



Green River Area Development District

# MEDIA RELEASE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2023

## Green River Area Council on Aging Seeks Partnerships with Clergy

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) and the Green River Area Council on Aging are extending an invitation to local clergy groups to discuss clergies' availability and degree of comfort providing pastoral counseling to area seniors. This discussion will also provide an opportunity to understand what type of information and training GRADD's Area Agency on Aging & Independent Living could provide to support clergy in providing these services.

The initiative is being led by the Green River Area Council on Aging's Senior Mental Health subcommittee. The subcommittee was formed in response to needs identified through the Kentucky Older Adults Needs Assessment Survey. The subcommittee's purpose is to explore mental health issues and topics affecting seniors and to share information about senior mental health with the community.

Members of the subcommittee have recognized that mental health services, particularly for seniors, and especially in rural areas, are generally lacking despite the large numbers of seniors within that population and the propensity for increased mental health issues related to aging.

Continuing discussions have highlighted that area clergy and churches have a unique relationship with many seniors of the area and are likely to be called upon frequently to deal with such needs.

According to Henrietta Harris, Aging Council Chairperson, "Our goal is not to ask pastors to take on the role of a mental health professional, but rather to help seniors who may be isolated or intimidated by the idea of professional mental health services to have someone to connect with, who understands the need for confidentiality, and if needed can refer individuals to other community resources."

Clergy who are interested in learning more about this initiative can contact Libby Watson at 270-926-4433 or [libbywatson@gradd.com](mailto:libbywatson@gradd.com).

---

*The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) is a regional planning agency and council of governments serving the communities of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster counties. GRADD offers assistance in the fields of aging, health, and social services; community and economic development; transportation planning; and workforce development. Our mission is to afford local governments and citizens a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities, and to provide leadership in planning and implementing programs to improve the quality of life in our district.*

300 GRADD Way, Owensboro, KY 42301 | [www.GRADD.com](http://www.GRADD.com) | 270.926.4433