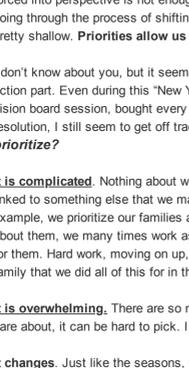


## Where Human Needs and Government Intersect

The Division of Community Services promotes ongoing economic security and independence for the people of Shelby County. We do this by promoting, coordinating and delivering services that address the underlying conditions for well-being and justice. We strive to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.



### Director's Message Priorities in Focus

2020. 35 years ago, I was fully expecting at this point to be participating in time travel and space travel "cues *Back To The Future* and *The Jetsons*". Strangely enough, the reality of the beginning of this year has found me much more reflective about my present self rather than worrying much about any of those things. The heaviness of recent events locally, nationally, and even personally, have forced me to get a renewed perspective about what is most important for me.

Gaining perspective about what is important in life is probably proof that I am finally on track to the "adulting" phenomenon that I have resisted for as long as I could. I would argue, however, that just being forced into perspective is not enough for continued evolution towards my best self. Without going through the process of shifting my perspective into establishing priorities, it all seems pretty shallow. **Priorities allow us to put our perspective into action.**

I don't know about you, but it seems that I always have the hardest time with the priorities and action part. Even during this "New Year, New Me" time of the year when I have attended every vision board session, bought every journal, signed up for every workout class and made every resolution, I still seem to get off track. This got me to thinking, **why is it so hard to prioritize?**

**It is complicated.** Nothing about what we care the most about is ever simple. It is typically linked to something else that we may also care about (or not) that muddies the waters. For example, we prioritize our families and the time we spend with them. Because we care so deeply about them, we many times work as hard as we can to earn the best living possible to provide for them. Hard work, moving on up, and we may look up and have less time -- surprise -- for that family that we did all of this for in the first place.

**It is overwhelming.** There are so many important activities, ideas and relationships that we care about, it can be hard to pick. I mean everything matters right?

**It changes.** Just like the seasons, what is and needs to be a priority in your life changes. It can be difficult to recognize or just hard to accept these changes for many of us.

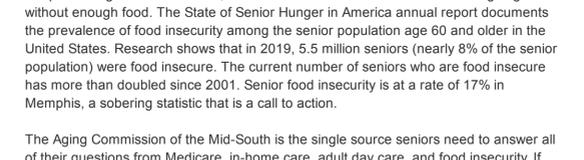
**It is a marathon.** The art and science of developing priorities through all of the complicated and overwhelming change is not something you just sprint through quickly and do once. You have to be committed to constantly being open to creating, assessing, and changing priorities throughout your entire life. I mean with so much to do, who has time for that?

Regardless of how long of a list we could all make about why it is so hard to prioritize, I submit that in order to be healthy individuals, it is a requirement. If you try to do everything, you learn rather quickly through burnout and/or utter failure that it is impossible. The same is true within our organizations. **Determining and sticking to priorities gives us direction and focus.** It helps us to figure out how to keep doing the things we need to do even better and change course when things aren't working very well. It helps us with time management and feeling less overwhelmed. It allows us to be our best selves, and frees up our partners and colleagues to do the same. It sets us all up for a collective win.

Over the course of this new year, you will be a part of plenty of conversations and work as we assess current and develop new priorities for the Division of Community Services. I am hopeful that as a part of that work, you are able to create your own personal priority plan as well. I am confident that as we focus on shifting our perspectives into priorities in action, the better equipped we are to be our best selves, individually and as a team in 2020.

**Dorcas Young Griffin**  
Director of the Division of Community Services  
Shelby County Government

[Read More.](#)

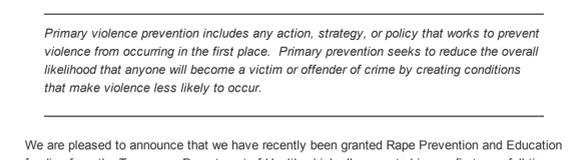


## Aging Commission of the Mid-South Prioritizing Senior Hunger

Despite strong financial markets, millions of seniors in the United States are going without enough food. The State of Senior Hunger in America annual report documents the prevalence of food insecurity among the senior population age 60 and older in the United States. Research shows that in 2019, 5.5 million seniors (nearly 8% of the senior population) were food insecure. The current number of seniors who are food insecure has more than doubled since 2001. Senior food insecurity is at a rate of 17% in Memphis, a sobering statistic that is a call to action.

The Aging Commission of the Mid-South is the single source seniors need to answer all of their questions from Medicare, in-home care, adult day care, and food insecurity. If you are aware of a senior who is suffering from food insecurity, they may qualify for Meals on Wheels or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides benefits to eligible, low-income individuals and families via an Electronic Benefits Transfer Card. This card can be used like a debit card to purchase eligible food in authorized retail food stores. Adequate nutrition is necessary for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, energy levels, immune system strength, recuperation speed and the ability to manage chronic health problems. Meals on Wheels ensures that seniors have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking. For more information, please contact The Aging Commission of the Mid-South at 901-222-4111.

*Thank you MFA for providing the photo.*



## Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center Prioritizing Prevention

In 2019, the Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center (CVRCC) served 3,996 victims of crime. Yes, you read that right. Almost 4,000 victims. And we know there are so many more people in Shelby County who have been impacted by crime but don't know about our services or for some reason feel they can't access them.

This is why CVRCC's mission is more than providing comprehensive services and resources to victims of crime. Quality, trauma-informed, and victim-centered services are important, but we know we have to work harder to get the word out about our agency's services and about the symptoms and impact that people who suffer from trauma can experience. To let our community know that we are here to help them on their journey towards resiliency and healing from that trauma, no matter how long ago the crime occurred.

We also know that we have to figure out how to get ahead of this problem, to keep people from being victimized, to reduce the number of people suffering from violence-related trauma in our community. We have to put our resources—time, money, and staffing—towards violence prevention efforts. **We have to PRIORITIZE PREVENTION.**

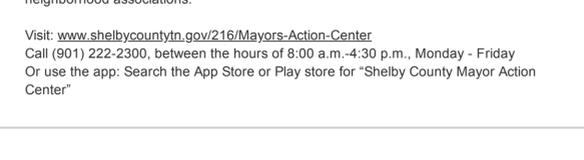
*Primary violence prevention includes any action, strategy, or policy that works to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. Primary prevention seeks to reduce the overall likelihood that anyone will become a victim or offender of crime by creating conditions that make violence less likely to occur.*

We are pleased to announce that we have recently been granted Rape Prevention and Education funding from the Tennessee Department of Health which allows us to hire our first-ever full-time prevention staff. This new staff member will join our two existing part-time staff to help expand our violence prevention efforts, like the healthy relationships classes we hold for Shelby County Schools or the Hope & Healing workshops we are piloting with Job Corps. That team is also working with Memphis Public Libraries, City of Memphis Ambassadors Program (MAP), and BRIDGES USA to get youth involved from across our county in leading their families and their communities in living violence-free lives. For more information, call 901-222-3950.

## Partner Survey

Please help us assess our collaboration efforts by taking this partner survey. The Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center is fueled by strong partnerships throughout the county. In order to best serve residents, we are asking the community to help assess our collaborative efforts by taking a brief survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/ir/CVRCCPartner](http://www.surveymonkey.com/ir/CVRCCPartner).

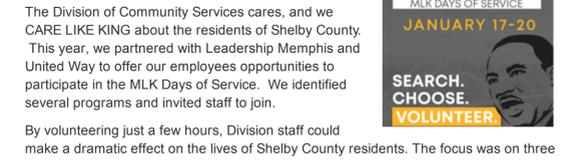
[READ MORE.](#)



## Community Partner Spotlight Parent Plus

Home visiting is hailed as one of the most effective ways to improve health, education, and economic outcomes for new parents and their children. Home visitors provide tailored support for pregnant moms and new parents to promote maternal and child health, improve school readiness, and help prevent child abuse and neglect. Home visitors partner with parents as they navigate the challenges of parenting, offering vital support through regular in-home visits and helping link families to community resources.

All programs offered through ParentPlus are voluntary and free of charge to eligible families. We're excited for this opportunity for the parents and children in Shelby County and thrilled to partner with ParentPlus as part of the Early Success Coalition to help spread the word about available home visiting programs in our community. Visit [www.ParentPlus901.org](http://www.ParentPlus901.org) to find more information about ParentPlus and to discover programs that may be right for your family.



## Aging Commission of the Mid-South Fighting Elder Abuse

One out of every 10 older Americans experience some form of elder abuse. But TN has stiffer punishments in place now for those convicted of elder abuse and caring resources like the Aging Commission and Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center who can help.

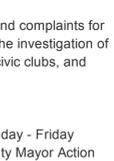
"Many times, victims of elder abuse are trapped in situations where they cannot access the courts directly—they may be dependent on their abuser for basic life needs or they have a physical disability or mobility limitations that prevent them from leaving the house. This new law expands the type of people who can seek an order of protection on behalf of those victims. Now people like the CREA/VA advocates at the Aging Commission or an attorney at the Community Legal Center can help increase elder abuse victims' access to safety and justice," said Kim Daugherty with the Aging Commission of the Mid-South.

The Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2019 will also change the classification of the most extreme forms of elder abuse from a class C to a class B felony and also expands who can seek a protection order for an abuse victim. [WMC Action News 5](#) reports one in 14 cases are ever reported. "It's really shocking when you think about that there are more people out there that we just don't know about," said Daugherty.

If you suspect abuse, you can report elder abuse by calling: 1-888-APS-TENN (277-8366) or <https://reportadultabuse.dhs.tn.gov/>.

For other services for seniors or adults with disabilities, call 901-222-4111.

## Partner Spotlight Shelby County Mayor's Action Center

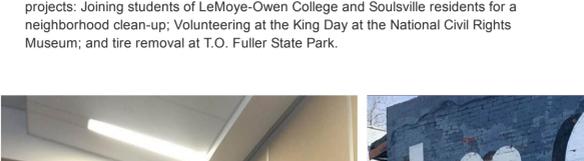


People are often surprised to hear there is a resource for all comments, questions, and complaints in Shelby County. The Mayor's Action Center serves as the central bureau for information and complaints for Shelby County Government. The center is responsible for ensuring the investigation of citizen complaints and also providing on-site visits to organizations, civic clubs, and neighborhood associations.

Visit: [www.shelbycountytg.gov/216/Mayors-Action-Center](http://www.shelbycountytg.gov/216/Mayors-Action-Center)  
Call (901) 222-2300, between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday  
Or use the app: Search the App Store or Play store for "Shelby County Mayor Action Center"

## Mayor's Summer Work Experience

Nearly 100,000 young adults reside in Shelby County each summer and many of them need high-quality, professional work. In the summer of 2020, Mayor Lee Harris' team will convene the second year of Mayor Lee Harris' Summer Work Experience where the County will connect young people with meaningful work. The Summer Work Experience provides an opportunity for participants to learn new skills in a job with directed professional development, earn income to set or strengthen financial positioning, and make new friends while creating unique memories. Reaching all of our young people will take leadership at every level to answer the call and take action. Our youth are not short on ability, only opportunity. [www.shelbycountytg.gov/Youth-Jobs](http://www.shelbycountytg.gov/Youth-Jobs)



## Division of Community Services Care Like King: MLK Days of Service



The Division of Community Services cares, and we CARE LIKE KING about the residents of Shelby County. This year, we partnered with Leadership Memphis and United Way to offer our employees opportunities to participate in the MLK Days of Service. We identified several programs and invited staff to join.

By volunteering just a few hours, Division staff could make a dramatic effect on the lives of Shelby County residents. The focus was on three projects: Joining students of LeMoyne-Owen College and Soulsville residents for a neighborhood clean-up; Volunteering at King Day at the National Civil Rights Museum; and tire removal at T.O. Fuller State Park.



[Read All Staff News](#)

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