

A Caring Place Feasibility Assessment

Hub and Spoke Landscape Analysis Key Findings

Report prepared by:

Carolyn Oldham, PhD

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205 Dickey Hall
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-2628
EvaluationCenter@uky.edu
education.uky.edu/evaluationcenter/

INTRODUCTION

Lexington’s A Caring Place village is a nonprofit, grassroots organization formed in 2019 with the mission of promoting social connection among, and aging-in-place supports to, seniors. Composed of 81 volunteers and 84 members, it is one of over 300 villages in the national Village-to-Village Network. In 2025, A Caring Place received \$150,000 to conduct a feasibility assessment for the purpose of expanding its services to the city using a village hub-and-spoke model. Cited benefits of the hub and spoke model include the hub’s start up support for new villages: 501c3 status; access to marketing and communication resources as well as a web site and database management system (e.g., Helpful Village or Run, Run My Village); staff support for operational needs; and mentoring (Carrier and Aviv, 2022). Additional gains include shared service offerings and regional collaborative efforts, both of which are attractive to funders. Under this model, A Caring Place would provide 501c3 status as well as start-up and administrative supports to new villages, including the proposed Beaumont and Gardenside Village.

In summer of 2025, A Caring Place contracted with The University of Kentucky’s College of Education’s Evaluation Center, via a subaward through the College of Social Work, to conduct a landscape analysis of other villages operating under the hub-and-spoke model. The evaluator sent recruitment announcements to those registered in the Village-to-Village Network directory as participating in this model. Using a semi-structured protocol, the evaluator interviewed eight hubs to gain operational insights. In addition to these hubs, the evaluator conducted interviews with three spokes affiliated with a hub. The year of establishment, number of spokes, and membership counts for seven hubs are indicated in Table 1. Additional organizations interviewed which do not operate in a hub-and-spoke village model, included a village unaffiliated with a hub model, a regional organization which provides supports and resources to villages, and a larger senior-serving organization affiliated with the Village-to-Village Network.

Table 1.
Hub Establishment, Spoke Count, and Membership

Hub	Established	# of Spokes	Members
Hub A	2023	1	700*
Hub B	2015	1	40
Hub C	2019	1	45
Hub D	2015	14	N/R**
Hub E	2014	11	868
Hub F	2016	3	331
Hub G	2013	0***	259

*All households in a neighborhood association are members, 50 of these are registered members of the spoke (completed an application). **N/R= not reported. ***During the time of interviews, Hub G's spoke broke off from its hub, forming its own 501c3.

KEY FINDINGS

GOVERNANCE

All hub and spokes operate according to the hub's bylaws, a mandatory document for maintaining its 501c3 tax-exempt status. Hub-drafted memoranda of understanding (MOUs) serve as a guide for the relationship between the hub and the spoke and are reviewed on an annual or biannual—every two years—basis. Under this agreement, hubs manage operations as the umbrella 501c3 entity, provide liability as well as directors and officers insurance, and manage taxes, village software, and bookkeeping. In addition to these responsibilities, interviewees relayed the importance of the hub leading the composition, review, and dissemination of all print materials to ensure protection of its 501c3 status.

Each hub's board of directors serve as the hub and spokes' fiduciary, overseeing operations and compliance. Some interviewees noted as a challenge that board members who had served as instrumental in launching the hub were now needing services themselves and no longer able to serve in a board role. Board succession planning was cited as key to ensuring leadership continuity and organizational stability. One best practice includes multigenerational board composition.

At the village-level, a steering or standing committee is responsible for actively engaging with their community and identifying its needs, planning social and community events, and leading local member and volunteer recruitment. Spokes often employ local teams to recruit and train volunteers, engage new members, and assist with budgets and financial reporting, as well as organize and host events.

The structure of village representation at the hub-level varies. In most cases, one or two members from each village steering or standing committee then serve on the hub's board of directors. In one hub's model, representatives from each village serve on a council convened by the hub's executive director who then serves the liaison with the board of directors. To facilitate collaboration across villages, another hub employs affinity groups, composed of representatives from each village, which meet to discuss issues and best practices related to membership, volunteer recruitment and management, fundraising, finance, and social activities.

STAFFING

Hub staffing varies with some executive director positions being volunteer-held and others paid. The median paid executive director salary of those interviewed is \$65,000. Outside of the executive director, additional part-time staffing—paid and volunteer—includes: an office manager, a member services coordinator, a volunteer manager to process background checks, a village development coordinator, a bookkeeper, and an information technology assistant. In some cases, paid staff reside at the village-level but are considered employees of the hub.

FINANCE

Hub revenue streams derive mostly from membership dues, grants and fundraising (see Table 2). One hub received \$20,000 from the city to pilot its hub and spoke and anticipates another \$40,000-\$80,000 in support from the county. Another hub’s three-year pilot budget is \$160,000, with half provided by the county and the rest supported by fundraising.

A notable revenue stream includes one hub’s \$68 reimbursement from the state for each new member intake and current member assessment made; new member intakes include interviewing prospect members for membership eligibility and distribution of resources to help them age in place, while current member assessments are completed when there is a change in status of a member because of a fall, cognitive decline, family concern, resource distribution, etc. Broadly speaking, each village’s finances are either co-mingled with the hub’s or managed from a subaccount. At the village-level, volunteer treasurers are often employed to oversee subaccount finances.

Table 2.
Membership Dues by Hub

Hub	Village Membership Dues	Finance
Hub A	\$0	3-year pilot of the hub is financed half by the state at \$80,000/year + half by fundraising (total budget of \$160,000/year).
Hub B	Single: \$150/year Household: \$225/year Social Membership*: \$60/year Membership fees waived for those with incomes below \$52,142 and household incomes less than \$59,209.	Hub is financed by a benefactor.

Hub	Village Membership Dues	Finance
Hub C	Single: \$200/year \$90 short-term membership for 3 months**	50% of revenue is from membership fees; 50% is from investment income, grants, and donations.
Hub D	A sliding Scale Membership is offered: Single: \$120, \$300 or \$480/year Household: \$180, \$480 or \$720/year	16% is from membership dues; 60% of revenue is from grants; 18% is from donations; and 6% is from events.
Hub E	Full-Service Single***: \$540 Full-Service + 1: \$300/year Associate**: \$300/year Up to 15% of memberships can be assisted.	Operating budget is \$70,000. Half of this is from grants. Spoke contributes 8% of income to the hub; this pays for annual appeal, tax services, and Zoom subscription.
Hub F	Single: \$600/year Household: \$750/year Social Membership Single: \$300/year Social Membership Household: \$425/year Life happens membership enables members to tap into services for two months. Villages pay for discounted membership; 15% of members have some sort of discount.	33% of revenue is from membership dues; 33% is from individual giving; and 33% from grants. Spoke contributes 90% of all membership dues.
Hub G	Single: \$500/year Household: \$750/year Social Membership: \$250/year	50% of revenue is from membership dues; 10% from state; 40% from fundraising. Spoke contributed: 1/3 of platform expense; 1/3 of insurance fees; 1/3 of bookkeeping expense; 1/3 of financial review; 1/3 of Village-to-Village Network membership; 1/3 of state corporate tax; and 1/3 of Zoom subscription.

*Social memberships solely include participation in activities; no services are provided.
**Short-term memberships are offered for 3-month periods for surgeries and rehab appointments.
***Full-Service Single membership includes all services plus 3 roundtrip rides per week while Associate Single membership includes 4 listed services per year.

FUNDRAISING

Outside of membership dues, hubs and their spokes raise monies via grant writing, annual funds, planned giving (e.g., bequests and lifetime gifts), community fundraisers—like one hub’s Harvest Hustle 5K which raised \$25,000 in 2025, or another hub’s pickleball tournament—and silent auctions. Grant writing is managed either by the hub’s executive director or the spoke with closest geographic

proximity to the funder or its service area. In both cases, funding for hub staff is written into the grant proposal. Funds raised, in addition to covering operational expenses, are also used to benefit membership fee assistance programs.

SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS

All interviewees reported that more than half of their hub or spokes' service requests fall under transportation. Additional services provided to members by village volunteers include: home safety evaluations, social visits, check-in phone calls, technology assistance, minor household tasks (e.g., organization, light bulb changing, simple repairs, picture hanging, replacing smoke alarm batteries), checkbook and paperwork management, dog walking, gardening and yard work, medical visit companionship, and running errands (e.g., picking up a prescription, shopping for groceries, mailing items). Some villages employ monthly caps to service hours provided (e.g., 25).

Services are provided by volunteers who complete an application, sometimes an interview, and a background check (e.g., Sterling) which is often paid for by the hub. Villages also review volunteer driving records and verify volunteer automobile insurance. Some villages have volunteers engage in a driving test as part of the vetting process and/or complete online training provided by their insurance company. Additional volunteer trainings include how to use assistive devices to help members get into and out of a vehicle and instruction on the village's technology platform.

Service requests are managed by either the hub or the spoke. The member will call the hub, or spoke, with a service request following lead-time recommendations (e.g., a few days to a couple of weeks). This request is then entered into the hub's technology platform. An email goes out to those vetted and trained volunteers who have logged availability for that service, date, and time. An assignment is either made and communicated manually by the hub or spoke, or using automated features in the technology platform. One hub's villages employ local service coordinators who manage service requests via phone between 9am to 5pm; they report this allows for personal interaction with members.

A notable volunteer practice is the engagement of the larger community in serving its members with programs like "Ditch the Desk." Marketed as a corporate team building through service activity, this event provides customizable group volunteer experiences designed to build connections with and support older adults, including providing yard work for members, assembling kindness kits, craft activities, or social visits with members.

ACTIVITIES

Activities offered by villages to members fell within the following categories: virtual programs, interest group meetups, live educational programs, social and seasonal events. Additional activities include neighborhood connections in which individuals living within one or two zip codes gather for fellowship. The recommendation from those interviewed is to start with one to two events per month and to build the social program incrementally.

Table 3.

Social Activities Offered by Villages

Activity Type	Offerings	
Virtual programs	• Tai chi • Chair yoga • Collaborative age café featuring guest speakers	• Online book club • Group TedTalks • Mindful meditation and breathing
Interest group meetups	• Living solo events • No guilt book club • Crafts and arts • Choir	• Gardening • Cultural programs (e.g., movie, theater, museums) • Game afternoon
Live educational programs	• Cooking • Smartphone photography • Intro to sleep technologies • Anti-virus and malware removal • Intro to social media • Hearing loss	• Cognitive decline • Death and dying • Estate planning • Internet and telephone scams • Financial management
Social events	• Happy/social hours • Weekly walks • Restaurant drop-in dinners and lunches • Potluck dinners	• Coffee breaks • Movie and concert events • Bingo
Seasonal events	• Patio picnics • Holiday parties	

Those interviewed reported that their village offerings were open to other spokes associated with their hub. One hub disseminates a calendar of events offered by all spokes. Villages can seek hub reimbursement for the cost of an activity.

PARTNERSHIPS

Hub-and-spoke model partners include United Way, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, parks and recreation, senior centers, health care providers, state health insurance providers, universities,

chambers of commerce, churches, libraries, local restaurants, disability, aging and veterans’ services, and senior agenda coalitions. One recommended practice is disseminating hub outreach and information materials at local physicians’ offices. Another is that villages engage with their master state plan for aging to ensure coordination of aging-in-place efforts. A village’s capacity to articulate its value-added to the master state plan for aging was noted as being attractive to funders as it suggests a greater return on investment, or reach.

MEASURES

The following measures are collected, or recommended for collection (UMBC, 2025), by hubs and spokes for the purpose of data-driven decision making. Data can be used to inform volunteer counts needed to ensure village ability to meet membership service demand, to inform development of new programs and services, and to demonstrate need and accountability to funders.

Table 4.
Measures

Domain	Measure
Services	• Number offered by type (e.g., transportation, technology assistance, etc.) • Number requested by type of service • Number fulfilled by type of service
Activities	• Number offered by type (e.g., virtual, interest group meetups, etc.) • Attendee counts by type of activity • Unduplicated attendee count
Members	• Number of members • Annual growth in membership count • Age • Income • Living status (e.g., alone, with family, etc.) • Disability status • Language spoken • Race/ethnicity • Memberships by type (subsidized, social, full, etc.)
Volunteers	• Number of volunteers • Annual growth in volunteer count • Number of hours volunteered • Non-service request hours provided (e.g., facilitation of events, manning of service request phone line)
Survey data	• Social connectedness • Satisfaction with services • Satisfaction with activities • Perceived ability to age-in-place due to services • Improvement in quality of life • Accessibility of programs and activities
Fundraising	• Number of fundraising efforts • Funds raised

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on data collected from the landscape analysis, the following are recommendations of the evaluator:

- Connect with Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services' aging master plan committee to determine how you may contribute to state efforts and if funding may be available to assist with the pilot of Lexington's hub and spokes.
- Identify and apply for additional seed funding opportunities to cover start-up costs and sponsor memberships for those who cannot pay.
- When selecting a technology platform, ensure ease of collection and reporting on measures in addition to service request process facility.
- Create an MOU to operationalize the relationship between Lexington's hub and spokes.
- Employ the community needs assessment to identify services and activities needed in the area and develop a membership fee structure.

WORKS CITED

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