



# Region IV Area Agency on Aging Annual Report FY 2023

## FROM OUR CEO

As I peruse the pages of this annual report, I am struck by the profound dedication of staff, inspiring service of volunteers and deep community partnerships—all of which helped make 2023 a truly remarkable year.

There has been no shortage of innovative approaches to meet community needs this year. From expanding our in-home services to include behavioral health counseling and nutrition education to embedding AAA staff in medical teams with community health care partners and growing the Arts & Aging partnership to combat the stigma associated with a dementia diagnosis.

While the AAA team was honored with three national awards for their pioneering work in 2023, many remarkable moments go unheralded. Moments like an overwhelmed caregiver not certain they can go on until they called the Info-Line and learned about a wealth of support available. Like the grateful son whose mother we were privileged to provide in-home services, ensuring she could live the remainder of her life in her own home despite her high care needs. Or the dozens of senior volunteers mentoring at-risk youth in schools across the region.

I hear about these and many other remarkable moments at the grocery store, youth sporting events and elsewhere in the community. Often people preface their remarks with “you probably get tired of hearing this, but your staff were lifesavers for my family.” I never get tired of hearing it. And I hope you enjoy reading this annual report highlighting the work of AAA staff, volunteers and community partners that make these and thousands of other remarkable, life-changing moments possible.

As we look back and celebrate our successes, we do so with hearts full of gratitude and energized for the work ahead. Please celebrate the accomplishments of 2023 with us and join us as we forge ahead in 2024 to ensure Southwest Michigan is a great place to live at every age.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Vanlandingham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Christine Vanlandingham, CEO

***Mission:*** Offering Choices for Independent Lives

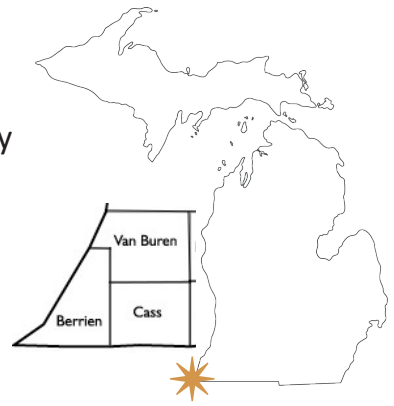
***Vision:*** Through choice and range of service, every aging adult lives a quality life.

# ABOUT THE AGENCY

Region IV Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is a private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to improving the lives of older adults and people with disabilities. Since 1974, we have been working tirelessly in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties to empower those we serve.

**What do we do?** We're advocates first and foremost. We champion the rights and needs of older and disabled adults, and their caregivers. We listen to what they need, and connect them to services that promote dignity and independence. We plan and provide in-home and community services to our community members.

We also manage funds from federal, state, local, and private sources to make sure these vital community services and programs continue to run smoothly. We are designated by the state of Michigan to handle federal Older Americans Act funds and we manage a variety of government contracts to deliver new and existing services in Southwest Michigan.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# 2023 AWARD WINNERS

## Caregiver of the Year Awards

### Peggy Means

In recognition of the persistence and love provided to her daughter, Jennifer Flewellen, during the five years she was in a coma; and the attention, learning and advocacy she's been able to do for her daughter as she woke up and transitioned back home.



### Steve Kelly

In recognition of the tireless dedication, care and love provided to his wife of 59 years, Millie Kelly, to keep her living comfortably in her own home; and being a strong advocate for her for over 25 years since her Parkinson's diagnosis.



## Direct Care Worker of the Year Award

### Venita Booth

In recognition of the outstanding care and patience given to her clients, including her own family members; the comfort and reassurance provided to clients who may be resistant to care; and for always willing to help in tough situations to ensure clients are not left without the care that they need to live independently in their home.

## Dorothy Richmond Customer Service Award

### Kristina Rita

Kristina was described as always first to offer help, problem solve, and cheerlead others; someone who brings people together; and someone who sees what needs to be done and does it. She works hard for others, lending an ear to listen and even helping a coworker or new employee with support, training, or a safe space to talk. It was noted:



## Volunteer of the Year Award

### Arthur Hagan

In recognition of the motivation, positive behaviors and joy he brings to the students, teachers and staff at Blossomland Learning Center as a Foster Grandparent, including going out of his way to help adapt learning activities for the students and driving nearly 800 miles a month to show up every morning with a smile on his face.

## Community Partner Awards

### The Herald-Palladium

In appreciation of 25 years of outstanding partnership in planning and organizing the Annual Senior Expo, which connects older adults to vital community resources so they may continue to live independently in Southwest Michigan; and giving a weekly platform in the Generations Column to celebrate and bring awareness to aging topics, programs and services.



### Strong Women of Faith

In appreciation of providing vital stakeholder input to AAA on how its programs and services impact their communities of which has been used to inform processes, initiatives and work done by AAA.



“Kristina inspires me as Social Worker to keep on advocating and pushing for positive change in clients, our community and in myself.”

*The Dorothy Richmond Customer Service Award is presented annually to a staff person who exemplifies outstanding customer service. Staff nominate their peers and a review committee of the Advisory Council makes the final selection.*

# FY 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

## ACCESS SERVICES

### Info-Line for Aging and Disability

**6,033** community members provided with **13,040** telephone and in-person consultations

**1,091** referrals from community agencies

**156** older adults received emergency assistance



### Michigan Medicare Assistance Program (MMAP)

**1,859** clients helped with their health benefits

*"I know you're certified and keep up on all the changes. I've learned a little more each year, but I'd still rather ask the experts. I trust you. You let me make my own decisions but are a guiding hand." - Brenda Layne, St. Joseph*



### Care Management

**969** clients connected with an array of services to help them live in the setting of their choice

### Nursing Facility Transition

**22** clients helped transition home from a nursing facility



*"When I got out, I had no place to stay, no furniture, nothing. AAA helped me out with furniture, a dresser, a bed, everything I would need to get me on my way, and it did!" - JoAnn Young, Hartford*

### Housing Coordination

**193** clients assisted in finding a place to live

### Caregiver Support

**876** caregivers served with education, support groups and online resources

*"I always had a lot to do with our grandchildren, but I just didn't expect to be helping to raise a great-grandchild. It was helpful hearing other people's stories and sharing my own at the Kinship Care Support Groups," - Carolyn Strzykowski, St. Joseph*

### Transportation

**26,637** rides coordinated for **767** individuals

## In-Home Services

### Community Living Supports

**757 clients** supported with tools to help them live independently

### Home-delivered Meals

**1,632 clients** served with **235,368 meals**

*"The food is delicious, but really it's knowing that someone cares, that I'm still part of the community."*

**- Meal Recipient, Bridgman**

### In-home Respite Care

**9 clients** with **4,081 hours**

### Personal Care Services

**69 clients** assisted with **9,560 hours** of bathing and dressing help

### Homemaker Services

**50 clients** served with **5,819 hours** of cleaning, meal prep and more

### Professional Nursing Service

**15 clients** served with **681 hours** of service

### Integrated Care at Home

**83 clients** provided nutrition and/or behavioral health counseling

*"The counselors gave me good ideas of things to do to improve my homelife. People should give it a try. You never know - it might help you. I hadn't planned on getting counseling, but it worked. Everyone was kind and helpful."*

**- Barbara Rodgers, Royalton Township**

### Emergency Response System/Fall Buttons

**373 buttons** with **3,058 months** of service

## COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

### Dining Sites

**1,068 clients** served with  
**36,036 meals** at area Senior Centers



## BY THE NUMBERS, CONT.

### Adult Day Services

**63 clients** spent **23,539 hours** in active community settings

*"You get out of the house; you meet like-minded people. It's a very diverse group. I'm so thankful to Area Agency on Aging. I need to be here, and they made it happen,"*

*- Client who attends Autumn House in Paw Paw*

### Out-of-home Respite Care

**11 clients** with **137 days** of respite services to give caregivers a break

### Long-term Ombudsman/Elder Abuse Prevention

**1,156 clients** provided with **1,195 hours** of free consultation

### Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

**491 community members** engaged in **61 classes**

### Computer Learning Center

**57 community members** engaged in **14 classes**

### Legal Assistance

**325 clients** served with **863 hours** of legal assistance

## CAMPUS FOR CREATIVE AGING

### In-Person and Virtual Classes

**1,913 community members** engaged in **148 classes**

### Evidence-Based Class Teachers

**126 community members** taught by **19 teachers**

### Reduced Isolation

**2,039 community members** engaged for **17,414 hours**

### Volunteer Campus Teachers

**24 volunteers** taught community members a new skill

*"Teaching tech at the Campus is empowering. I'm grateful to the Campus for allowing me to help my fellow humans confidently navigate the digital world, fostering personal growth and meaningful connections in our digital age." - Mendez Holliday*





## Creating a Dementia-Friendly Community

**236 community members** reached through classes, conversation and Arts & Aging performances

**23 classes** of Dementia Friends taught at

**8 locations** around Southwest Michigan, including

**51 Agency employees** trained as Dementia Friends



## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

### Senior Companions

**22 volunteers** served **89 clients** with **7,988 hours** of companionship

### Friendly Callers

**26 volunteers** served **81 clients** with **759 hours** of conversation

### Foster Grandparents

**59 volunteers** served **324 local students** for **41,738 hours**



*"Grandpa Buck reminds everyone that even though he is 98, age is not a factor and should not stop anyone from being active and giving back to their community. Grandpa Buck has made a measurable impact over the years, especially the children who may or may not have a positive male role model in their lives.*

*- Kim Ertman, preschool teacher, South Haven*

### AAA Board of Directors

**16 Board Members** served the AAA service area

### AAA Advisory Council

**14 Council Members** served the AAA service area

### Campus Advisory Council

**4 Council Members** served the Campus service area

### Special Project Volunteers

**67 volunteers** delivered over **300 care packages** to homebound seniors in Berrien County



### Michigan Senior Advocates

**1 volunteer** served the AAA service area with **70 hours** of advocacy

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration is at the core of Region IV Area Agency on Aging's work and corporate philosophy. Key collaborative efforts and special projects in Fiscal Year 2023 include:

**AAA Health Solutions:** A joint venture between Senior Resources of West Michigan (AAA located in Muskegon, MI), Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (located in Grand Rapids, MI) and Region IV Area Agency on Aging was formed in 2023 to collectively meet the health and social care needs of Medicare beneficiaries in 16 counties in west and southwest Michigan.

**Aging Health Equity Policy & Planning Project:** In 2023, Area Agency on Aging continued its effort to identify inequities in access to services. This was done by convening several focus groups. By partnering with Michigan State University to pilot a Society Needs People and Policies Worksheet, AAA identified several policies and strategies it could change and/or add to improve access to services, like streamlined rapid response to those in need and more dedicated outreach to faith communities and distinct cultural groups.

**Community of Care Transformation Strategy:** Through a partnership with Corewell Health South and funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, the Community of Care (COC) Transformation Strategy creates a person-centered community of care that integrates clinical care with home-based supports and services. Through a partnership between primary care, acute, specialty and inpatient service lines, and community-based care management, COC interventions address not only complex medical care needs of older adults but also address social determinants of health, caregiver needs, and funding mechanisms for project sustainability.

**Rake a Difference for Seniors:** AAA staff joined efforts with United Way of Southwest Michigan in November to rake leaves for older adults who are not able to do fall cleanup work and who do not have the financial resources to pay for the service. United Way takes the lead on this effort each year, recruiting hundreds of area volunteers to rake leaves for seniors across the tri-county area.

**Senior Care Kits:** Through a partnership with Berrien Community Foundation, Heart of Cook Foundation, Honor Credit Union, Corewell Health Foundation, Frederick S. Upton Foundation, private donations, and an army of community volunteers, holiday care kits were packed,

wrapped, and delivered with a hand-written note to homebound older adults in Berrien County. The packages as well as the compassion shown by a community that remembers older adults during the holiday season meets basic needs and reduces social isolation and loneliness for isolated elders.

**Senior Expo:** In a long-standing partnership with The Herald-Palladium, Region IV AAA presented the 25th Annual Senior Expo at Lake Michigan College Mendel Center in Benton Harbor. This annual event is estimated to be the largest annual gathering of older adults in Southwest Michigan, with over 800 seniors, caregivers, aging services professionals, and the general public in attendance. The theme of the event this year was “Aging Unbound.” In addition to a plethora of information about local resources, attendees were entertained with demonstrations from a variety of local senior centers. A health pavilion sponsored by Corewell Health featured health information and screenings for expo attendees.



Additional collaborations are facilitated via RIV AAA’s numerous affiliations and memberships, which include but are not limited to:

- Bronson Care Coordination Committee
- Corewell Health Population Health Committee
- Healthy Berrien Consortium
- Michigan’s Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council Board
- PACE of Southwest Michigan Board
- St. Joseph Housing Commission
- TRIAD
- the three-county Human Services Collaborating Councils
- Van Buren County Health Committee

Key Memberships include: USAging, National Council on Aging, American Society on Aging, and the Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan.

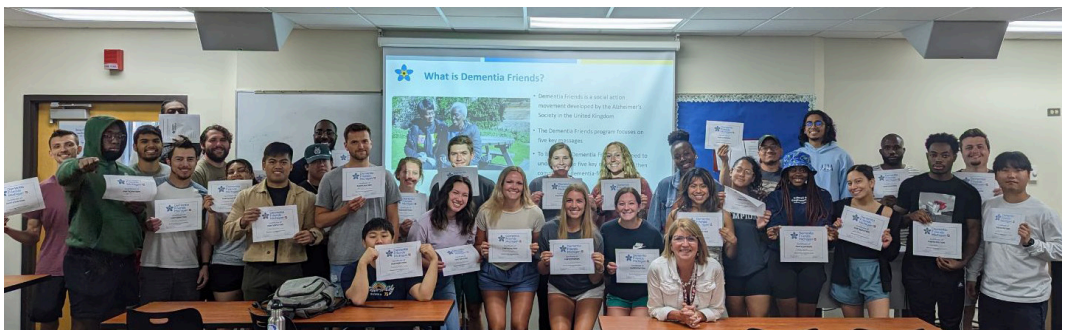
# THE LYNN & FREEBORN KELLOGG CAMPUS FOR CREATIVE AGING

In 2023, the Campus for Creative Aging continued to inspire a community movement to laud the passage of years and aging as a time of creativity, purpose, growth and learning by connecting those with shared passion for eliminating ageism and building a more inclusive, accessible and equitable community for everyone regardless of age!

A Campus Advisory Council was formed and began meeting to discuss the future vision of the Campus.

Chief among its ventures was continuing the Dementia-Friendly Community initiative launched in 2022. The initiative aims to increase awareness and conversation around dementia and connect individuals to resources.

Our team taught 23 Become a Dementia Friend classes at eight different locations around the tri-county area, including the Campus, during the '23 Fiscal Year (see page 9 for more data).



*A group of Andrews University students pose with their certificates after a Become a Dementia Friend training in June.*

The most well-attended classes were virtual healthy cooking classes held in partnership with Bronson Healthcare. "Healthy Cooking with Bronson" covered a variety of recipes and diets for disease prevention like "Instant Pot Summer Soups," "Pasta Power," "Jam Jar Salads," "Sheet Pan Shawarma" and more.

Over 3,500 people have attended these classes, with an average of about 50-80 in attendance each time. A survey of participants showed over 97 percent agreed, "It is important for organizations like Bronson and Area Agency on Aging to continue offering no-cost nutrition and health education classes virtually, post-pandemic."



## ARTS & AGING PARTNERSHIP

In 2023, the Arts & Aging Partnership took on new life. Two plays were put on with local actors depicting families impacted by a dementia diagnosis.

The Arts & Aging Partnership began in 2022 as a way to harness the power of the arts to inform and engage the community and impact public health.



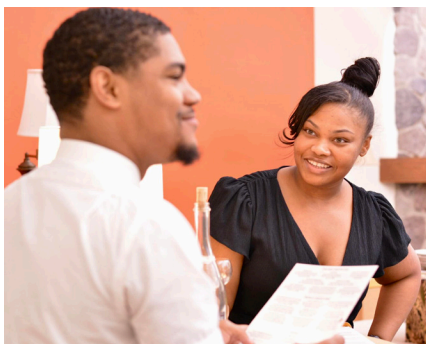
In January, “Velocity of Autumn” was performed at the Campus For Creative Aging. The play told the story of an 80-year-old artist in a showdown with her family over where she’ll spend her remaining years. The show touched on topics of aging in place, dementia, family dynamics and more.

In April, a play was commissioned and written about the lived experience of a woman and her family who are impacted by a dementia diagnosis. It included input from local people living with dementia and their care partners. The play, “Memory of a Dance,” was performed at the Campus for Creative Aging and at Lake Michigan College’s Mendel Center.

Each performance was followed with a talk-back session to create community conversation around dementia, caregiving, available community resources, and how collective individual and systemic action can help make Southwest Michigan a more dementia-friendly community.

Arts & Aging Partners in include:

- GhostLight Theatre
- Twin City Players
- Lake Michigan College
- South Haven Center for the Arts
- Berrien Community Foundation



## ADVOCACY & AWARDS

Advocacy for older adults and people with disabilities is one of Region IV Area Agency on Aging's founding missions. In 2023, we were involved in a number of advocacy opportunities at the local, state and federal levels.

In April, CEO Christine Vanlandingham testified in front of a special committee of the United States Senate about the barriers to job entry or re-entry faced by older job seekers; the services RIVAAA provides to help overcome those barriers, like our Senior Community Services Employment Program and Computer Learning Center; and ways Congress can better support older job seekers.



In May, over 75 older adults, community members and aging services professionals met with state elected officials and their staff at the Spring Legislative Forum, held at the Campus for Creative Aging. Attendees urged lawmakers to support programs and services locally and around the state to meet identified needs of older adults, caregivers, direct care workers and long-term care ombudsman.

Staff presented the Older Michiganians Day policy platform on the State Capitol lawn to state legislators, MDHHS staff and 100-plus constituents in person and thousands more across the state via live stream. More than 1,400 personalized constituent letters from more than 300 Southwest Michigan residents were sent to legislators, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and state officials urging their support of the OMD platform.



# Community of Care for Older Adults with Complex Care Needs

In July, AAA won the 2023 Aging Innovations Award from USAgging in the Health-Longterm Services and Support Integration category and placed second overall in the nation for all categories. In addition, AAA was named runner up for The John A. Hartford Foundation 2023 Business Innovation Award.



The awards were given in recognition of the Community of Care (COC) for Older Adults with Complex Care Needs partnership with Corewell Health South. The partnership serves older adults who are high utilizers of inpatient and emergency department services.

The achievements of this partnership include linking AAA care managers with Corewell medical clinicians in an integrated team and creating patient-tailored interventions.

AAA serves as the hub of connectivity to the ecosystem of community-based organizations to meet the social determinate of health needs and identified goals for each individual.

Less than 10 percent of COC patients have experienced an emergency room visit or unplanned inpatient hospital since enrollment.

This has resulted in an estimated health care savings of \$770,200 for avoided inpatient stays and \$55,558 for avoided emergency room visit costs for 46 patients.

The John A. Hartford Foundation  
**BUSINESS INNOVATION AWARD**

**2023 RUNNER UP**



Each year, AAA staff and aging advocates around the country attended the USAgging Policy Briefing in March in Washington, D.C. During the two-day event, staff are able to hear updates on critical policy issues facing older adults and meet with members of Congress on Capitol Hill to advance the platform of legislative action.

# ANNUAL CONTRACTORS & PARTNERS

**ANNUAL CONTRACTORS:** Community-based services funded by the Michigan Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports (ACLS) with Older Americans Act, Older Michiganians Act, and other state funds are contracted on an “annual contract” basis. Request for Proposals are issued every three years based on an ACLS and AAA approved multi-year plan. The AAA annual contractors and the services provided in FY 2023 are as follows:

Contractor	Service
Cass County Council on Aging	Adult Day Care, Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Respite Chore, Transportation, Caregiver Education
The Avenue Family Network	Adult Day Care, Respite Chore
North Berrien Senior Center	Transportation
Legal Aid of Western Michigan	Legal Assistance
Senior Nutrition Services	Home-Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Transportation
Senior Services of Van Buren County	Transportation, Respite Chore

**SUPPLEMENTAL NEEDS PURCHASES:** Purchases on behalf of AAA Care Management clients are one-time in nature and can include services, supplies or equipment. These purchases are typically necessary in order to keep the client safe and able to continue living independently in their home. Supplemental need purchases were ordered from the following businesses in FY 2023:

ACE Plumbing & Heating Co.	Michiana Heating & Air Conditioning
American Eagle Home Improvements, LLC	One Man Does It All
Best Way Disposal	Pest Pros of Michigan, LLC
BinTris Moving and Storage	Point Guard Inspections
Coastal Clean	Rose Pest Solutions
Fleetwood’s Mechanical Services, Inc.	ServiceMaster of Kalamazoo
Great Lakes Health Advocate, LLC	Stanley Steemer
Griffin Pest Solutions	Superior Air Management Systems
Kendall’s Septic & Sewer	

**DIRECT SERVICE PURCHASE PARTNERS:** The Care Management Program purchases in-home and transportation services according to individual plans and a Direct Service Purchase Bid Agreement with the following credentialed community service providers:

A Day To Remember AFC Home	Accessible Design Solutions
A Place Called Home in Stevensville, LLC	ADT
A+ Nursing	Advantage Private Nursing
	Airway Oxygen



AJ Jaeger-Heiden  
 Alick's Home Medical Equipment, Inc.  
 All HomeCare Services, LLC  
 Always Best Care-Michiana  
 Angel Hands Home Health Care. LLC  
 Arcadia Home Care & Staffing  
 Area Wide Transportation, Inc.  
 Berrien Bus  
 Betsab Services  
 Bridgman Retirement Home #2  
 Buchanan Meadows  
 Carewatch of Michigan Home Care, LLC  
 Caring Connection (The Avenue Family Network, Inc.)  
 Carol's Home  
 Cass County Council On Aging  
 Cass County Transportation Authority  
 ComForCare  
 ConnectAmerica  
 Country Manor Care Center, LLC  
 Cozy Hill AFC  
 Divine Grace Country Home, LLC  
 Ferny's Home  
 Forest Glen Assisted Living  
 Fresh Perspective Home Care  
 Functional Homes  
 G. Mencl Builders  
 Golden Shore Assisted Living  
 GT Independence  
 Guardian Medical Monitoring  
 Guardianship and Alternatives  
 Harbor Habitat for Humanity, Inc.  
 Help at Home of Michigan, LLC  
 Home Sweet Home In Home Care  
 HomeCare Transitions, Inc.  
 HomeJoy of Allegan and Van Buren Counties  
 Homestyle Direct  
 In-Home Companions, Inc.  
 LaJoy F.I., LLC  
 Lakeland CareRide  
 Lakeshore Home Health Care  
 Long Acres Adult Foster Care, LLC  
 Maple Lake Assisted Living  
 Maple Lake Builders  
 Meadowview Home AFC  
 Medic 1  
 Michiana Mobility, LLC  
 Michigan Agency With Choice  
 Miller's Assisted Living  
 Mom's Meals  
 Oak Lawn Manor  
 Old Farm Living Center  
 ORKIN, LLC  
 Powell House AFC  
 Private Duty Home Health Care  
 Private Duty Transportation, LLC  
 Ready Ride Transportation  
 Resource Transportation Group  
 Rick's AMT, LLC  
 Right at Home  
 River Ridge Retirement Village  
 Senior Nutrition Services  
 Senior Nutrition Services  
 Senior Services of Van Buren County  
 Serenity Shore Assisted Living Facility  
 Shangrila Home  
 Southwest Michigan Community Ambulance Services  
 Stately Living  
 Stuart Wilson  
 Swans Lawn Care  
 The Willows  
 Trinity Loving Home  
 Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority  
 Valued Relationships, Inc. (VRI)  
 Van Buren Emergency Medical Services  
 White Oaks Assisted Living

# FY 2023 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

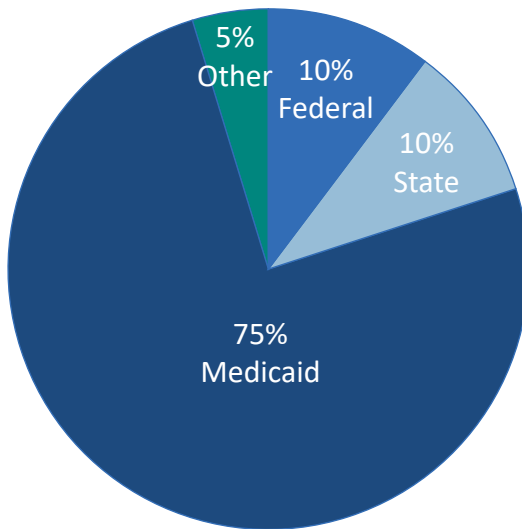
## REVENUE

Federal	\$2,666,892
State of Michigan	\$2,493,033
Medicaid	\$19,360,521
Other	\$1,154,315
<b>Total FY2023 Revenue</b>	<b>\$25,674,761</b>

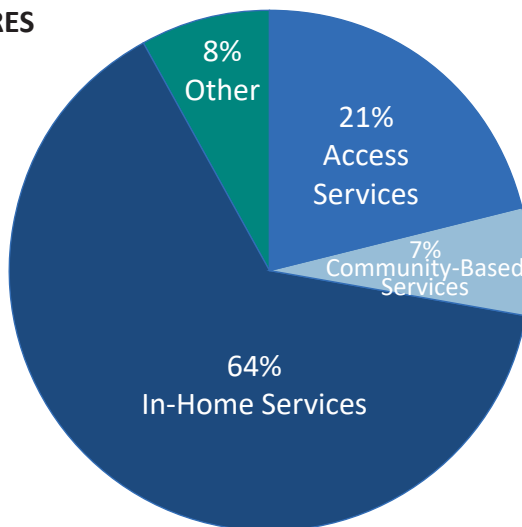
## EXPENDITURES

Access Services	\$5,490,371
Community-Based Services	\$1,670,094
In-Home Services	\$16,479,516
Other	\$2,034,780
<b>Total FY2023 Expenditures</b>	<b>\$25,674,761</b>

### REVENUE



### EXPENDITURES



A special thanks to our foundation funders:



United Way  
of Southwest Michigan



FREDERICK S. UPTON  
Foundation



BERRIEN  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Marzke Family Foundation



# Info-Line for Aging and Disability

# 800-654-2810

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Tax-deductible donations are deeply appreciated and may be made by mail or online by scanning the QR code.

**Region IV Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**

2900 Lakeview Ave.

St. Joseph, MI 49085

[www.AreaAgencyonAging.org](http://www.AreaAgencyonAging.org)



Serving Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties since 1974

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The Area Agency on Aging offers programs and services without regard to race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or religion. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request.

Region IV Area Agency on Aging is part of a nationwide network of organizations designated through the Older Americans Act to be an aging and disability resource center with information about programs, services and housing options.

For information on services in other parts of the state or nation, call Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116.