

**Senior Affairs
Commission
2024
ANNUAL
REPORT**

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CITY SECRETARY
DALLAS, TEXAS



City of Dallas

Approved by the Senior Affairs Commission on January 27, 2025

Memorandum



Date: January 27, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **2024 Senior Affairs Commission Annual Report**

Attached is the Annual Report for calendar year 2024 for the Senior Affairs Commission, as required by Chapter 8 of the Dallas City Code.

The members of the Senior Affairs Commission have been pleased to be of service to the City for the past year. As noted in the report, the Commission has made great strides in developing and communicating factual information about the demographics and needs of senior citizens in Dallas and we hope it will be used to better serve this important segment of our population. Thank you for providing each of us with the opportunity to serve.

Regards,

J. Peter Kline, Chair
Senior Affairs Commission

Attachment – Senior Affairs Commission 2024 Annual Report

cc:	Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, City Manager	Portia Cantrell, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), District 2
	Biliera Johnson, City Secretary	Verna Mitchell, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), District 3
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	Teresita Delgado, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), District 1	Karen Roberts, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), District 14
		Mike Nurre, Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), Mayor's Appointment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chair’s Memo.....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
Commission Membership and Mission.....	8
Profile of The Dallas Senior Population	9
Major Issues Confronting Dallas Seniors.....	12
Resources for Dallas Seniors	13
Commission Work During 2024.....	14
Annual Funding Priorities Memos	16
Senior Listening Sessions	17
Senior Data Project – Senior Poverty Hot Spots	20
Relationships with Other Agencies and Service Providers	21
LGBTQ+ Senior Needs Analysis.....	22
Observations and Recommendations.....	23
Commission Goals and Work for 2025.....	25
Appendices:	
APPENDIX I – OP-ED Article: Don’t Forget Seniors in Holiday Philanthropy.....	28
APPENDIX II – 2021 Statistical Profile of the Dallas Senior Population.....	30
APPENDIX III - Age 75+ Senior Poverty Heat Maps	35

SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMISSION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The members of the Dallas Senior Affairs Commission are pleased to present this Annual Report to the Mayor and Dallas City Council Members highlighting the challenges that face Dallas senior citizens as well as our activities and accomplishments during the 2024 calendar year and goals for 2025.

Dallas Senior Population Overview

- One of every seven Dallas residents is over 60 years of age, but until recently the city has not considered the well-being of older residents a priority that merits special attention. Over the past three years, the Commission has worked to assemble and share data that clearly illustrates the severity and magnitude of problems facing Dallas senior citizens
- The fastest growing segment of our population are senior citizens. The 65+ age group has grown five times as fast as the rest of the city and accounts for about one-third of the city's total growth over the past ten years
- Senior poverty has also increased and there are approximately 31,500 City of Dallas residents age 60 and older living at or below the federal poverty level of \$14,040
- Like all Dallas residents, senior citizens are impacted by all of the major urban issues affecting our city and they benefit from the broad-based city programs and services that address these issues. Crime, poverty, affordable housing, food insecurity, access to health care and medical services, and transportation issues impact everyone, but these issues are compounded for the senior population. Additionally, about 42,500 Dallas seniors live alone and are particularly susceptible to social isolation, adversely impacting their quality of life and their physical and mental health.

Senior Affairs Commission 2024 Focus

During 2024, the efforts of the Senior Affairs Commission have focused on three primary areas: improved coordination of senior services among all public and non-profit providers, improved communication to residents regarding services that are available to them, and improved strategic planning to identify and execute necessary actions to build a better future for Dallas Seniors

Focus One: Improved Coordination of Senior Services

- In June 2024, Tabitha Taylor was recruited to fill a new position as the Age-Friendly Officer for the City. She will have responsibility for monitoring the wide variety of senior-oriented services and programs across all city departments and the city's progress on implementing and updating the Age Friendly Dallas Action Plan that was adopted by City Council in 2019.
- The Senior Affairs Commission has become an authoritative source of information about elderly residents in Dallas and sharing this information with City officials and other governmental and non-profit agencies who are working to serve the critical needs of our older residents. Progress has been made during 2024 toward breaking down silos among the various service providers and more work is needed to foster a collaborative effort to serve the needs of older residents throughout the region.

Focus Two: Improved Communication to Residents Regarding Senior Services

- Perhaps the Commission's greatest accomplishment in 2024 was to conduct Senior Listening Sessions across the city. Upon completion of the District 4 Listening Session in early 2025, the Commission will have conducted sessions in every City Council District over a seven month period. Formal senior listening sessions have not been conducted since 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic and this outreach effort was well received in all parts of the city. Good feedback was received from participants, but it was clear that the most vulnerable seniors were not adequately represented. One of the biggest take-aways was the lack of awareness of the services and resources which are available to seniors from the City, County and local non-profit providers. The lack of an effective communications vehicle to reach the senior community continues to be a systemic problem.

Focus Three: Improved Strategic Planning to Build a Better Future for Dallas Seniors

- In November 2024 a \$250,000 consulting project was launched after selecting the Guidehouse organization to assist in the development of a strategic plan on how to best serve the needs of the vulnerable senior sector of our community. This project is a very important milestone in the comprehensive assessment of the challenges facing our older residents and the development of specific strategies on how best to meet those needs. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2025.
- For the past three years, the Senior Affairs Commission has worked with the City's Data Analytics department to develop and update credible senior demographic profiles on a city-wide basis and for each City Council District in order to support recommended funding priorities for senior focused activities.

- In 2024 a new initiative was launched to identify which census tracts in the city of Dallas have the greatest concentrations of senior poverty. Heat maps were created to identify Senior Poverty Hot Spots within each City Council District and on a city-wide basis. A more detailed discussing this project and its implications are found in the body of this report.

The following pages will outline the above initiatives in further detail.

Finally, the final approved budget for fiscal 2024-25 did not follow the Commission's recommendations. The recommended new outreach specialist position was not approved and city funding for the DART Rider Assistance Program and the Senior Dental Health Care Program was eliminated. These decisions were not driven by the lack of need for these services nor their effectiveness. They were based on required budget cuts and the premise that they should be funded by other government entities instead of the City. This is a valid argument, but the city must exert its influence on other funders to ensure that Dallas residents continue to receive these services.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND MISSION

There are 15 Senior Affairs Commissioners who are appointed by the Mayor and each Member of the City Council. For most of 2024 the Senior Affairs Commission had a full complement of Commissioners representing all Council Districts.

As of December 31, 2024, the members of the Commission include:

District 01	Teresita Delgado
District 02	Portia Cantrell
District 03	Verna Mitchell
District 04	Phyllis Lee
District 05	Feliz Jarvis VICE CHAIR
District 06	Marilyn Daniels
District 07	Marian Williams
District 08	Debbie Austin
District 09	Lisa Kelly
District 10	David Tyson, Jr.
District 11	Renee Karp
District 12	Robert Friedman
District 13	Peter Kline CHAIR
District 14	Karen Roberts
District 15	Mike Nurre (Mayor's Appointee)

The mission and purpose of the Senior Affairs Commission is set forth in the Dallas City Code. The Commission is an advisory body to the Mayor, City Council and City Manager and is authorized to:

- Recommend the role of the City of Dallas and the Commission in ensuring the provision of services to the elderly
- Advise the City Council, as requested, on elderly issues
- Provide access for citizen comment on elderly issues
- Assist the city in the identification of programs for the elderly that are needed in the community
- Perform other duties assigned by the City Council

In order to fulfill this mission, the Senior Affairs Commission must gather reliable facts and data about the City's senior population, their problems and issues, and the activities of both governmental and not-for-profit agencies that serve them. The Commission recognize that it must take the initiative to compile this information and share it with the general public and all agencies that are focused on helping the senior population. More work is required to identify the specific vehicles that can be used to most effectively share this data.

Based on numerous interactions with Dallas seniors and the organizations that serve them, it is clear that the general public has very little knowledge about the plight of senior citizens in Dallas. Unless they are coping with how to care for elderly family members, most people do not focus on these issues. Personal philanthropy is primarily focused on investments in future generations, not on taking care of the generations who came before us. The outstanding non-profit organizations that are focused on senior services struggle to raise needed funding because most people do not appreciate the nature and scope of the needs of this vulnerable sector of our population. In addition to the Senior Affairs Commission's charter to make recommendations to City Council and the City Manager regarding problems and issues confronting the elderly, the Senior Affairs Commissioners also recognize that it is incumbent on them to share their knowledge with the broader community to create awareness of senior issues and potential solutions. **See the December 15, 2024 Op-Ed piece written by the Senior Affairs Commission Chair in Appendix I as an example of this effort.**

PROFILE OF THE DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION

According to the preliminary data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey the number of Dallas seniors age 65 and older increased by 2.2% since the 2020 Census, while there was a small decline in the total Dallas population. Senior poverty has also increased and there are approximately 31,500 City of Dallas residents age 60 and older living at or below the federal poverty level of \$14,040. When full data for the 2023 American Community Survey becomes available, the following data from the 2021 ACS will be updated and should be available in the first quarter of 2025.

Residents aged 65 and older are the fastest growing segment of the Dallas population. In 2021, our senior population (age 65 and older) was 140,120 or 10.7% of the total population. ***Between 2010 and 2020, our senior population grew five times as fast as the rest of the population and accounted for one-third of the City's total growth during the decade.*** This rapid growth in the senior population is guaranteed to continue since there were over 60,000 residents between the ages of 60 and 64 who will be feeding this high rate of growth. Simply based on population growth, the need for social services or assistance directed at seniors has grown by more than 30% over the past decade. When inflation and the shortage of affordable housing are factored into the equation, the current safety net available to Dallas senior citizens is not adequate to serve basic needs.

2021 DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION (Age 65 & Older) BY CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

<u>Council District</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Senior Population</u>	<u>% District Population</u>
01	89,740	9,655	10.8%
02	92,292	6,812	7.4%
03	92,557	11,020	11.9%
04	92,100	12,288	13.3%
05	87,764	7,017	8.0%
06	89,247	5,944	6.7%
07	88,841	8,602	9.7%
08	94,514	9,856	10.4%
09	97,041	10,853	11.2%
10	96,197	10,752	11.2%
11	97,049	12,351	12.7%
12	95,266	12,341	13.0%
13	96,393	15,268	15.8%
14	95,411	7,361	7.7%
TOTAL	1,304,412	140,120	10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey

The senior population is widely distributed across all City Council Districts and concentrations range from a high of 15.8% of total population in District 13 to a low of 6.7% in District 6. District 13 is the home for the greatest number of seniors in any district.

While it is virtually impossible to create a profile of a “typical” Dallas Senior Citizen, it is possible to look at demographic characteristics and identify the size of at-risk populations throughout the city. The following highlights characterize the profile of the city-wide senior population in Dallas. Please refer to **Appendix II** to review these characteristics for every City Council District based on the 2021 census data.

- One out of ten Dallas residents are aged 65 or older and 54,175 Dallas seniors are over 74 years of age and are more susceptible to disabilities, mobility issues and isolation.
- 57% of the senior population are females and this percentage is higher in the older age brackets. This is significant because women are more likely than men to be income insecure.
- The median household income for seniors 65+ is \$42,829 compared to the overall city-wide median household income of \$71,412. Over 50% of all Dallas seniors live in Council Districts that have median senior household income levels below \$38,000, and

nearly 40,000 seniors live in Council Districts where median senior household income is less than \$25,000.

- Currently, there are about 31,500 Dallas residents aged 60 and older who are living below the federal poverty line (\$14,040 in 2022). Approximately 28% of these individuals are 75 or older. Two-thirds of those living below the federal poverty level reside in the six least affluent City Council Districts, but it is important to note that there are also pockets of poverty in all of the more affluent districts where over 10,000 seniors are living below the poverty line.
- The city-wide racial makeup of Dallas seniors is approximately 46% white, 25% black and 18% Hispanic. These percentages vary significantly by Council district. In the six Council Districts where median senior household income is less than \$30,000 the racial makeup is approximately 18% white, 42% black and 28% Hispanic.
- About 30% of Dallas seniors live alone, putting them at a higher risk of social isolation and difficulty accessing food, medicine and medical resources. There are 42,482 Dallas seniors living alone, and they must depend on family, friends or neighbors for socialization and help with routine needs.
- About 20% of all Dallas seniors are living with 2 or more disabilities. As people age, disabilities increasingly impact mobility and transportation issues. Seniors living in lower income neighborhoods are twice as likely to suffer from multiple disabilities than their counterparts in more affluent areas.
- Seniors represent about 30% of home-owners in the city. There are 62,260 Senior Householders and the average appraised value of senior-owned homes was \$441,116 in 2021. Over 20,000 senior homeowners live in census tracts with a high poverty rate and assistance is needed for routine maintenance.
- The Dallas Police Department reported that 5,457 crimes were committed against senior citizens in 2022, or a crime rate of 3.9% on a city-wide basis. The senior crime rate in the six least affluent City Council Districts is 70% higher than it is in the more affluent Districts.

MAJOR ISSUES CONFRONTING DALLAS SENIORS

Like all Dallas residents, senior citizens are impacted by all of the major urban issues affecting our city and they benefit from the broad-based city programs and services that address these issues. Crime, poverty, affordable housing, food insecurity, access to health care and medical services, and transportation issues impact everyone, but these issues are compounded for the senior population.

Social Isolation

About 42,500 Dallas seniors live alone and are particularly susceptible to social isolation, adversely impacting their quality of life and their physical and mental health. In May 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on loneliness in American society and the public health consequences it poses. Being socially disconnected increases the risk of premature death more than obesity and physical inactivity.

Poverty & Cost of Living

In Dallas there are about 31,500 seniors over the age of 60 who living at or below the 2022 federal poverty line of \$14,040. Most senior citizens live on a fixed income that may be supplemented by part time employment. Based on feedback received from the community, numerous seniors lost their jobs in recent years and have had difficulty re-entering the labor force because of age discrimination. Nearly 30% of seniors live alone and do not benefit from multiple incomes in their household. Very large increases in rent, food and gas prices have forced many seniors who were struggling to make ends meet into crisis mode.

Affordable Housing

According to news reports, the lack of affordable housing in Dallas is a wide-spread problem that is being exacerbated by an unprecedented increase in rental rates for apartments and rental homes. For seniors who are living on a fixed income, these increases make it virtually impossible to continue to live independently because the supply of less expensive apartments simply does not exist. Affordability is also a serious issue for seniors who own their own homes. Even for seniors who no longer have a mortgage, large increases in insurance, utilities and maintenance costs have been very difficult to absorb. Since there are limited housing alternatives, finding ways to keep seniors in their existing homes is especially important. Many seniors need assistance with minor and major home repairs in order to do this.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has become a significant issue for Dallas residents of all ages and the dramatic escalation in grocery store prices has compounded the problem, particularly for seniors living on a fixed income. The North Texas Food Bank and VNA's Meals on

Wheels programs are seeing all-time record demand for their assistance. The lack of grocery stores in proximity to seniors living in low-income neighborhoods is also a major problem.

Mobility Issues and Transportation

Access to medical care, grocery stores and socialization opportunities is a very common issue for senior citizens. Nearly 10% of all Dallas households do not have a motor vehicle and must rely on family, friends or public transportation. Over 27,000 Dallas seniors report having two or more disabilities, and as people age, almost everyone has some sort of mobility issue, making it difficult to get to DART bus stops. In addition, the DART route system is focused on transporting people between home and work and most senior transportation needs revolve around access to medical facilities and neighborhood services. There are about 54,000 Dallas seniors aged 75 and older who are particularly vulnerable to transportation issues.

RESOURCES FOR DALLAS SENIORS

Dallas senior citizens benefit from a variety of targeted programs that are funded and administered through the federal, state, county and city levels of government and the generosity of private citizens through Dallas non-profit and volunteer organizations.

Historically care for older people has been viewed as a governmental responsibility. Nationally less than 2 percent of philanthropic contributions go toward aging-related initiatives (according to the Silver Century Foundation) and seniors depend primarily on the Older Americans Act programs which are funded by the federal government for assistance. Unfortunately, per capita funding for these programs has declined by 3.7% over the past ten years because of the rapid growth in the senior population and inflation of nearly 30% has further eroded the effective resources.

The primary programs at the federal level are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and funding provided to states to implement federal Older Americans Act legislation. In Dallas, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services channels state and federal funding for seniors primarily to the Greater Dallas Community Council's Dallas Area Agency on Aging (DAAA) to serve seniors throughout Dallas County. Some City of Dallas residents live in Collin and Denton Counties and receive these services through the North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging. Services range from benefits counseling, minor home repair, medical transportation, food and other needs. The DAAA contracts with local non-profits and Dallas County to execute the delivery of some of these services. For example, they contract with Dallas County to execute the delivery of congregate meal services to seniors, which the county supplements with additional funding. The City of Dallas provides critical municipal services which benefit the senior population, as well as providing targeted programs for senior citizens.

The City's targeted programs using city staff or by contract with other parties include:

- Office of Community Care / Senior Services Program
- Senior Ombudsman Program
- Dallas Public Library Adult Services
- Park and Recreation Department / Active Senior Adult Programs (ASAP)
- Senior Training and Employment Program

In addition, in 2019, the Dallas City Council approved the Age Friendly Dallas Plan, which set forth several domains of importance to our aging population, including:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Communications and Information
- Social Participation and Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Community Support and Health Services

In 2024 the city created a new position (Age-Friendly Officer) in the Office of Community Care to oversee the effectiveness of the Age-Friendly Dallas Action Plan and the overall city effort to serve the senior community. The Age-Friendly Officer will carefully review what progress has been made on the 2019 plan and work to update the whole initiative.

COMMISSION WORK DURING 2024

In 2024 the Senior Affairs Commission conducted 11 regular monthly public meetings (no meeting in July) at Dallas City Hall and have either conducted or have scheduled Senior Listening Sessions in every City Council District. In addition, individual SAC Commissioners participate in senior-oriented events at the council district level throughout the year and work on special projects for their City Council Member as requested.

In accordance with City and State policies and regulations, all Commission meetings were conducted as HYBRID MEETINGS which only require the Chair to attend in person at City Hall. However, since the Covid-19 threat has abated, there has been a concerted effort to encourage all Commissioners to attend meetings in person. In 2024 about 80% of the Commissioners have attended most meetings in person, which has fostered stronger personal relationships among them and improved our ability to assess community needs and program effectiveness. Remote participants experience technical difficulties at almost every meeting, cutting into the available time for productive discussions. Problems with the City Hall monitor make it very difficult to

actually conduct the hybrid meetings, and remote participants often feel like they are being ignored.

An effort has been made to make the monthly Commission meeting agendas more robust by inviting outside agencies to update the whole body. Throughout 2024, the Commission's focus has been on bringing attention to the facts about the Dallas senior population and the need to make them a true priority for city management. The Commission has been monitoring efforts to restore and expand services to seniors as we emerge from the pandemic. At every meeting we receive an activity update from the Senior Services division of the Office of Community Care, which reports the number of seniors served under various contracted services as well as public interactions by the Senior Services Staff. In addition, the SAC receives regular updates from the Housing Department, Dallas Public Library System and Parks and Recreation Departments. All of these departments provide vital services to seniors and they are actively trying to restore pre-pandemic service levels and continue to offer virtual services to older citizens that were initiated when traditional services were suspended.

In addition, at our monthly meetings, the Commission invites senior managers from a wide variety of organizations serving seniors in the Dallas area to share their missions, services provided and their perspectives on the biggest problems facing the senior population. Special presentations to the Senior Affairs Commission in 2024 included:

January 29, 2024	Adult Day Care Centers – Proposed Code Amendment Andreea Udrea - Assistant Director- Planning & Urban Design
February 26, 2024	AIDS Services of Dallas (ASD) Transitioning to Affordable Housing as a Senior Traswell C. Livingston III – President & CEO of ASD
March 18, 2024	Provider's Perspective on Senior Issues & Resources Stacey Malcolmson – President & CEO of The Senior Source
April 15, 2024	AARP Dallas 2024 Susan J. Williams – Associate State Director of Research & Advocacy Dallas Area Agency on Aging (DAAA) Senior Programs Doris Soler – Senior Director – Community Council of Greater Dallas
May 20, 2024	VNA Impact on Senior Issues and Resources Chris Culac – VP Chief of Strategy & Development – Visiting Nurses Association of Texas/Meals on Wheels
June 17, 2024	Dallas County Older Adult Services: Keeping Seniors Active Mark Edwards – Assistant Director of Social Services
August 19, 2024	Overview of Homelessness Among Older Adults

	Sarah Kahn – President & CEO of Housing Forward
September 16, 2024	The Dementia Friendly Initiative in Dallas Ann McKinley – Chair of Dementia Friendly Dallas Juliette Fowler Communities and Jane Hunley – Former Director of Gerontology at Parkland
October 21, 2024	Data Insights for Strengthening Outreach to Older Adults J. Peter Kline – Senior Affairs Commission Chairman
November 18, 2024	Park & Recreation Department – Senior Program Update Latrice Brown – Senior Program Supervisor Senior Services Strategic Plan Project Overview Jessica Galleshaw – Director, Office of Community Care Tabitha Taylor – Age-Friendly Officer – Office of Community Care
December 16, 2024	Working Session on the 2024 SAC Annual Report

Annual Funding Priorities Memorandums

Annually, as part of the city’s budgeting process, the Commission prepares a Funding Priorities Memorandum which provides recommendations to the City Manager, the Mayor and City Council on how to better serve the rapidly growing older adult population.

One of the most important advancements on behalf of Dallas seniors in 2024 was the initial implementation of two significant SAC recommendations. In 2023, the Senior Affairs Commission shared detailed senior data and recommended funding priorities with the City Manager and Dallas City Council. In response, the Council approved a 2023-24 city budget that included significant new funding for a new staff position to monitor how the senior community is being served and to hire a consultant to help develop a strategic plan on how to best serve the needs of this vulnerable sector of our community. After a national search, Tabitha Taylor was hired in June 2024 as the City’s first Age-Friendly Officer, with responsibility for monitoring the wide variety of senior-oriented services and programs across all city departments. And Guidehouse was retained as a consultant to assist the city in the development of a strategic plan. The project has been initiated and is scheduled for completion by June 2025. This project is a very important milestone in the comprehensive assessment of the challenges facing our older residents and the development of specific strategies on how best to meet those needs.

In June 2024 the Senior Affairs Commission issued its annual Funding Priorities Memorandum, with recommendations for the 2024-2025 city budget. **The 2024 memorandum can be accessed through the following link:**

<https://dallascityhall.com/government/Boards-and-Commissions/Senior-Affairs/Pages/resources.aspx>

Since the two major initiatives that were funded in the 2023-24 city budget had not been implemented when the memo was prepared, the Commission's recommendations were similar to the prior year's. Three key recommendations were not incorporated into the final approved budget. The recommended new outreach specialist position was not approved and city funding for the DART Rider Assistance Program and the Senior Dental Health Care Program was eliminated. It appears to the Commission that these decisions were not driven by the lack of need for these services nor their effectiveness. Rather, they were based on the premise that they should be funded by DART or Dallas County instead of the City. This may be a valid position to take, but the city must exert its influence on other funders to ensure that Dallas residents continue to receive these services.

Senior Listening Sessions

The Commission had set goals for 2024 that included the development of presentation materials and the reintroduction of Senior Listening Sessions for every City Council District for the first time in almost five years. Over the past three years the Commission has developed extensive demographic information for each district but did not have direct feedback from senior residents about their most pressing issues. Working with each City Council Member, their staff, the Senior Services staff, and every Senior Affairs Commissioner, "Join the Senior Conversation" meetings were planned for every City Council District. During 2024 the Commission completed listening sessions in 13 districts and the final session will be held in early 2025. At the conclusion of each listening session, an event report was prepared by staff to provide a detailed summary of number of attendees and the topics covered. **The 2024 Listening Session Event Reports can be accessed through the following link:**

<https://dallascityhall.com/government/Boards-and-Commissions/Senior-Affairs/Pages/resources.aspx>

The Commission had hoped to attract participants from broad cross section of older residents in each Council District. While attendees included younger caregivers, most participants were between 60 and 80 years old and the oldest attendee was 100 years old. The number of participants in most sessions ranged between 35 and 50 people, but the smallest group had 10 people and about 80 people attended the Council District-3 session.

The demographic profile of participants varied significantly between Council Districts. In many of the listening sessions, at least half of the attendees lived alone. Spanish interpreter services were available in most sessions, but were only utilized in two of the listening sessions. Middle-income seniors who owned homes and automobiles, and were not struggling to meet their basic needs represented the majority of participants in many of the sessions. Vulnerable seniors living in poverty, with disabilities and transportation challenges were under-represented in the listening sessions. And Hispanic and Asian seniors were also under-represented in most districts.

The listening sessions produced excellent feedback on numerous issues that concern mainstream older residents. The issues and concerns were remarkably similar in most City Council Districts:

- The escalating costs of housing are impacting both homeowners and renters. Even for seniors who own their homes free and clear of any mortgage, rapidly increasing costs of insurance, utilities, HOA fees and maintenance are a problem. Renters discussed the problems caused by investment groups who buy older apartment complexes, make improvements and then raise rental rates dramatically, making their existing housing unaffordable. Problems with getting landlords to make basic repairs required by code compliance were also cited.
- Home repair and lawn care were cited as problems in most sessions. For many, affordability was the primary issue but for others assistance in identifying reputable contractors was identified as a need.
- Many participants expressed concerns about safety in their neighborhoods. They cited problems with high-speed traffic on their residential streets and the condition of streets and sidewalks.
- Issues with trash collection, code compliance, animal control and other city services were brought up. Most participants were not familiar with special accommodations made for seniors.
- Emergency financial assistance for rent, utilities and other basic necessities when confronted with unexpected expenses was discussed.
- The lack of opportunities for employment and volunteering and/or age discrimination were discussed at several sessions. These included people with solid work experience and skill sets who had been laid off from their jobs and had not been able to find new positions.

The “Join the Senior Conversation” initiative was very productive and received positive ratings and feedback from almost all participants. It was very important for the Commission to demonstrate its concern and interest in getting feedback from older residents in all parts of the city. The Commission and city staff experimented with different formats and approaches and tried to apply what was learned at later sessions. Some form of listening and senior information session should be conducted in every Council District on an annual basis.

While the listening sessions did not provide the Commission with a needs inventory for the full spectrum of seniors living in every district, they did provide valuable insights that should be applied to future projects and initiatives. In addition to the specific feedback received from the

attendees of the listening sessions, the following observations and conclusions became very apparent:

- Most older residents have very little knowledge about the range of services, programs and benefits that are available to them through the City and other government agencies and from non-profit organizations that are dedicated to serving seniors.
- The city lacks effective communication tools that can reach the broader senior population. Almost all outreach efforts are directed at residents who are already connected to city programs and services, with no strategy for how to connect with unserved senior citizens. The vast majority of the listening session participants were already engaged with the city either through Council District meetings and newsletters or through senior programming at Park and Recreation Facilities. The listening sessions with the highest levels of participation utilized the faith community and other service providers to help promote the event.
- The non-profit service providers are confronted with the same communication challenges. The Area Agency on Aging, the Visiting Nurse Association and The Senior Source are among the largest, most established service providers serving Dallas seniors, but a significant portion of the listening session participants had little or no knowledge of them.
- There are approximately 200,000 Dallas residents who are age 60 and older. About 31,500 of them are living at or below the federal poverty level. The Park and Recreation Department's ASAP program (Active Senior Adult Program) serves the most seniors of any City program. 8,649 individual seniors (less than 5% of senior residents) were registered for the program in FY 2024. Less than 1,500 unduplicated seniors utilized the Office of Community Care Senior Services Help Line.
- The Commission finds that older people living in poverty are the most vulnerable and believes they should be targeted by the Office of Community Care for help in making sure that they fully participate in the wide range of assistance programs that are available from the federal, state, county and city assistance programs.
- The current senior outreach programs are not effective in reaching the most vulnerable senior citizens in Dallas. Consequently, the older residents who need the most help are the least likely to know about available resources and how to access them.

Senior Data Project – Senior Poverty Hot Spots

Since 2022 the Commission has worked closely with the City’s Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence to develop and routinely update senior demographic data from the Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey and Infographics created for the city-wide senior population and for each City Council District. In 2023, the model was updated to reflect the new City Council District boundaries and the release of the Census Bureau’s 2021 American Community Survey data and the infographics were included in last year’s report. The 2023 American Community Survey data should be available by April 2025 and the model will be updated and distributed.

In 2024 the Commission initiated a project to study senior poverty in Dallas. Many of the problems associated with aging can be mitigated if an older person has adequate financial resources. But for seniors who are living at or below the federal poverty level, these problems can be unsurmountable and seniors age 75 and older are the most vulnerable group. The incidence of physical disabilities increases with age and the Alzheimers Association estimates that 1 in 9 people age 65 and older suffer from the disease and 73% of them are age 75 and older. People over 75 are more likely to have mobility issues and be faced with transportation challenges to access daily necessities and community resources that serve senior citizens. This leads to an isolated life-style and our oldest seniors are least likely to know about sources for help and how to sign up for programs.

There are approximately **54,000 seniors age 75 and older** living in the city of Dallas. About **8,200 of them are living at or below the 2022 Federal Poverty Annual Income of \$14,040**. The first step in understanding their special needs and how to direct resources to them is to know where they live. Using American Community Survey 2018-2022 census data, the Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence created heat maps reflecting the number of seniors who are living at or below the federal poverty level in each of the approximately 350 census tracts in the city of Dallas. The maps are color coded to reflect different concentrations of impoverished older adults who are age 75 and older:

Dark Blue	Census Tracts with 179-292 Age 75+ residents in poverty
Light Blue	Census Tracts with 91-178 Age 75+ residents in poverty
Dark Green	Census Tracts with 46-92 Age 75+ residents in poverty
Light Green	Census Tracts with 15-45 Age 75+ residents in poverty
Yellow	Census Tracts with 14 or fewer Age 75+ residents in poverty

The Senior Poverty Heat Maps for the city as a whole and for each City Council District can be viewed in Appendix III to this report.

The analysis of the heat maps yields important information that can be utilized by the city and non-profit service providers to take a much more strategic approach toward addressing the needs of our most vulnerable seniors. Just as the Dallas Police Department used a grid system to identify crime hot spots to bring down the crime rate, the senior poverty hot spots can be

the key to make significant progress in mitigating the most serious issues facing our older residents.

While there are about 350 census tracts in the city, 40% of the 75+ impoverished seniors live in the 21 census tracts coded in dark and light blue. Predictively, three-quarters of these seniors are located in City Council Districts having the lowest median income levels, but there are pockets of poverty throughout the city and the census tract with the second highest concentration is located in the wealthiest Council District.

Thus, targeted outreach efforts in just 21 neighborhoods (census tracts) could have a significant impact on problems associated with 75+ senior poverty in Dallas. If targeted outreach efforts were expanded to another 31 census tracts that are coded in dark green, over 70% of the 75+ impoverished residents could be reached.

Relationships With Other Agencies and Service Providers

One of the Commissions goals for 2024 was to strengthen the working relationships with the many organizations that are dedicated to serving the senior community. Several members of the Senior Affairs Commission are personally active and involved with many of the service providers that work with older residents. The Commission has made significant progress during the year and the groundwork has been laid for a collaborative approach toward addressing the needs of our older residents.

- Early in the year, the Commission shared our senior demographic data and infographics with the leadership of several agencies.
- Since most of the service providers cover all of Dallas County, they requested assistance in developing the same type of infographics for Dallas County and for the other major cities. The Data Analytics team helped respond to the request.
- In June the Visiting Nurse Association, The Senior Source and the Community Council co-sponsored an Aging in Place Conference and asked Commission Chair Kline to make a presentation about our senior data work. The conference was very well attended and several members of the OCC Senior Services staff and the Senior Affairs Commission were present.
- In September, Chair Kline was invited to participate in an Aging in Place Conference Debrief along with representatives of VNA, The Senior Source, Community Council of Greater Dallas, The Resource Center, Dallas County, Jewish Family Services, Catholic Charities and Housing Forward. At the meeting, Chair Kline discussed the concept of the

Commission's Senior Poverty Heat Map analysis and there was an enthusiastic reaction to the idea of selecting a pilot project area and conducting a comprehensive needs analysis of the 75+ impoverished senior population and developing a community information session format that can be promoted by trusted sources in the neighborhood.

- In December, Chair Kline and D-3 Commissioner Mitchell met with senior leadership of VNA and The Senior Source to review the Senior Poverty Hot Spots and discuss a potential pilot study area and how service providers, the faith community and other trusted sources could participate in a comprehensive needs analysis. Stacey Malcolmson, CEO of the Senior Source and Chris Culak, Vice President/Chief of Strategy of the VNA agreed to help create and co-chair a senior poverty pilot project to conduct a needs analysis in three Dallas Census Tracts located in Council District 3. An organizational meeting will be scheduled for late January 2025 to further define the project.

LGBTQ+ SENIOR NEEDS ANALYSIS

One of the Commission's goals for 2024 was to establish a working group to assemble data and document the unique needs relating to LGBTQ+ seniors. When this goal was established, the Commission assumed that the Strategic Planning Consultant would be retained and commence work during fiscal year 2023-24. The RFP for the consulting contract specified the LGBTQ+ senior community as requiring analysis and specific recommendations on how to better serve this constituency.

Today's LGBTQ+ senior community grew up during an era when gay lifestyles were considered socially unacceptable and even illegal under Texas law. Many of these older adults do not participate in senior services and programs because they fear discrimination and rejection by the broader communities. The LGBTQ+ community is now much more open, legal rights have been established and they have gained broad acceptance mainstream citizens. In spite of this, many older LGBTQ+ seniors are still afraid to utilize available resources out of fear of bias, discrimination and bullying.

Unfortunately, the current political environment is exacerbating these fears. Openly hostile behavior has become commonplace and efforts to roll back hard-earned LGBTQ+ rights are part of the legislative agenda. Even if these efforts do not gain traction, they will adversely impact the senior LGBTQ+ community's inclination to participate in mainstream senior resources. The City needs to recognize this issue and develop specific strategies for serving this community.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2024 was a year of significant change for the city of Dallas. Kimberly Bizer Tolbert was named Interim City Manager after the resignation and departure of T.C. Broadnax and several other high ranking city officials. Under her leadership there has been a major reorganization of city departments and reporting relationships. There is a new focus on city responsiveness and accountability for results, and on the improvement of communications with city residents. During the 2024-25 budget process, city funding for two long established senior programs (Dart Rider Assistance Program and the Senior Dental Health Program) was eliminated. The City Charter Amendments that were approved in the November elections have added a great deal of uncertainty around the future availability of funding for non-police functions at the city.

It is too soon to tell what impact all of these changes will have on the City's commitment to assist the rapidly growing number of older residents. Two major new initiatives in 2024 should help focus on these issues. The recruitment of the new Age-Friendly Officer who will be responsible for monitoring city services and programs for senior citizens across all city departments should have a very positive impact. And the consulting engagement with Guidehouse to conduct research and help develop a strategic plan for the city's efforts to support senior citizens should have a positive long-term impact.

It is the city's responsibility to be knowledgeable about the challenges facing all segments of the population, but city government is neither responsible nor capable of solving everyone's problems. Financial insecurity and lack of affordable housing are just two major senior issues that will require a collaborative effort on the part of all levels of government, non-profit service providers and the philanthropic community. The kinds of collaborative efforts that have made a significant difference in fighting homelessness are needed to address the growing issues facing the senior citizens. The city should be taking a leadership role in forming these collaborations.

The Senior Affairs Commission recognizes that City Management is responsible for the provision of critical services and public safety for *all* Dallas residents and that older residents benefit from all city functions. The city must recognize that older residents have special needs that make it difficult to access routinely available services. And the city's reliance on service fees to help reduce property tax rates have an unfair impact on seniors living on fixed incomes. Many city departments offer special accommodations and services to seniors but the public awareness of these programs is limited.

The Commission has been critical of the city's communications programs for the past several years and it has become clear that most other governmental and non-profit senior programs have the same issue. Most communications are directed to people who are already being served. Since only a small percentage of the senior population are taking advantage of existing programs, the Commission believes it is clear that the vast majority of seniors are not being reached effectively. This is particularly true for impoverished seniors who need help the most.

The Senior Services Division of the Office of Community Care supports the Senior Affairs Commission's activities, meetings and administrative needs but its primary role is to help connect older Dallas residents with the wide range of city services and special accommodations for senior citizens. In addition, they also serve as a referral source to non-city services and programs that are available to older residents. In fiscal year 2023-24 the staff participated in 100 outreach events and served 1,293 unduplicated clients through the Senior Services Help Line. Each client requires an average of three points of contact throughout the assistance process. Most of the people using the Help Line are seeking help with a crisis situation involving housing, home repairs or needed financial assistance. The dedicated staff members work very hard to help clients and those who receive assistance benefit greatly.

There are approximately 200,000 seniors aged 60 and older living in Dallas, and 31,500 are living at or below the federal poverty line. **The number of people served through the Help Line represent about two-thirds of one percent of the total number of seniors, and only four percent of those living in poverty.** While those being served by the current program benefit greatly, the number of people being served is not having a material impact on the quality of life city's total senior population. The strategic planning process that is now under way must address this challenge. The Commission recommends serious consideration of the following approaches:

- Work closely with the city's overall communications plan to ensure that senior citizens are carved out as a unique audience.
- Document and inventory the full range of special services and programs that are offered across all city departments.
- Develop approaches to educate seniors about financial assistance programs that are offered by federal, state and local governmental agencies to help ensure that seniors are taking full advantage of available resources.
- Produce high quality collateral materials that are tailored to older residents and include important contact information. This material should be distributed to the faith community, food pantries and other trusted organizations that serve individual neighborhoods.
- Recognize that different approaches are needed to reach both the broader senior population and the most vulnerable low-income residents.
- Continue the current outreach efforts at senior events and gatherings, but recognize that these are focused on constituencies that are already connected.
- Develop highly targeted outreach efforts that focus on reaching audiences who are not presently served. This effort cannot depend on expecting seniors in need to come to us;

we need to be going into targeted neighborhoods with the greatest need and using trusted sources of information to assist in reaching people.

- Actively work on collaborative efforts to address the needs of the senior community.

The Park and Recreation Department's Active Senior Adult Program (ASAP) program is the highest volume senior service/program offered by the city. There were 8,649 seniors registered for the program in fiscal year 2023-24 and they hope to increase participation to 10,000 in the current fiscal year. The program is offered at all 43 Recreation Centers across the city although participation varies widely by location. The city provides \$1.1 million for dedicated senior program staff, but funding is inadequate to offer consistent programming at each location throughout the year. The Commission believes this program could grow dramatically if it was better publicized and promoted.

In addition, the city partners with Dallas County to provide congregate meals and senior programming at five rec center locations with dedicated senior spaces as well as the WellMed Senior Activity Center at Redbird Square. These dedicated senior facilities should be replicated across the entire recreation center system.

Since Dallas has not yet developed dedicated senior centers across the city, many seniors have gravitated toward libraries and all-purpose recreation centers as their only opportunity for socialization. There needs to be serious consideration of how to create dedicated senior spaces in existing library and park locations and substantially more money should be provided to enhance and expand senior programming. Libraries and recreation centers are essential for the senior population and should not be treated as non-essential amenities for the general population. Funding for senior programming and staffing needs to be increased to properly serve the senior community needs.

COMMISSION GOALS AND WORK FOR 2025

The Senior Affairs Commission has set forth the following goals and work plan for 2025:

Focus One: Improved Coordination of Senior Services

- Continue to work with the City's Data Analytics Department to develop additional facts about the Dallas senior population. Request an update of the Senior Demographic Data for every City Council District and update existing infographics to reflect the 2023 American Community Survey as soon as the full data release becomes available. Develop updated five-year trend data that can be used in presentations.

- Plan and execute at least two Senior Affairs Commission field trips to visit successful senior programs and/or resources in various parts of the city.
- Receive regular briefings from the new Age-Friendly Dallas Officer and review the status of progress on the Age Friendly Dallas Plan that was adopted by City Council in 2019.
- Continue to foster stronger working relationships and information sharing with Dallas County, AARP, AAA, Alzheimer’s Association, Dallas Area Gerontology Society, The Senior Source, VNA/Meals on Wheels and other agencies who serve seniors.
- Participate in the next Aging in Place Seminar and explore other opportunities to convene conferences with other senior-focused government agencies and non-profit organizations. Organize a meeting of senior leadership from key organizations that serve Dallas seniors to share insights and information.
- Consider potential partnerships with other organizations to initiate a semi-annual “State of the Senior Community” report for Dallas/Dallas County.

Focus Two: Improved Communication to Residents Regarding Senior Services

- Develop Updated Senior Affairs Presentation materials for every City Council District that Commissioners can use at District Town Hall meetings and request that Council Members include senior issues on meeting agendas. These presentations could also be used by Commissioners to create more awareness of senior issues with community groups around the city.
- Participate in the 75+ Senior Poverty Hot Spot Pilot Project that will be led by The Senior Source and the VNA with participation by the city, faith groups and other service providers in the project area. This will include a needs analysis and outreach initiative to impoverished seniors who are not yet being served.
- Monitor the implementation of the expanded Senior Home Repair Program and explore how to best communicate all housing resources to the Dallas seniors.
- Challenge City staff to find ways to increase participation in the current programs being offered to seniors.

Focus Three: Improved Strategic Planning to Build a Better Future for Dallas Seniors

- Provide input to consultants on the kind of needs analysis that should underly the strategies on how to best serve seniors and monitor the progress of the Senior Strategic Planning Consulting Project that is being conducted by the Guidehouse team. Request progress reports to be delivered at the Commission's regular meetings until delivery of their final report.
- Schedule an SAC half-day workshop to review the final strategic plan and discuss how the plan should impact the goals and workplan of the Commission.
- Continue to monitor existing City services and programs for seniors. Assess the gaps between service volumes and the overall needs in the community.
- Identify other community needs that are not being met through existing programs.

APPENDIX I

DALLAS MORNING NEWS DECEMBER 15, 2024 OP-ED ARTICLE

*Don't Forget Seniors
In Holiday Philanthropy*

Don't forget seniors in holiday philanthropy

Many 60 and older in Dallas County face financial hardship and unmet needs

By J. PETER KLINE

This holiday season, let's not forget seniors. In Dallas County alone, there are 50,000 people aged 60 and older who are living at or below the federal poverty level of \$15,060 per year. That is not a typo — \$15,060 per year. Nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population is age 60 or older, but according to John Feather, CEO of Grantmakers in Aging, only about 2% of philanthropy is directed toward senior causes. That is philanthropy's missing link.

Seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes, face financial and food insecurity, medical expenses, rapidly escalating rents and home ownership costs, transportation challenges and social isolation.

Without a major increase in philanthropic support, organizations serving senior citizens will be unable to cope with the explosive growth in senior poverty and the assistance needed for seniors to maintain an acceptable quality of life.

A mother and daughter dressed in holiday colors during a free holiday concert at the Richardson Senior Citizen Center on Dec. 10, 2014. J. Peter Kline, chair of the Dallas Senior Affairs Commission, writes that almost a quarter of the U.S. population is 60 or older, but holiday giving isn't often directed to programs for seniors.



File Photo/The Dallas Morning News

declined by 8.7% over the past 10 years, according to a May report from the Congressional Research Service.

It is critical that philanthropic individuals and foundations elevate senior causes to a much greater focus. For far too long, caring for older citizens has been viewed as almost exclusively a government responsibility and philanthropy has not participated in a meaningful way. It is clear that governmental funding has not kept up with the unprecedented growth in our senior population or with the devastating impact of inflation.

Most of us participate in year-end donations to our favorite charities. This year, please take the time to consider helping large and small organizations that are dedicated to making life better for our senior citizens.

Three of the oldest and largest nonprofits that serve large numbers of senior citizens are the Community Council of Greater Dallas, The Senior Source and the VNA/Meals on Wheels Program. There are also numerous small organizations that need support to deliver services to older residents.

Providing help to our seniors has been the missing link in philanthropy for far too long, and we must change this mindset to meet the needs of our older residents.

J. Peter Kline is chair of the Dallas Senior Affairs Commission.

impossible to pay for housing, food and medical expenses. The need for additional funding is critical.

Most of the funding for older adult services comes from the federal government through Social Security, Medicare and various programs that are mandated through the Older Americans Act. States are required to provide a partial match for federal funding and then distribute it to the Area Agencies on Aging for implementation. Yet, disappointingly, per capita federal funding for Older Americans Act programs

phase of their lives with security and dignity.

The senior population has grown by 26% since 2016; more than 20 times the rate of growth for the rest of the population. Indeed, the Census Bureau estimates that 83% of the U.S. population growth over the past 10 years is attributable to older adults. Nationally, about 10,000 people are turning 65 every day.

This growth means that there has been significant growth in the number of older adults living in poverty. Far too many seniors find it is nearly

Raising money for charitable causes is never easy, but it is particularly difficult to secure philanthropic support for senior programs and facilities. Contributions for children's charities are viewed as an investment in the future while donating to senior citizens service providers is often viewed as an expense related to the past. Yet we are currently living the future that was created through the hard work and investments made by the older people in our community. Our older residents deserve to live the final

APPENDIX II

STATISTICAL PROFILE

OF THE DALLAS

SENIOR POPULATION

Primary data sources include the U.S Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey, City of Dallas 2022 Tax Appraisal Data from Dallas, Collin and Denton County Appraisal Districts and from the Dallas Police Department's 2022 Crime Data Base

PROFILE OF THE DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION IN 2021

COUNCIL DISTRICT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	CITYWIDE
TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION 65+	9,655	6,812	11,020	12,288	7,017	5,944	8,602	9,856	10,853	10,752	12,351	12,341	15,268	7,361	140,120
% OF TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION	6.9%	4.9%	7.9%	8.9%	5.0%	4.2%	6.1%	7.0%	7.7%	7.7%	8.8%	8.9%	10.0%	5.3%	100.0%
65-74	6,333	4,745	6,874	7,000	4,702	3,839	5,702	6,299	6,012	6,323	7,179	7,719	8,255	4,883	85,945
75-84	2,365	3,192	3,986	3,986	1,682	1,666	1,967	2,712	2,984	2,680	3,201	3,362	4,685	1,666	37,537
85+	957	428	954	1,352	883	499	853	845	1,857	1,749	1,971	1,260	2,378	652	16,638
FEMALE/MALE RATIO	53%/47%	55%/45%	57%/43%	61%/39%	54%/46%	56%/44%	61%/39%	60%/40%	55%/45%	54%/46%	57%/43%	58%/42%	56%/44%	50%/50%	57%/43%

SENIOR RACIAL MAKE-UP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	CITYWIDE
WHITE	23%	34%	18%	7%	23%	16%	19%	13%	73%	69%	78%	76%	78%	78%	46%
BLACK	7%	17%	48%	68%	26%	18%	59%	71%	4%	14%	5%	5%	6%	4%	25%
HISPANIC	49%	33%	20%	17%	36%	44%	15%	11%	14%	6%	9%	7%	9%	10%	18%
ALL OTHER	21%	16%	14%	8%	15%	22%	7%	5%	9%	11%	8%	12%	7%	8%	11%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SENIORS LIVING ALONE	2,298	2,252	2,624	3,686	1,931	1,783	2,943	2,486	3,710	2,989	4,213	3,486	4,949	3,132	42,482
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SENIORS WITH 2 OR MORE DISABILITIES	2,668	1,188	2,163	3,910	1,772	1,282	2,388	2,920	1,582	1,823	1,522	1,263	2,034	880	27,395
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SENIOR HOUSEHOLDERS	4,313	2,482	5,004	6,139	3,554	2,383	3,444	4,536	4,752	4,567	5,491	5,089	7,170	3,335	62,259
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AVERAGE APPRAISED VALUE OF HOMES	\$ 294,578	\$ 292,090	\$ 234,725	\$ 174,701	\$ 167,832	\$ 241,158	\$ 227,000	\$ 172,020	\$ 518,765	\$ 440,241	\$ 616,537	\$ 594,668	\$ 984,494	\$ 726,201	\$ 441,116
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CRIMES AGAINST SENIORS IN 2021	353	435	371	496	323	421	623	411	340	264	365	211	458	386	5,457
<i>Crimes per 100 Seniors</i>	3.7	6.4	3.4	4.0	4.6	7.1	7.2	4.2	3.1	2.5	3.0	1.7	3.0	5.2	3.9

SENIORS LIVING IN POVERTY	2,543	2,467	2,651	4,307	2,037	1,756	2,983	2,971	1,623	1,253	1,494	859	1,502	1,239	29,685
AGE 60+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	807	373	1,092	1,236	389	454	627	775	589	248	498	213	558	339	8,198

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$ 29,400	\$ 23,805	\$ 38,009	\$ 27,118	\$ 23,984	\$ 17,848	\$ 24,959	\$ 21,042	\$ 60,994	\$ 48,349	\$ 59,277	\$ 65,784	\$ 72,430	\$ 49,997	\$ 42,829
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PROFILE OF THE DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION IN 2021

Council Districts Ranked by Median Senior Household Income

COUNCIL DISTRICT	6	8	2	5	7	4	1	3	10	14	11	9	12	13	CITYWIDE
TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION 65+	5,944	9,856	6,812	7,017	8,602	12,288	9,655	11,020	10,752	7,361	12,351	10,853	12,341	15,268	140,120
% OF TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION	4.2%	7.0%	4.9%	5.1%	6.3%	8.4%	6.9%	7.8%	7.7%	5.3%	8.8%	7.7%	8.8%	10.0%	100.0%
65-74	3,839	6,299	4,745	4,702	5,782	7,000	6,333	6,874	6,323	4,883	7,179	6,012	7,179	8,255	85,945
75-84	1,606	2,712	1,639	1,432	1,967	3,696	2,365	3,192	2,680	1,826	3,201	2,984	3,362	4,635	37,537
85+	499	845	428	883	853	1,552	957	954	1,749	652	1,971	1,857	1,800	2,378	16,638
FEMALE/MALE RATIO	56%/44%	60%/40%	55%/45%	54%/46%	61%/39%	61%/39%	53%/47%	57%/43%	54%/46%	50%/50%	57%/43%	55%/45%	58%/42%	56%/44%	57%/43%
SENIOR RACIAL MAKE-UP															
WHITE	16%	13%	34%	23%	19%	7%	23%	18%	69%	78%	78%	73%	76%	78%	46%
BLACK	18%	71%	17%	26%	59%	68%	7%	48%	14%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%	25%
HISPANIC	44%	11%	33%	36%	15%	17%	49%	20%	6%	10%	9%	14%	7%	9%	18%
ALL OTHER	22%	5%	16%	15%	7%	8%	21%	14%	11%	8%	8%	9%	12%	7%	11%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
SENIORS LIVING ALONE	1,783	2,486	2,252	1,931	2,943	3,686	2,298	2,624	2,989	3,132	4,213	3,710	3,486	4,949	42,482
SENIORS WITH 2 OR MORE DISABILITIES	1,282	2,970	1,188	1,772	2,388	3,910	2,668	2,163	1,823	880	1,522	1,582	1,263	2,034	27,395
SENIOR HOUSEHOLDERS	2,383	4,536	2,482	3,554	3,444	6,139	4,313	5,004	4,567	3,335	5,491	4,752	5,089	7,170	62,259
AVERAGE APPRAISED VALUE OF HOMES	\$ 241,158	\$ 172,020	\$ 292,090	\$ 167,832	\$ 227,000	\$ 174,701	\$ 294,578	\$ 234,725	\$ 440,241	\$ 726,201	\$ 616,537	\$ 518,765	\$ 594,668	\$ 984,494	\$ 441,116
CRIMES AGAINST SENIORS IN 2022	421	411	435	323	623	496	353	371	264	386	365	340	211	458	5,457
Crimes per 100 Seniors	7.1	4.2	6.4	4.6	7.2	4.0	3.7	3.4	2.5	5.2	3.0	3.1	1.7	3.0	3.9
SENIORS LIVING IN POVERTY															
AGE 60+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	1,756	2,971	2,467	2,037	2,983	4,307	2,543	2,651	1,253	1,239	1,494	1,623	859	1,502	29,685
AGE 75+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	454	775	373	389	627	1,236	807	1,092	248	339	498	589	213	558	8,198
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME															
SENIORS AGE 65+	\$ 17,848	\$ 21,042	\$ 23,805	\$ 23,984	\$ 24,959	\$ 27,118	\$ 29,400	\$ 38,009	\$ 48,349	\$ 49,997	\$ 59,277	\$ 60,994	\$ 65,784	\$ 72,430	\$ 42,829

PROFILE OF THE DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION IN 2021

Seven Council Districts With The Lowest Median Senior Household Income

COUNCIL DISTRICT	6	8	2	5	7	4	1	TOTAL
TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION 65+	5,944	9,856	6,812	7,017	8,602	12,288	9,655	60,174
<i>% OF TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION</i>	<i>4.2%</i>	<i>7.0%</i>	<i>4.9%</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>	<i>8.8%</i>	<i>6.9%</i>	<i>42.9%</i>
65-74	3,839	6,299	4,745	4,702	5,782	7,000	6,333	38,700
75-84	1,606	2,712	1,639	1,432	1,967	3,936	2,365	15,657
85+	499	845	428	883	853	1,352	957	5,817
FEMALE/MALE RATIO	56%/44%	60%/40%	55%/45%	54%/46%	61%/39%	61%/39%	53%/47%	58%/42%

SENIOR RACIAL MAKE-UP								
WHITE	16%	13%	34%	23%	19%	7%	23%	18%
BLACK	18%	71%	17%	26%	59%	68%	7%	42%
HISPANIC	44%	11%	33%	36%	15%	17%	49%	28%
ALL OTHER	22%	5%	16%	15%	7%	8%	21%	12%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SENIORS LIVING ALONE	1,783	2,486	2,252	1,931	2,943	3,686	2,298	17,379
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SENIORS WITH 2 OR MORE DISABILITIES	1,282	2,920	1,188	1,772	2,388	3,910	2,668	16,128
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SENIOR HOUSEHOLDERS	2,383	4,536	2,482	3,554	3,444	6,139	4,313	26,851
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AVERAGE APPRAISED VALUE OF HOMES	\$ 241,158	\$ 172,020	\$ 292,090	\$ 167,832	\$ 227,000	\$ 174,701	\$ 294,578	
----------------------------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	--

CRIMES AGAINST SENIORS IN 2022	421	411	435	323	623	496	353	3,062
<i>Crimes per 100 Seniors</i>	<i>7.1</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>7.2</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>5.1</i>

SENIORS LIVING IN POVERTY								
AGE 60+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	1,756	2,971	2,467	2,037	2,983	4,307	2,543	19,064
AGE 75+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	454	775	373	389	627	1,236	807	4,661

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME								
SENIORS AGE 65+	\$ 17,848	\$ 21,042	\$ 23,805	\$ 23,984	\$ 24,959	\$ 27,118	\$ 29,400	

PROFILE OF THE DALLAS SENIOR POPULATION IN 2021

Seven Council Districts With The Highest Median Senior Household Income

COUNCIL DISTRICT	3	10	14	11	9	12	13	TOTALS
TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION 65+	11,020	10,752	7,361	12,351	10,853	12,341	15,268	79,946
<small>% OF TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION</small>	<small>7.9%</small>	<small>7.7%</small>	<small>5.3%</small>	<small>8.8%</small>	<small>7.7%</small>	<small>8.8%</small>	<small>10.9%</small>	<small>57.1%</small>
65-74	6,874	6,323	4,883	7,179	6,012	7,719	8,255	47,245
75-84	3,192	2,680	1,826	3,201	2,984	3,362	4,635	21,880
85+	954	1,749	652	1,971	1,857	1,260	2,378	10,821
FEMALE/MALE RATIO	57%/43%	54%/46%	50%/50%	57%/43%	55%/45%	58%/42%	56%/44%	56%/44%

SENIOR RACIAL MAKE-UP								
WHITE	18%	69%	78%	78%	73%	76%	78%	67%
BLACK	48%	14%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%	12%
HISPANIC	20%	6%	10%	9%	14%	7%	9%	11%
ALL OTHER	14%	11%	8%	8%	9%	12%	7%	10%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SENIORS LIVING ALONE	2,624	2,989	3,132	4,213	3,710	3,486	4,949	25,103
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SENIORS WITH 2 OR MORE DISABILITIES	2,163	1,823	880	1,522	1,582	1,263	2,034	11,267
-------------------------------------	-------	-------	-----	-------	-------	-------	-------	--------

SENIOR HOUSEHOLDERS	5,004	4,567	3,335	5,491	4,752	5,089	7,170	35,408
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AVERAGE APPRAISED VALUE OF HOMES	\$ 234,725	\$ 440,241	\$ 726,201	\$ 616,537	\$ 518,765	\$ 594,668	\$ 984,494	
----------------------------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	--

CRIMES AGAINST SENIORS IN 2022	371	264	386	365	340	211	458	2,395
<small>Crimes per 100 Seniors</small>	<small>3.4</small>	<small>2.5</small>	<small>5.2</small>	<small>3.0</small>	<small>3.1</small>	<small>1.7</small>	<small>3.0</small>	<small>3.0</small>

SENIORS LIVING IN POVERTY								
AGE 60+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	2,651	1,253	1,239	1,494	1,623	859	1,502	10,621
AGE 75+ LIVING BELOW FED POVERTY LINE	1,092	248	339	498	589	213	558	3,537

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME								
SENIORS AGE 65+	\$ 38,009	\$ 48,349	\$ 49,997	\$ 59,277	\$ 60,994	\$ 65,784	\$ 72,430	

APPENDIX III

CITY OF DALLAS

AGE 75+ SENIOR POVERTY HEAT MAPS

The following poverty maps for city-wide Dallas and each City Council District were prepared by the City of Dallas Data Analytics and Business Intelligence Team, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

POVERTY HOT SPOTS FOR DALLAS SENIORS AGED 75+

Council District	Council Person	Census Tract	Total Population	Total Number of Residents Age 75 or Older	75+ Residents Living at/below Federal Poverty Line	Percent of Age 75+ Residents Living at or below the Poverty Line	
D-1	Chad West	CT 50	3372	236	145	61%	
		CT 52	4562	220	124	56%	
				456	269	59%	
							<i>Census Tract Totals</i>
D-2	Jesse Moreno	CT 25 (P)	1867	75	42	56%	5602
		CT 5.02 (P)	729	113	50	44%	225
				188	92	49%	126
							<i>Census Tract Totals</i>
D-3	Zarin Gracey	CT 113	5698	648	198	31%	
		CT 110.03	4771	634	292	46%	
		CT 111.03	3442	366	104	28%	
				1648	594	36%	
D-4	Carolyn King Arnold	CT 59.01	5291	474	188	40%	
		CT 87.04	4301	355	198	56%	
		CT 88.02	5337	388	107	28%	
		CT 110.02	3707	309	108	35%	
		CT 54	5336	423	127	30%	
				1949	728	37%	
D-5	Jaime Resendez	CT 93.03	4164	251	87	35%	
				251	87	35%	
D-6	Omar Narvaez	CT 205	6148	322	178	55%	
				322	178	55%	
D-7	Adam Bazaldua	CT 27.03	5828	323	173	54%	
		CT 202	2193	210	68	32%	4385
		CT 25 (P)	3735	150	84	56%	420
				683	325	48%	135
							<i>Census Tract Totals</i>
D-8	Tennell Atkins	CT 202	2193	210	68	32%	4385
		CT 116.01	4526	215	112	52%	420
		CT 171.01	6973	176	106	60%	135
				601	286	48%	
D-9	Paula Blackmon	CT 127.01	5327	501	169	34%	
				501	169	34%	
D-10	Kathy Stewart	CT 78.05	2509	655	79	12%	
		CT 190.34	4645	314	75	24%	
		CT 130.08	3046	233	48	21%	
		CT 130.05	4489	543	55	10%	
				1745	257	15%	
D-11	Jaynie Schultz	CT 136.20	6241	499	138	28%	
		CT 192.13	3464	304	157	52%	
				803	295	37%	
D-12	Cara Mendelsohn	CT 216.16	4933	106	63	59%	
				106	63	59%	
D-13	Gay Donnell Willis	CT 96.04	4489	863	276	32%	
		CT 96.03	4997	398	64	16%	
				1261	340	27%	
D-14	Paul Ridley	CT 5.02 (P)	1459	226	100	44%	2188
				226	100	44%	339
							<i>Census Tract Totals</i>
				226	100	44%	150

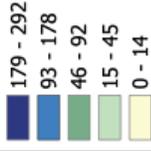
Total 75+ Seniors Living in Poverty in these census tracts 3782

This summary analysis was prepared by J. Peter Kline, Chairman of the Senior Affairs Commission based on the 75+ Poverty Concentration Maps and underlying data tables that were produced by the Data Analytics and Business Analytics team. This Table reflects the census tracts in each City Council District that have the highest concentration of 75+ seniors who are living at or below the Federal Poverty Level. The goal of this analysis was to identify the census tracts with the greatest concentrations of 75+ senior poverty in order to select one neighborhood for a comprehensive needs analysis and outreach program to our most vulnerable residents.



Senior Poverty 75+ City Wide

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



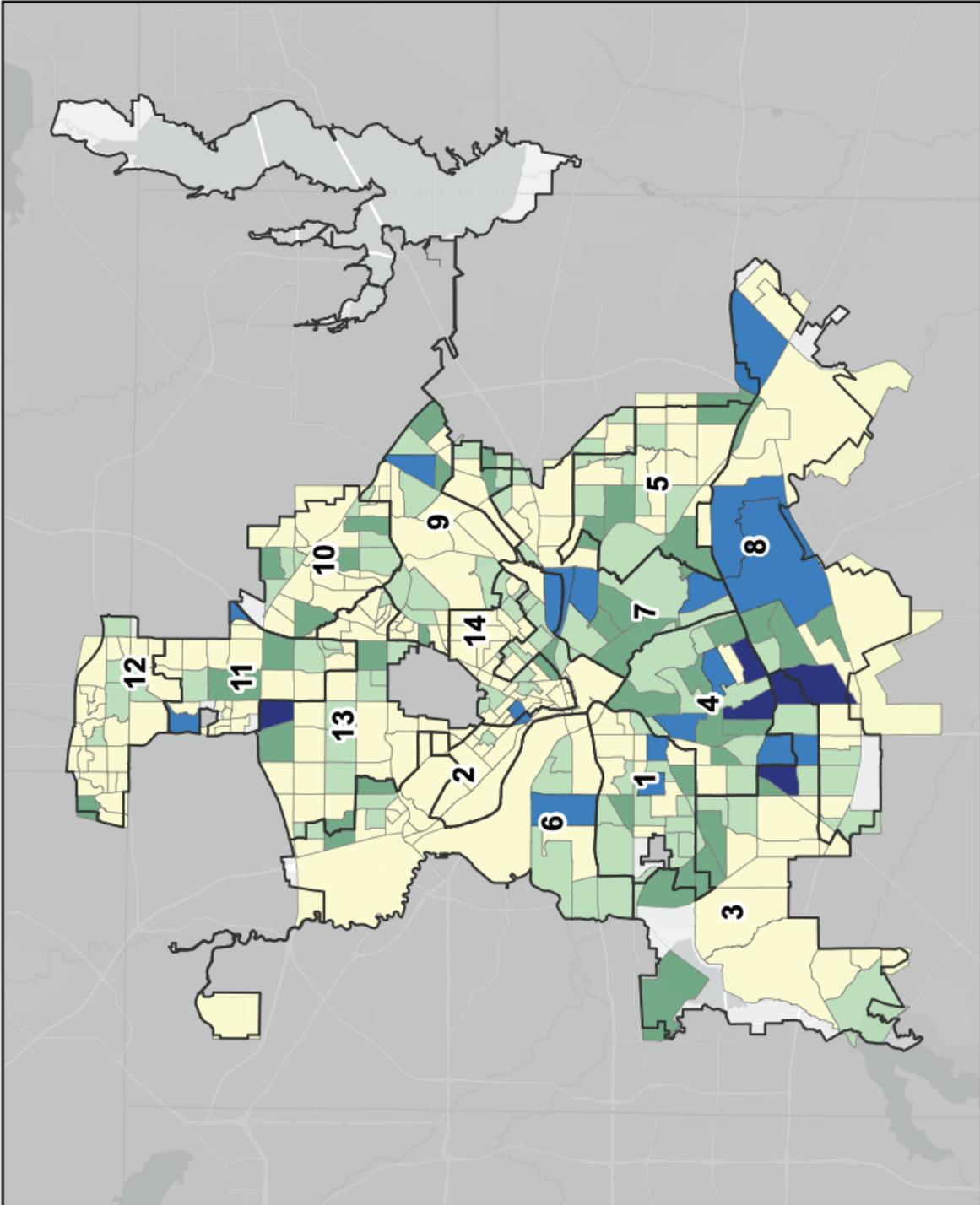
Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

DISCLAIMER
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Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2024
Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.

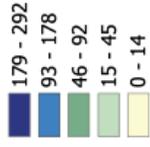




Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 1

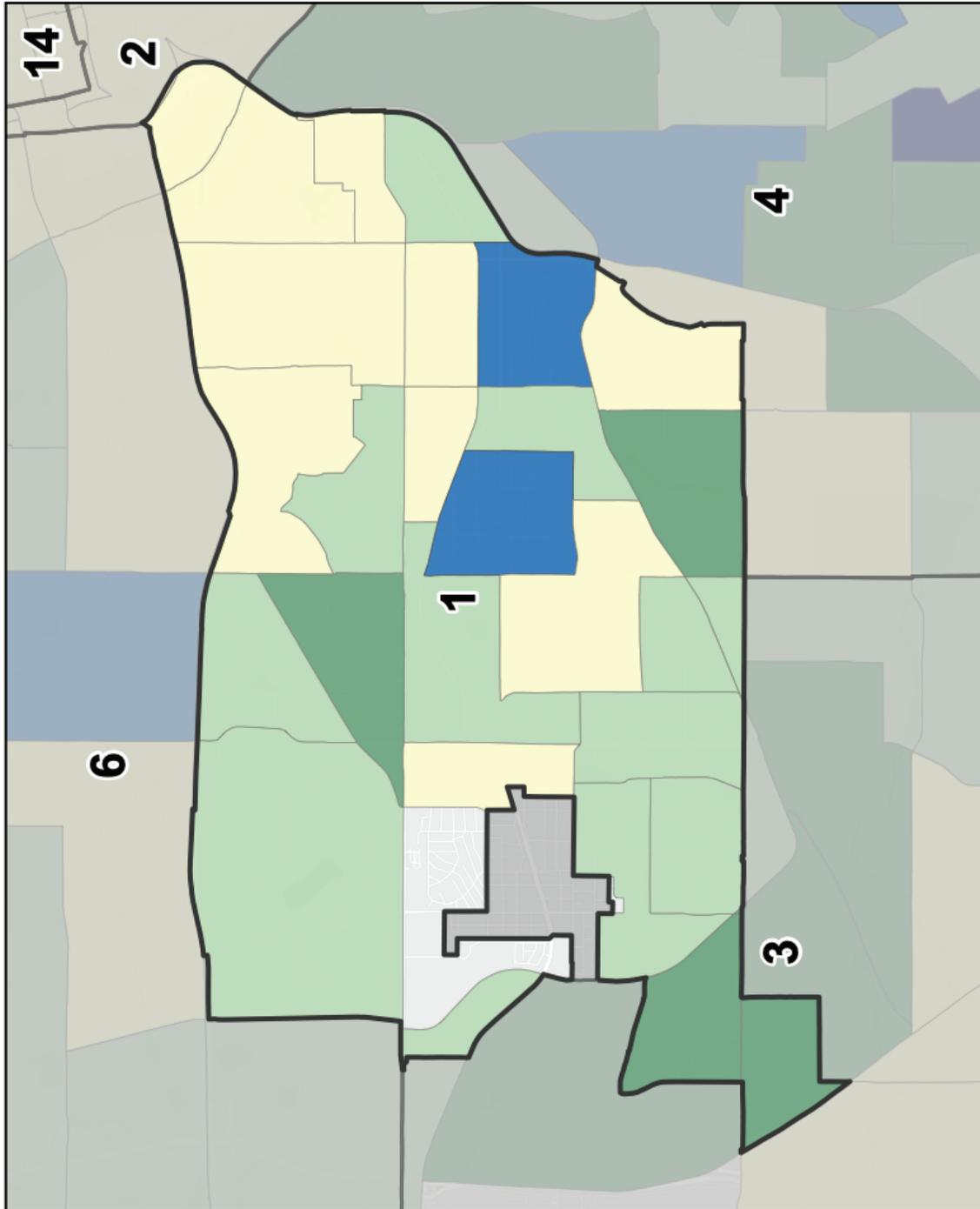
Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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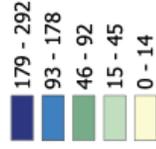
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Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 2

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



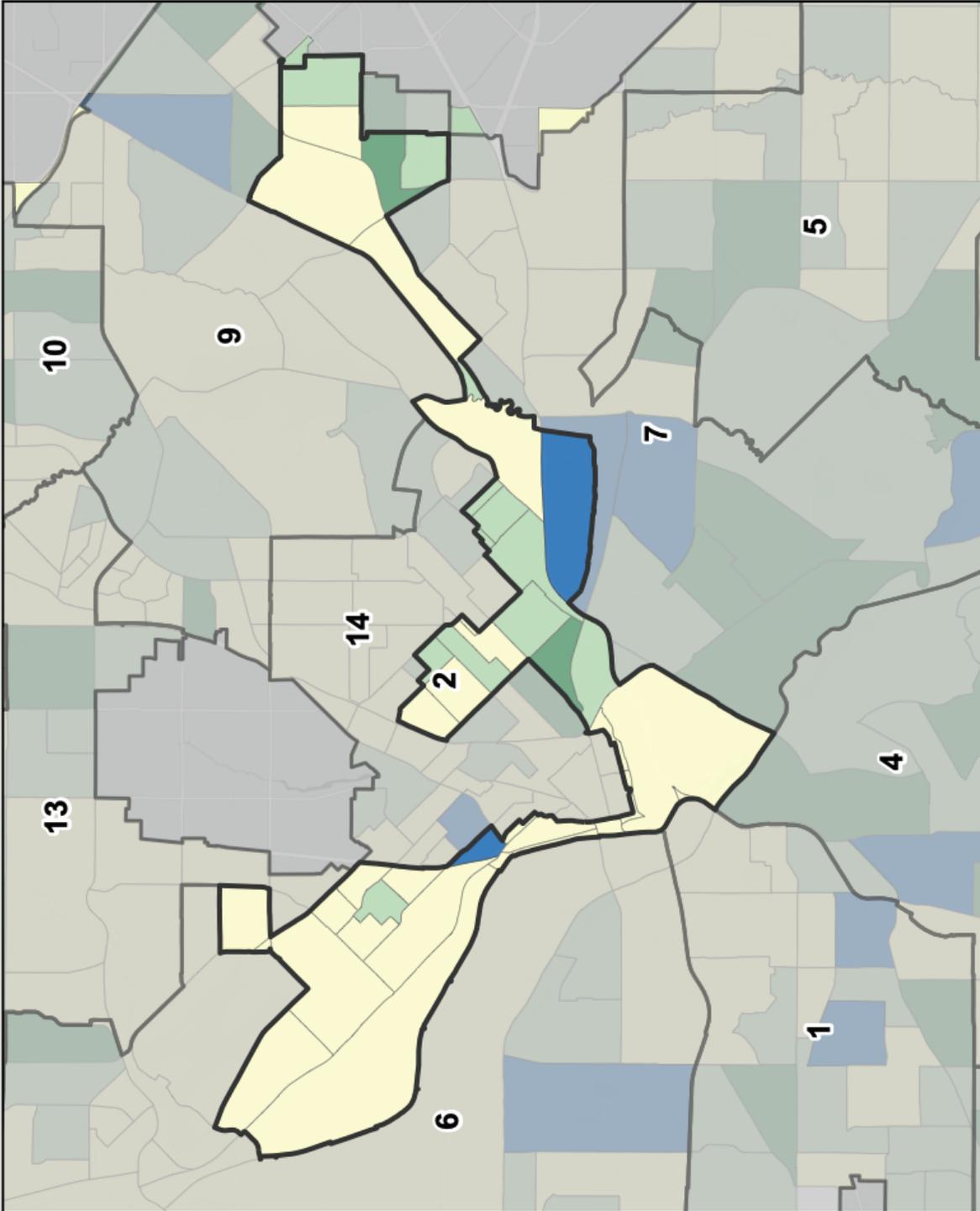
Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American
Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project Name: SAC_Poverty
Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
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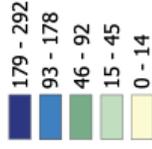




Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 3

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



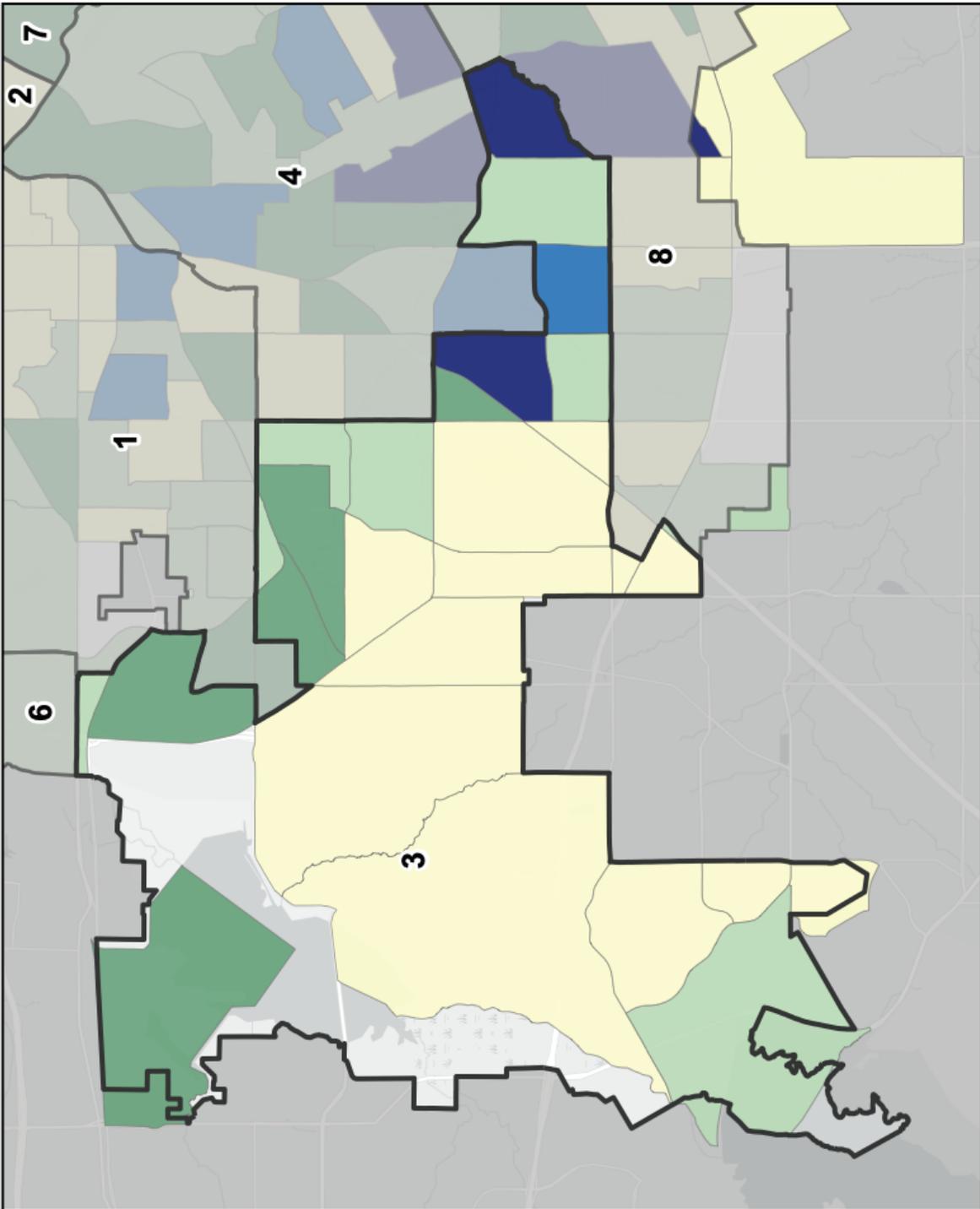
Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American
Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Monthly, September 23, 2024
Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
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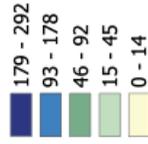




Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 4

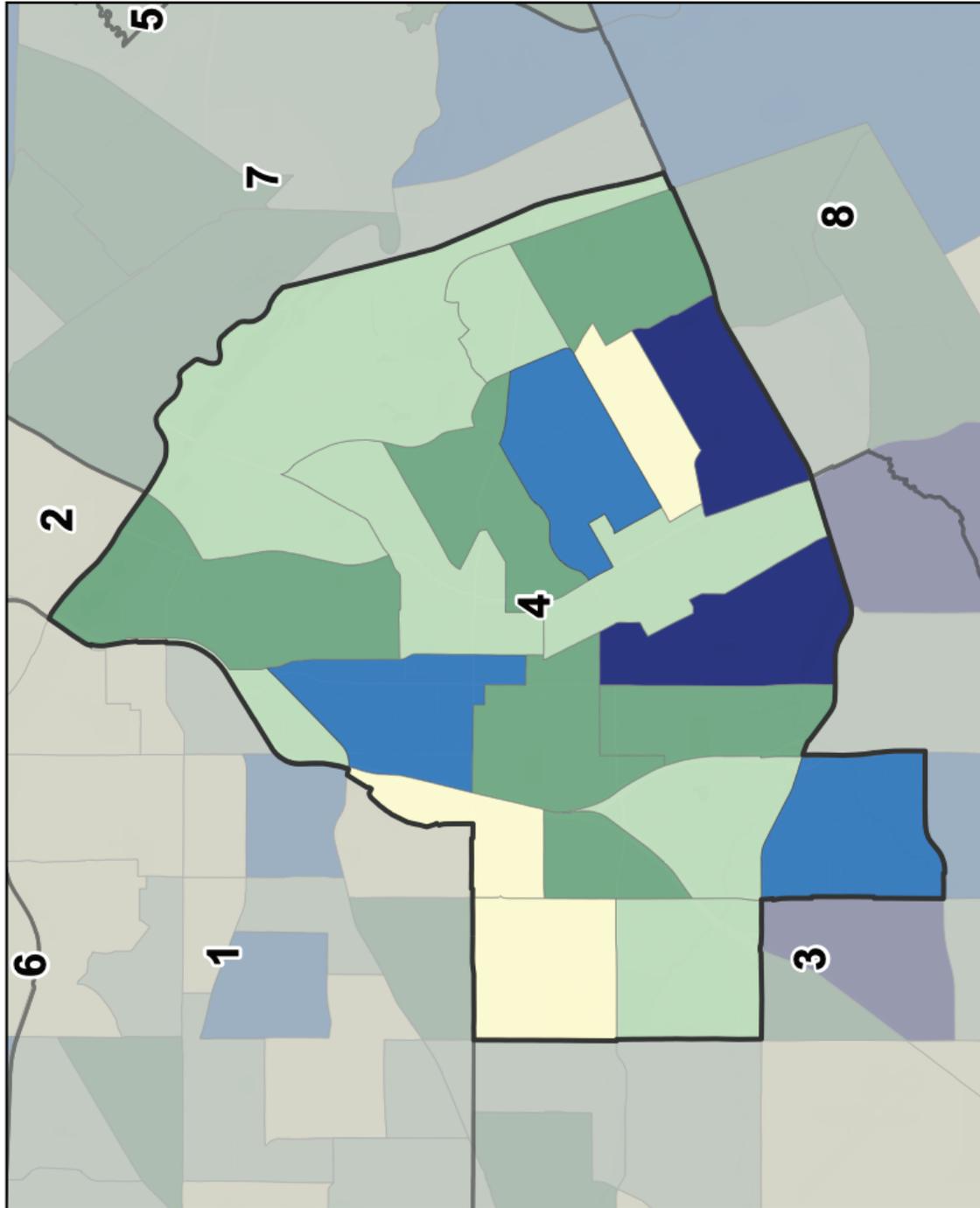
Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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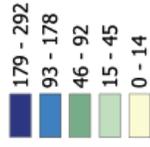
Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project Name: SAC_Poverty
Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
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Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 5

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



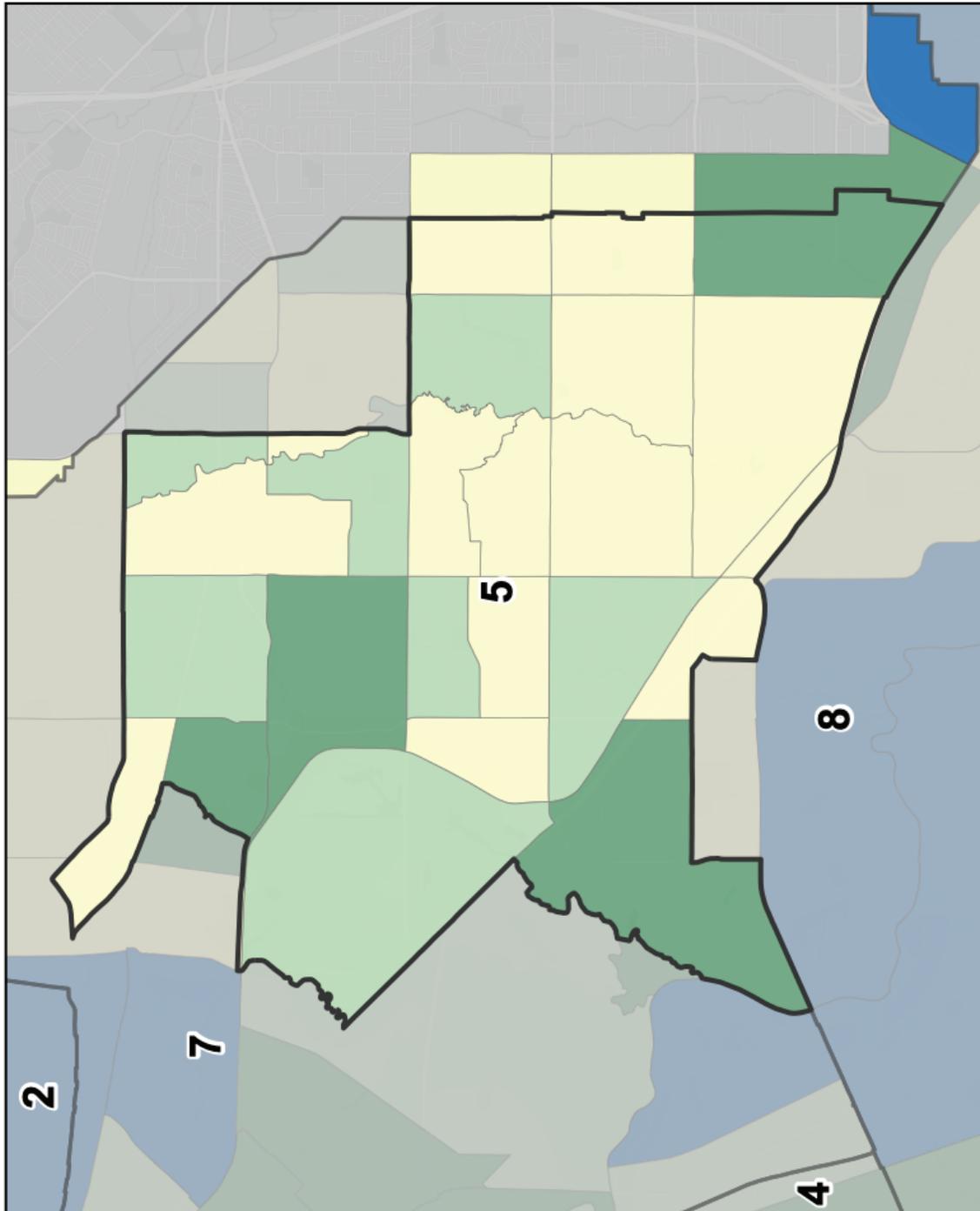
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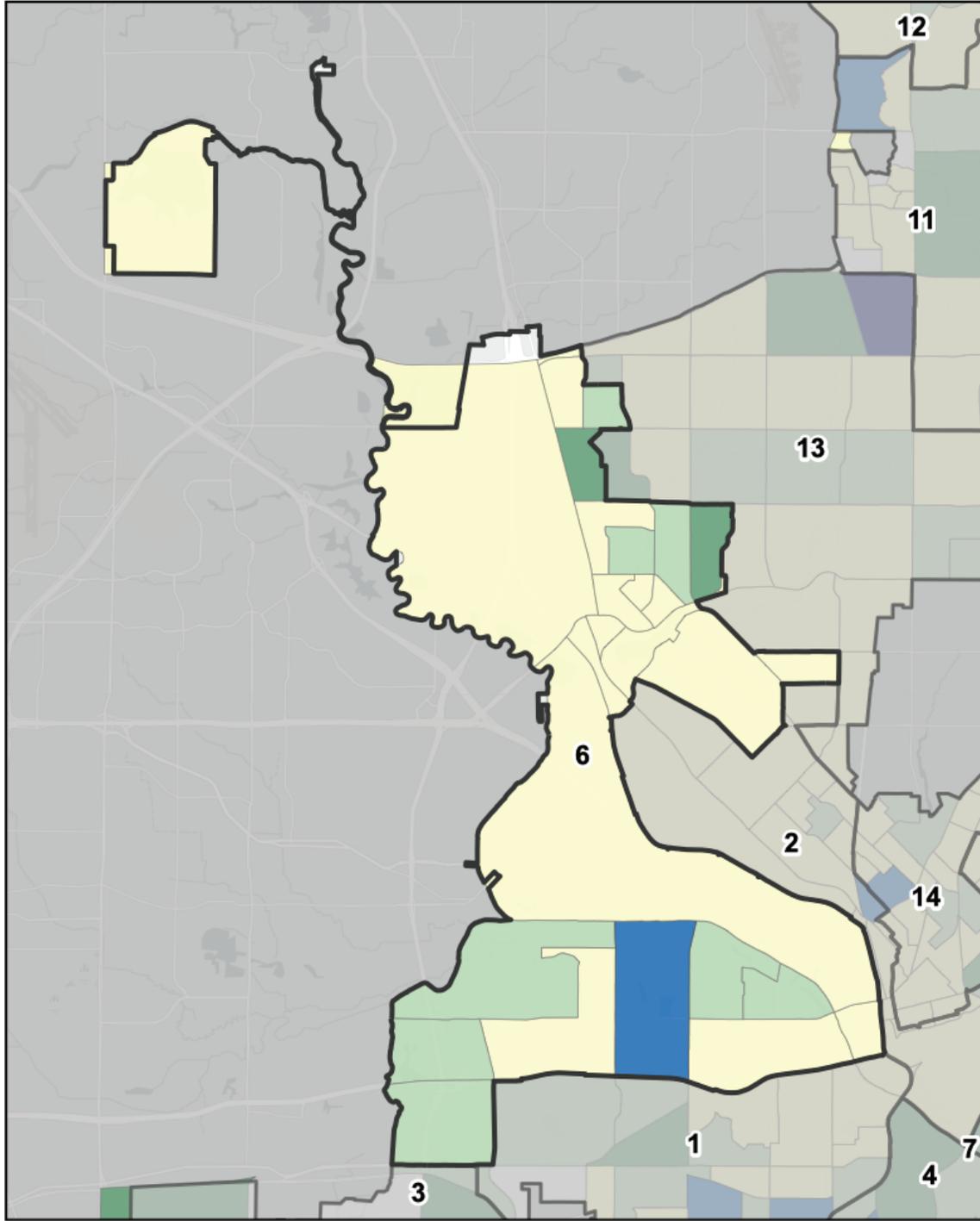
Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 6

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level

- 179 - 292
- 93 - 178
- 46 - 92
- 15 - 45
- 0 - 14

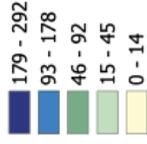
 Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
 Project Name: SAC_Poverty
 Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
 Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.



Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 7

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



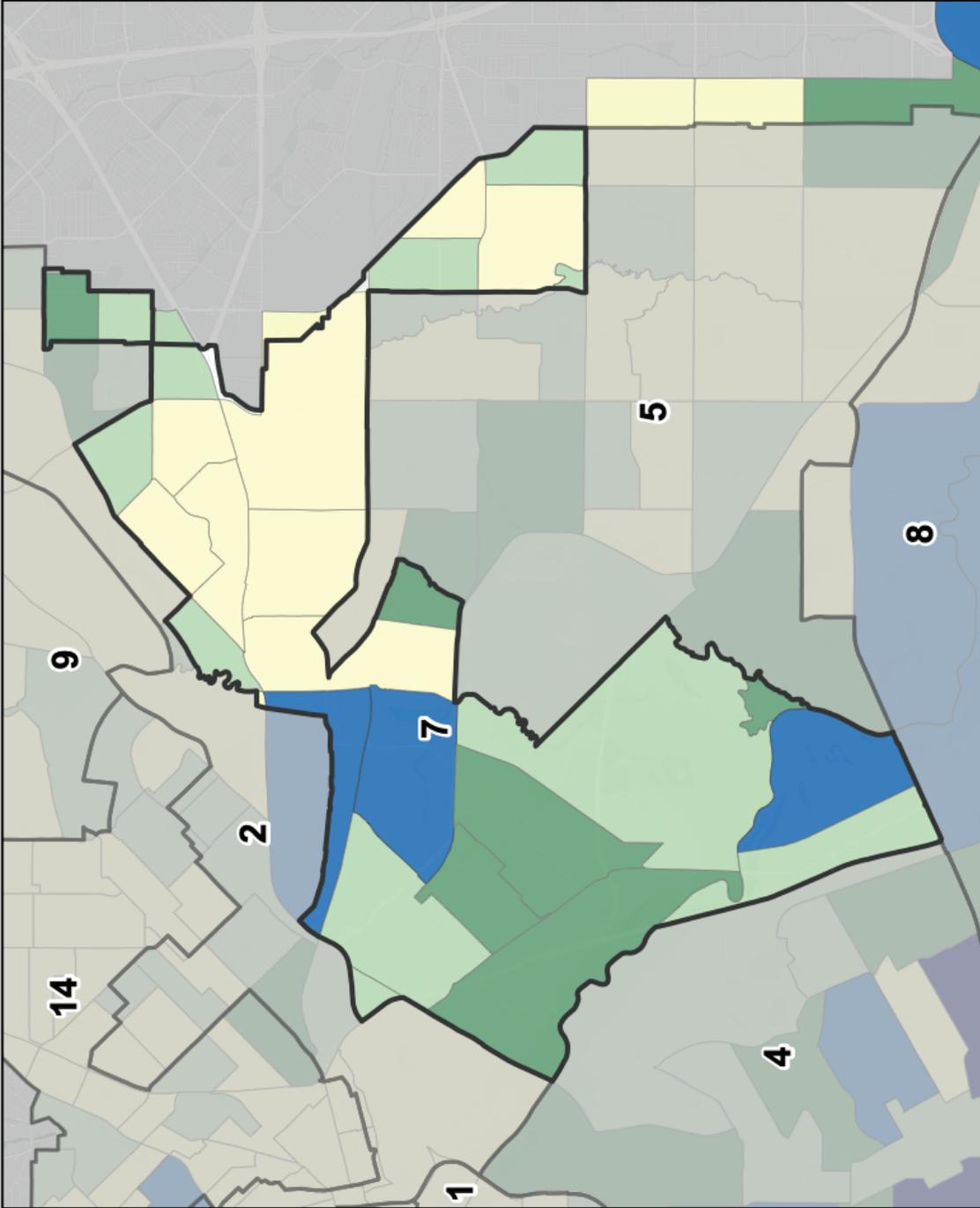
Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range or estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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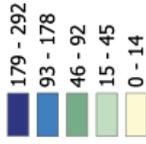




Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 8

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



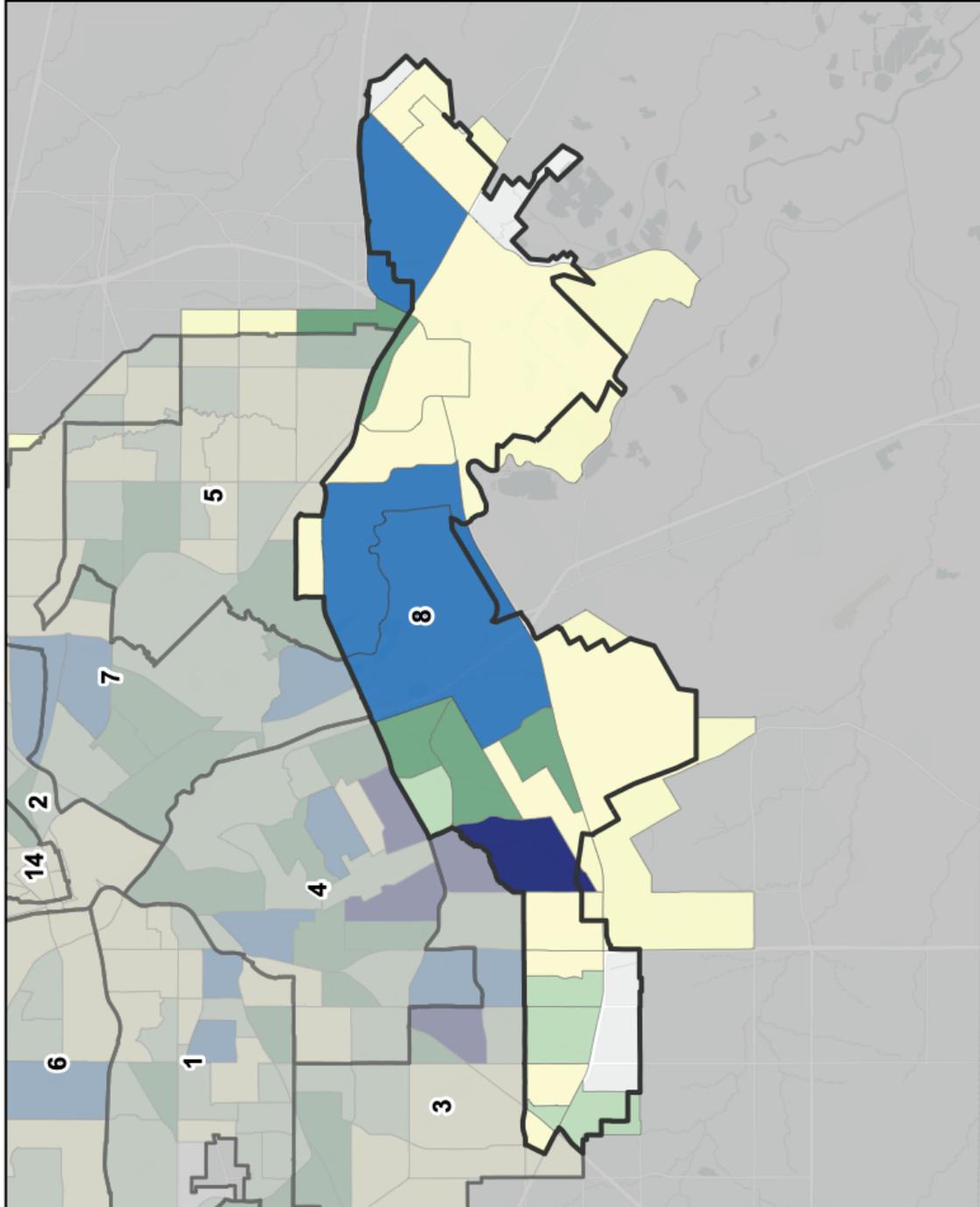
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project Name: SAC_Poverty
Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
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Senior Poverty 60+

Council District 9

Senior Population (60 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



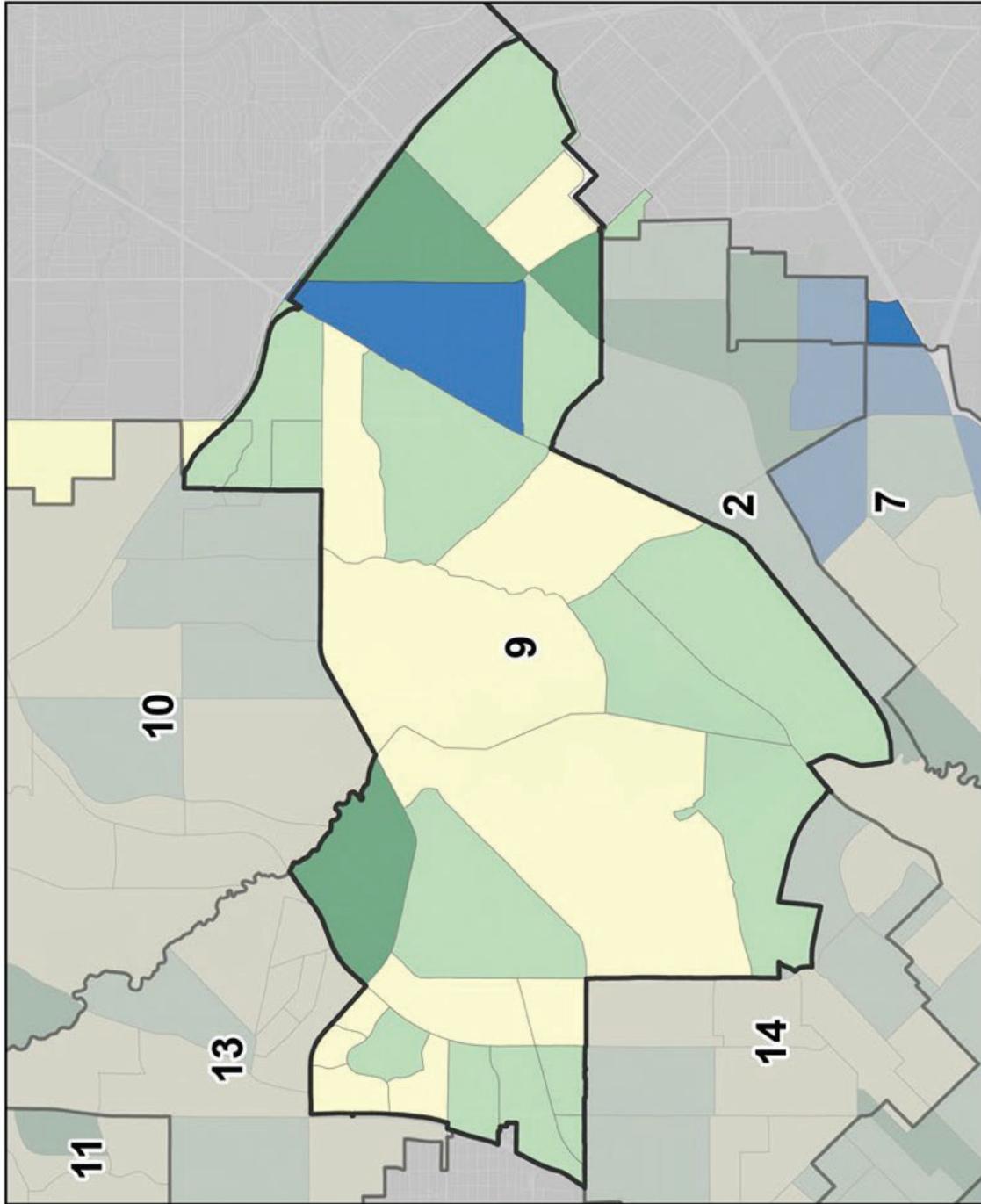
Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022
Food Pantry Data as of 2017.
Tax Appraisal Data 2024.

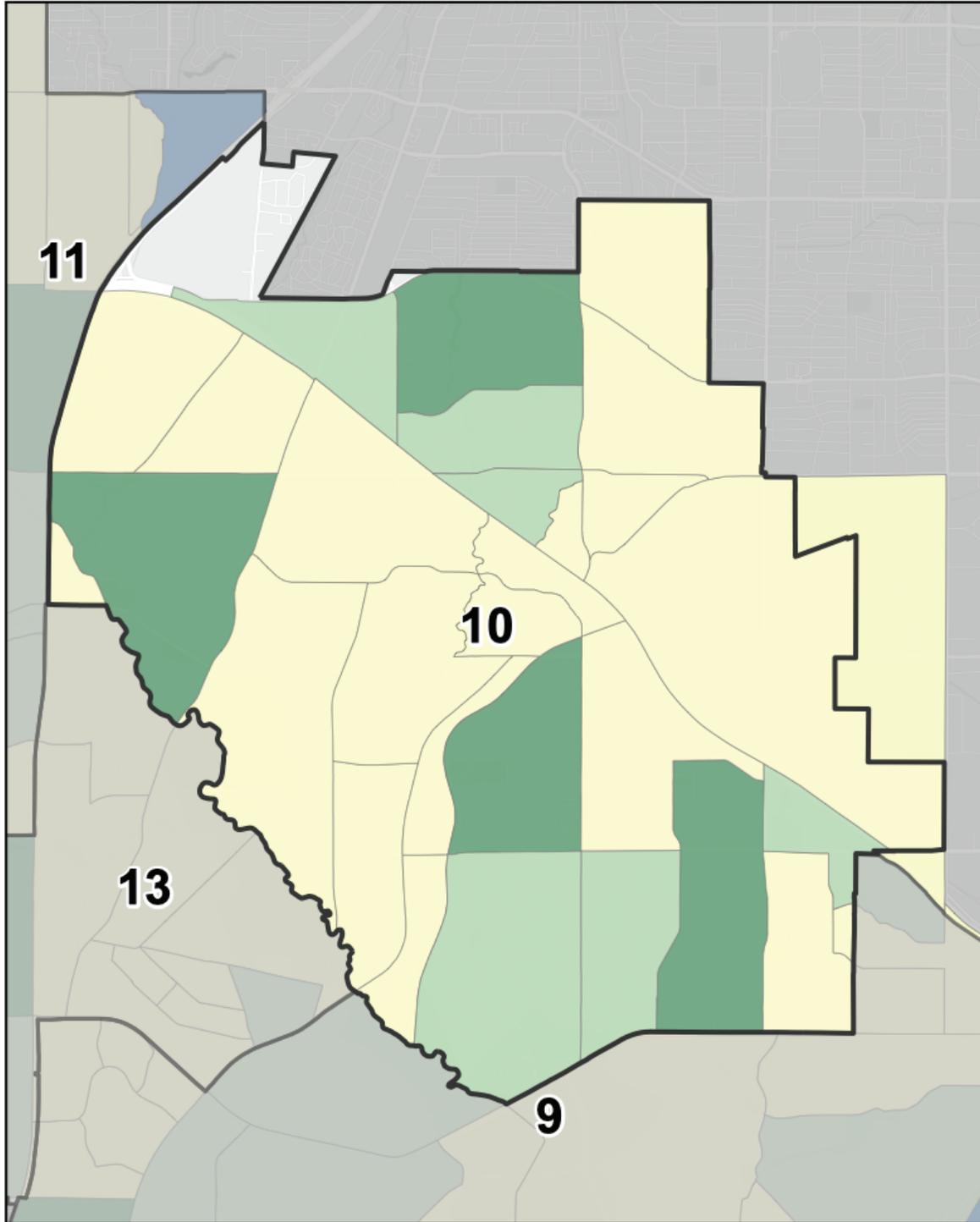
Note:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2024
Prepared By: Data Science and Business Intelligence
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0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Senior Poverty 75+

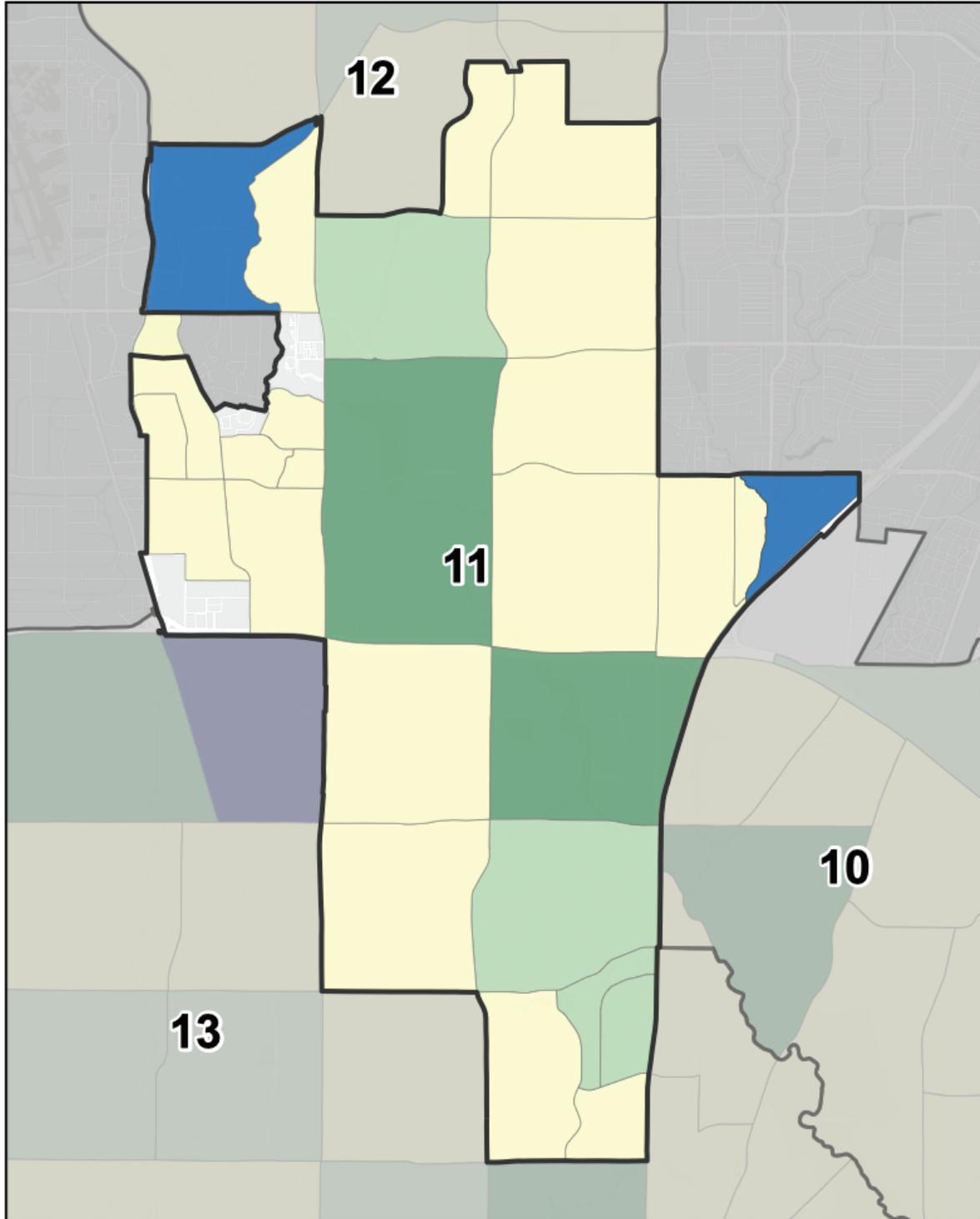
Council District 10

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level

- 179 - 292
- 93 - 178
- 46 - 92
- 15 - 45
- 0 - 14



Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
 Project Name: SAC_Poverty
 Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
 Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 11



Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
 Project Name: SAC_Poverty
 Prepared By: Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
 Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level

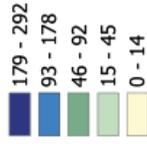
- 179 - 292
- 93 - 178
- 46 - 92
- 15 - 45
- 0 - 14



Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 12

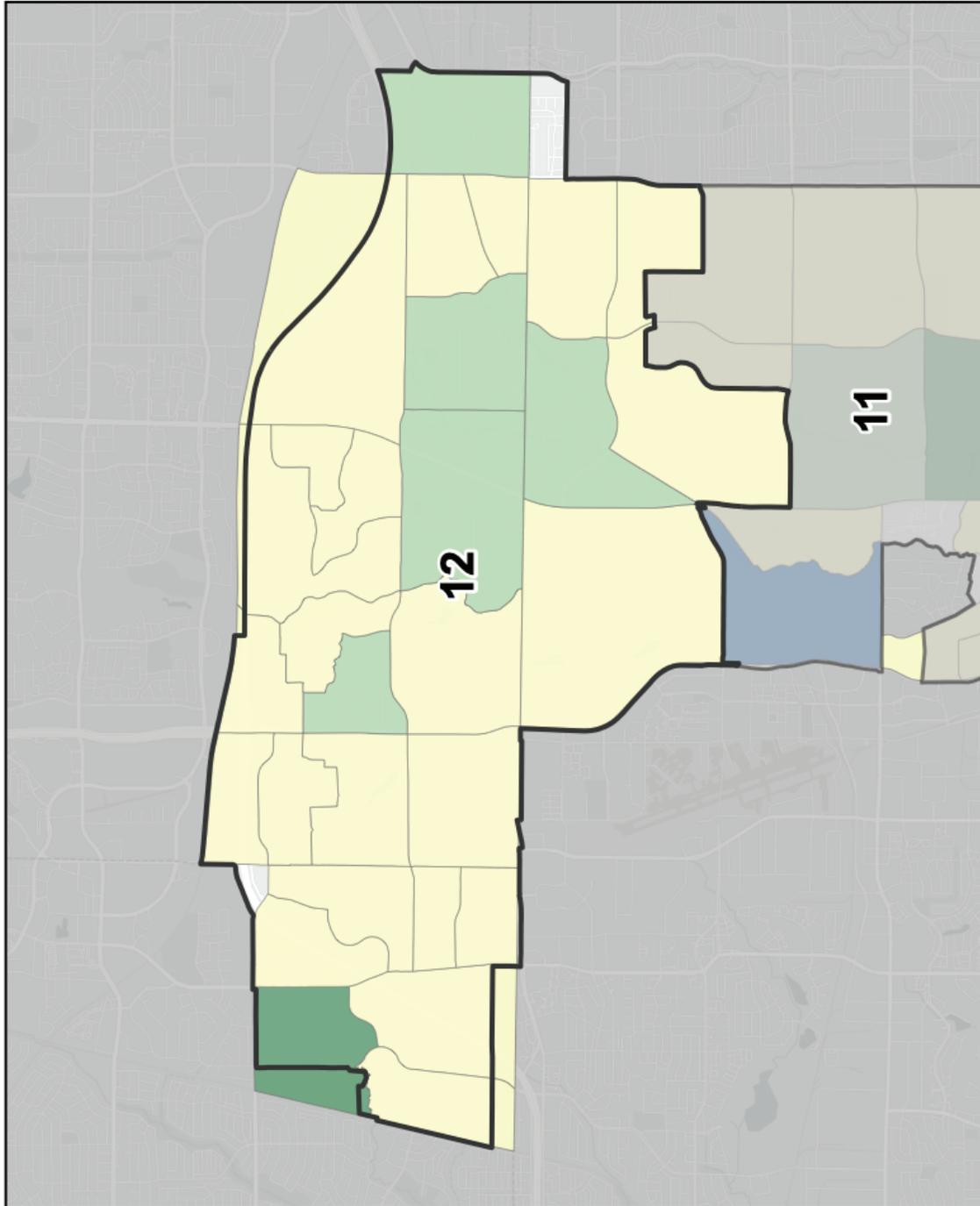
Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



Data Source:
U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Notes:
The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

DISCLAIMER
The accuracy is not to be taken / used as data produced by a Registered Professional Land Surveyor for the State of Texas or as a basis for any legal action. The creation of this product does not constitute a survey or a representation of fact. This product is for informational purposes only and may not be used for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. (Texas Government Code § 2051.10).



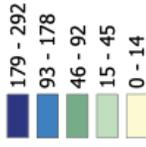
Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project Name: SAC_Poverty
Prepared by: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.



Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 13

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



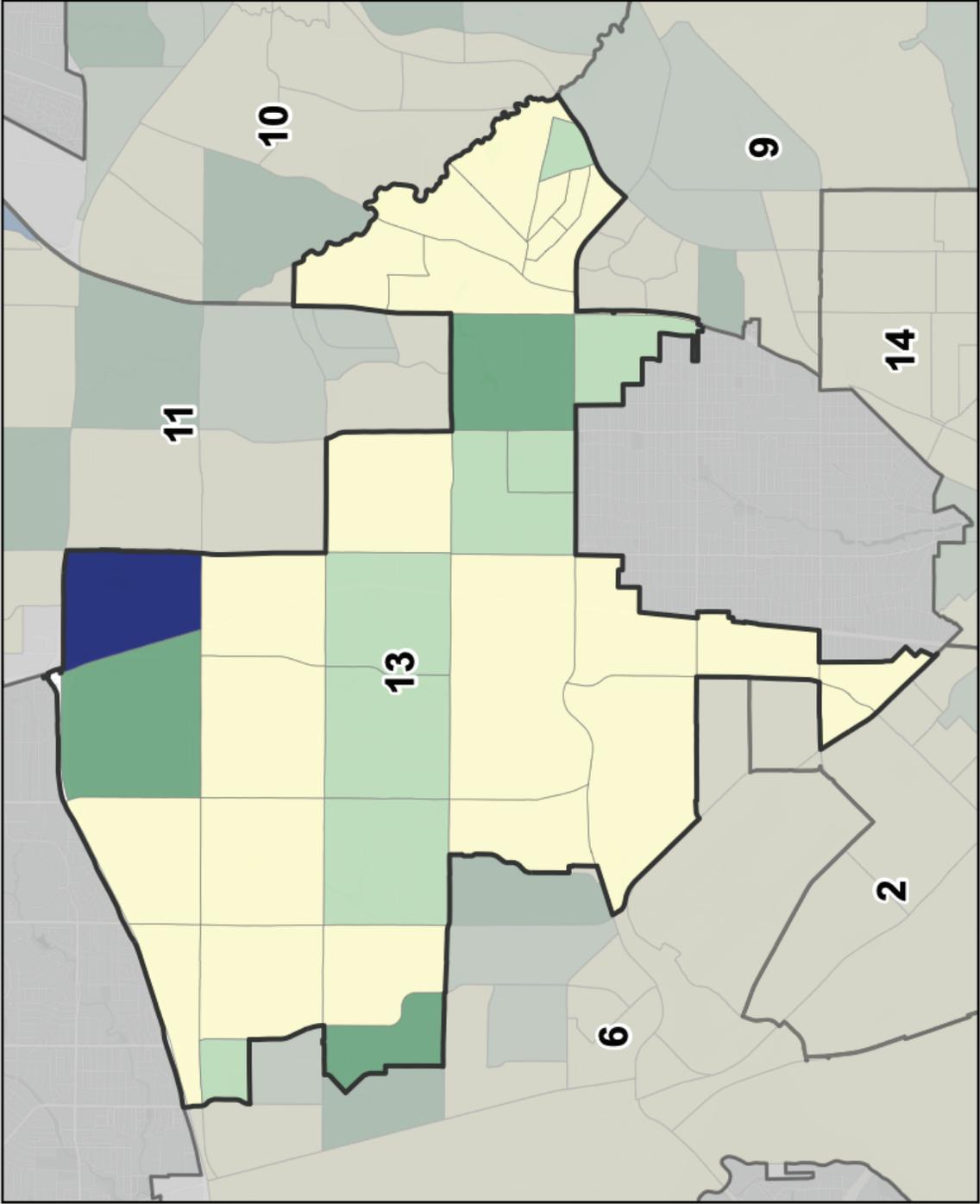
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project Name: SAC Poverty
Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.

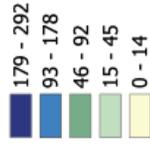




Senior Poverty 75+

Council District 14

Senior Population (75 years and over) whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level



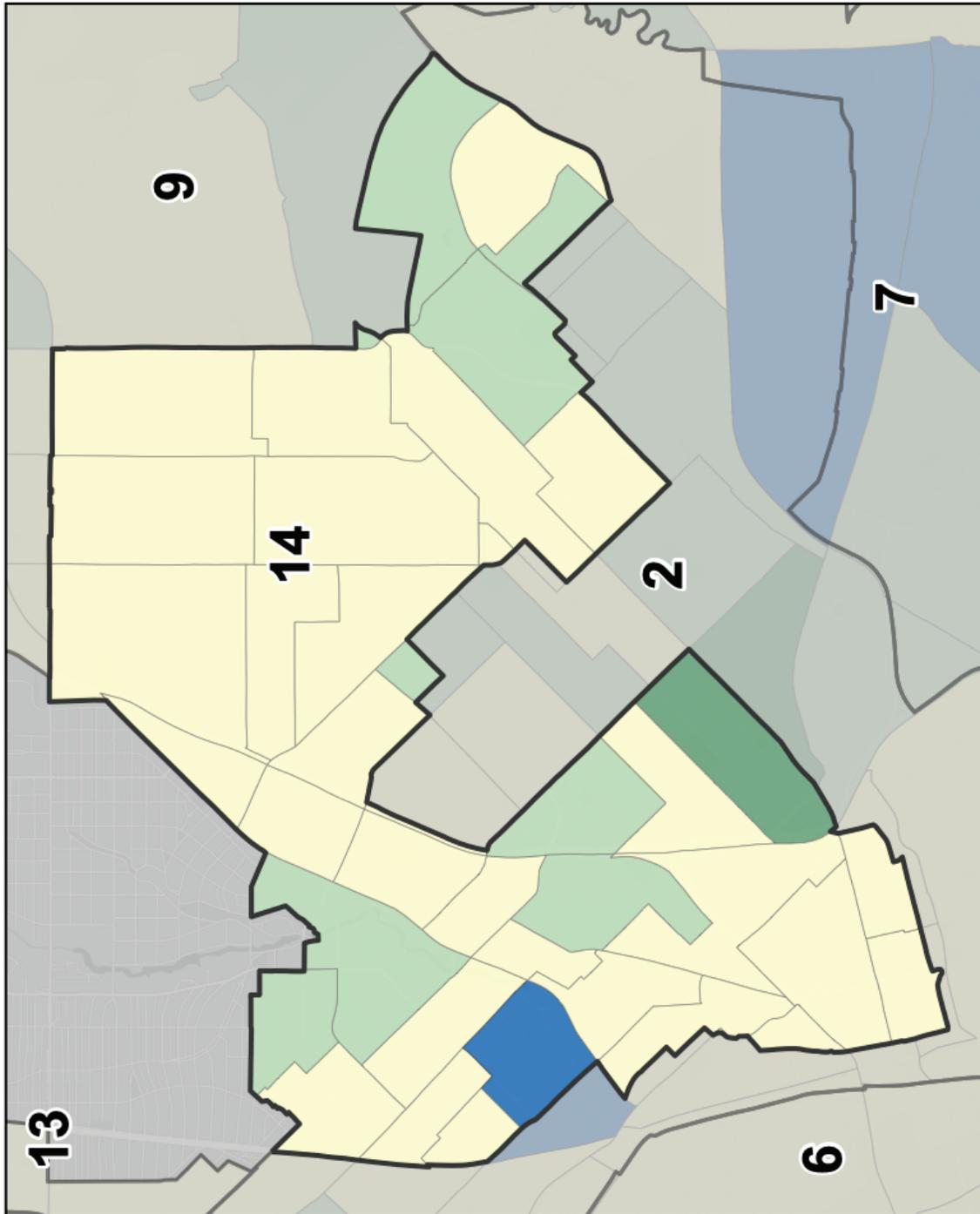
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2018-2022.

Note: The Poverty Threshold for this dataset is \$14,040 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. The legend displays the range of estimated total number of seniors at or below poverty level in a census tract.

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Date: Monday, September 23, 2024
Project: Map of Senior Poverty
Map Data: Senior Poverty
Property of: City of Dallas Enterprise GIS for illustrative purposes only.



Date: January 27, 2025

To: City of Dallas Mayor and Members of Dallas City Council Members

Subject: Addressing the Needs and Inclusion in City Services and Resources of LGBTQ Seniors in Dallas

Introduction

As the only openly Gay member of the Dallas Senior Affairs Commission (SAC), I feel a deep responsibility to address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ seniors in our city. While discussions in the SAC center on the general needs of the senior population, it is essential to acknowledge that LGBTQ seniors encounter distinct barriers that can profoundly affect their quality of life. The absence of a voice representing those directly affected by these issues undermines the very essence of inclusivity and equity that our commission stands for. It raises questions about the validity and effectiveness of the recommendations being made. Furthermore, it is troubling that there has been no outreach to local organizations that serve LGBT seniors, which could provide valuable insights and perspectives. Engaging with these organizations is crucial for understanding the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ seniors in our community.

Additionally, I must highlight the repeated rebuff of efforts made by this author as our only gay commissioner to educate fellow members on these critical issues.

In 2024, as highlighted in the SAC annual report submitted to City Council, several Dallas city departments and various organizations from throughout the city were invited for “Special Presentations” to the commission, yet there were no invitations extended to LGBTQ organizations that could address the unique needs of LGBTQ Seniors, highlighting a systematic deficit in recognizing this vital segment of our population.

This lack of openness to dialogue and learning not only stifles progress but also perpetuates a culture of exclusion. It is essential that we foster an environment where all voices are heard and valued, especially those of marginalized communities.

Given the lack of inclusion and representation, it has become necessary to draft a minority report to accompany the submission of the annual report to the City Council. This minority report will serve as a vital counterpoint, highlighting the perspectives and needs of LGBT seniors that have been overlooked. It is crucial that the City Council receives a comprehensive view of the issues at hand, including dissenting opinions that reflect the experiences of those directly impacted. This minority report will not only provide a more accurate representation of the community's needs but will also emphasize the importance of inclusive practices moving forward. It is essential for the commission to acknowledge and address these gaps to ensure that all seniors, regardless of their sexual orientation, feel supported and valued. This report seeks to not only illuminate the needs of this community, but will also propose compassionate, actionable solutions to better serve this marginalized and vulnerable community.

The Absence of LGBTQ Representation:

Not only has there been a notable lack of invitations made to organizations that represent the LGBTQ community, this author as a Gay Commissioner, has never been invited to events and meetings nor notified of invitations made to the SAC where their voice could champion the cause of LGBTQ seniors, and that is deeply is deeply concerning. This exclusion not only silences an important perspective but also perpetuates the invisibility of LGBTQ seniors in our city's planning and resource allocation.

Additionally, I must highlight the repeated rebuff of efforts made by this author as a Gay Commissioner to educate fellow members of the SAC on critical issues related to LGBTQ seniors. This lack of openness to dialogue and learning not only stifles progress but also perpetuates a culture of exclusion. It is essential that we foster an environment where all voices are heard and valued, especially those of marginalized communities.

As we as a Commission reflect on the efforts to support our senior population, it is essential to address the glaring absence of targeted outreach to the LGBTQ senior community. Without such outreach, programs and resources remain out of reach or go unused by this vulnerable demographic. The existing initiatives, including the Office of Community Care, the Senior Ombudsman Program, and the Age-Friendly Dallas Plan, do not adequately consider the unique needs of LGBTQ seniors, leaving them at risk of further marginalization.

The Age-Friendly Dallas Plan, approved by the Dallas City Council in 2019, outlines several domains crucial to our aging population, such as outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, and social participation. However, it fails to include any stated goals or strategies for the inclusion of LGBTQ seniors. This oversight not only neglects a significant segment of our community but also perpetuates the invisibility of LGBTQ seniors in city planning and resource allocation.

The newly created position of "Age-Friendly Officer" in the Office of Community Care aims to review progress on the 2019 plan and update the initiative. However, given that the original plan did not mention or include LGBTQ seniors, it is unlikely that this new role will have any meaningful impact on their needs.

The phrase "Taxation without Representation" originally referred to the American colonies' frustration with being taxed by the British government without having a voice in that government. This concept can be related to LGBTQ seniors in Dallas, who may face unique challenges and needs that are not adequately addressed by local policies or representatives.

Needs of LGBTQ Seniors:

Many LGBTQ seniors experience issues like social isolation, discrimination, and lack of access to healthcare and supportive services. If their voices and needs are not represented in local government decisions, they may be taxed—both literally and figuratively—through policies that do not consider their specific circumstances. For example, funding for senior services, affordable housing, and healthcare might not adequately reflect the needs of LGBTQ seniors, leading to a lack of resources and support. Many LGBTQ seniors face unique challenges that differ from their heterosexual peers, particularly when it comes to accessing safe spaces for socializing and

receiving essential services like congregate lunches. While heterosexual seniors may have established community centers or programs that cater to their needs, LGBTQ seniors often struggle to find inclusive environments where they can feel safe, accepted, and supported. This lack of safe spaces can lead to increased social isolation, which is detrimental to their mental and emotional well-being.

The phrase "Taxation without Representation" is a concept closely related to the experiences of LGBTQ seniors in Dallas, who often find themselves marginalized and without adequate representation in community services and resources.

It highlights the frustration of being subjected to rules and taxes without having a voice in the decisions that affect one's life. When LGBTQ seniors feel that their concerns are overlooked or ignored by those in power, it creates a sense of disenfranchisement similar to the historical context of "Taxation without Representation". Ensuring that LGBTQ seniors have representation in local government and their unique needs are acknowledged and addressed is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable community in Dallas. This way, they can receive the support they deserve without feeling marginalized or voiceless.

Moreover, the absence of representation in the Office of Community Affairs means that the specific needs of LGBTQ seniors are frequently overlooked.

To truly serve the diverse senior population of Dallas, the Age-Friendly Dallas Plan must be revised to incorporate clearly defined goals for LGBTQ seniors, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are met.

The Senior Affairs Commission has conducted numerous meetings and listening sessions throughout 2024, focusing on the senior population's needs. While these efforts are commendable, they have not specifically addressed the challenges faced by LGBTQ seniors. The lack of representation and targeted outreach means that LGBTQ seniors have not felt comfortable participating in these discussions, further isolating them from the resources and support they desperately need.

While I appreciate the acknowledgment of the progress made in legal rights and societal acceptance noted in the SAC annual report provided by the Chairman of the SAC, Peter Kline, I must respectfully refute the notion that fear is the sole reason for the reluctance of LGBTQ seniors to engage with senior services and programs.

Many LGBTQ seniors do not participate because they feel marginalized, voiceless, and unsupported by the current city government. These individuals contribute to the city through taxes and civic engagement yet find themselves overlooked in terms of their unique needs and concerns.

Despite the advancements in legal rights, many LGBTQ seniors still experience systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing safe and inclusive spaces. The fear of discrimination is compounded by the reality that their specific needs—such as social support, healthcare access, and safe housing—are often not addressed in the services offered by the city. This lack of representation leaves them feeling isolated and unheard, leading to a reluctance to engage with programs that do not cater to their experiences.

Furthermore, the absence of dedicated advocacy and support within the city government leaves LGBTQ seniors feeling unsupported. They need assurance that their voices will be heard and that their unique challenges will be met with empathy and understanding, with the same urgency and respect as those of their heterosexual counterparts. Without this, it's not just fear of discrimination that holds them back; it's the realization that their needs may not be prioritized or even acknowledged.

To foster a truly inclusive environment, it is essential for the Dallas city government to actively engage with LGBTQ seniors, ensuring that their voices are included in the conversation about community services and resources. By doing so, we can work towards dismantling the barriers that keep them from participating fully in the community they help sustain.

In conclusion, while fear does indeed play a role, it is the feeling of being marginalized and unsupported that truly inhibits LGBTQ seniors from accessing the resources they deserve. It is time for our city to recognize and address these disparities, ensuring that all seniors, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, can enjoy the rights and services they are entitled to.

Identified Needs of LGBTQ Seniors in Dallas

Social isolation is a significant concern for many LGBTQ seniors. This isolation often results in mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, which can further diminish their quality of life.

We are in a crisis right now where a lot of LGBTQ+ older adults do not have quality of available family caregiver support based on structural barriers such as anti-LGBT legislation or attitudes towards LGBTQ+ marriage and family formation.

The loss of partners, friends, and family members, combined with societal stigma, can lead to profound loneliness. There are so many of us that do not have children to help us arrange and manage the last stages of our lives, therefore we need safe places where LGBT seniors can not only share their stories but can also grow old safely, and where their health and legal needs can be carried out and looked after diligently

Healthcare disparities also pose a serious challenge. Many LGBTQ seniors face discrimination in healthcare settings, which can create reluctance to seek necessary medical care. This leads to poorer health outcomes and a pervasive lack of trust in healthcare providers, exacerbating their vulnerability.

Housing insecurity is another pressing issue. Affordable and inclusive housing options are scarce for LGBTQ seniors, many of whom fear discrimination in housing situations. This fear can lead to increased vulnerability and even homelessness, making it imperative that we address these housing needs.

Access to support services is limited, with a noticeable lack of targeted resources for LGBTQ seniors. This includes counseling, social programs, and other services that recognize and affirm their unique experiences and identities.

Finally, cultural competency among service providers is often lacking. Many professionals do not receive adequate training in LGBTQ issues, which can hinder effective communication and support for this demographic.

Solutions:

To remedy this situation, we must take proactive steps to ensure that LGBTQ seniors receive the services and resources they need. Here are some recommendations:

- 1. Establish Inclusive Programs:** Develop programs specifically tailored to the needs of LGBTQ seniors, including mental health support, social activities, and healthcare resources that are sensitive to their unique experiences.
- 2. Increase Representation:** Ensure the Gay Commissioner is included in relevant meetings and events, allowing for a direct channel of communication and advocacy for LGBTQ seniors.
- 3. Conduct Needs Assessments:** Implement surveys and focus groups to gather input from LGBTQ seniors about their specific needs and challenges, ensuring that their voices are heard in the decision-making process.
- 4. Training for Service Providers:** Provide training for staff and volunteers in senior services to foster an understanding of LGBTQ issues, promoting an inclusive environment where all seniors feel safe and respected.
- 5. Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with local LGBTQ organizations to create resources and support networks that cater to the senior community.

By taking these steps, we can begin to address the exclusion of LGBTQ seniors and ensure they receive the recognition and support they deserve. It is crucial that we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity within our senior population, as this not only enriches our community but also aligns with our values of equality and inclusion.

Recommendations to Alleviate Needs of LGBTQ Seniors

To address these needs, I propose the establishment of an LGBTQ Senior Center. This dedicated space would cater specifically yet not exclusively to LGBTQ seniors, offering social activities, support groups, and wellness programs. It should be a safe and welcoming environment where seniors can connect with peers and feel not only accepted but celebrated.

Implementing comprehensive training programs for healthcare providers, social workers, and staff at Senior Centers / Recreation Centers is also crucial. This training would ensure that they understand the unique needs of LGBTQ seniors, enabling them to offer respectful and informed care.

Enhancing mental health services is vital. We should increase funding for programs that specifically address the needs of LGBTQ seniors, including counseling, support groups, and crisis intervention services tailored to their experiences.

Promoting affordable housing initiatives is essential. We must advocate for policies that ensure affordable housing options are inclusive and accessible to LGBTQ seniors. Collaborating with local housing organizations to develop LGBTQ-friendly housing projects can help alleviate this pressing concern.

Creating outreach programs to connect LGBTQ seniors with available resources, services, and community events is equally important. Informational workshops, newsletters, and partnerships with LGBTQ organizations in Dallas can facilitate this connection.

Finally, fostering community engagement through partnerships between the Senior Affairs Commission and LGBTQ organizations can create events and programs that promote intergenerational connections and community building.

Rationale for Hiring or Promoting an LGBTQ-Informed Employee in the Office of Community Affairs

The city of Dallas has a diverse population that includes a significant number of LGBTQ individuals, including seniors who face unique challenges and barriers. To effectively address the needs of this community, it is essential to have dedicated personnel within the Office of Community Affairs who are knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues and can advocate for their specific needs. Here are several compelling reasons why the city should hire or promote from within an LGBTQ-informed employee for this role:

1. **Expertise in LGBTQ Issues:** An LGBTQ-informed employee brings valuable insights and understanding of the specific challenges faced by LGBTQ seniors. Their lived experiences and knowledge of the community can guide the development of programs and services that are culturally competent and relevant.

2. **Building Trust:** Trust is a critical component in serving marginalized communities. An employee who identifies as LGBTQ can foster trust and rapport with LGBTQ seniors, encouraging them to engage with city services and resources. This connection can lead to more effective outreach and support.

3. **Advocacy for Inclusive Policies:** An LGBTQ-informed employee can advocate for policies and initiatives that promote inclusivity and equity within city services. They can ensure that the voices of LGBTQ seniors are heard in decision-making processes, leading to more responsive and effective community programs.

4. Improving Service Delivery: By having someone in the Office of Community Affairs who is well-versed in LGBTQ issues, the city can improve the delivery of services to LGBTQ seniors. This employee can identify gaps in services, recommend improvements, and implement strategies that ensure LGBTQ seniors receive the support they need.

5. Enhancing Community Engagement: **Hiring or promoting an LGBTQ-informed employee to work within the Office of Community Affairs** is a strategic and necessary step for the city of Dallas. This action will not only enhance the city's ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ seniors but also demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and equity for all residents. By investing in this role, the city can create a more supportive and responsive environment for its diverse population.

An LGBTQ-informed employee can lead efforts to engage the LGBTQ community in city initiatives, fostering a sense of belonging and participation. This engagement can help the city better understand the needs and concerns of LGBTQ seniors and develop programs that address those needs. The city of Dallas has a diverse population that includes a significant number of LGBTQ individuals, including seniors who face unique challenges and barriers. To effectively address the needs of this community, it is essential to have dedicated personnel within the Office of Community Affairs who are knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues and can advocate for their specific needs. Here are several compelling reasons why the city should hire or promote from within an LGBTQ-informed employee for this role:

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C. Advocacy for Inclusive Policies: An LGBTQ-informed employee can advocate for policies and initiatives that promote inclusivity and equity within city services. They can ensure that the voices of LGBTQ seniors are heard in decision-making processes, leading to more responsive and effective community programs.

D. Improving Service Delivery: By having someone in the Office of Community Affairs who is well-versed in LGBTQ issues, the city can improve the delivery of services to LGBTQ seniors. This employee can identify gaps in services, recommend improvements, and implement strategies that ensure LGBTQ seniors receive the support they need.

E. Enhancing Community Engagement: An LGBTQ-informed employee can lead efforts to engage the LGBTQ community in city initiatives, fostering a sense of belonging and

participation. This engagement can help the city better understand the needs and concerns of LGBTQ seniors and develop programs that address those needs.

F. Promoting Cultural Competency: Hiring or promoting an LGBTQ-informed employee can enhance the cultural competency of the entire Office of Community Affairs. This individual can provide training and resources for other staff members, ensuring that all city employees are equipped to serve LGBTQ seniors effectively and respectfully.

G. Alignment with City Values: The city of Dallas has a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Hiring or promoting an LGBTQ-informed employee aligns with these values and demonstrates the city's dedication to serving all residents, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

H. Addressing Health and Social Disparities: LGBTQ seniors often face health disparities and social isolation. An informed employee can implement targeted programs that address these issues, improving overall health outcomes and quality of life for this population.

In conclusion, this action will not only enhance the city's ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ seniors but also demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and equity for all residents. By investing in this role, the city can create a more supportive and responsive environment for its diverse population.

Conclusion:

As we strive to create a more inclusive and equitable Dallas, it is imperative that we address the specific needs of LGBTQ seniors. By implementing these recommendations, we can cultivate a supportive environment that acknowledges their unique challenges and enhances their quality of life. I urge the Dallas City Council to consider these proposals seriously and work collaboratively to ensure that no senior, regardless of their sexual orientation, is left behind. Only through genuine engagement can we ensure that our policies and initiatives truly reflect the needs of all seniors in our community.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Portia M. Cantrell, RN
Member, Senior Affairs Commission
District 2