



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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Vanlandingham, CEO

Mission: Offering Choices for Independent Lives

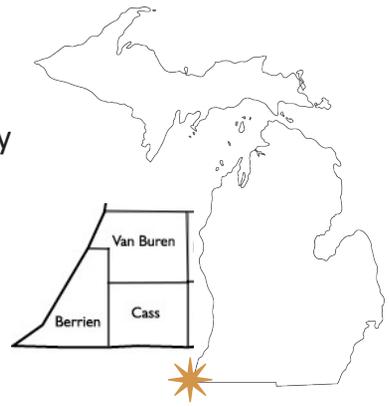
Vision: Through choice and range of service, every aging adult lives a quality life.

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 USAgings 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 USAgings 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

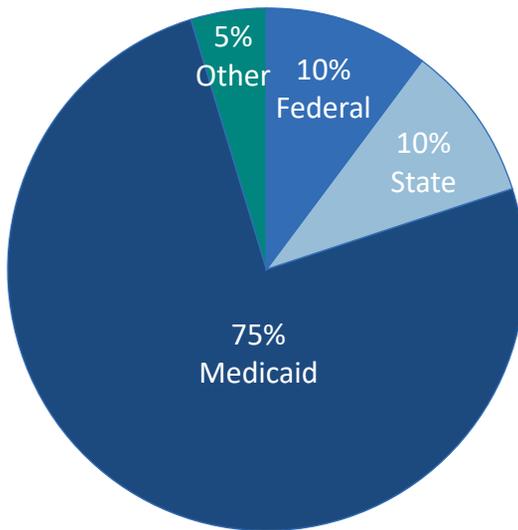
AJ Jaeger-Heiden
 Alick's Home Medical Equipment, Inc.
 All HomeCare Services, LLC
 Always Best Care-Michiana
 Angel Hands Home Health Care. LLC
 Arcadia Home Care & Staffing
 Area Wide Transportation, Inc.
 Berrien Bus
 Betsab Services
 Bridgman Retirement Home #2
 Buchanan Meadows
 Carewatch of Michigan 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

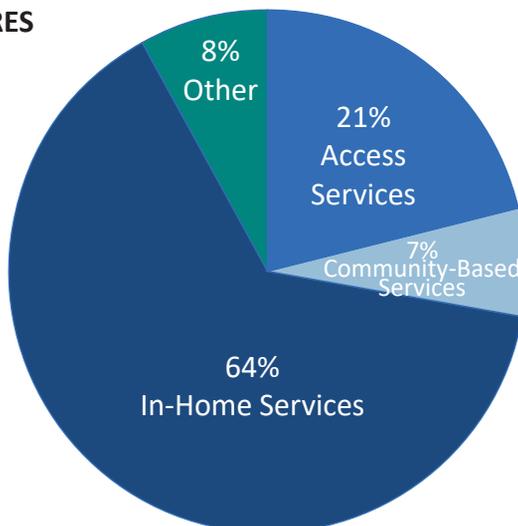
REVENUE	
Federal	\$2,666,892
State of Michigan	\$2,493,033
Medicaid	\$19,360,521
Other	\$1,154,315
Total FY2023 Revenue	\$25,674,761

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

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

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



Serving Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties since 1974

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.