



# Year in Review

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022



# Agency on Aging

OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT  
Your Advocate for Independence®

## Dear Friends of AOASCC,

I want to share with you what we've been working on over the last year. In this report, you will see examples of the thousands of individuals we have been able to assist with a range of services to help them remain at home and engaged in the community, and the caregivers we have provided with critical supports.

As strong as our community is, we continue to see so many critical concerns for older adults and people with disabilities: social isolation and loneliness, food insecurity, transportation, cost of care, and knowing where to turn for help.

This is why our support for older adults continues to grow -- through care management for in-home services, information about insurance and benefit & community services, and programs that address loneliness and encourage community participation. We see firsthand how critical these programs are for people who want to remain in the community but who do need various levels of support.

We also know the important role that family caregiving plays, and that it can take an emotional and physical toll -- so we are continuing to build our services for family members, helping them navigate benefits and services that can support their loved one and connecting them to respite programs for in home support that can offer caregivers a much-needed break. Our trainings and support groups continue to provide education on caregiving topics in a safe and supportive environment where caregivers can share experiences and gain a sense of camaraderie.

As much as we offer here, we know how overwhelming it can be when individuals and families are looking for services, often in crisis, and don't know where to turn. This coming year you'll see more education from us and statewide collaborations as we create a unified message and approach that will decrease that feeling of fragmentation in aging services. As we develop these new systems, access for underserved and vulnerable older adults is at the forefront.

Coming out of the last couple years, we all learned so much about how critical it is to collaborate and have a strong infrastructure for older adults. I could not be more thankful for those who partner with us, as well as Board, Advisory Council and staff. Together we are entering into a year of great opportunities.

Sincerely,



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

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## Overview of Accomplishments

### Support to Live at Home

- 3,370 older adults and individuals with disabilities were able to remain at home through care management or self-directed services.
- 7,772 callers received information about community resources and benefit programs.
- 29,911 people received education to support their independence in the community, in person or through written material.
- 3,450 individuals received nutrition support through benefit and community programs.

### Caring for Loved Ones

- 1,295 family caregivers were assisted with information about community resources and benefits, provided with respite care, or received training.
- 149 family caregivers attended a national conference sponsored by AOASCC.

### Staying Active & Healthy

- 85 works by 36 artists were displayed at our 10th Annual Art of Aging Exhibition.
- 342 volunteers served in the community through AOASCC programs.

### Support for Professionals

- 742 individuals were provided education regarding elder abuse and fraud through the annual conference TEARST<sup>™</sup>. 

# Addressing Health Disparities

We know the needs of the greater New Haven community.

- 1 in 10 people live in poverty in Connecticut. However, the poverty rate in New Haven County is 20% higher than the state average.
- 43% of people using food pantries are aged 65 or older.
- The fastest sector of population growth is in the 60+ age group, meaning that there is an even greater need for education and access to long term services and support.
- Lack of reliable transportation is a frequently cited factor in medical non-compliance and hospital readmissions.



Our staff see the reality of these statistics every day as they answer the phones and are out in the community. They see firsthand how these needs increase the risk for poor health outcomes and a lower quality of life. Their work makes a critical difference in mitigating this risk.

However, we could not do this alone. We work alongside other aging network organizations, community partners, the agencies on aging in the other regions of the state and state and municipal partners.

One of these partners, the Yale School of Medicine, Office of Health Equity Research, recently featured us in a video [AOASCC.org/news/yhepvideo/](https://www.aosccc.org/news/yhepvideo/). This video speaks to how their research provides critical guidance in identifying health disparities. Recently feature us in a video ([www.aosccc.org/news/yhepvideo/](https://www.aosccc.org/news/yhepvideo/)).

Being able to identify these disparities then allows us to work with our partners to create health equity models to address these needs, making an even greater difference in our community.



# Navigating the Complexities of Care

We receive over 7,500 calls every year. Some of the requests are routine and our counselors can provide the information. How do I get help with meals? Do I qualify for in-home assistance? Which Medicare plan works for my prescriptions? Sometimes, however, the needs are complex, and more time is needed to sort through the possible solutions.

Service Navigation is a new program here at AOASCC, as well as at the other agencies on aging in Connecticut. This adds staff and resources as a second level of assistance. When an older adult is experiencing a crisis, is alone and without resources or needs help while waiting for program services to start, a referral is made to a service navigator.

Jon is the Service Navigator at AOASCC. He enjoys the work because he is able to build relationships with the people he is helping. He tells us that what really creates a crisis is, not only that there is a critical need and individuals do not know where to turn for help, but that an emotional crisis is being experienced because of prolonged stress. He shared these stories with us.

Henry has dementia and was already receiving home care services. His brother Will, who is his primary caregiver, lives out of state, but tries to visit on a weekly basis. During his visits he noticed that his brother's home wasn't being kept up and his brother also wasn't bathed. On further investigation, he discovered that his brother was leaving the home when the home care workers were scheduled to arrive. Jon explains situations can be very complicated and, often his role becomes more focused on the caregiver. While Henry may need more support than he can receive at home, because of Jon's support, Will is able to think through the options and determine the best next steps for his brother's care.

Jon also talked about Kathy whose long-time partner Joe is the primary caregiver. Jon began helping them work through qualifying for in-home services. The family, while not actively engaged in caregiving, raised concerns about Joe, further complicating the situation. Jon explains that often, as in this case, the steps for the care recipient are solvable, but the emotional crisis the care recipient and caregiver are undergoing is what really requires the work of a navigator. Jon was able to find a men's caregiver support group for Joe and this is providing the support he needs as they continue to work through the options for Kathy's care.

Jon, likes to say, "we're called navigators because we help people navigate a sometimes murky benefits system; but sometimes, that system is so murky, and I have to fight-fight-fight for my clients, I feel like I'm not a Service Navigator... I'm a Service Gladiator!"

## Each Volunteer Brings Something Unique

The Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs provide several key benefits to volunteers. Volunteers tell us that they feel more self-sufficient and discover that they have the ability to contribute something meaningful to others. Volunteering allows them to socialize more and keep their mind engaged. They enjoy feeling wanted and the opportunity to express themselves through their volunteering. Staff member Judy provided examples from her many years working with these volunteers.

Senior companions are placed with seniors who need assistance and companionship. The companions find it meaningful that they can be of service to their peers and express that seeing the needs of others motivates them to keep taking care of themselves and staying engaged. Senior companions enjoy sharing their gifts. Many enjoy cooking or love shopping and can use these passions in their volunteering. The volunteer's time is a great gift both to the individual, but also the individual's family as they can step away from caregiving for a while.

Louisa is 92 years old and tells us that she will continue volunteering "until the end." She has been part of the senior community in New Haven for a long time, cooking in one of the senior center kitchens at first and now she serves as a senior companion. Typically, companions are younger than the individual they are assisting, but in Louisa's case, it is the opposite. Judy tells us that there is a lot to admire about Louisa and when you see her it is obvious that volunteering makes her happy.

Foster grandparents provide one-on-one support to young children. Teachers often feel overloaded because of the number of children in their class that need support. These volunteers assist a child through every activity, both in learning and social interaction. This early intervention in a child's life makes all the difference to later academic success.

AOASCC is grateful for a specific group of foster grandparents, our abuelitas. Judy spoke about the Spanish culture that these women are part of. In this community, the older generation is recognized for their wisdom, and given respect and honor in response. Grandmothers especially are seen as the person "who helped us get where we are."

Migdalia is one of our abuelitas. She had arrived from Puerto Rico and wanted to get involved and it was obvious from the beginning that she had so much to offer. At first, she spoke little English. However, staff both at the agency and the foster grandparent site do not allow this to be a barrier and she was welcomed into the classroom. She attributes learning English to her time volunteering. Those around her remark on how her confidence has grown. She tells us that being a foster grandparent "saved my sanity".

These are two of the volunteer opportunities we provide, and it is clear why AOASCC has been sponsoring volunteer programs for thirty years. The benefits for both the volunteer and the recipient cannot be overstated. Thank you to each of our amazing volunteers for what you do!

# Meeting Transportation Challenges

One cold and blustery winter day, volunteer Dera arrived at Jana's home, who was going to a local hospital for several appointments. Jana had been avoiding her medical appointments because she has a chronic illness, which can affect her balance and is extremely painful, making it difficult to travel. That's where our chaperone program comes in.

Dera stayed at Jana's side, "door-through-door". From going into Jana's home to help her get ready, all the way to when Jana was settled back in at home, she was there. She escorted Jana to and from the car, which was arranged through a community transportation program. She helped Jana navigate through the hallways and elevators and pedestrians. At the facility, she arranged for a wheelchair. All Jana had to do was focus on walking and keeping her balance.

When we checked in later, Jana expressed her gratitude. She told us that because she had fallen multiple times previously, she was planning to cancel these critical appointments when she saw the snow and ice outside. "I am so happy I did not cancel my appointment today!" 

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# Financial Information

October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021

## EXPENDITURES

Care Management	4,999,392
Nutrition:	
Congregate Meals	1,067,788
Home-Delivered Meals	921,590
Community & Respite:	
Funding to Partners	1,031,510
Respite Care Management	388,973
Aging & Disability Resource Ctr.	1,696,351
CARES Act	16,380
CAA	310,349
Volunteer & Training:	
Senior Companions Program	358,982
Foster Grandparents Program	303,954
RSVP	91,569
Experience Corps	193,214
Others non-grant	45,582
Administration	1,973,557
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>13,399,191</b>

## Event Sponsors

Caregiver Homes by Seniorlink • Juniper Homecare, LLC • KeepMeHome, LLC



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