together is not. At the core are social service and health care providers; housing managers or representatives of neighborhood associations; and, most important, the community’s residents, especially its seniors. Government agencies and philanthropic organizations provide essential funding.

These core partners connect to the many other stakeholders in a community – typically, local businesses; civic, religious, and cultural institutions; public and private funders; and local police and other public safety agencies. By harnessing these resources for a common interest, a NORC program begins to transform the community into a good place in which to grow old.

Rather than emphasize only the provision of services to individuals, the NORC program model also promotes community change. It offers new opportunities to:

- Empower older adults to take on new roles in shaping communities that work for them.
- Weave a tighter social fabric and foster connections among residents.
- Maximize the health and well-being of all older adults in the NORC.

A NORC program is built from the ground up, in response to what it learns about the community. Inevitable challenges to healthy aging often include environmental factors, health and social service gaps, transportation problems, lack of infrastructure, or a frayed social fabric. But a NORC program also identifies strengths to be harnessed.

As partners acquire knowledge about assets and deficits in the community, they are positioned to design and implement a responsive NORC program that integrates:

- Community engagement (educational programming, community action initiatives, and opportunities for seniors to take on new roles).
- Social work services (to individuals, caregivers, and groups of seniors).
- Health care-related services (addressing both individual health management needs and the health of the community).

For additional information, please click on the following link:

<http://www.norcblueprint.org/norc-program>