



# Year in Review

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# Agency on Aging

OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT  
Your Advocate for Independence®

## Dear Friends of AOASCC,

It has been an amazing year of growth and opportunities. We are excited that we completed our strategic plan and are thankful to our board members, staff, and community partners who participated in its development.

We continue to expand our programs and develop new ones to reach even more older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. We met an important milestone in the Navigator Program, assisting a greater number of individuals than originally planned. A new staff position was created to focus on strengthening our partnerships with other aging network providers to address the needs of the underserved and vulnerable older adults in our communities. Volunteer engagement is a critical need, both for the one who serves and the one who receives the services, so we are focusing on growing the meaningful opportunities we offer. Calls from caregivers are ever increasing, and we want our wide range of services and support to keep up.

All of this relies on our staff and volunteers, who are resilient, caring, and dedicated. They managed to keep services strong through the public health emergency, and now as we move forward, the agency is focusing on ways to strengthen and grow our workforce as we face a continuing and changing landscape of long-term services and support.

Collaboration with other agencies in the aging network has also been at the forefront of our efforts this past year. This has coincided with our work as part of AgingCT. AgingCT combines the power of five nonprofit Area Agencies on Aging for Connecticut through advocacy, resource sharing, and services innovation. This year, we will hold an inaugural AgingCT Summit to inform and educate professionals in the field of aging and disability.

Building partnerships and community is one of our core values. I am grateful for each of our community partners, our Board, Advisory Council, staff, and volunteers. Together, we are impacting thousands of lives each year.

I look forward to what comes next.

Sincerely,

Melissa Lang, DrPH, MPH, MPA, MA  
President & CEO

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## Overview of Accomplishments

### Support to Live at Home

- 3,900 older adults and individuals with disabilities were able to remain at home through care management or self-directed services.
- 7,954 callers received information about community resources and benefit programs.
- 13,252 people received education to support their independence in the community, in-person, or through written material.
- 3,594 individuals received nutrition support through benefit and community programs.


### Caring for Loved Ones

- 3,290 family caregivers were assisted with information about community resources and benefits, were provided with respite care, or received training.
- 137 family caregivers attended a national conference sponsored by AOASCC.

### Staying Active & Healthy

- 243 works by 74 artists were displayed at our Annual Art of Aging Exhibition.
- 207 volunteers served in the community through AOASCC programs.

### Support for Professionals

- 254 individuals were provided education regarding elder abuse and fraud through the annual conference TEARSTM. 

## Our Guiding Principles

**Care** – We support one another in ensuring that each older adult has the experience of care that inspires lifelong dignity and independence.

**Passionate expertise** – We are energized by learning and by bringing our knowledge to each situation and decision.

**Quality service** – We strive for excellence in the service we provide to our clients and one another, and we seek to improve in some way each day.

**Inclusion and collaboration** – We commit to honor differences as we build partnerships and community.

**Stewardship** – We recognize the significance of our work and the resources entrusted to us and hold them in the greatest trust.

**Leadership** – We will lead the way as experts and advocates in aging services.

Find out more at [www.aoascc.org/About/strategic-plan/](http://www.aoascc.org/About/strategic-plan/).

# The Impact of Volunteering

Volunteer engagement matters. We could not do the work we do in the community without the hundreds of individuals who give of their time, talent, and experience. Volunteer engagement also strongly correlates to enjoying a healthy lifestyle. Volunteers have improved physical and mental health; gained a sense of purpose; and grown new social relationships. This is why we are committed to providing meaningful volunteering opportunities.




Pat is one of our amazing volunteers. In speaking about leaving her career, she tells us, "I hung my boots, but they didn't stay hung up long." She currently works as a caregiver for a healthcare agency, and one day a week, she volunteers as a chaperone, meeting people in their home and traveling with them to and from their medical appointments.



Pat's compassion for volunteering is fueled by her own experience with her mother. When her mother needed care, she was working full-time and was unable to be close by. She shared that her mother did not have the best care, and from this experience believes what is often missing in healthcare is the people connection. In her current employment and as a volunteer, she can fill that role.

She began volunteering with AOASCC when a friend shared her experience of taking people to the hospital who, without this assistance, may not go otherwise. Pat says this hit home. One of her clients happened to be a long-time friend. Dolores has had many struggles, but is extremely reluctant to go to her hospital visits without someone to take her. Pat has seen a change in her since she began receiving services through the agency, just because someone is invested in her.

Being a chaperone, however, is more than just getting people from point A to point B. For Pat, it is about being able to reach people. Pat tells us, "Everyone has a hook" and she treats every chaperone visit as a chance to have a conversation. She recounts the story of an individual who was being unfriendly with everyone. As they rode together in the van, Pat mentioned that she likes riding and looking at architecture. After a few minutes, the client started talking about her memories of the area when she was growing up.

When asked what she would say to someone who is thinking about volunteering, Pat responded. "Do you have anyone in your family you want the best for? What if that person had no family? All people need is somebody who is interested in them." You can be that somebody. 

# The Complexity of Accessing Resources


Dennis is 62 years old and has complex medical and behavioral health needs. What started as a simple application for the Medicare Savings Program turned into a complicated problem when the application was rejected, despite it being clear that he was eligible. In working with Dennis, agency staff discovered that his discharge from the hospital was being delayed because he had nowhere to live. His sister, who serves as his caregiver, was ready to help him after he left the hospital, but was unable to provide a place to live. Our staff worked numerous hours to help Dennis and his sister work through all that he needed until he was on a path to living independently.

Often, our dedicated certified counselors are able to assist people with the resources they need to remain at home. However, in circumstances like Dennis', the situation is so complex that extensive case management is needed. Now the counselor can make a referral to the Navigator Program.

Collaboration is core to our work as an Agency on Aging. This is strongly demonstrated through our work with the other four Agencies on Aging in Connecticut. This network is known as AgingCT. The Navigator Program was created through this collaboration.

Advocacy is also one of our core values. It is important to not just provide services today, but advocate for the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities so their needs will continue to be met. With the completion of the first full year of implementation, the need and success of the Navigator Program was clearly seen as we surpassed our original target of clients. This story was repeated across the state, so AgingCT advocated with the state legislature and was able to secure funding for a second Navigator to be placed at each of the agencies.

Accessing benefits and programs is not always simple. We assist people who are missing out on almost \$2,000 a year in benefits, just because they do not know the help is available. Over 60% of information provided to people is never acted upon, and even when there is the intention to act, there are barriers, such as technology. Online applications can be challenging, and access to a computer or smartphone may be limited. As a result, many people simply get discouraged and give up.

Calling Aging Answers is the first step. Our information counselors are amazing at navigating the complexities of long-term services and supports, and now they have an added resource in the Navigator Program. 

# Extending Our Reach Through Community Collaboration


According to the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control, social determinants of health have a significant impact on health outcomes. Social determinants of health (SDOH) refers to a wide range of areas, from the circumstances in which you are born to the infrastructure of the town you live in, which includes access to transportation, nutrition, and housing. To impact these health-related social needs, we are working to strengthen our partnerships with Yale New Haven Health and community-based health providers.

“Knowing the impact of social determinants on older adults and people with disabilities, it was clear that this agency is in a crucial position to make a difference. We are eager to support our medical providers and expand our role in addressing health-related social needs,” said Melissa Lang, President & CEO.

Because this is a new priority for our agency, a new position was created — Assistant Director of Community Programs. Mollie Gadarowski, who has worked in our Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, took on this new role with enthusiasm and a clear vision. She states, “by growing

and strengthening our partnerships with community organizations, we will see positive health outcomes in vulnerable populations that we have previously not been able to fully impact.”

In her tenure with the agency, Mollie has seen firsthand the impact of SDOH. She shares the story of Doris as an example. Doris received services through a state program managed by AOASCC. She has diabetes and was faithful to her doctor appointments and the prescribed care, but her blood sugar levels continued to fluctuate. After multiple visits, questions started being asked and she disclosed the level of food insecurity she was experiencing. Without a good, healthy diet, even the best medical care would not be able to help her maintain a healthy lifestyle.

When asked to provide a one-year goal, Mollie refers back to the research that tells us that we can have positive outcomes in the health and well-being of older adults by addressing SDOH. Through partnerships with community organizations, she is looking forward to seeing this proved at the local level. 

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## Financial Information

October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

### REVENUE & SUPPORT

State Funding	8,358,613
Federal Funding	4,609,423
Other Support	962,448
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>13,930,484</b>

### EXPENDITURES

Care Management	5,574,657
Nutrition:	
Congregate Meals	811,381
Home-Delivered Meals	1,067,631
Community & Respite:	
Funding to Partners	1,129,015
Respite Care Management	423,494
Aging & Disability Resource Ctr.	1,742,293
Volunteer & Training:	
Senior Companions Program	273,220
Foster Grandparents Program	221,181
RSVP	81,617
Experience Corps	295,315
Others non-grant	45,562
Administration	1,846,701
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>13,512,067</b>

## Our Strategic Plan:

A strategic plan is a document that outlines what values are guiding the organization and, based on these values, what actions will be taken. The stories in this report illustrate how these are lived out every day in our work in the community. Find out more at [www.aoascc.org/About/strategic-plan/](http://www.aoascc.org/About/strategic-plan/).

### Mission:

To champion and serve older adults and individuals with disabilities so that they remain independent and engaged within their communities.

### Vision:

A society that values older adults and people with disabilities.