

*Securing Older Adult Resources (SOAR):
A Community Impact Report on Baltimore-area Banks'
Senior Services Executive Summary*



by Shelley Franklin
with Marceline White and
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*Maryland Consumer
Rights Coalition*

ABOUT MCRC

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) advances and protects fairness and justice for Maryland consumers through research, education, and advocacy. Founded in 2000, MCRC works with its more than 7,000 supporters to promote consumer protections. MCRC has reached more than 36,000 Maryland families through its films, produced cutting-edge research on critical issues that affect working families, and helped pass important state legislation on foreclosure, debt and consumer fraud issues.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for banks and other financial institutions to offer older adults age-sensitive financial products and fraud prevention services is clear and pressing. Experts estimate that financial fraud and abuse now costs seniors \$2.9 billion a year and harms one in five older Americans.¹ Banks and financial institutions can play an important role in helping older adults protect their assets and in educating them about financial fraud.

To evaluate how well Baltimore-area banks are playing this role, and addressing the urgent problem of financial fraud against older adults, MCRC developed this report, “Securing Older Adult Resources (SOAR): A Community Impact Report on Baltimore-area Banks’ Senior Services.”

The report will help older adults and the general public understand the range of area banks’ products and services and help consumers find the bank that best serves their needs. It also allows banks to compare their products and services with those of other banks and offers policy recommendations that explain how banks can better meet the needs of older adults and better fulfill their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act.

Methodology

MCRC’s report draws on the Community Impact Report Card (CIRC) developed by researchers in New Haven, Conn. to assess how well banks served low- and moderate-income families in that area. The New Haven CIRC analyzed banks on a number of criteria, including products, services, and customers’ access to the banks.

MCRC adapted the methods used in New Haven’s CIRC to look specifically at how well banks serve their older adult customers in the Baltimore area. To adapt the CIRC, MCRC drew on the National Community Reinvestment Coalition’s (NCRC) Age-Friendly Banking concepts. NCRC established six principles for banking products and services to meet the specific needs of older adults:²

- Protect older adults from financial abuse;
- Customize financial products and services for older adults;
- Expand affordable financial management;
- Help seniors access critical income supports;

- Make it easier for older adults to age in place in their homes and communities; and,
- Improve the accessibility of bank branches and services.

To determine which products and services were most important to older adults, MCRC surveyed and conducted focus groups with more than 210 older adults in Baltimore City and Baltimore County between June and September 2013. The topics for the survey and focus groups were drawn from NCRC’s principles. The results of the surveys and interviews helped MCRC focus our analysis and weight the scores banks received (see Appendix A for more information on how we scored the banks and Appendix B for details on the results of our surveys and focus groups).

MCRC’s report focuses on access to age-appropriate products and services and protection against financial fraud because these issues were ranked as most important by the older adults we surveyed. While many older adults also wanted banks to help them gain access to income supports, no bank consistently offers those services today, and we therefore did not rate banks in this area. Similarly, while many banks offer education on financial exploitation, we did not score the banks in this area because of the methodological challenges in comparing their programs.

Our guide assesses the practices of the 10 banks with the largest market shares in Baltimore City and Baltimore County in three major areas:

Accessibility: Our Accessibility Scores rate how easy it is for older adults to conduct financial transactions with their bank. These scores are based on 10 criteria that assess the number of physical bank locations, the time those banks are open, and the ability of customers to make transactions through other avenues, including ATMs and call centers. Although improving physical access to bank services is also important to older adults who face limited mobility and other physical challenges, capacity constraints prevented us from conducting the research needed to determine how well banks are addressing those concerns at this time.

Products and Services: Our Products and Services Scores rate how affordable and useful each bank’s financial products are for older adults. These scores are based on 10 criteria that assess each bank’s services and fees for low-fee, no-fee, or senior savings and checking accounts, and other products important to older adults.

Protection Against Financial Exploitation: The guide reviews how the four banks that responded to our inquiries train staff to recognize and report suspected fraud against older adults. We found that BB&T trains its staff several times a year and M&T, SunTrust, and Wells Fargo require annual training. Unfortunately, the other six banks in this study did not respond to our repeated inquiries.

GRADING THE BANKS

MCRC gave each of the 10 area banks we surveyed three grades – an Accessibility Grade, a Products and Services Grade, and an Overall Grade for how well it serves older adults (See Table A below). M&T Bank won the highest overall score (B). BB&T’s poor Accessibility Score (C-) helped give it the worst overall score among the 10 banks (C) and all eight other banks ended up with mediocre grades of B- or C+.

National Banks Score High on Access:

As the table below shows, the larger national and regional banks in most cases earned higher Accessibility Scores – primarily because they tended to offer more branches and ATMs. SunTrust, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo earned the highest access grades (B+) while First National Bank scored lowest (D+) and the other local banks we studied earned B-, C, or C- grades.

Regional Banks Offer More Senior-Friendly Services:

On the other hand, regional banks generally earned higher scores for their products and services – because they more often offered basic checking and savings accounts with no fee or a very low fee. Rosedale Federal had the highest score (A-) and locally-based First Mariner scored a B+ while Wells Fargo (C) earned the lowest Products and Services Score.

TABLE A:

Summary of Baltimore-area Banks’ Service to Older Adults

BANK	ACCESSIBILITY GRADE	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES GRADE	OVERALL GRADE
M&T	B-	B	B
PNC	B-	B	B-
Rosedale Federal	C-	A-	B-
SunTrust	B+	B-	B-
Bank of America	B+	C+	B-
Wells Fargo	B+	C	B-
First Mariner	C	B+	B-
Susquehanna	C	B	C+
First National Bank	D+	B+	C+
BB&T	C-	C+	C

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While none of the banks earned a failing grade, all have room for improvement. The policies of individual banks vary, but older adults would be better served if each bank took steps to improve its services to seniors.

Banks can improve accessibility and the products and services they offer older adults by:

- Keeping branches open, especially in low-income neighborhoods and near senior centers.
- Finding innovative new ways like bus-based banking to deliver banking services to older adults in places where bricks-and-mortar branches have closed.
- Establishing or expanding weekend hours for branches.
- Not charging a fee to use out-of-network ATMs.
- Offering no-cost or low-cost checking and savings accounts.

Banks can also better protect older adults against financial exploitation by:

- Requiring bank staff to be trained in how to spot and report suspected elder financial abuse at least once a year.
- Offering financial fraud trainings to older adults through senior centers and at other forums at least quarterly.
- Standardizing training practices to ensure high-quality fraud training in each bank.
- Collecting statistics that establish the full extent of financial fraud against seniors.
- Partnering with senior services agencies, consumer groups, and other organizations to provide information and seminars to older adults on how to avoid financial fraud.

Banks can introduce new services to better meet the needs of older adults including:

- Training older adults to use on-line banking.
- Adding services like free bill-paying or low-cost safety deposit boxes to senior accounts.
- Offering low-cost small-dollar loans to help seniors pay off tax liens or water and utility bills that can cause them to lose their homes.

INTRODUCTION

The need for banks and other financial institutions to offer age-sensitive financial products and services and fraud prevention services to older adults is clear and pressing. Experts estimate that financial fraud and abuse now costs seniors \$2.9 billion a year and harms one in five older Americans.³ Older women (who very often rely only on a small Social Security check to pay their bills) are twice as likely as men to be victims of financial fraud, with women between the ages of 70 and 89 at the highest risk.⁴ With the number of older adults projected to rise to 79.7 million by 2040 and new technologies giving scam artists new ways to victimize vulnerable older adults, the financial exploitation of seniors is likely to continue to grow for decades to come.⁵

Safe and appropriate banking services can give older adults a secure way to retain and grow their assets, finance large purchases or emergency needs, and maintain or build their credit. Because federal law now requires Social Security payments and other federal benefits to be made electronically through direct deposit to bank or credit union accounts or to the Direct Express® or Debit Master® cards,⁶ a bank account is also now an important gateway to the federal benefits older adults have earned.

Yet far too many older adults lack adequate access to banking services. Nineteen percent of older adults are either “unbanked” (meaning that they don’t have a checking or savings account) or so “under-banked” that they rely on abusive financial products like high-cost payday loans (short-term loans that often carry interest rates of more than 200%) to pay their bills.⁷ A 2011 study by the Center for Responsible Lending found that almost 25% of Social Security recipients have taken out a payday loan – usually to help pay ordinary monthly expenses.⁸ For older adults, the cost of banking services appears to be an important barrier to access. An AARP study of unbanked and under-banked older adults found that most of them would like to have a bank account with a respected bank or credit union – but that many worried that hidden fees or high minimum balances would make a bank account too expensive for them to maintain.⁹

Age-Friendly Banking

The concept of tailoring financial services to meet the specific needs of different groups of consumers is not new but the idea

of focusing on older adults is. As adults age, their needs change. Financial institutions have an opportunity to cater to these needs by offering a wider array of products and services. Across the country, 48% of seniors have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level while, in Maryland, 17% of older adults live in poverty.¹⁰ With so many older adults living in or near poverty, the need for low- or no-cost checking and savings accounts for older adults is clear. At the same time, as more and more older adults homeowners plan to “age in place” in their homes, the need for affordable home improvement loans for seniors increases.

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) developed the concept of Age-Friendly Banking to highlight ways that financial institutions can better serve the banking and financial needs of older adults. Adopting and implementing these principles would also help banks meet their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) (*See Box 1 on page 10*).

Age-Friendly Banking principles suggest that financial institutions should:¹¹

- **Protect Older Adults from Financial Abuse:** Financial institutions should bring community partners and organizations together to educate older adults, their families, and caregivers about how to recognize and prevent scams such as identity theft and computer fraud, lottery, and home improvement scams.

- **Customize Financial Products and Services for Older Adults:** Financial

BOX 1: THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT (CRA)

Banks and other financial institutions are required to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, under the Community Reinvestment Act.¹² Under the law, federal agencies review a bank's record on meeting its CRA commitments periodically; members of the public may comment on a bank's performance, and these comments will be considered by evaluators during a bank's next CRA exam. Federal agencies also review comments from the community any time a bank wants to merge or acquire another financial institution. There are three CRA tests: lending, investment, and services – and community development is part of assessing whether banks are meeting each test. Implementing Age-Friendly Banking products and services, along with protections targeted at low- and moderate-income older adults, will help banks meet several of their CRA tests.

institutions should develop simple, low-cost, low-fee accounts for older adults. These accounts should offer complimentary checking, discounted safety deposit boxes, and allow for multiple free withdrawals. Financial institutions should also develop retirement and financial plans for older adults at all income and asset levels and offer free bill-paying services and free or discounted money orders to older adults.

▪ **Expand Affordable Financial Management:** Banks should offer financial education seminars and trainings geared to the needs of older adults.

▪ **Access Critical Income Supports:** Financial institutions should play a leadership role in helping older adults to access the income supports they are eligible to receive. Banks can do this by offering benefit check-ups for older adults (or partnering with local groups to do so) or benefit calculators to inform older adults about the federal and state benefits they may be eligible for. The National Council on Aging estimates that a benefits check-up will, on average, identify \$6,200 in benefits available to a senior in need.¹³

▪ **Facilitate Aging in the Community:** Financial institutions should provide low-cost, small-dollar loans for home modifications to help moderate-income older adults age in place. Aging-in-place investments should be considered part of a financial institution's Community Reinvestment Act lending and investment tests.

▪ **Improve Accessibility to Bank Locations and Services:** Banks should provide a designated teller for older adults, ensure that branches are accessible to seniors, offer adequate seating, and present information in large print. Banks should also consider training older adults on the use of ATM machines and online banking.

MCRC'S REPORT CARD

MCRC developed this report card as a way to help older adults make good choices about where to bank in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, to help banks understand how the services they offer compare to those of other financial institutions, and to help the public understand how well the banks are meeting the needs of their communities and their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act.

Our report draws on the Community Impact Report Card (CIRC) developed by researchers in New Haven, Conn. to assess how well banks served low- and moderate-income families in that area. The New Haven CIRC analyzed banks on a number of criteria, including banking products, services, and customers' access to the banks.

Drawing on the six NCRC principles for banking products and services to meet the specific needs of older adults explained above, MCRC adapted the methods used by New Haven's CIRC to look specifically at how well banks serve their older adult customers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

To determine which products and services were most important to older adults, MCRC surveyed and conducted focus groups with more than 210 older adults in Baltimore City and Baltimore County between June and September 2013. The topics for the survey and focus groups were drawn from NCRC's principles. The results of the surveys and interviews helped MCRC focus our analysis and weight the scores banks received.

Our survey of older adults found:

- **Access to bank branches, ATM machines is important to older adults.** Eighty-three percent of respondents said the location of ATMs was important, while the majority noted that ATMs are not a substitute for brick-and-mortar branches. Participants rated the location of bank branches and their hours open as important. Weekend hours were also important to those who could no longer drive at night.
- **Senior-friendly services are in high demand.** Eighty-six percent of respondents said they were very interested in senior checking and savings accounts and that low fees were important to them.
- **Fraud is common but fraud prevention services aren't well understood.** Seventeen percent of respondents said they had been victims of fraud, but 56% did not know if their banks offered education on fraud prevention.

Our report focuses on access to age-appropriate banking services and on protecting seniors from financial fraud because these issues were ranked as most important by

the older adults we surveyed. Although the other Age-Friendly Banking principles are also important to older adults, we found little evidence that the region's banks are addressing these issues and had no basis for grading banks in those areas.

Our guide assesses the practices of the 10 banks with the largest market shares in Baltimore City and Baltimore County in three major areas:

- **Accessibility:** Our Accessibility Scores rate how easy it is for older adults to conduct financial transactions with their bank. These scores are based on 10 criteria that assess each bank's number of physical bank locations, the time those banks are open, and the ability of customers to make transactions through other avenues, including ATMs and call centers. Although improving physical access to bank services is also important to older adults who face limited mobility and other physical challenges, capacity constraints prevented us from conducting the research needed to determine how well the banks are addressing those issues at this time.
- **Products and Services:** Our Products and Services Scores rate how affordable and useful each bank's financial products are for older adults. These scores are based on 10 criteria that assess each bank's services and fees for low-fee, no-fee, or senior savings and checking accounts, and other products important to older adults.
- **Protection Against Financial Exploitation:** The guide reviews how the four banks that responded to our inquiries

train staff to recognize and report suspected fraud against older adults. We found that BB&T trains its staff several times a year and M&T, SunTrust, and Wells Fargo require annual training. Unfortunately, the other six banks in this study did not respond to our repeated inquiries.

Banks with at least 1% of market share deposits in the Baltimore City and Baltimore County area are included in this guide. Data for market share is from the FDIC as of June 30, 2012. In Feb. 2014, First National Bank of Pennsylvania merged with Baltimore County Savings Bank – but we included First National Bank in the guide since BCSB had more than 1% of market share.

The banks included in this guide are:

- Bank of America
- Branch Banking and Trust Company (BB&T)
- First Mariner Bank
- First National Bank of Pennsylvania
- Manufacturers and Traders Trust Company (M&T)
- PNC
- Rosedale Federal Savings and Loan Association
- Sun Trust Bank
- Susquehanna Bank
- Wells Fargo Bank

After weighing 10 criteria in each category, we gave each bank a specific grade for its Accessibility and for its Products and Services.

Our study also reviews the practices of the banks that responded to our inquiries in stopping financial exploitation – but we did

not grade the banks on those practices because we lacked quantifiable criteria to compare their efforts.

For more information about how we scored and weighted the data on the banks, please see Appendix A. For more information about the results of our surveys and focus groups, please see Appendix B.

GRADING THE BANKS

MCRC gave each of the 10 area banks we surveyed an Accessibility Grade, a Products and Services Grade, and an Overall Grade for how well it serves older adults (*See Table 1 on page 14*). M&T Bank won the highest overall score (B). BB&T's poor Accessibility Score (C-) helped give it the worst overall score among the 10 banks (C) and all eight other banks ended up with mediocre grades of B- or C+.

ACCESSIBILITY OF BANKING SERVICES

Accessibility refers to the ability of customers to conduct banking activities – to the ease of reaching physical bank locations, the time branches are open, and to customers' ability to manage accounts and make transactions in other ways. But access to banking services can also mean different things to different customers – and older adults have specific access needs.

Because most older adults do not use on-line banking (MCRC's research found that only 25% of older adults we surveyed use online banking), physical access to branches and ATMs is more important to older adults than to younger bank customers. Weekend branch hours are also of special interest to older adults.

TABLE 1:

*Summary of How Baltimore-area Banks’
Serve Older Adults*

BANK	ACCESSIBILITY GRADE	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES GRADE	OVERALL GRADE
M&T	B-	B	B
PNC	B-	B	B-
Rosedale Federal	C-	A-	B-
SunTrust	B+	B-	B-
Bank of America	B+	C+	B-
Wells Fargo	B+	C	B-
First Mariner	C	B+	B-
Susquehanna	C	B	C+
First National Bank	D+	B+	C+
BB&T	C-	C+	C

**BOX 2: DEMOGRAPHICS OF OLDER ADULTS,
POVERTY IN BALTIMORE CITY, BALTIMORE COUNTY**

MCRC chose to focus on Baltimore City and Baltimore County in part because those jurisdictions have large populations of older adults and, especially in Baltimore City, a high concentration of low-income adults who are particularly vulnerable to financial exploitation.

According to 2012 Census data, 11.9% of the city’s population was at least 65 years old and 15.1% of the county’s population was 65 years and older. Baltimore City had a median household income of \$40,803 with 23.4% of city residents living below the poverty level. Baltimore County had a median household income of \$66,068 with 8.5% of residents below the poverty level.

Older adults living below the poverty line represent 17.55% of the population of Baltimore City and minority older adults living in poverty comprise 12.45% of the city’s population.

Many of our focus group participants also stressed that driving at night was a problem – and that it was important to them for banks to be open during the day on weekends. Because many older adults live on low incomes, high ATM fees can also be a significant barrier to banking services. Call centers with long hours also appear to matter more to older adults than to other customers – in our focus groups many participants stressed that they wanted to be able to talk by phone to a live bank representative.

Our data shows that some banks are doing much better than others in meeting the banking access needs of older adults. As Table 2 (page 17) shows, many of the larger banks (Bank of America, SunTrust, Wells Fargo) earned high Accessibility Scores – largely because they had more branches, more ATMs, and, in many cases, longer call center hours available.

Branches near senior centers: Proximity to senior centers makes it easier for older adults to access banking services – especially when transportation is available to and from the centers – and the large regional and national banks had the most branches near a senior center. M&T had the most branches (26) within one mile of a senior center, followed by Bank of America (22) and Wells Fargo (18). On the other hand, Baltimore County-based Rosedale Federal had only two branches near a senior center.

Total number of branches: Among the banks responding to our survey, M&T had the most branches (59) in Baltimore City

and Baltimore County, followed by Wells Fargo (33) and SunTrust (25). BB&T reported the fewest area branches (14).

Weekend hours: All the banks that responded to our survey had branches with Saturday hours. M&T had the most branches (54) open on Saturday, followed by Wells Fargo (32) and SunTrust (25). Only M&T and SunTrust had branches with Sunday hours – and each bank had two branches open on Sunday.

Telephone support: BB&T and Wells Fargo offer a live representative 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – for a total of 168 hours per week. M&T offers this service from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends (for a total of 91 hours/week). SunTrust has telephone support available 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday (84 hours/week).

Access to ATMs

Because older adults often have limited mobility and limited incomes, both physical access to ATMs and ATM fees can be important barriers to banking services for older adults. For this reason, we collected data on both physical access to ATMs (the number of ATMs near senior centers, ATMs in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and in-network ATMs across the country) and on the fees banks customers must pay to withdraw money.

We found that the larger banks, in most cases, made more ATMs available to customers. On the other hand, several smaller banks offered customers no-fee access to out-of-network ATMs and we

TABLE 2:

Accessibility Scores for Baltimore-area Banks

BANK	SCORE OF OUT 4.0	GRADE
Bank of America	3.2	B+
SunTrust	3.2	B+
Wells Fargo	3.2	B+
M&T	2.8	B-
PNC	2.7	B-
First Mariner	2.1	C
Susquehanna	1.9	C
Rosedale Federal	1.8	C-
BB&T	1.6	C-
First National	1.3	D+

TABLE 3:

Access to Bank Branches and Telephone Support

BANK	BRANCHES WITHIN ONE MILE OF SENIOR CENTER	BRANCHES IN BALTIMORE CITY AND COUNTY	NUMBER OF BRANCHES OPEN ON SATURDAY	NUMBER OF BRANCHES OPEN ON SUNDAY	WEEKLY HOURS CALL CENTER IS OPEN
Bank of America	22	NR	NR	NR	NR
BB&T	5	14	8	0	168
First Mariner	7	NR	NR	NR	NR
First National	4	NR	NR	NR	NR
M&T	26	59	54	2	91
PNC	11	NR	NR	NR	NR
Rosedale Federal	2	NR	NR	NR	NR
SunTrust	14	25	23	2	84
Susquehanna	5	NR	NR	NR	NR
Wells Fargo	18	33	32	0	168

NR: No Response – means bank did not respond to our inquiries. Banks were given 0 points in categories where they did not respond to our inquiries.

found no clear pattern linking the size of the bank to its ATM fees.

ATMs near senior centers: Large regional and national banks had the most ATMs within one mile of a senior center. M&T had 30 ATMs near senior centers, followed by Bank of America (25) and Wells Fargo (21). Smaller local banks had fewer ATMs near senior centers. Rosedale Federal reported only two ATMs within one mile of a senior center.

In-network ATMs: Among the banks responding to our survey, Wells Fargo had by far the largest number of in-network ATMs available for free around the country (more than 12,000).

ATMs in Baltimore City and Baltimore County: M&T reported the most (59), followed by Wells Fargo (38).

Fees for using out-of-network ATMs: Low-fee or no-fee access to ATMs not affiliated with the bank gives customers easier and cheaper access to their money. Rosedale Federal and Susquehanna Bank charge customers no fee (\$0) to use out-of-network ATMs and earned the highest score in this category. M&T ranked last with its fee of \$3.00.

Fees for non-bank customer using bank’s ATMs: Charging higher fees for non-bank customers to use the bank’s ATMs decreases access to banking services for the entire community – therefore the lower the fee, the more community-friendly the bank is considered. Bank of America, PNC, and SunTrust charged the smallest fees to

non-bank customers (\$2.00) BB&T and M&T charged the largest fees (\$3.00). First National Bank did not have a fee posted on its website, and its customer service department was unable to provide its fee.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Just as the banking access needs of older adults differ from those of younger customers, older adults also need financial products and services tailored to their specific needs. Many older adults live on low and fixed incomes and need access to low-fee or no-fee checking and savings accounts and accounts with small or no minimum balances. This is especially true in Baltimore City, where 16.9 percent of seniors lived below the federal poverty level in 2011 – compared to the national figure of 9.3 percent.¹⁴

As a group, older adults appear to be particularly sensitive to the cost of banking services. A 2011 AARP study found that 70% of under-banked individuals more than 45 years old and 62% of those more than 65 years old would prefer to do their banking at a traditional bank or credit union but also found that hidden fees and charges, high minimum required balances, and the overall expense of a bank account were among the leading reasons that older adults often relied on non-traditional banking services like check cashers instead.¹⁵

Low-cost and simple checking and savings accounts can help older adults build relationships with banking institutions. Eighty-six percent of the older adults who responded to our survey told us they were

TABLE 4:

Access and Fees for ATMs in Baltimore area and across the U.S.

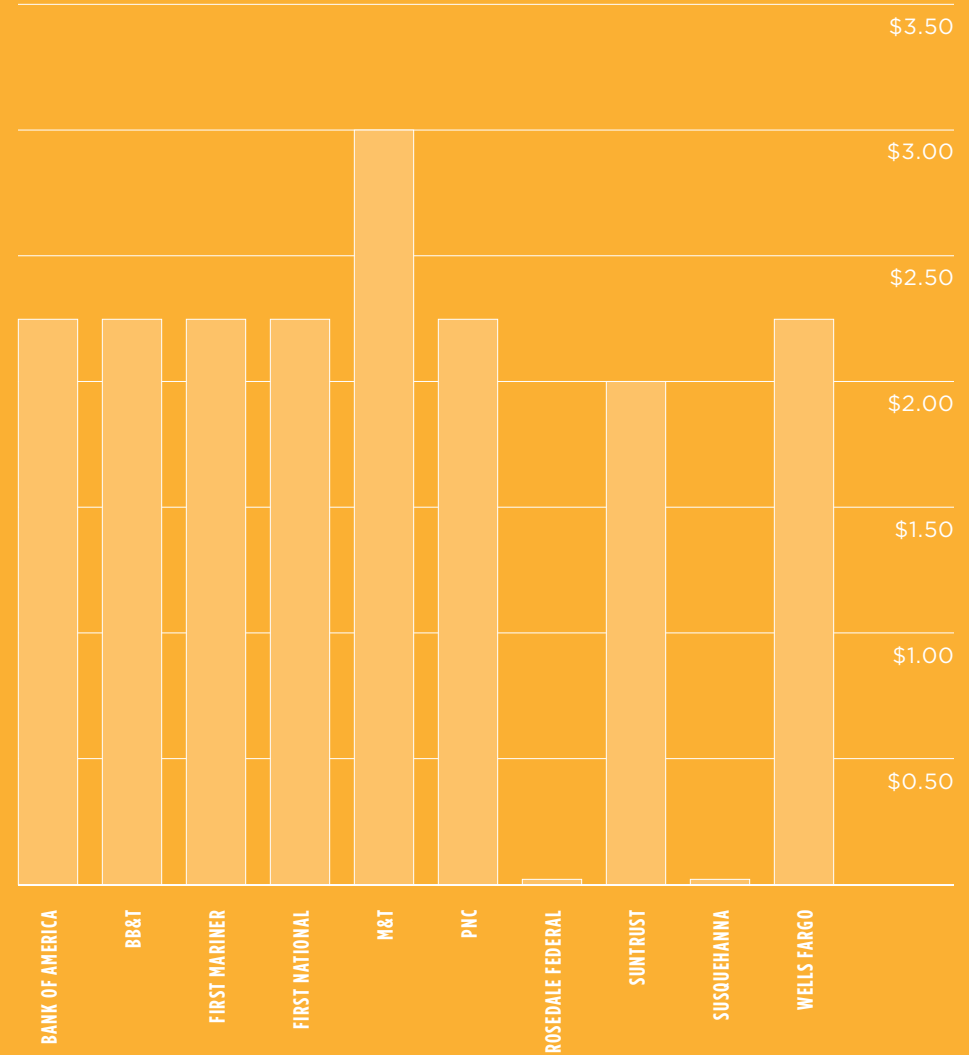
BANK	NUMBER OF ATMS W/IN MILE OF SENIOR CENTER	NUMBER OF IN-NETWORK ATMS ACROSS U.S.	NUMBER OF ATMS IN BALTIMORE CITY AND COUNTY	FEE FOR USE OF OUT-OF-NETWORK ATM	FEE FOR NON-BANK CUSTOMER TO USE ATM
Bank of America	25	NR	NR	\$2.50	\$2.00
BB&T	5	2,467	14	\$2.50	\$3.00
First Mariner	8	NR	NR	\$2.50	\$2.50
First National	4	NR	NR	\$2.50	NA
M&T	30	1,500	59	\$3.00	\$3.00
PNC	18	NR	NR	\$2.50	\$2.00
Rosedale Federal	2	NR	NR	\$0	\$2.50
SunTrust	19	2,236	26	\$2.00	\$2.00
Susquehanna	5	NR	NR	\$0	\$2.00
Wells Fargo	21	12,000+	38	\$2.50	\$2.50

NR: No Response – means bank did not respond to our inquiries.

NA: Not Available

CHART 1:

Fees for use of out-of-network ATM



interested in senior checking and savings accounts – and many of the members of our focus groups said they wanted access to a no-fee, senior checking account. Yet our research found that most of the banks surveyed do not offer accounts tailored to seniors and that their basic checking and savings accounts often carry fees and minimum balances burdensome for older adults. Just four of the ten banks we surveyed offered special accounts for seniors – and three of those accounts include fees of at least \$4.95/month. Fees for basic checking accounts varied from \$0 to \$12/month and, for basic savings accounts, ranged from \$0 to \$7.50/month.

As Table 5 shows, the Products and Services Scores for area banks vary widely, with smaller banks like Rosedale Federal (A-) and First Mariner (B+) at the top of the list and national firms like Bank of America (C+) and Wells Fargo (C) at or near the bottom. Regional banks mostly ranked higher, chiefly because they offered no-fee or low-fee basic checking and savings more often than the national banks did. Rosedale Federal’s no-fee checking and savings accounts helped it earn the top ranking while low-ranked Bank of America (\$12/month for checking, \$5/month for savings) and Wells Fargo (\$9/month for checking, \$5/month for savings) charge relatively high fees for basic checking and savings accounts.

Checking Account Fees

Monthly fees – basic checking: The fees banks charge for a basic checking account unless a customer meets the required minimum balance varied greatly. Bank of

America charged the highest monthly fee (\$12) and Wells Fargo the next-highest (\$9). First Mariner, First National, M&T, Rosedale Federal, and Susquehanna did not charge a fee for basic checking but First National did charge a \$2/month fee to receive paper bank statements.

Minimum opening balance: SunTrust required the highest minimum balance to start a checking account while First National did not mandate a minimum balance. All the other banks required minimum balances of \$50 or \$25 to open a checking account.

Fee waivers: Many banks will waive the monthly fee for a checking account if a consumer maintains a minimum balance but the banks calculate that minimum balance differently. Some banks charge a fee if the account dips below the minimum balance at any point in the month while others charge a fee if the average daily balance dips below the minimum required balance.

This guide does not distinguish between the ways of calculating the minimum balance. But the lower the minimum, no-fee balance the account requires, the higher the score we gave the bank. First Mariner, First National, M&T, Rosedale Federal, and Susquehanna earned the highest scores in this area because those banks do not charge a monthly fee. On the other end of the scale, Bank of America and Wells Fargo required a minimum balance of \$1,500 to waive the monthly fee and BB&T does not waive the fee no matter the balance.

TABLE 5:

Products and Services Scores for Baltimore-area Banks

BANK	SCORE OF OUT 4.0	GRADE
Rosedale Federal	3.7	A-
First National	3.3	B+
First Mariner	3.2	B+
M&T	3.0	B
PNC	2.9	B
Susquehanna	2.9	B
SunTrust	2.5	B-
BB&T	2.4	C+
Bank of America	2.2	C+
Wells Fargo	2.1	C

TABLE 6:

Summary of Charges and Fees for Basic Checking Accounts

BANK	MONTHLY FEE	MINIMUM OPENING BALANCE	MINIMUM NO-FEE BALANCE	OTHER WAYS TO AVOID MONTHLY FEE?	NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF) FEE PER ITEM
Bank of America	\$12	\$25	\$1,500	Yes	\$35
BB&T	\$5	\$50	NV	No	\$36
First Mariner	\$0	\$50	\$0	NA	\$39
First National	\$0 (\$2 fee for paper statements)	\$0	\$0	NA	\$37
M&T	\$0	\$25	\$0	NA	\$38.50
PNC	\$7	\$25	\$500	Yes	\$36
Rosedale Federal	\$0	\$25	\$0	NA	\$35
SunTrust	\$7	\$100	\$500	Yes	\$36
Susquehanna	\$0	\$25	\$0	NA	\$40
Wells Fargo	\$9	\$50	\$1,500	Yes	\$35

NV: Not Available

NA: Not Applicable

CHART 2:

Basic Monthly Checking Fees

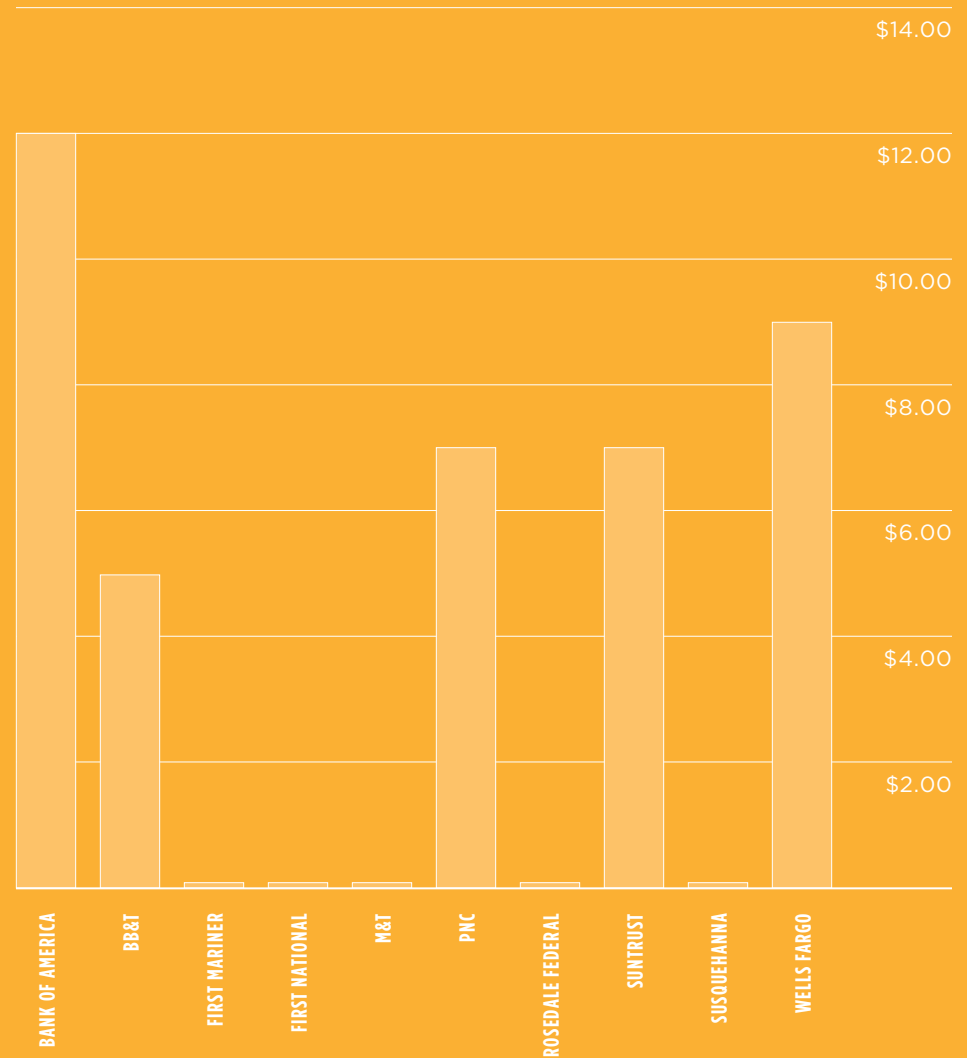


TABLE 7:

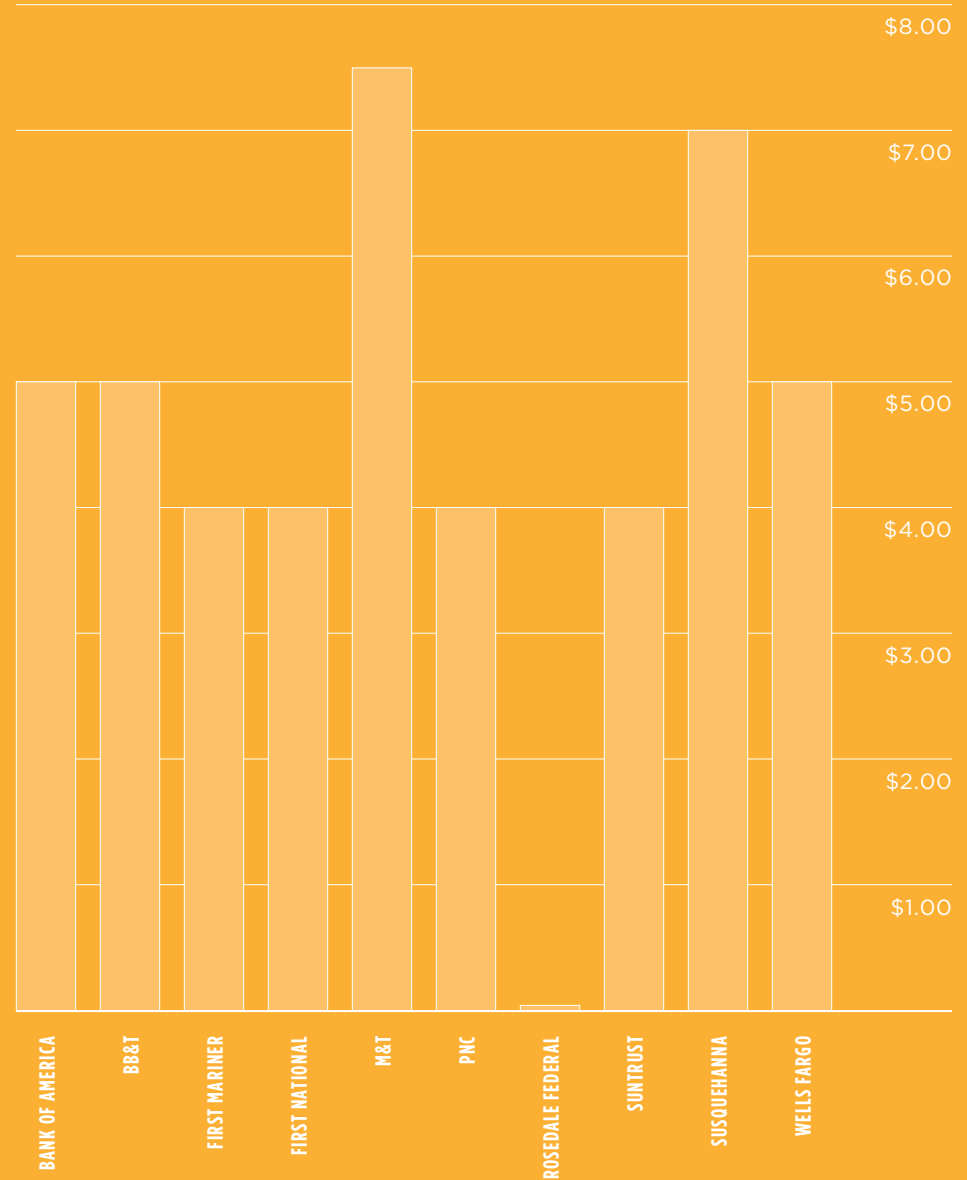
Fees and Required Balances for Basic Savings Accounts

BANK	MONTHLY FEE	MINIMUM OPENING BALANCE	MINIMUM NO-FEE BALANCE	OTHER WAYS TO AVOID MONTHLY FEE?
Bank of America	\$5	\$25	\$300	Yes
BB&T	\$5	\$25	\$300	Yes
First Mariner	\$4	\$50	\$200	No
First National	\$4	\$100	\$100	No
M&T	\$7.50	\$25	\$250	Yes
PNC	\$4	\$25	\$400	Yes
Rosedale Federal	\$0	\$10	\$0	NA
SunTrust	\$4	\$100	\$300	Yes
Susquehanna	\$7	\$25	\$100	No
Wells Fargo	\$5	\$25	\$300	Yes

NA: Not Applicable

CHART 3:

Monthly Fees for Basic Savings Account



Some banks waive the monthly fee for an account if the consumer meets other requirements – for instance, many banks will waive the monthly fee if a consumer has a certain number of electronic direct deposits made to his or her account. Only one bank in our survey, BB&T, did not provide an alternative way to avoid a monthly fee or did not charge a monthly fee.

Non-sufficient funds fee: This is the amount a bank charges if a customer attempts to make a check payment that would overdraw his or her account – or “bounces” a check. Our survey found little variation in these fees – with all the banks charging \$35 to \$40 to a customer who bounces a check.

Savings Account Fees

Monthly account fees: The monthly fee for a basic savings account ranged from \$0 (Rosedale Federal) to \$7.50 (M&T).

Minimum opening deposit: All banks required a minimum deposit to open a basic savings account. Rosedale Federal required the smallest deposit (\$10) and SunTrust the highest (\$100) while six out of the 10 banks required a \$25 deposit to open a basic savings account.

Fee waivers: All banks will waive the monthly fee for a savings account if a consumer maintains a minimum balance in his or her account. As in the case of checking accounts, the banks calculate minimum balances differently and we do not distinguish among those approaches.

But the lower the minimum, no-fee balance a bank requires, the higher its ranking in

this category. Since Rosedale Federal does not charge a monthly fee, it earned the highest ranking (with an effective minimum balance of \$0). PNC earned the worst rating with the highest balance required to waive the monthly fee (\$400).

Some banks will also waive the monthly fee for a basic savings account if the customer meets others requirements such as having two or more direct deposits. Bank of America, BB&T, M&T, PNC, SunTrust, and Wells Fargo provide other ways besides a minimum balance to avoid a monthly fee.

First Mariner, First National, and Susquehanna do not provide other ways to avoid a monthly savings account fee. This policy isn't relevant for Rosedale Federal because it does not charge a monthly fee.

Senior Accounts

Just four of the ten banks we surveyed offered special accounts to older adults. BB&T, M&T, and Susquehanna offer senior checking while First Mariner offers a senior savings account.

Senior checking accounts have the advantage of paying interest on the account balance while basic checking accounts pay no interest. Unfortunately, the value of these accounts to seniors is limited because all three senior accounts carry a monthly checking fee that is higher than the monthly fee these banks charge for basic checking accounts (See Table 8 on page 30).

BB&T: Offers senior checking for customers 62 years old and older. But the monthly fee for senior checking is \$8 and the minimum

BOX 3: HOW SMALL MONTHLY FEES CAN TAKE A BIG BITE OUT OF A SENIOR'S BUDGET

Monthly fees that may seem small can quickly add up to take a big toll on people's budgets – especially for older adults living on a fixed income.

For example, If Mrs. Jones is a Bank of America customer with a basic checking account (with a \$12/month fee) and a basic savings account (with a \$5/month fee) and isn't able to maintain the sizable minimum balances she needs to avoid those fees (\$1,500 for the checking account, \$300 for the savings account), she would pay \$204 in fees over the course of a year.

If she has to live on the minimum monthly Social Security payment (\$813/month in 2013), her \$17 in monthly bank fees would eat up more than 2 percent of her income.

TABLE 8:

Senior Accounts Offered by Baltimore-area banks

BANK	TYPE OF ACCOUNT	AGE RESTRICTION	MONTHLY FEE
BB&T	Checking	62+	\$8
M&T	Checking	50+	\$4.95
Susquehanna	Checking	55+	\$15
First Mariner	Savings	55+ and under 18	\$0

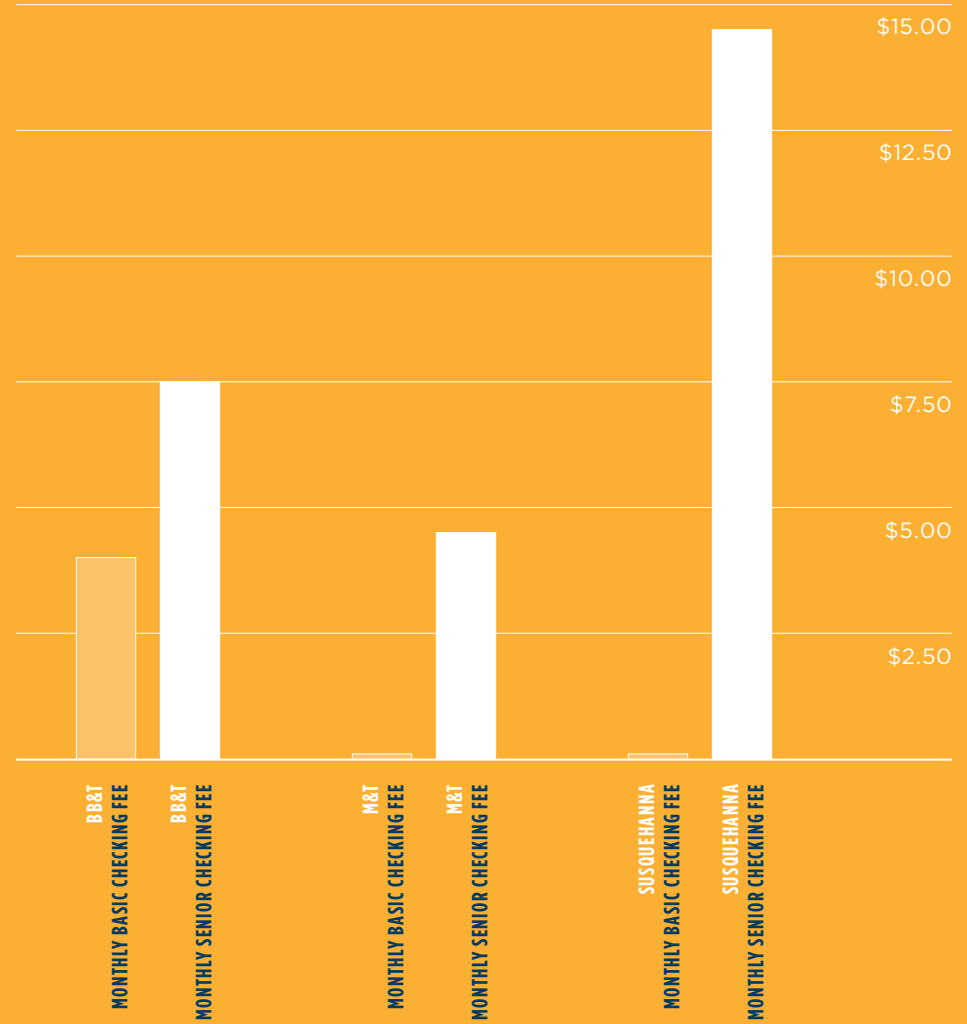
BANK	MINIMUM OPENING DEPOSIT	MINIMUM NO-FEE BALANCE	OTHER WAYS TO AVOID FEES?	PAYS INTEREST
BB&T	\$100	\$1,000	Yes	Yes
M&T	\$25	\$500	Yes	Yes
Susquehanna	\$25	NV	Yes	Yes
First Mariner	\$50	NA	NA	Yes

NV: Not Available

NA: Not Applicable

CHART 4:

Fees for Senior Checking vs. Regular Checking Accounts



balance to avoid that fee is \$1,000, while the bank's basic checking carries a monthly fee of \$5/month.

M&T: Offers senior checking to customers 50 years old and older. But the monthly fee for that account is \$4.95 and the minimum balance to avoid the fee is \$500, while the bank's basic checking account carries no monthly fee.

Susquehanna: Offers senior checking to customers 55 and older. But the monthly fee for that account is \$15, while the bank's basic checking account carries no fee.

PROTECTING OLDER ADULTS AGAINST FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

With financial fraud taking a huge and growing toll on older adults, Maryland enacted a law that requires employees of financial institutions to play a role in detecting and reporting suspected financial abuse and exploitation of elder adults in 2012.¹⁶ The law mandates that financial institutions establish training programs to help employees spot and stop acts of financial abuse against those 65 years and older.¹⁷ But the law does not establish re-training requirements or create any specified training program.

It is difficult to evaluate just how effective the law has been – in part because reporting of suspected incidents of fraud to Adult Protective Services is anonymous. However, we asked the 10 banks we studied to explain their programs to prevent financial abuse and exploitation of older adults.

Four out of the ten banks responded to our survey questions on financial exploitation. In brief, BB&T reported that it trains its staff to spot and report financial exploitation of the elderly multiple times per year. M&T, SunTrust, and Wells Fargo require staff to retake their training programs on how to stop financial fraud once a year. **Here's what the banks reported they are doing to stop financial fraud:**

- **BB&T** holds in-person financial training at the local level once per year and provides training at the start of an employee's career. Staff is trained several times a year to recognize and report financial exploitation of the elderly multiple.

BB&T is also a charter member of the Senior Housing Crime Prevention Foundation, Inc. (SHCPF), a coalition that operates the Senior Crime Stoppers program, a coordinated set of programs that work together to create a climate of zero tolerance to financial crime in senior housing facilities. Components of the program include personal lockboxes for the residents, cash rewards of up to \$1,000 paid anonymously for information about wrongdoing of any kind, and effective, on-going education and training for staff members and residents. Currently, BB&T operates this program in three senior housing facilities in the Baltimore area, and SHCPF reports that the number of financial crime incidents in those facilities had been reduced by 98% as of March 31, 2014.¹⁸

- **M&T** requires its employees to take yearly web-based training that covers a variety

of security topics, including elder financial abuse. If an employee suspects that a customer may be at risk of financial fraud, the bank asks that employee to submit an online form so that the fraud charge can be investigated.

- **SunTrust** requires its staff to take an annual Code of Conduct Training. It also requires staff to take an annual online training program on Elder Financial Abuse that teaches staff members about the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and how they can intervene on behalf of an elderly person who is being abused. This course teaches front-line bank employees how to protect a senior's self-esteem as well as of his or her financial resources when they suspect an older adult is being harmed financially.

- **Wells Fargo** covers financial exploitation and abuse in all its training for all new hires, including tellers, lead tellers, bankers, service managers, and store managers. All staff members are required to re-take the training once a year.

Wells Fargo also makes resources available on-line and distributes brochures to educate seniors about financial exploitation and abuse and how to avoid it through its "Hands On Banking" website and program.

Unfortunately, the other six banks in our study did not respond to our repeated inquiries about what they are doing to protect older adults against financial abuse.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

With the population of older adults expected to rise from one-eighth of the U.S. population in 2011 to one-fifth (or 79.7 million seniors) by 2040,¹⁹ the need for older adults to have access to financial products and services that enable them to protect their nest eggs and manage their often-limited incomes is critical now – and is sure to grow more pressing in the years to come.

Yet this report card finds that none of the major banks in the Baltimore area is serving older adults well enough across-the-board to earn a grade better than a B. Our data shows that most of the area's major banks do not offer no-fee accounts or accounts specifically tailored to seniors that offer many of the services they need and that most seniors must pay significant account fees and ATM fees to get access to their money.

While none of the banks earned a failing grade, all have room for improvement. The policies of individual banks vary but seniors would be better served if each bank took steps to improve its services to seniors. MCRC recommends that:

Banks improve accessibility of services and the quality of the products and services they offer older adults by:

- **Keeping branches open, especially in low-income neighborhoods and near senior centers and finding innovative ways to deliver services where branches are scarce.**

Banks should consider keeping bank branches open near senior centers and look at innovative new ways like bus-based banking²⁰ or use “Mobibranch” technology²¹ (see Box 4 on page 35) to bring banking services to older adults in places where bricks-and-mortar branches have closed.

- **Establishing or expanding weekend hours for branches.**

Banks without weekend hours should consider establishing them at branches with a high population of older adults.

Banks that have hours on Saturdays should consider extending their hours or offering limited hours on Sunday.

- **Not charging a fee to use out-of-network ATMs**

Other banks should follow the lead of banks like Rosedale Federal and Susquehanna that do not charge customers of other banks an extra fee to use out-of-network ATMs.

- **Offering more no-cost or low-cost checking and savings accounts.**

Bank of America is piloting a new product called a SafeBalance account.²² SafeBalance will charge customers a \$4.95 monthly fee to allow them to make direct deposits and pay bills online, avoiding overdraft fees. Expanding this initiative could benefit older adults on fixed incomes.

Banks act to better protect older adults against financial exploitation by:

- **Requiring bank staff to be trained in how to spot and report suspected elder financial abuse at least once a year.**

While all banks train new staff, it may be helpful to require training as well as a refresher course for all staff members.

- **Standardizing training practices to ensure high-quality fraud training in each bank.**

Each bank now has its own financial exploitation training curriculum. However, the quality and consistency of training could be improved if one training program was used by all banks. In Maine, for example, the SeniorSafe training program was developed in a collaboration by the Aging Services and Regulatory Division of the Maine Health and Human Services Department, the Maine Bankers Association, the Maine Credit Union League, and Maine Legal Services for the Elderly.²³ The program provides training to front-line employees in how to spot fraud.

- **Collecting statistics that establish the full extent of financial fraud against seniors.**

In Maryland, banks currently train their employees to spot fraud and the state provides several different options for reporting cases of concern. However, Maryland doesn’t provide a central location for banks and others to report elder financial abuse, and this makes it difficult to get an accurate understanding of just

BOX 4: NEW WAYS TO BRING BANKING SERVICES TO THE UNBANKED

In many countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia, banks are taking the term “mobile banking” literally – they’re using buses and vans equipped with tellers, ATMs, and loan officers to bring banking to customers after bricks-and-mortar branches have closed or in poor or rural areas where people once had little access to banking.

After closing more than 1,000 branches as a result of financial losses, Bankia, Spain’s fourth-largest bank, is now using buses to bring services to customers in many Spanish towns. Swedbank in Sweden and banks in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Philippines are using buses and vans to bring banking services to new customers.

In the United States and Canada, some credit unions are using an innovative technology called “Mobibranch” that allows bank employees to enroll new customers and securely perform loans and other bank transactions online from just about any location to bring banking services to members of the community who otherwise have little or no access to banking services.

how many cases of financial fraud older adults in Maryland suffer.

▪ **Partnering with senior services agencies and consumer groups to provide information and seminars to older adults on how to avoid financial fraud.**

MoneySmarts for Older Adults (MSOA), for example, is a training program developed jointly by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) that can be a tool for bank and community partnerships. Banks' staff members could also collaborate with consumer protection groups, senior service providers, and housing counselors to find other ways to assist older adults.

Banks can introduce new services to better meet the needs of older adults including:

▪ **Training older adults to use on-line banking and making bank branches and ATMs accessible for older adults.**

While we didn't find any examples of banks in this region offering such training for older adults, the New Zealand Banker's Association Code of Banking Practice Focus Group, for example, has adopted voluntary guidelines for assisting banks to meet the needs of older and disabled customers.²⁴ These guidelines include numerous examples of ways to adapt modern banking technology (ATMs and online banking) for use by older adults and people with disabilities and ways to use design and materials well-suited for older adults and people with disabilities.

▪ **Adding services like free bill-paying or low-cost safety deposit boxes to senior accounts.**

Free bill-paying services and easy access to safe deposit boxes would help seniors stay on top of their finances and protect valuable assets and records essential to their financial security.

▪ **Providing low-cost loans to help seniors save their homes.**

Offering low-cost loans to help seniors pay off tax liens or water and utility bills that can cause them to lose their homes can help seniors preserve the huge investments so many older adults have made in their homes and enable more seniors to "age in place."

Reforms like these will help older Americans manage their money more effectively, protect their homes and their nest eggs against financial predators, and get access to the public benefits seniors have earned – and often need to make ends meet. By expanding access to secure and appropriate financial services, these policies will enable many more older adults to age with dignity, and freedom from want, in their homes and their communities.

Endnotes

- 1 MetLife Mature Market Institute, "Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders," June 2011.
- 2 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "A New Dawn: Age-Friendly Banking," 2013.
- 3 MetLife Mature Market Institute, "Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders," June 2011.
- 4 Cindy Hounsell, "Protecting Your Mother from Financial Abuse and Fraud," Elder Abuse: A Women's Issue, OWL Mother's Day Report, 2009.
- 5 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "A New Dawn: Age-Friendly Banking," 2013.
- 6 See www.godirect.gov.
- 7 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "A New Dawn: Age-Friendly Banking," 2013.
- 8 Rebecca Borne, Joshua Frank, Peter Smith, and Ellen Schloemer, "Big Bank Payday Loans: High-interest loans though checking accounts keep customers in long-term debt," Center for Responsible Lending, July 2011.
- 9 AARP, "A Portrait of Older Unbanked and Underbanked Consumers: Highlights of a National Survey," 2010.
- 10 Kaiser Family Foundation, "A State by State Snapshot of Poverty Among Seniors: Findings From Analysis of the Supplemental Poverty Measure," May 20, 2013.
- 11 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "A New Dawn: Age-Friendly Banking," 2013.
- 12 The CRA was enacted by the Congress in 1977 (12 U.S.C. 2901) and is implemented by Regulation BB (12 CFR 228). The regulation was substantially revised in May 1995 and updated again in August 2005.
- 13 <http://www.ncoa.org/enhance-economic-security/benefits-access/5-things-you-can-do-on-the.html>

- 14 Baltimore City Health Department.
- 15 AARP, "A Portrait of Older Unbanked and Underbanked Consumers: Highlights of a National Survey," 2010.
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- 17 Md. Code, Financial Institutions, section 1-306(d)(7).
- 18 MCRC conversation with bank officials, June 2014.
- 19 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "A New Dawn: Age-Friendly Banking," 2013.
- 20 Betty Nolan, "Mobile Banking without a phone: Here comes the bank van," Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 11, 2013 <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/Change-Agent/2013/1111/Mobile-banking-without-a-phone-Here-comes-the-bank-van>
- 21 Credit Union Times, "Mobile Platform Takes Branch Transactions to Members," Oct. 23, 2013.
- 22 National Community Reinvestment Coalition, National Neighbors Silver Program List of Age-Friendly Banking Innovations, 2014.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.

Appendix A: How We Scored the Banks

Information on banks was compiled through banks' websites, inquiries to call centers, and surveys we sent to the banks. MCRC contacted the banks six times by email and by telephone to obtain survey data from Feb. 5 through April 7, 2014. Only four out of the ten banks responded to our inquiries. The lack of response created a challenge for MCRC in determining the number of branches and ATMs the banks had in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Nevertheless, we scored each of the criteria we established – giving banks that did not respond to our inquiries a score of 0 for questions to which they did not respond. Criteria that had quantitative results (for example, monthly fee amounts) were divided into quartiles and points were assigned to each quartile. Banks in Quartile 1 (the worst quarter) received 2 points; banks in quartile 2 received 4 points, banks in quartile 3, received 6 points; and those in quartile 4 (the best), received 8 points.

In categories that had only two possible choices (for example, whether a bank offered a senior checking or savings account), banks received 0 points for a negative response and 8 points for a positive response. If the bank did not respond to our inquiry, it received 0 points.

Each of the criteria was assigned a weight based on its relative importance. The weight we gave each factor was based on MCRC's survey of older adults and our focus groups and on the quality of the data we collected. For instance, in our surveys older adults told MCRC that monthly account fees were most important to them, and we therefore weighted those fees more strongly than any other criteria. At the same time, we weighted some accessibility criteria for which we had incomplete data less strongly than other criteria for which we had data from all the banks.

After weighting the factors we surveyed, we gave banks Accessibility Scores and Products and Services Scores based on a maximum possible score of four points and banks were given a letter grade based on how they did on that four-point scale.

TABLE A-1:

Weighting of factors to develop Accessibility Scores

ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Number of Branches within 1 mile of a senior center	0.1250
Number of Branches in city and county	0.0125
Number of Branches Open on Saturday	0.0125
Number of Branches Open on Sunday	0.0125
Total number of hours Call Center is Open during Week	0.0125
Number of "In-Network" ATMs across U.S.	0.0125
Number of ATMs in City and County	0.0125
Number of ATMs within 1 Mile of a Senior Center	0.1250
Fee for Use of "Out-of-network" ATM	0.1250
Fee for Non-bank Customer to Use ATM	0.0500

TABLE A-2:*Weighting of factors to develop Products and Services Scores*

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Basic Checking Monthly Fee	0.125
Basic Checking Minimum Opening Balance	0.050
Basic Checking Minimum No-Fee Balance	0.025
Other Ways To Avoid Monthly Checking Fee	0.025
Non-Sufficient Funds Fee/Item	0.025
Basic Savings Monthly Fee	0.125
Basic Savings Minimum Opening Balance	0.050
Basic Savings Minimum No-Fee Balance	0.025
Other Ways To Avoid Savings Fee	0.025
Offer Senior Checking or Savings Account	0.025

TABLE A-3:*Letter grades based on 4-point scoring scale*

SCORE	GRADE
4.0	A
3.7	A-
3.3	B+
3.0	B
2.7	B-
2.3	C+
2.0	C
1.7	C-
1.3	D+
1.0	D
0.7	D-
0.0	F

Appendix B: Findings from MCRC's Surveys and Focus Groups on Older Adults' Banking Needs

To determine the banking needs of older adults, MCRC surveyed and held focus groups with more than 210 older adults in Baltimore City and Baltimore County between June 2013 and Sept. 2013.

How we conducted the research:

- Surveys were collected at senior and community centers and at senior living facilities.
- One hundred seventy older adults completed the survey.
- Ninety-three percent of survey participants were women.
- Forty-eight percent of survey participants were between the ages of 65 and 74.
- MCRC also conducted five focus groups of older adults who reside in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.
- Forty-one older adults participated in those focus groups. Three-fourths of focus group participants were women.
- The age of focus group participants ranged from 62 to 92.

Key Findings:

- Older adults wanted customize financial products, especially senior accounts with no hidden fees.
- Older adults wanted improved access to bank locations.

- Older adults wanted banks to expand access to critical income supports by offering benefit screenings or having social services agencies provide information to older bank customers.

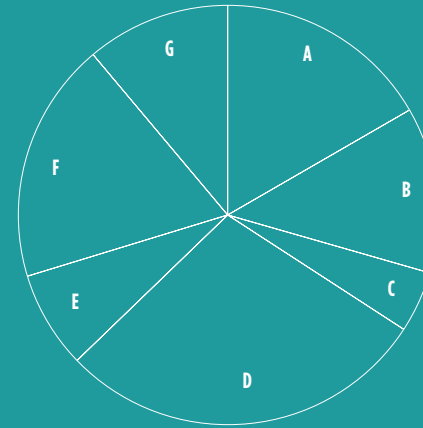
- One in six older adults (17%) surveyed had been a victim of financial abuse.

- Older adults very often did not know if their banks offered information on financial fraud.

Additional Findings

The data that follows summarizes our findings on what older adults told us about where they bank, what they accessibility issues matter to them most, how likely they are to use online banking and ATMs, how interested they are in banks helping them gain access to public benefits, what products and services they want from their banks, what they know about bank efforts to protect them against financial fraud and exploitation, and what mortgage lending services they seek from their banks.

1. Where do Older Adults Bank?



WHERE OLDER ADULTS BANK

A	18%	Bank of America
B	14%	Credit Union
C	3%	First Mariner
D	31%	M&T
E	6%	SunTrust
F	20%	Wells Fargo
G	9%	Other

Older adults' banking is highly concentrated.

Three banks serve 71% of the older adults we surveyed. Thirty-one percent banked with a regional bank (M&T), followed by Wells Fargo (20%), and Bank of America (18%).

Given the number of older adults served, Bank of America, M&T, and Wells Fargo are well-placed to serve as anchor institutions to promote financial security for older adults.

89% of older adults had a checking account and 57% also had a savings account.

Focus group participants usually chose their bank years ago based on its location near home or work and just kept it even if the bank branch was bought by another bank.

Most survey participants would switch banks if offered lower fees or no fees on bank products and services.

2. What are the most important accessibility issues for older adults?

Location of branches and hours open were the most important accessibility issues.

Saturday hours are needed since some seniors said that driving at night was difficult.

Seating inside the bank was ranked as somewhat important.

Parking and drive-through services are important.

Many focus group members also mentioned the need for electronic doors, since older adults have difficulty opening heavy doors.

3. Why do few older adults use online banking services?

77% of older adults do not use online banking.

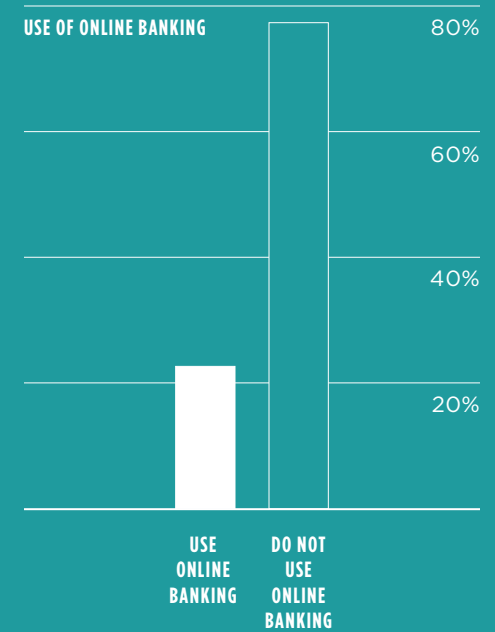
The main concern older adults expressed about online banking is system security and potential hackers.

A few participants said they would use online banking if their bank offered a workshop.

Most survey participants said banks could do nothing to encourage online banking use.

Policy Implication:

Branch closings greatly impact older adults, who are far less likely to transition to online banking than other bank customers.



4. How many older adults use ATMs?

Why Aren't Many Older Adults Using ATMs?

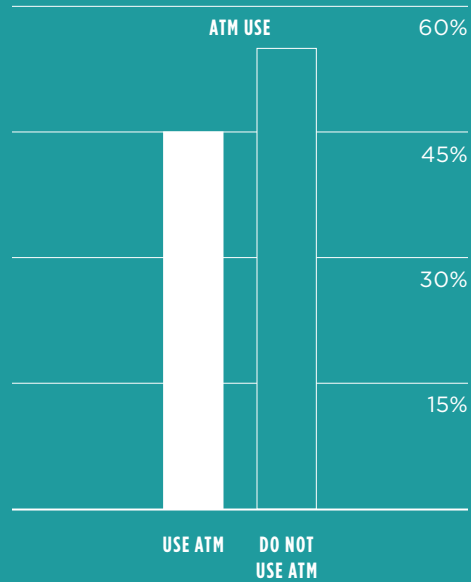
83% of survey respondents said that the location of the ATM was important.

Focus group participants said that the location had to be "convenient and feel safe."

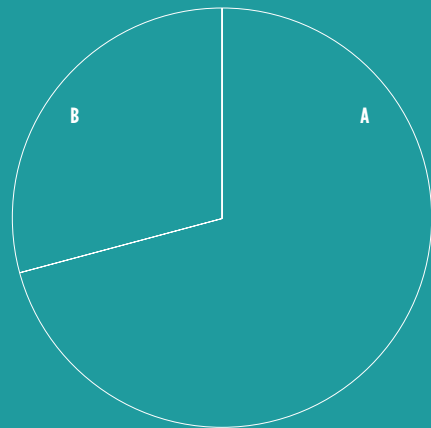
Most of those surveyed also rated ATM fees and large, easy-to-read screens as somewhat important.

However, several focus group participants noted that they liked to go to a physical bank branch and speak with the tellers, rather than an ATM.

Policy Implication: For the majority of older adults, ATMs are not a substitute for brick-and-mortar bank branches.



5. How many older adults want their banks to help them gain access to benefits?



71% of survey-takers were interested in banks offering services to help determine whether older bank users are eligible for housing, food, income, and other supports.

INTERESTED IN BENEFITS CHECKUP

A	71%	Yes
B	29%	No

6. What products and services do older adults want?

Older adults were strongly interested in no-fee, senior checking and savings accounts. 86% of survey respondents were very interested in senior checking and savings accounts. This corresponded with the many focus groups members who wanted a no-fee, senior checking account.

60% of older adults were very to somewhat interested in retirement or financial planning products.

Many focus group participants were concerned about the possible need for assisted living services and about planning for their children's and grandchildren's futures.

7. What do older adults think about fraud and financial exploitation?

Bank of America, M&T, and Wells Fargo, where 71% of older adults surveyed bank, have fraud prevention information on their websites. Yet 56% of survey-takers did not know if their banks offered fraud prevention information.

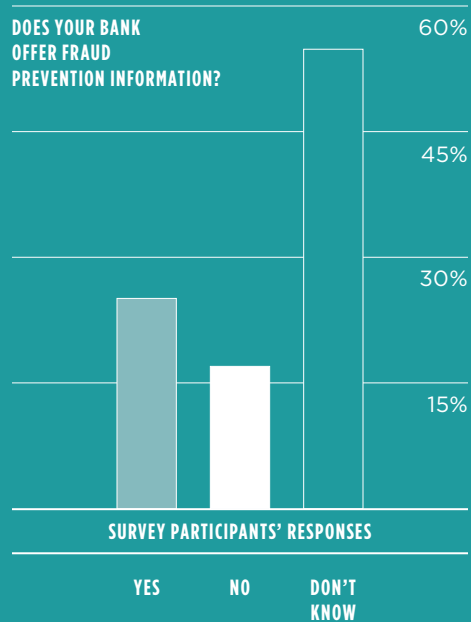
18% of those survey believed that their banks did not offer such information.

17% of survey-takers had been victims of financial fraud or exploitation.

Most focus group participants did not believe that financial fraud and exploitation was a senior issue. They thought it could happen to anyone at any age. They did not see age as a factor for increased risk of fraud.

Many focus group participants wanted banks to come to senior centers to give fraud protection presentations.

Many seniors expressed concerns that bank tellers rotated between branches and no longer knew customers and were less able to spot financial abuse. They were concerned because bank tellers no longer knew the customers or their banking habits, which made spotting financial abuse more difficult.



Policy Implications:

There is a clear need for banks to find new ways to share the financial fraud information they've developed.

Older adults could use additional resources and support to avoid falling victim to financial fraud and scams.

8. Do older adults want access to home loans from their banks?

As a group, survey respondents were not very interested in accessing the equity in their homes. Many respondents did not bother to rate their interest in housing counseling/home equity issues, which may indicate that they were uninterested in the service.

Focus group participants were uninterested in home-equity loans. Some used credit cards if they needed a small loan.

Many participants said that seniors should know and understand the complete terms of a reverse mortgage.

