



**ASIAN AMERICAN
RESOURCE CENTER
SENIOR
PROGRAMMING:
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**



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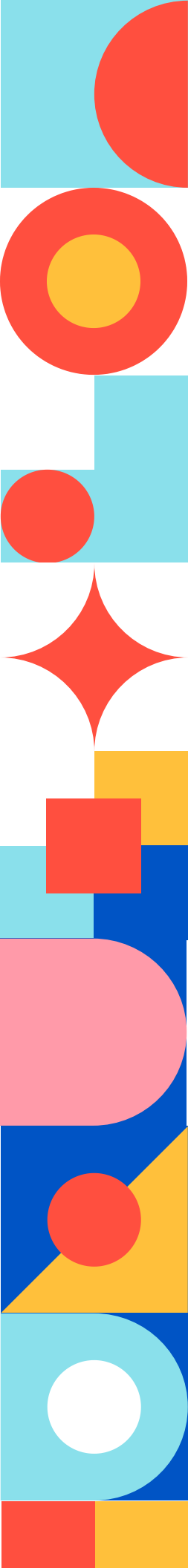


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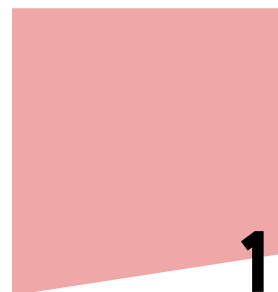
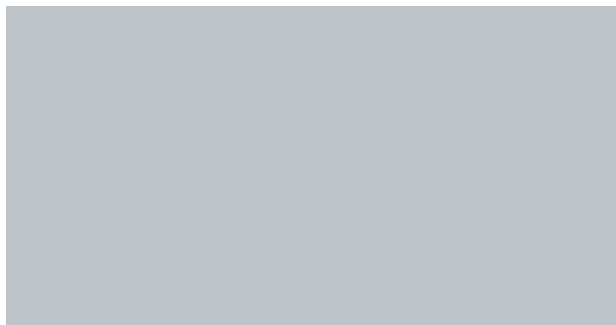
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An introduction to the AARC

The Asian American Resource Center, or AARC, is a city-funded, pan-ethnic space housed in North Austin. First opened in 2013, the center hosts programming across the lifespan, including [educational programming across the lifespan](#), [artist exhibits](#), and family events. Its [mission](#) is accessible [at this link](#):

The AARC hosts a robust senior program on Monday-Thursdays from 10-1PM. Seniors in the program are able to register to receive transportation to the AARC at pre-determined stops through the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, they can register to receive Meals on Wheels programming.

Registered participants of the AARC enjoy a variety of wellness activities such as tai-chi, Bollywood, yoga, and ping-pong. The AARC welcomes community partners such as Austin Public Health, Austin Free Net, and more to offer technology, health education, and gardening classes. Finally, seniors with an interest in strengthening their English skills are able to participate in English corner with volunteers twice a week. To learn more about the [senior program](#), [click here](#).



Purpose and Method:

The purpose of this report is to present a needs assessment for the senior program at the AARC. To inform this assessment, we utilized 2 forms of data collection. **All questions and interviews were translated to Mandarin to increase the span of participants that were included.**

1. First, a total of 10 (**n=10**) seniors participated in semi-structured interviews. Seniors were asked to reflect on their experiences at the AARC and provide feedback. The results of these semi-structured interviews provided one set of data that informed seniors' needs for the program.
2. In addition, the AARC hosted a "Lunch with the Manager" series. Twice in July, the AARC manager brought in dessert to celebrate the seniors who had a birthday in July. In the first session, he summarized feedback from the interviews and the changes in progress as a result of the feedback. In order to get a larger perspective from the seniors, 4 questions were posted across the lunchroom on large Post-It Note papers. Seniors received their own smaller Post-Its and the manager facilitated time for them to answer any questions they wanted to. A total of 30 seniors participated (**n=30**). In the second session, the questions were posted in the lunch room for seniors to answer on their own time. 13 seniors participated (**n=13**). The graduate intern worked with the translator to collect and translate responses. See the appendix for question guides.

Strengths to Maintain:

1. The importance of a social outlet and embracing cultural diversity:

Participants expressed that coming to the AARC helped them maintain an outlet to socialize and learn about other cultures.

Chinese Couple- *We felt very lonely staying at home. We did not have any interactions with people outside of the house. That's why we come here. We feel very good interacting with other people.*

Indian Couple- *I feel actually that you get to meet people. So, I get inspiration to come here for meeting people and all of the friends.*

Chinese Female - *My view on connection is our friendship to different cultures. Being here, it can help to bring people more intentionally across different cultures and break down the wall.*

Mexican American Female- *We have a lot of cultures. And I think that we all embrace those cultures. It's just has been real, happy environment for a lot of people that have gone through different things in their lives. I think that that really has helped bring us together.*

2. Welcoming space: Participants reflected on staff and fellow participants creating a space that was welcoming.

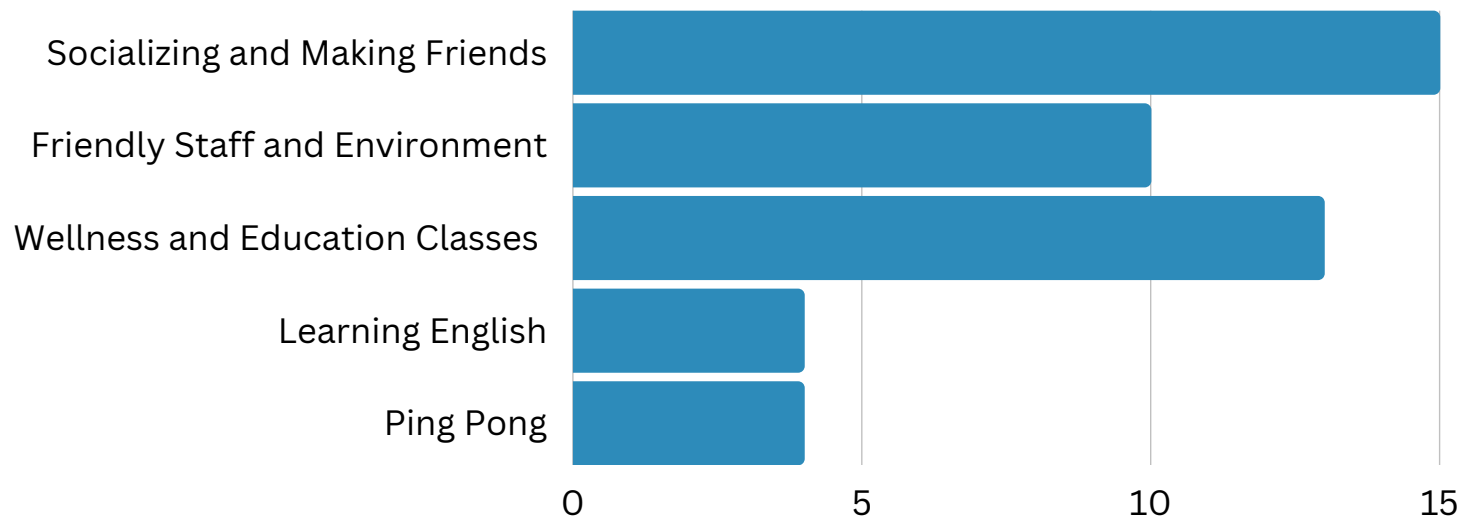
Indian Female Senior- *One thing is the way people greet you. You feel that you are welcome. That is the culture over here. Whenever someone new comes, they try to make friendship with them, Make them feel that you are at home.*

ThaiCoupleSenior- *It's the social aspect. It's close to home. You develop friendships. We love it. I like the smiling people. It's a social contact. Those here are smiling and are understanding, and those are the kind of people that you want to talk to and share with.*

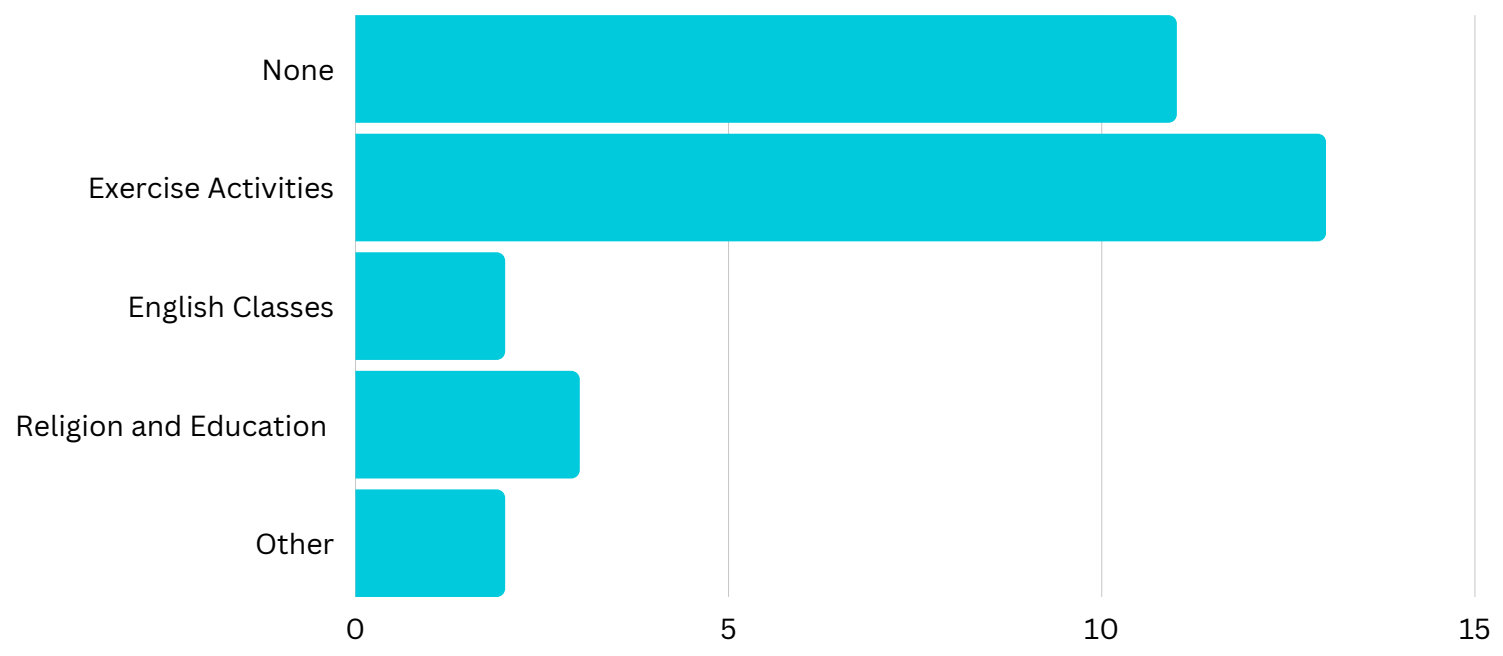
Quantitative Support: AARC Strengths

The following summarizes 2 of 4 questions asked during Lunch with the Manager. These questions offered a broader perspective from seniors on the strengths of the AARC and what brings them to the center.

What is your favorite part about coming to the AARC?



What activities do you participate in outside of the AARC?





Expressed Needs:

1. **Changes to the existing programming:** Participants offered various suggestions to improve upon the existing programming, including cultural exchanges, information classes, and art:

Indian Female: *I would like to learn. Like that Korean introduction was given. I would be interested in learning different cultures. I would like to know how they have rituals, music... not just language.*

Chinese Couple: *We really want to learn more about medical insurance and Medicare. Some information on this would be good.*

Chinese Female: *I am interested in the English class. I know there is a class but only on Mondays. Are you able to provide the class?*

Chinese Couple (wife): *I'm interested in drawing, painting, and arts and crafts. I'm not good at it, but these activities help my mental stress.*

2. **Challenges to participating at the AARC:** Participants expressed transportation barriers in both the semi-structured interviews and lunch engagement sessions, which are summarized below:

Chinese Female- *I still keep coming. You know, it's not easy for me to keep coming to the center. My daughter, she has to give me a ride here to the stop. Then she will go to work, and then she will come back to the library to pick me up. Yeah, it's kind of hard for me to come. But I keep coming.*

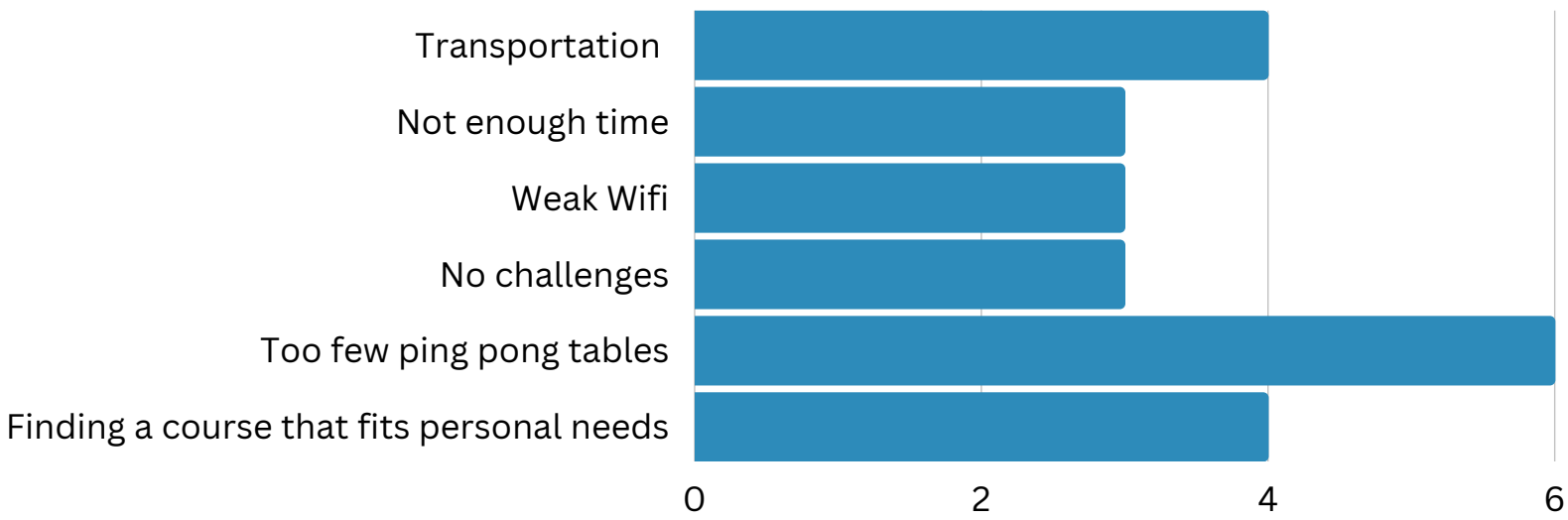
Anonymous (lunch session)- *It's hard for me to come here because the bus stop is too far. I have to rely on my children to get here.*

Chinese Female- *It's a good place for seniors to get together, but the next thing is the transportation. If they don't drive, and if the bus doesn't go to their place, they cannot continue it. It's hard.*

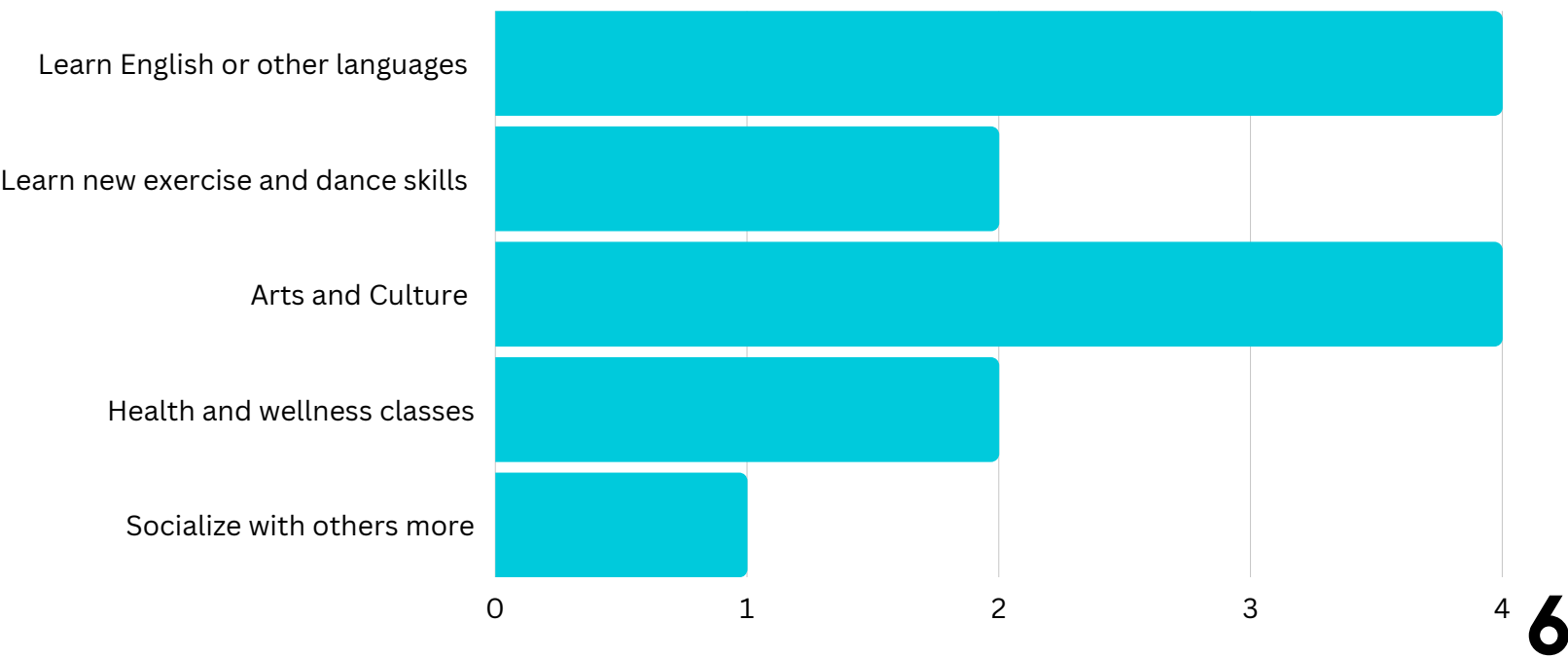
Quantitative Support: Expressed Needs

The following summarizes 2 of 4 questions asked during Lunch with the Manager. These questions offered a broader perspective from seniors on their needs as they continue to participate in programming at the AARC.

Biggest barrier to participating in classes at the AARC:

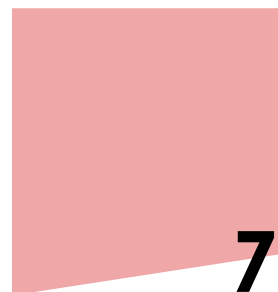
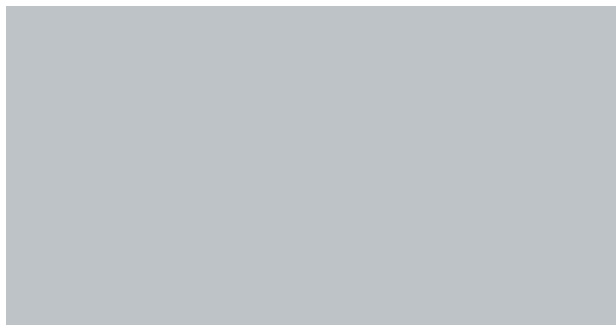


What is something new you want to do at the AARC?



Anticipated Changes at the AARC

1. The AARC added an additional English corner day and is currently working on a curriculum that allows seniors to choose how they'd like to spend their time meaningfully (conversation, grammar lessons, or reading a book).
2. As the AARC transitions out the current Bollywood dance instructor and welcomes a new one, there is open space in the senior programming calendar to offer new dance skills as one-off workshops.
3. The second ping pong room will open up in the month of August, as the summer camp wraps up. This will open more opportunities for seniors to play and practice ping pong.
4. In the month of August, the AARC intends on introducing a culture sharing class to begin piloting a series on learning about each other's cultures. The culture share will entail learning about different games such as Mahjong and Carrom. In the future, staff at the AARC have expressed interest in sharing about their own cultures with the seniors.
5. Transportation challenges are difficult to address given a pre-determined contract with the City of Austin. In September, the staff will assess whether public stops need to change locations to best accommodate the seniors attending.
6. To continue engagement and facilitate a feedback loop with the seniors, the AARC staff will host Lunch with the Manager monthly.



Follow Up with Seniors

At the following link, you will be able to see the English and Mandarin versions of the materials shared and posted at the AARC for seniors about the outcomes of the project. These flyers are posted in the AARC for the seniors:

<https://bit.ly/SeniorFlyerEnglishandMandarin>



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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Reflecting on Culture and Connection:

1. When I say the word connection, what do you think of? In other words, how would you define connection?
2. Do you feel connected to others when you come to the AARC? Please explain more.
3. Have you seen your culture represented here? If yes, how so? If no, how would you want it to be represented?
4. Have you learned something about a different culture in your time here? If yes, how so? If no, how would you want it to be represented?

Questions Specific to Senior Programming:

1. How would you explain the AARC to someone who is new to Austin? What does this organization do?
2. If you did attend AARC prior to the pandemic, have you noticed any changes since coming back?
3. What classes do you attend at the AARC? --> Facilitator can prompt and provide the different classes offered here if needed.
4. What do you like about those classes?
5. What do you dislike about those classes?
6. As you get older, what kinds of classes would help you with your:
 - a. Physical health
 - b. Mental/Emotional health
 - c. Spiritual health
7. Is there anything else you would like for us to know?

Appendix B: Lunch Engagement Questions

Questions for Round 1 (facilitated by manager):

1. How do you get here to the AARC?
2. What is your biggest challenge to participating in the classes here?
3. What other activities are you involved in outside of the AARC?
4. What is your favorite part about coming to the AARC?

Questions for Round 2 (on seniors' own time):

1. How do you feel when you walk into the AARC?
2. What is a change you have noticed in your life since coming to the AARC?
3. What have you experienced since coming here that you did not expect when you started?
4. What is something new you want to do at the AARC?

