

2023

# Annual Report



Central Minnesota Council on Aging  
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# Celebrating Achievements

*In 2023, Central Minnesota Council on Aging achieved significant milestones that we are proud to highlight.*

- ⇒ Reached over 23,332 older adults and caregivers with the Older Americans Act services including meals, assisted transportation, homemakers services, respite care, caregiver consultation, and healthy living classes.
- ⇒ Provided options counseling to 12,012 consumers through Senior LinkAge Line.
- ⇒ Conducted Dementia Friendly Workforce Dental/Health Care Practice Training sessions at St. Cloud Technical Community College and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Dental Clinic, reaching 34 students and staff.
- ⇒ Collaborated with the Minnesota Crisis Intervention training team to integrate dementia awareness into their certification classes, with 54 participants including police officers, social workers, and probation officers.
- ⇒ Engaged over 40 new Dementia Friends Champions from various sectors to provide awareness, education, and support for those affected by dementia-related diseases.
- ⇒ Gathered data from various sources to compile the *Profile of Older Adults in Central Minnesota* report, disseminated to over 1,700 community members and elected officials, leading to presentations to six different groups and reaching over 120 individuals.
- ⇒ Lead the Coalition to End Social Isolation in the St. Cloud area and partnered with CentraCare Health to gather data during annual patient visits.
- ⇒ Sponsored two older adult Pride events.
- ⇒ Developed the Together Well Toolkit, utilizing the UCLA 3-Item Loneliness Scale and piloting it with interested agencies offering direct care services.
- ⇒ Hosted a workshop showcasing social isolation efforts and partnerships with diverse community stakeholders, attracting 50 attendees from various sectors.
- ⇒ Contracted with Lyricality, a local artist group, to conduct listening sessions with individuals from Somali and Latinx communities to understand their needs for social engagement.

## Executive Director Review

I am thrilled to present the annual report for 2023, highlighting the impactful initiatives and achievements of Central Minnesota Council on Aging (CMCOA). At CMCOA, the collaborative nature of our dedicated employees and community partners fuels our daily efforts. Together, we address the diverse needs of those we serve, from enhancing access to healthy food to providing vital supports for caregivers. This work is made possible through the collective efforts of various stakeholders including businesses, healthcare organizations, nonprofits, local government entities, and volunteers.

Reflecting on the accomplishments of 2023, (listed on page 2), I extend heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, supportive volunteers, engaged advisory council, and dedicated governance board. Their commitment has been instrumental in driving our mission forward and making a positive difference in the lives of older adults in central Minnesota. Together, we have achieved remarkable feats that would not have been possible without their dedication.

As we look ahead to the future, I am confident that we will rise to meet the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I invite you to join us in celebrating our achievements and facing new challenges with resilience and determination. Together we will continue to serve our community with compassion and dedication, ensuring that every individual receives the support they need to live with dignity and independence.



Lori Vrolson  
Executive Director

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission: Committed to maintaining the highest level of independence of older people by developing and coordinating community care, reducing isolation, and improving access to services.

## Service Awards



Lori Vrolson, Executive Director, (right) presented the 25 year award to Linda Gansen, Finance Manager.

Central Minnesota Council on Aging recognizes the value that long-term employees bring. Their significant knowledge, and work experience over time contributes to the overall success of the agency. These awards are given each year in December.



L to R Row 1: Lisa M. 20 years, Linda G. 25 years, Sonia R. 10 years Row 2: Mara L. 10 years, Ashley B. 5 years, Joel N. 5 years, Eleanor B. 2 years  
Not pictured: Kathy K. 5 years

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Beth Schlangen, Benton County Commissioner  
Jeff Peterson, Cass County Commissioner  
Rick Greene, Chisago County Commissioner  
Alan Duff, Isanti County Commissioner  
Peter Ripka, Kanabec County Commissioner  
Genny Reynolds, Mille Lacs County Commissioner\*  
Bobby Kasper, Morrison County Commissioner  
Steve Hallan, Pine County Commissioner\*  
Lisa Fobbe, Sherburne County Commissioner\*  
Tarryl Clark, Stearns County Commissioner  
Leigh Lenzmeier, Stearns County Commissioner\*  
Randy Neumann, Todd County Commissioner  
Murlyn Kreklau, Wadena County Commissioner  
Jeanne Holland, Wright County Commissioner

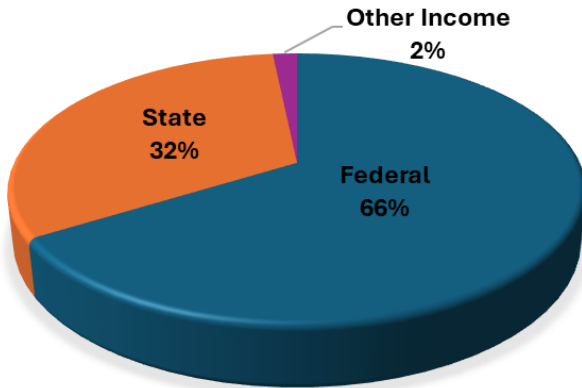
\*Executive Committee

## 2023 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

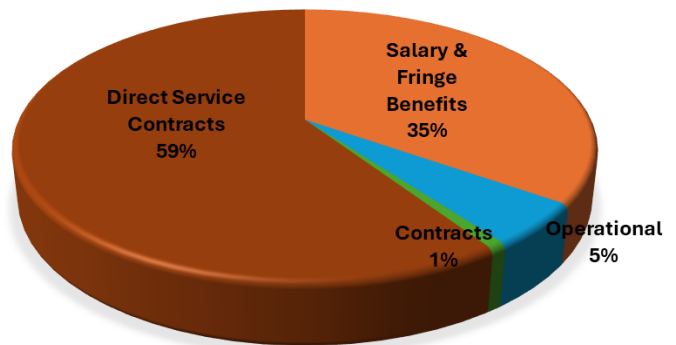
Spencer Buerkle, Benton County Representative  
Ruth Hunstiger, Benton County Representative  
Mary Anderson, Cass County Representative  
Kathy Blomquist, Chisago County Representative  
Karl Samp, Crow Wing County Representative  
Julie Hickerson, Isanti County Representative  
Alan Roseberry, Kanabec County Representative  
Martha Ahlschlager, Mille Lacs County Representative  
Desiree Bednar, Morrison County Representative  
Patrick Meacham, Pine County Representative  
Dennis Eichinger, Sherburne County Representative  
Nola Varilek, Stearns County Representative  
Lauren Hebert, Todd County Representative  
Cindy Pederson, Wadena County Representative  
LeeAnn Thimell, Wright County Representative  
Denise Sargent, American Indian Representative  
Bisharo Iman, Somali American Representative

# Financial Summary 2023

## 2023 REVENUE \$6,890,935



## 2023 EXPENSES \$6,883,022



(based on unaudited figures)

### Support and Revenue

Federal	\$	4,560,879
State	\$	2,217,809
United Way of Central Minnesota	\$	52,990
County	\$	50,672
Other Income	\$	8,585

Total Revenue	\$	6,890,935
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### Expenses

Salary & Fringe Benefits	\$	2,394,197
Operational	\$	351,564
Contracts	\$	54,595
Direct Service Contracts	\$	4,082,666
	\$	6,883,022

Revenue over Expenses	\$	7,913
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# 2023 Older Americans Act Funding

Total Dollars Utilized: \$4 Million

Over 23,332 Older Adults and Caregivers Supported

21 Contracted Title III Federal Older Americans Act Service Providers

Health Assessment	
	\$43,882
Older Adults	220
Hours	700

Home-Delivered Meals	
	\$2,295,555
Older Adults	4,281
Meals	369,901

Chore	
	\$47,572
Older Adults	242
Hours	1,689

Caregiver Consulting	
	\$151,553
Caregivers	231
Hours	1,657

Evidence-Based Programs	
	\$96,134
Older Adults	321
Series	62

Respite	
	\$61,062
Caregivers	53
Hours	2,158

Senior LinkAge Line Contacts	
Clients	18,495
Contacts/Calls	12,012

Congregate Meals	
	\$570,881
Older Adults	2,792
Meals	94,661

Homemaker	
	\$218,191
Older Adults	576
Hours	9,741

Friendly Visits / Telephone Reassurance	
	\$6,165
Caregivers/ Older Adults	56
Hours	221

Legal Education	
	\$229
Older Adults	200
Sessions	1

Legal Assistance	
	\$151,983
Older Adults	656
Hours	3,146

Assisted Transportation	
	\$270,200
Older Adults	631
One-way trips	12,820

Support Groups	
	\$33,101
Caregivers	114
Sessions	82

Caregiver Information	
	\$43,639
Caregivers	855
Sessions	30

Caregiver Education	
	\$28,258
Caregivers	92
Hours	200

## Title III Provider Partners

Organization	Amount Utilized
A Home for the Day	\$19,416
Assumption Community Faith in Action	\$88,962
CARE-Community Action Respecting Elders	\$31,407
Catholic Charities Senior Nutrition	\$2,269,804
Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization (CAIRO)	\$59,464
Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization (CMCEO)	\$5,129
Central Minnesota Dementia Community Action Network	\$95,568
Faith in Action for Cass County	\$57,487
Family Pathways	\$174,252
Helping Hands Outreach	\$23,233

Organization	Amount Utilized
Horizon Health	\$101,097
Kanabec County Public Health	\$43,883
Lakes & Pines CAC	\$13,839
Lutheran Social Service Senior Nutrition	\$585,322
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid	\$152,200
Northwoods Caregivers	\$22,574
Parmly on the Lake, LLC (South Chisago Meals on Wheels)	\$38,231
Paynesville ROSE Center	\$59,180
Senior Community Services	\$54,362
Whitney Senior Center	\$60,000
Wright County Community Action	\$98,118



Mary Bauer, Community Development Specialist, retired in 2023.

Mary has always been passionate about whatever path life takes her. CMCOA was one of her encore jobs. She brought much experience and knowledge to her position and gave technical assistance to many senior providers and was an excellent presenter for CMCOA events.

When telling her coworkers that she was going to retire she'd say with a laugh and a smile, "Well, I'm going to take the year off".



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

17

New to Medicare  
Classes

“Senior LinkAge Line  
made difficult to understand  
things easily understandable.”

*“It is good to have  
resources like Senior  
LinkAge Line available!  
They are very helpful.”*

120

Informational  
Presentations

25

Health Fairs  
&  
Senior Expos

“Senior LinkAge Line did a very good  
job helping me. Excellent!”

*“The amount of time the Specialist  
took to explain Medicare and  
Advantage plans was very helpful  
and appreciated.”*

## The impact

A resource coordinator met with a married couple, Chuck and Helen, some time ago. Chuck is caring for Helen who has quickly progressing memory loss. They were referred to the Senior LinkAge Line by their doctor, who had told them that Helen needed to move into an assisted living facility within the year.

During the two-hour home visit Chuck had many questions for the resource coordinator. Some of these she could answer but other answers were simply unknown. Together they talked about resources, discussed caregiver support and came up with community support plan options. These included: adult day, home health care, caregiver training for Chuck so he could care for Helen safely, medication assessment, and hospice options.

By the end of the visit, Chuck had made some decisions. He decided to keep his wife at home with support until the end of her life. The resource coordinator would of course be part of their team and would be available to talk or email to discuss any questions or needs they have. Chuck was so happy to finally have a plan in place, and he was happy that he and Helen could still be together.



Central Minnesota Council on Aging provides Senior LinkAge Line services in the 14-county central planning and service area in partnership with the Minnesota Board on Aging.

# 2023

## Comments | Notes | Stats

### Resource Specialists

Working within the Senior LinkAge Line Contact Center, locate services or research options to determine what kind of services might be helpful. In addition, they do an in-depth assessment and help navigate individuals to the appropriate community services.

**Assisted 12,012 individuals through 18,654 points of contact.**

**814 people served from various minority groups.**

### Resource Coordinators

Assist nursing home residents who have complicated needs to return home and individuals who are living in their home to remain there as long as possible.

**695 Individuals Returned to community or remained in community.**

**450 Support Plans (32% increase)**

### Preadmission Screening Specialists (PAS)

Partner with qualified health care professionals at hospitals, nursing facilities, hospice agencies, and clinics to ensure that the preadmission screenings process is completed for individuals admitting to Medical Assistance certified nursing facilities.

**7, 156 Preadmission Screenings ( 21% increase)**

**5,656 Referrals (Estimated stay of less than 30 days.)**



Lisa Maetche, LSW, retired after over 20 years working with Senior LinkAge Line. She was a resource specialist but also had worked as a preadmission screening specialist for several years.



Sue S., CMCOA Volunteer

# Community Development



Steve Hoover, PhD, CMCOA Healthy Aging Coordinator

## Workforce Development and Education

*CMCOA is working to educate the current and upcoming workforce on age-related needs to better equip them in working with older adults and to spark interest in working with the older population.*

- **Dementia Friendly Dental/Health Care Practice Training**  
Trained 34 St. Cloud Technical & Community College students and staff. The training also included a section on Aging and Ageism. In addition trained 10 Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Dental Clinic staff.
- **Responding to Calls with People Living with Dementia**  
Two statewide workshops were held with a collaboration of Crow Wing County, a volunteer with Alzheimer's Association, and the Minnesota Crisis Intervention training team (who leads a 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team Certification class). There were 54 participants that included police officers, social workers, corrections and probation officers.
- **Dementia Friends Champions**  
Community Development staff continued efforts in engaging new Dementia Friends Champions. Over 40 new Dementia Friends Champions were trained including Dementia Friendly Community leadership teams, home health agencies, senior living communities, faith community nurses, community health workers, senior services agencies, and representatives from university extension teams.

## **Social Isolation and Loneliness**

*Through continued funding from United Way of Central Minnesota and additional funds from the Age-Friendly Minnesota Technical Assistance Provider grant, CMCOA was able to continue community engagement and education to assist those impacted by social isolation and loneliness (SIL).*

- **Coalition to End Social Isolation**  
Leading the Coalition to End Social Isolation (CESIL) in the St. Cloud area, CMCOA was able to partner with the Age Flourishing (Friendly) St. Cloud's social and community engagement subcommittee.
- **Together Well Toolkit**  
In April 2023, CMCOA contracted Collective Action Lab to facilitate a conversation with CESIL members to determine goals and next steps. The outcome was that the group wanted to have resources and tools to assist professionals offering direct client services to determine the individual's risk for SIL and the resources to offer when needed. From this conversation, the Community Development team researched and developed the *Together Well Toolkit*. Using the UCLA 3-Item Loneliness Scale and including resources and guidance for using the tool, having conversations, and offering next steps, CMCOA engaged interested Title III providers and CESIL member agencies to pilot the toolkit.
- **A Road Map to End Social Isolation and Loneliness Workshop**  
CMCOA hosted this workshop in June 2023 to showcase the work of the CESIL and the partnership with CentraCare Health in gathering data during annual patient visits. The 50 attendees were primarily from our 14-county region.
- **Listening Session**  
Contracting with Lyricality, a local artist group that offers community group sessions that bring people together to discuss needs and build connections through poetry, CMCOA held a listening session. Present were 19 individuals of various ages from the Somali and Latinx communities sharing the needs for social engagement. Results from the session will assist next steps in convening with Affinity Circles in 2024.

## Age-Friendly

In 2023 CMCOA received the Age-Friendly Minnesota Technical Assistance Provider grant. CMCOA offered one on one technical assistance to potential and current grantees and offered a series of group discussions through their Community of Learning sessions.

- **Central Minnesota Age-Friendly Community of Learning**  
CMCOA hosted this five-part series. These virtual trainings offered the support and tools needed to agencies and communities working on age-friendly or dementia friendly initiatives and services. Accumulatively, close to 100 participated representing teams throughout the state and region, transportation, housing, senior providers, senior centers, county staff, and health systems.
- **Age-Friendly Regional Exchange**  
As a follow-up extension to the Age-Friendly Minnesota Conference held in September, CMCOA hosted one of seven Regional Exchange sites that were held throughout the state. The event offered in-person conversations to discuss and gather input about the community's needs as it relates to the Age-Friendly Domains. The information was used to help with regional efforts and also the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council to determine the focus areas for their commitment to participating in the Multi-sector Blueprint for an Age-Friendly Minnesota. Close to 40 participated in the Central Exchange.

## Senior Pride Events

CMCOA sponsored two first-time ever held events in 2023 during Pride Week that welcomed LGBTQ+ seniors and friends. Together the *Brainerd Senior Pride Brunch* and the *Senior Pride Bingo & Brunch*, held in Sartell, hosted over 60 older adults. Each brought together community sponsors including representation from the regional Pride Committees. The feedback from these inaugural events was very positive and planning has already begun for more events in 2024.

## Profile of Older Adults in Central Minnesota

CMCOA gathered data regarding older adults located in central Minnesota to complete and publish an updated *Profile of Older Adults in Central Minnesota* report. CMCOA presented the data to six different groups involving 120 individuals which included county commissioners, senior provider networks, senior community centers, nursing alumni association, area realtor association, and county health and human services staff.