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AREA AGENCY ON AGING
OF WESTERN MICHIGAN
ANNUAL REPORT



A R E A
A G E N C Y
O N A G I N G
O F W E S T E R N
M I C H I G A N

The Source for Seniors

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM)



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide older persons and persons with a disability an array of services designed to promote independence and dignity in their homes and their communities. AAAWM is The Source for Seniors in Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Newaygo, and Osceola counties.

WHAT WE DO

AAAWM connects individuals to quality services that promote and preserve their dignity, independence, and well-being, coordinates support and education for caregivers, and leads advocacy efforts on behalf of our clients.

HOW WE DO IT:

AAAWM is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Services are funded through Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency, and the Kent County Senior Millage.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) Board of Directors consists of elected officials and older adults from our nine county region and the City of Grand Rapids. Board Members provide leadership to the organization and ensure the agency is fulfilling the mission of helping older adults and those with disabilities live with independence and dignity.

ALLEGAN COUNTY

Comm. Rick Cain
Stuart Peet

IONIA COUNTY

Comm. Larry Tiejema
Dennis Sitzer

KENT COUNTY

Comm. Carol Hennessy
Nancy Nielsen

LAKE COUNTY

Comm. Betty Dermeyer
Marilyn Burns

MASON COUNTY

Comm. Ron Bacon
Peggy Dittmer

MECOSTA COUNTY

Comm. Bill Routley
Sharon Bongard

MONTCALM COUNTY

Comm. Betty Kellenberger
Linda Weger

NEWAYGO COUNTY

Comm. Kenneth DeLaat
Cindy LaBelle

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Comm. Larry Emig
Richard Karns

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

Comm. Milinda Ysasi
Jane DeVries

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AAWM Advisory Council consists of representatives from our nine counties and the City of Grand Rapids. Advisory Council Members help identify the needs of older adults, disseminate information about available services and the aging network in their communities, identify available untapped resources, advocate on behalf of older adults in Western Michigan and present their recommendations to the Board of Directors.

ALLEGAN COUNTY

Thomas Peelle
Natalie Van Houten

IONIA COUNTY

Norma Kilpatrick
Kenneth Thompson

KENT COUNTY

Dr. F. Rob Deane*
Melaine Grooters
Harold Mast
Monica Sparks
Stephen Wooden*

KENT COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES

Martha Burkett

LAKE COUNTY

Nellie Blue

MASON COUNTY

Robert Sundholm
James Thomas

MECOSTA COUNTY

Mary Bechaz
Jerrilynn Strong

MONTCALM COUNTY

Tim Reno
Ben Witbrodt

NEWAYGO COUNTY

Adele Hansen
Elsie Plank*
Helen Taube

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Barbara Hazlett
Mary Lou Proefrock

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

Keith Vandercook

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Priscilla Kimboko Ph.D.

* Denotes Former Member

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jackie O'Connor



“If the essence of my being has caused a smile to have appeared upon your face or a touch of joy within your heart. Then in living - I have made my mark.”

- Thomas L Odem Jr.

Making a mark on someone else’s life is an ability we all have. Helping others takes no special skills or life-situation, it can be a large or small act as long as it makes a positive impact. Communities, organizations, and individuals of all ages can all make a difference and we recognize that this is something our outstanding network of partners, volunteers, and staff members embody daily. This is why we chose “Make Your Mark” as our theme for the 2019 annual report.

At Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM), making a mark aligns with our mission to assist older adults and persons living with a disability to live in their homes and communities as they age. These individuals and their caregivers can become easily overwhelmed in where to find help, therefore we work to be the source for seniors in our nine-county region where people are able to find answers and access resources.

Our Care Management and MI Choice Medicaid Waiver programs provide personalized plans for individuals with services that make the most sense for their needs. Programs such as Family Caregiver University, our role as the Dementia Friends Michigan state-lead, the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP), and our Caregiver Resource Network provide educational support to Aging professionals, caregivers, and older adults in our region. AAAWM's mark is the mark of **knowledge**.

Our valuable network of partners are often the ones administering personal care, providing transportation, facilitating support groups, making home modifications, and providing the many other vital support services that are offered to older adults in our community. The relationships that our partners build with their clients are long-lasting and their commitment to providing high-quality care is steadfast. We have an expansive network of Older Americans Act (OAA) and Kent County Senior Millage (KCSM) partners doing this imperative work. In 2019, this network was made up of 53 different partner agencies who provided unique services through over \$18 million in funding. That is some impact! Our partners leave the mark of **support**.

Program volunteers, advocates, and our board/advisory council members devote their time and talents to the older adults in our community. Our dedicated team of volunteers makes the time to selflessly support others and often have served in their roles for many years. We will take a closer look at a few of these volunteers and why they do what they do later in this report, but we know that our programs and services would not be what they are today if not for our volunteers. For these individuals, their mark is the mark of **service**.

As you go through this year's report, these "marks" will be apparent and we thank each of you for contributing to the goal of allowing older adults and persons with a disability to live independently with grace and dignity. It is simply why we do what we do. In 2019 your outstanding work led to our serving a combined 38,147 individuals between OAA and KCSM funded services alone--a true testament to us all making our mark.



THE MARK OF

KNOWLEDGE



The Source for Seniors



THE SOURCE FOR SENIORS

The power of knowledge is evident when it comes to older adults and caregivers navigating their independence and needs. It can be overwhelming. Navigating the wide number of resources that exist to aid older adults is no easy task, which is why we try to streamline this process and lead them through their journey. For each phone call, website visit, in-person visitor, and assessment we receive, we work to provide resources that are personalized to each individual. We do this because there is no “one-size-fits-all” for aging well and we want to be sure that all individuals we touch are able to stay as autonomous as possible. This is done through the implementation of the many services that we and our partner agencies offer.

INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE (I & A)

Our I&A team works to fully understand a person’s unique situation and recommend the best fit of services. They act as a reliable guide, taking care to listen fully to callers, identify specific struggles, and problem-solve for solutions.

EDUCATION

We focus on education and providing programming that can assist caregivers and care recipients. The Caregiver Resource Network brings together caregiving resources within our nine-county region. Family Caregiver University (FCU) involves monthly classes at the agency

for anyone in a caregiving role. These topics range from community resources, self-care, activities, and more. FCU not only supports a caregiver on their journey, but it allows them to be a stronger caregiver for the loved one they support.



helping caregivers one class at a time

Another way we work to educate the community is through our Dementia Friends program. We are the state-lead for the program, which emphasizes helping individuals and organizations fully understand dementia and how to communicate effectively. Medicare and Medicaid are also confusing to navigate, our Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program is in place with counselors who will help answer those questions.



Regular physical exercise is essential to prevent injuries, remain fit, and improve overall well-being. Our Healthy Aging programs are rooted in education with evidence-based class offerings to help with strength, balance, and fall prevention. Aside from fitness, the social aspect of the program allows older adults to build friendships and hold each other accountable in their wellness.

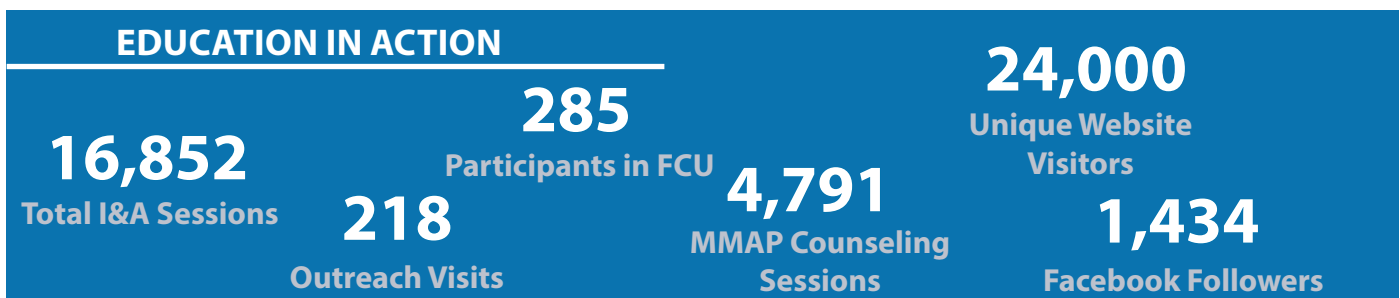


There are many resources available within our nine-county region, which is why we also work to connect with the greater community to educate people before they need assistance. This is where our website, outreach visits, media appearances, and social media come into play as further educational tools for people turn to before calling.



PERSONALIZED PLANS

Care Management and the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver (MI Choice) programs help provide person-centered care that empowers individuals to age in place. Ongoing services include personal care, housekeeping, meals, and transportation. In an initial assessment the Care Manager is able to truly get to know an individual, coordinating their services and connecting them with partner agencies and community resources. Care Managers do more than oversee an individual's care, they become their advocate in making sure their needs are met. Sometimes, just having someone in their corner cheering them on can be a driving force for a person's confidence in maintaining their independence.



THE MARK OF

SUPPORT

Our Older Americans Act and Kent County Senior Millage partner network is made up of 70 different services, and it is these services that make an unequivocal and lasting difference in a client's life. No matter if this support lasts years or is an essential one-time interaction, it leaves a lasting mark. To capture this, we chose to focus on two of our priority services; meals and transportation. Though all services make an impact, these two services are within our top utilized services every year showing they make a world of a difference.

1,134,689 MEALS AND 34,629 RIDES WERE PROVIDED THROUGH OLDER AMERICANS ACT FUNDING ALONE

THE POWER OF A MEAL

We never want a participant or caregiver to have to wonder where their next meal might come from. Congregate meals and home-delivered meals are vital services that provide nutritious meal options throughout our nine-county region.

To highlight this importance further we decided to take a closer look at long-time meals partner Mason County Central Schools (MCCS). MCCS is unique in that it operates out of a middle school kitchen and brings much-needed meals to a rural county. They provide meals for the three senior centers (Ludington, Scottville, and Tallman) in addition to delivering about 130 home-delivered meals a day. As Mary Ann Nielson, Senior Meals Director, explained, it is more than a meal, they serve a vulnerable population and by getting a meal each day these individuals are receiving an essential need they wouldn't otherwise have. It is this that allows them to stay living in their own homes.

These meals provide a balanced diet, yet a meal often goes further than nutrition. At congregate meal sites these meals provide the vital socialization that is necessary for wellbeing and emotional health. For those that receive the home-delivered meal option, their meal delivery person becomes a vital point of contact. Dropping off the meal is the person's daily check-in and a relationship is built from this visit. MCCS staff members shared why they do what they do, oftentimes citing the close relationships they form with their clients as the most fulfilling part of their role.

THE POWER OF A RIDE

When someone does not have access to transportation options, their world is as small as the rides loved ones are able to provide or the one bus on their route. Seniors that are no longer able to drive are granted freedom and accessibility from a ride.

Kent County Community Action (KCCA), a partner through Ridelink, offers senior transportation service throughout Kent County. Director of KCCA, Susan Cervantes, explained that transportation is a common thread in solving issues related to poverty. At KCCA their goal is to help eradicate this and their transportation services for seniors helps them to maintain their independence. In 2019 they provided 27,000 rides to such things as medical appointments, shopping trips, and social outings with friends. Susan explained that these seemingly regular, everyday trips are vital, as they are what makes older adults feel like they are still an active and engaged member of the community.

A unique aspect of KCCA is that their transportation service is predominantly utilized by monolingual seniors who only speak Spanish. KCCA works to make their transportation accessible, having a driver that speaks their language and makes riders feel comfortable and accepted.



WHY A MEAL MATTERS

"I can eat when I am hungry and know I have meals coming while my daughter is away in Florida. Before I started receiving meals I would drink a cup of coffee and forget about it, now I can't wait for Nancy (my delivery person) to arrive. The meals are good and hot. I've enjoyed them and I've enjoyed everybody that's come through my front door with the program.."- Connie Walker



WHY A TRIP MATTERS

Aruna Kamara, Transportation Project Supervisor at KCCA, emphasized the importance of a ride for their clients, "I see how impactful it is clearly on their face. When they see a bus pull up—knowing they can get to where they need to go this time—their face lights up."

THE MARK OF

SERVICE

The service that our volunteers share is paramount. Through the work they do they are directly supporting programs that make a lasting impact in the lives of seniors. These are not things they do for a paycheck, but things they choose to do for others. It is a testament to their dedication in helping older adults and their caregivers.

MEDICARE/MEDICAID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Our Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAAP) administers counseling sessions for individuals who are overwhelmed by their health insurance options. MMAAP is designed to help older adults, their families, and caregivers understand, access, and apply for Medicare, Traditional Medicare Part A and B, Part D prescription plans, Medigap plans, Medicare Advantage, and Medicaid. There were 6,593 client contacts made in 2019, many of which were administered by our wonderful team of MMAAP volunteers!



FRANCINE ROBERTS-
VOLUNTEER SINCE 2004

"It's a wonderful place to work, everyone is so friendly and accepting. I like it because it is rewarding, no question about that, but there is always something new to learn or something different to do. I like the challenge of that!"

DONNA DEEB-
VOLUNTEER SINCE 2013

"Initially, I just wanted to learn more about Medicare and Medicaid. Now I enjoy it when I can successfully help people save money on their insurance costs and ensure they will receive much-needed care. Folks are so grateful when we are able to successfully help them!"

AAAWM'S VOLUNTEER 2019 NETWORK

Senior Leadership: 4 Advisory Council : 22
Board Members: 21 Advocates Leadership: 15 MMAAP: 70

HEALTHY AGING PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Our Eaglecrest Healthy Aging program has been growing exponentially in recent years and features a dynamic volunteer duo: Belinda Becker who has been volunteering with the program for 5 years and Karen Jenson for 6 years. Belinda explained that it all started due to her joining EnhanceFitness and loving the class, "When I started EnhanceFitness I noticed they had simple things they had to do from an administrative side that I was capable of doing. I had the time and was willing to help." Both love the classes offered through the program, explaining that it gets them up and out of bed, and working out with a wonderful community of people. Karen enjoys encouraging other people to come work out and finds it rewarding when she sees people committing to taking care of themselves, "I will continue volunteering in the future for as long as I can. And everywhere I go I will let people know about Eaglecrest Healthy Aging."



Our volunteer network is vast, and it would be impossible to list everyone here, so we extend a heartfelt thank you to all those who selflessly commit their time and talents to our programs and advocate for older adults. The mark of service is a strong and constant one.



THE MARK OF OLDER AMERICANS ACT

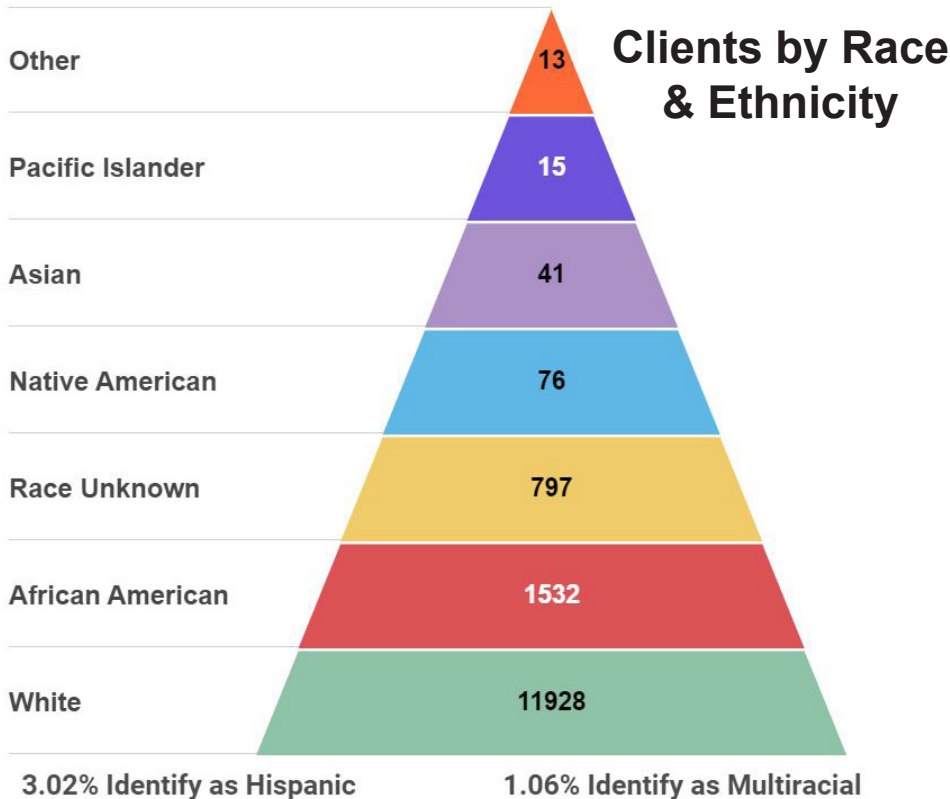
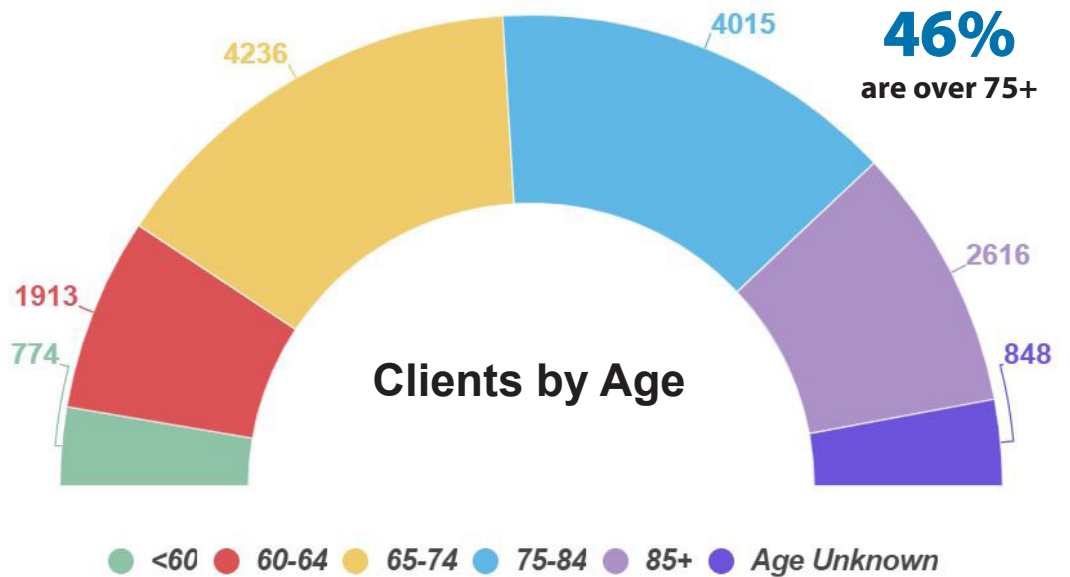
\$7,635,660 in service funding



AAAWM and our network of partners served

14,402

total clients



42.16%

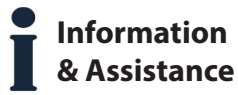
lives alone



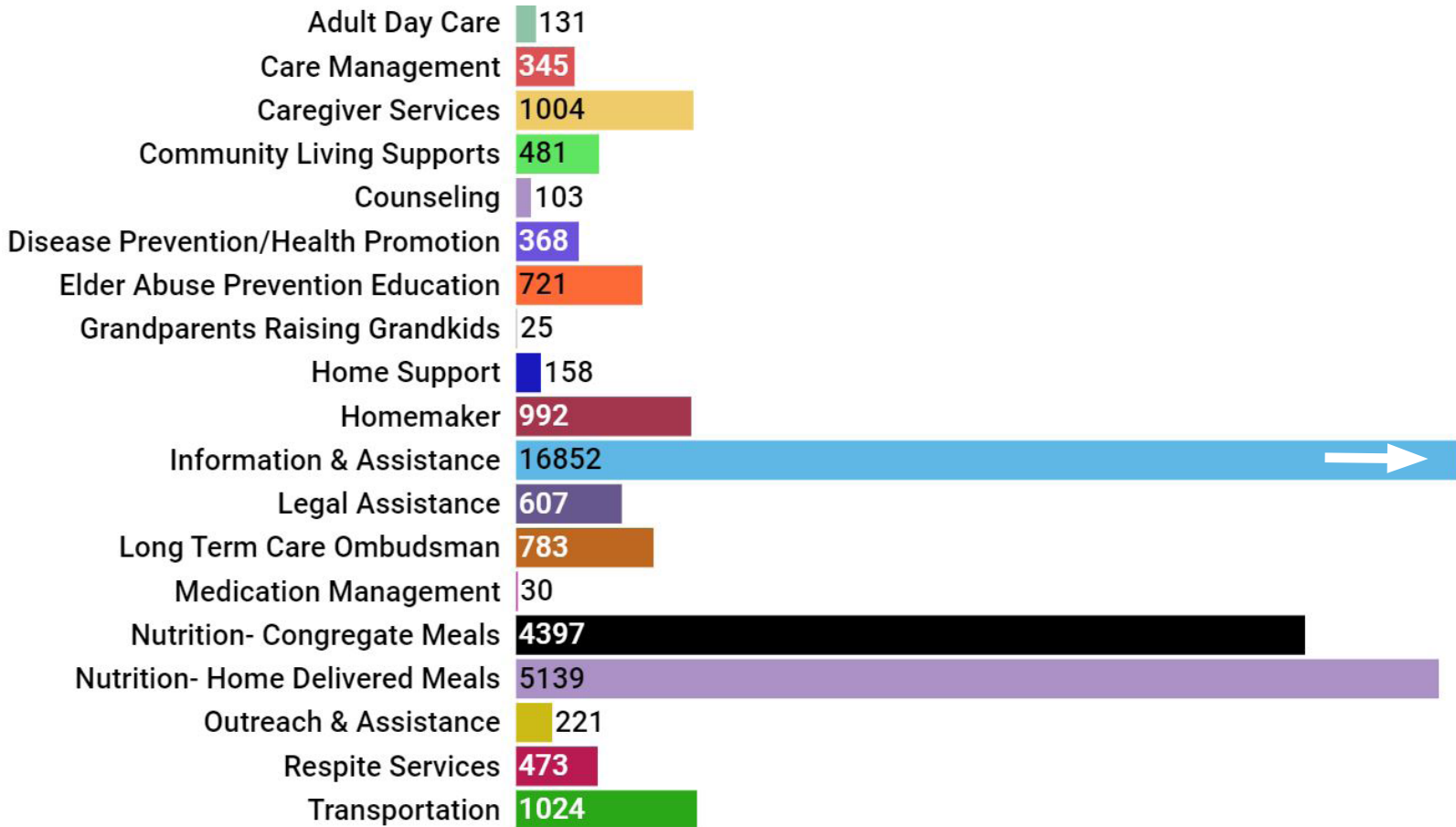
28.36%

below poverty

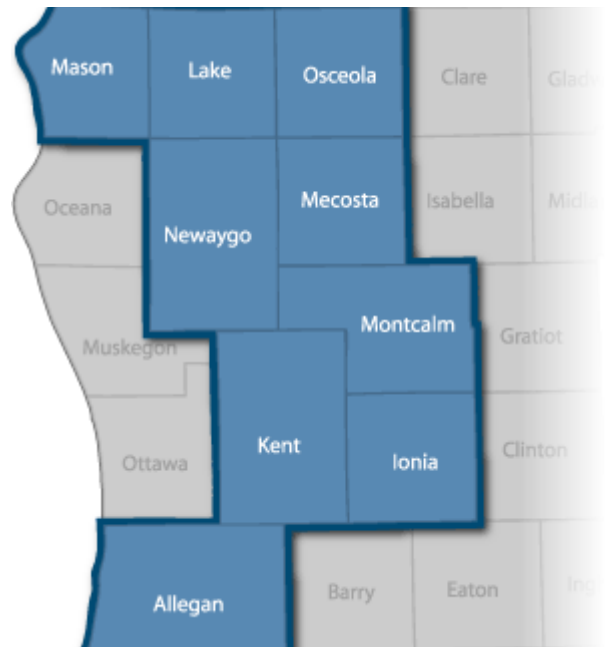
Top 5 Services



Transportation



County	Clients Served	Percent
Allegan	761	5.28%
Ionia	1,171	8.13%
Kent	5,901	40.97%
Lake	683	4.74%
Mason	950	6.60%
Mecosta	764	5.30%
Montcalm	926	6.43%
Newaygo	881	6.12%
Osceola	728	5.05%
Other	195	1.35%
County Unknown	1,442	10.01%



THE MARK OF THE KENT COUNTY SENIOR MILLAGE

2019 FISCAL YEAR

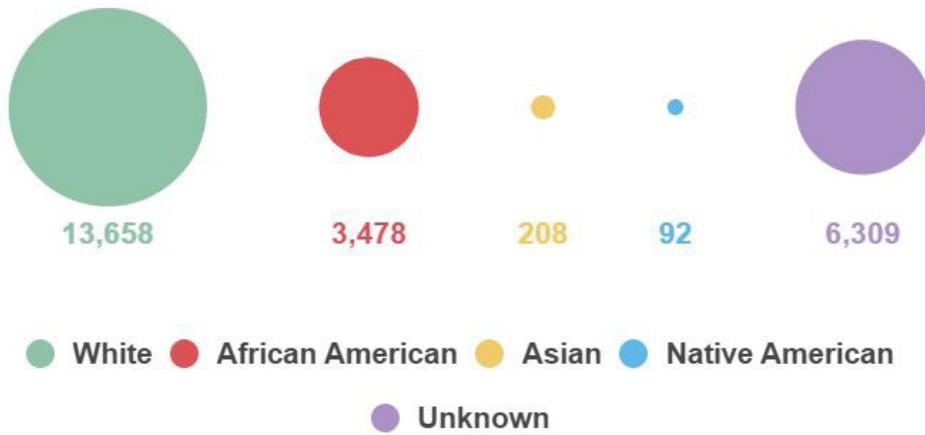
\$11,192,600 in service funding

AAAWM and our network of partners served

23,745
total clients



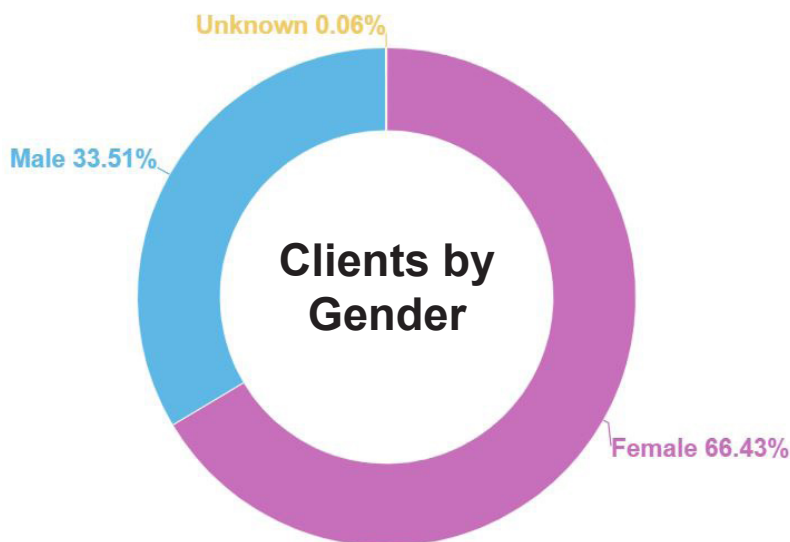
Clients by Race & Ethnicity



Kent County Senior Millage



1,051 clients identify as Hispanic

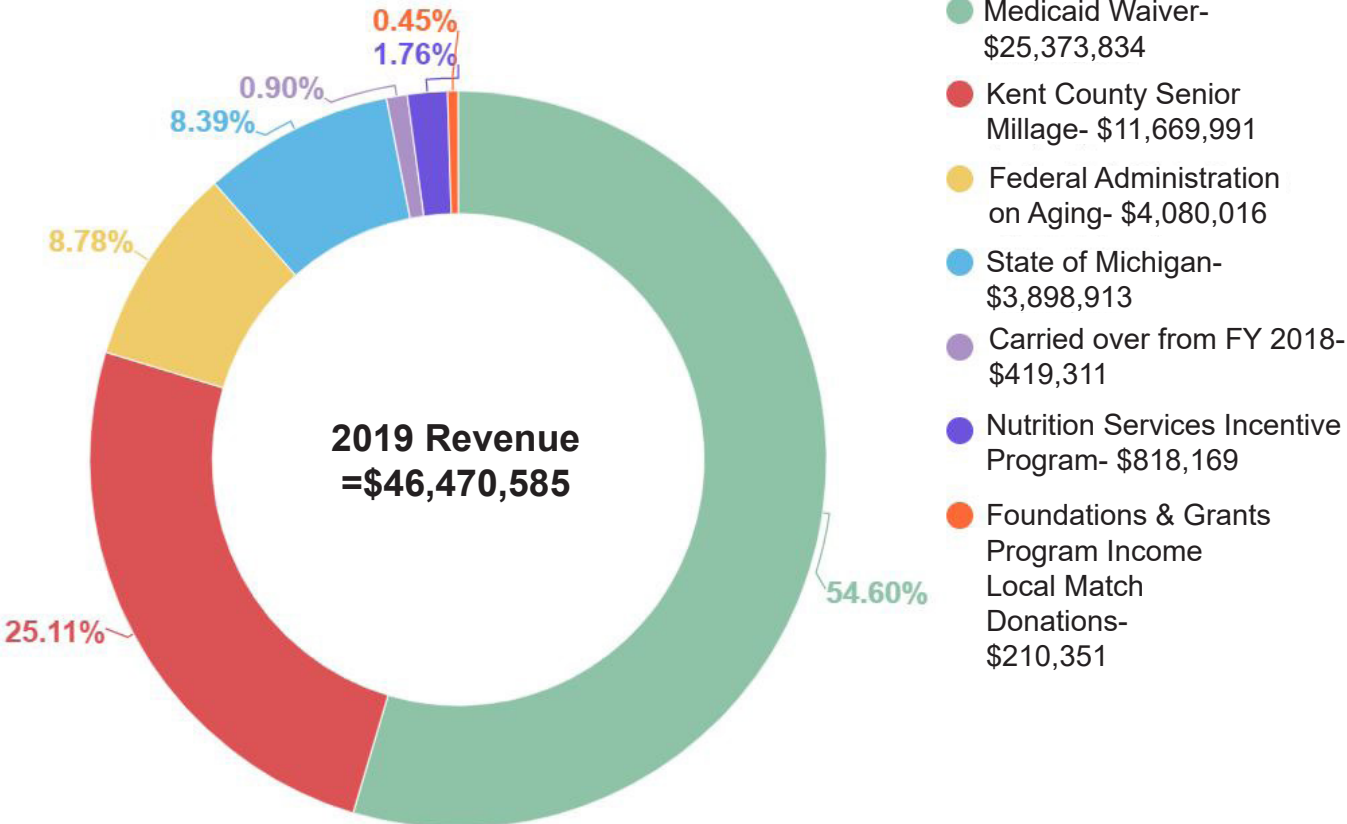
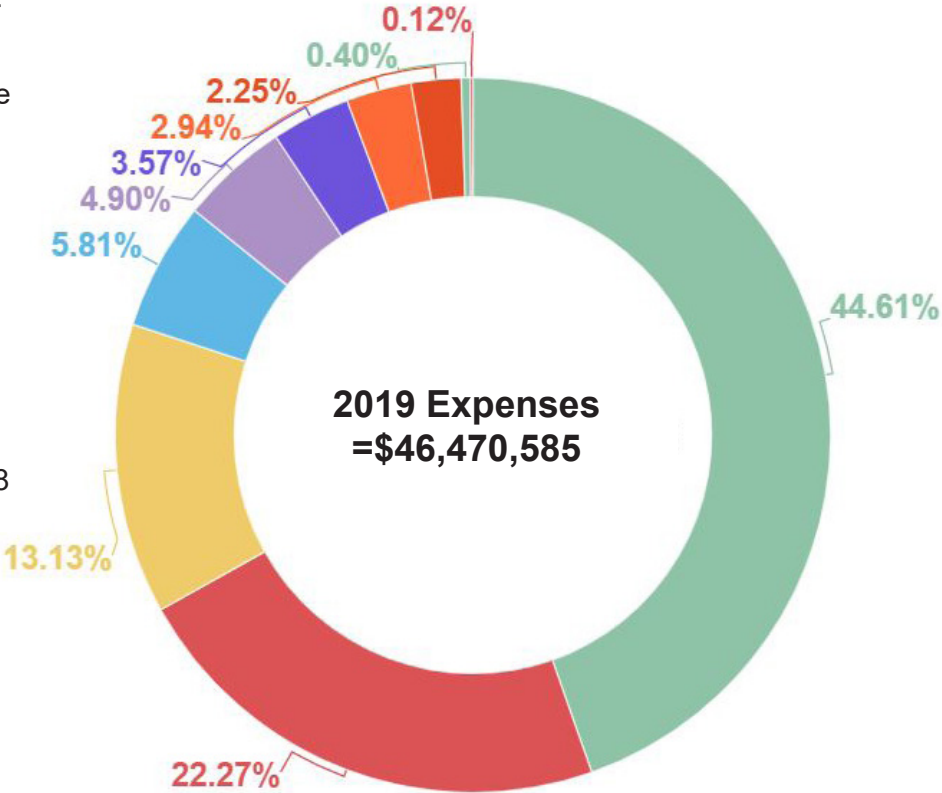


Top Services (by # of clients)

- Information and Referral- 5,635
- Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program- 4,791
- Outreach & Assistance- 2,387
- Senior Food Pantry- 2,067
- Transportation-Assisted- 1,979
- Home Delivered Meals- 1,615
- Care Management- 1,074
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman- 1,058

FINANCIAL REPORT 2019

- Medicaid Waiver Services- \$20,728,839
- Kent County Senior Millage Services- \$10,347,975
- Care Management- \$6,102,402
- Home Delivered Meals- \$2,700,753
- In-Home Services- \$2,278,979
- Administration- \$1,656,728
- Supportive Services- \$1,368,489
- Congregate Meals- \$1,045,384
- Program Development- \$183,701
- Foundation & Mini Grant Programs- \$57,335



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