



Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

*Supporting independence, connection,
and dignity,*

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Letter from the President & CEO

Dear Friends and Partners,

It is my privilege to present the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging's Annual Report for the 2024–2025 program year. This was a defining year for WCAAA—one marked by meaningful progress, major systems improvements, and the strongest financial position in our more than fifty years of service. Across our 41-town region, we continued to advance our mission of enriching the lives of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers by helping them live with dignity, independence, and connection.

Even as community needs grew more complex and funding environments remained uncertain, WCAAA demonstrated resilience and discipline. We sustained revenues of nearly \$11 million, expanded service delivery, and increased long-term reserves, strengthening the financial foundation that supports our work today and positions us for tomorrow. This financial stability is the result of thoughtful stewardship, strategic growth, and a clear focus on aligning resources with our mission.

At the same time, we undertook some of the most significant operational and process improvements in our history. The implementation of the Salesforce Care Management System for Homecare, the Grantee Gateway system for Elderly Nutrition Providers, Casebook for safety and case documentation, and a redesigned, more accessible website all represent major steps forward in modernizing how we serve the community. Our Home Care team successfully navigated statewide systems conversions, intensive data clean-up, and evolving DSS requirements—while maintaining continuity of care and meeting audit and compliance expectations. These efforts have strengthened our workflows, improved data quality, and enhanced our ability to track outcomes and respond quickly when needs arise.

Programmatically, WCAAA continued to grow its reach and impact. CHOICES and MIPPA expanded volunteer capacity, deepened partnerships, and exceeded every federal performance benchmark while achieving a perfect score on the statewide Mystery Shopper evaluation.

Senior Medicare Patrol increased counseling, complex interactions, and outreach across an expanded 52-town region, playing a critical role in preventing fraud and abuse. Our National Family Caregiver Support and Respite programs delivered thousands of units of support, helping caregivers sustain their own health while caring for loved ones at home.

Through Aging Answers, I&R/A, Service Navigation, nutrition, wellness, transportation, legal, and chore services, we reached more individuals than ever before and responded to growing demand for benefits navigation, housing assistance, and community-based supports.

This year was also one of strategic clarity and vision. We completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan for 2025–2028, advanced our 2026–2028 Area Plan, launched The Western Compass magazine, hosted our Second Annual Community Health Fair, and deepened regional collaboration through our Leadership Breakfast Series. As an active leader within AgingCT and USAging, WCAA helped elevate statewide advocacy around navigation, housing, transportation, caregiver supports, and elder rights—ensuring that the voices and experiences of Western Connecticut’s older adults and caregivers inform state and national policy. The creation of the Lifeline Fund reflects our growing focus on social determinants of health and our shared responsibility to prevent homelessness and crisis for those most at risk.

None of this progress would be possible without the people who make WCAA what it is. I am deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, Advisory Council, staff, volunteers, contractors, grantees, community partners, and funders. Your leadership, expertise, and compassion are evident in every program described in this report and in every life touched by our work. Together, we are building a stronger, more coordinated, and more equitable system of support for older adults and individuals with disabilities across Western Connecticut.

As we look ahead, WCAA moves forward with confidence, stability, and a renewed sense of purpose. Grounded in our values and strengthened by the investments made this year—in people, systems, and partnerships—we are well-positioned to continue improving processes, expanding access, and championing a region where every older adult can age with dignity, safety, and choice.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Spring R. Raymond".

Spring R. Raymond

President & CEO

Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging



In Memory of our Friends

We were deeply saddened by the passing of **Darylle Willenbrock** in March, shortly after her retirement from CHOICES. Darylle was a cherished colleague and a dear friend to many. Her warmth, dedication, and kindness left a lasting impact on our team and the many individuals she served. She is profoundly missed.

Dolores Winans dedicated more than two decades of service to the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, contributing as both a longtime volunteer (1996–2018) and as a committed member of the Board of Directors for 28 years. Throughout her tenure, she was a steadfast advocate for fair state rates for senior meals and for strengthening the Connecticut Homecare Program for Elders. Her unwavering passion for protecting the dignity, well-being, and independence of older adults left a lasting impact on everyone who had the privilege of working with her.



Organizational Overview

Mission, Vision, Values & Our Service Region

Mission Statement

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging enriches the lives of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers by providing support, services, and information to help them live well with assurance, independence and dignity.

Vision

Our vision is to foster a community where older adults and people with disabilities are supported, valued, and connected with services that enable them to live independently, in their chosen home, with dignity.

Value Statement

Western CT Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (WCAAA) is guided by a deep and authentic commitment to enriching the lives of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. Our core values—dignity, compassion, inclusion, choice, trust, and collaboration— influence every decision we make and shape the services we provide.

- **Dignity:** We believe all people should be treated with dignity.
- **Compassion:** We interact with all people on the basis of kindness and empathy.
- **Inclusion:** We value all people regardless of age or ability.
- **Choice:** We strive to maximize people's ability to decide where and how they want to live.
- **Trust:** We foster the trust of the people we serve and the agencies we work with.
- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership within our communities to meet the needs of those we serve.

Who We Serve

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) serves older adults, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and families across a diverse 41-town region that includes urban centers, rural communities, and suburban neighborhoods. We support people who are aging in place, living with chronic conditions, navigating complex health and long-term care systems, or facing challenges related to housing, transportation, food security, or social isolation. Our services are designed for those who may be low-income, isolated, limited-English-proficient, or otherwise underserved—ensuring they have access to information, benefits, and community-based supports. In partnership with local providers and community organizations, WCAAA works to ensure that every person we serve can live with dignity, safety, and as much independence and choice as possible.

Our Service Region

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) is dedicated to ensuring that every older adult, individual with a disability, and caregiver across our region has the support needed to live with dignity, independence, and purpose. Guided by the values of compassion, equity, and collaboration, WCAAA serves as both a trusted resource and a strong advocate for those navigating the opportunities and challenges of aging.

Our 41-town service region stretches across Western Connecticut—from the urban centers of Waterbury and Danbury to the rural landscapes of the Northwest Hills and the tight-knit suburban communities of the Housatonic Valley and Central Naugatuck Valley. This geographic and cultural diversity shapes our work and deepens our commitment to meeting people where they are. Each community we serve brings unique strengths, traditions, and needs, reminding us that aging is not a singular experience but a deeply personal journey.

WCAAA fulfills its mission through planning, coordinating, and delivering essential programs, including CHOICES/SHIP, Senior Medicare Patrol, Nutrition and Wellness Services, National Family Caregiver Support, Respite Programs, Care Management, Housing and Transition Services, and the Aging & Disability Resource Center/Service Navigation. Whether we are assisting someone with Medicare enrollment, supporting a caregiver in crisis, arranging home-delivered meals, or connecting an individual to long-term services and support, our focus remains on promoting health, stability, and independence.

We achieve this work in partnership with a robust network of municipal leaders, senior centers, housing sites, healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, volunteers, and community champions. Together, we strive to build an age-inclusive region where all residents—regardless of background, income, or circumstances—have access to the resources and opportunities that help them thrive.

As we look across our diverse and evolving region, one thing remains constant: WCAAA's unwavering commitment to enriching lives and empowering independence. Through innovation, advocacy, compassion, and collaboration, we continue to champion a vision for Western Connecticut where every older adult can age with dignity, connection, and choice.

Financial Overview

Adel Mousa, Chief Financial Officer | WCAAA

A Defining Year of Scale, Growth and Financial Stewardship

As we close FY25, WCAAA stands in the strongest financial position in its more than five decades of service. Since the beginning of FY20, the agency has expanded its operational capacity and enhanced its financial resilience, laying the groundwork for this year's exceptional outcomes. Net assets grew from \$676,419 to an estimated \$3,303,486, marking a historic 388% increase in long-term stability. FY25 shows how this multi-year foundation translated into the most impactful year yet in service delivery, operational performance, and financial strength.

WCAAA's transformation has elevated its role within Connecticut's network of Area Agencies on Aging. The agency now operates with greater efficiency, expanded program capacity, and strengthened regional influence—positioning WCAAA as a central partner in advancing a more coordinated statewide system of care. FY25 reaffirmed this position, highlighting excellence in resource management, system development, and community-focused outcomes.

Financial Positioning & FY25 Performance Highlights

FY25 stands as a defining year for WCAAA. The agency sustained revenues just shy of \$11 million, maintaining the historic scale achieved in FY24. Expenses of \$10.55 million reflect the largest and most strategically aligned operating platform in agency history. Even while delivering services at unprecedented volume, WCAAA maintained cost discipline and increased long-term reserves to over \$3.3 million. FY25 is not simply a year of expansion—it reflects organizational precision, maturity, and a steadfast commitment to mission-driven financial responsibility.

Financial Performance (FY19–FY25)

Fiscal Year	Revenue (\$)	Expenses (\$)	Net Assets (\$)
FY19	\$7,334,704	\$7,473,545	\$676,419
FY20	\$9,544,382	\$9,339,369	\$898,303
FY21	\$8,361,310	\$7,529,567	\$1,784,214
FY22	\$9,011,708	\$8,758,339	\$2,052,559
FY23	\$9,425,256	\$8,986,460	\$2,510,000
FY24	\$10,290,107	\$9,953,793	\$2,903,486
FY25 (Est.)	\$10,950,000	\$10,550,000	\$3,303,486

Home Care: A Landmark Year of Growth

The Home Care Division delivered its strongest financial results to date in FY25. Revenue reached an all-time high, positive margins were restored, and refined operational systems reinforced service delivery. This year represents a decisive turnaround—driven by disciplined execution, operational rigor, and an unwavering commitment to person-centered care.

Fiscal Year	Revenue (\$)	Expenses (\$)	Net Income (\$)
FY22	\$2,035,163	\$1,961,308	\$73,855
FY23	\$1,896,070	\$1,843,078	\$52,992
FY24	\$2,131,368	\$2,157,159	\$(25,791)
FY25	\$2,433,097	\$2,316,928	\$116,169

Positioned for FY26: Strategic Readiness and Long-Term Stability

As WCAAAs enters FY26, the agency does so with exceptional financial strength, scalable systems, and a proven capacity to lead within Connecticut's aging network. FY25 stands as one of the most consequential years in WCAAAs history—demonstrating not only how far the organization has advanced, but how effectively it is positioned for what comes next. The momentum generated this year creates a powerful platform for innovation, deeper regional collaboration, and expanded impact across Western Connecticut. With a solid foundation and a clear strategic trajectory, WCAAAs is poised to shape the future of aging services with even greater influence and purpose.

Closing Statement

In more than half a century of service, few years have carried the significance or clarity of direction that FY25 provides. This year reflects the full maturity of WCAAAs financial evolution—built through thoughtful stewardship, strengthened by disciplined growth, and anchored in a mission that remains unwavering. As we look toward FY26, WCAAAs moves forward with confidence, strategic focus, and a renewed commitment to advancing the independence, dignity, and well-being of the older adults we serve. The agency is prepared not only to meet the challenges ahead, but to lead with vision, integrity, and enduring impact.

Sincerely,

Adel Mousa

Adel Mousa

Chief Financial Officer

Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging

Operational Stewardship & Grants Management

Operational Stewardship & Process Efficiency

FFY2025 was not only a year of strong financial performance, but also one of measurable operational discipline. Across grants, waiver administration, MIS, and IT support, WCAAA intentionally tightened workflows and reduced inefficiencies—allowing the agency to maximize contract deliverables, strengthen controls, and reduce carryover from year to year. These improvements ensured that growth in service demand was matched by growth in internal capacity and accountability.

Grants

In FFY2024, WCAAA spent 92% of subrecipient-awarded grant funds. In FFY2025, we increased that rate to 97%. This 5% improvement reflects stronger efficiency at both the front end (timely award planning and budgeting) and the back end (faster drawdown and closeout), resulting in less carryover from year to year. Overall, these outcomes point to tighter fiscal controls and more effective grant management practices that maximize community impact. Notably, this progress occurred in a year when WCAAA funded approximately 14% more subrecipients than in the prior year.

Grant management processes also advanced through adoption of standardized, universal reporting templates for subrecipients and waiver staff. Where appropriate, reporting tools were combined or redesigned to cover multiple programs in a single, comprehensive format. This reduced variation across reports, increased consistency, and lowered training demands for both WCAAA staff and subrecipients.

Governance & Leadership

Board of Directors (2024-2025)

The Board of Directors serves as the governing body of the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA). The Board provides oversight, leadership, and strategic guidance to ensure the agency fulfills its mission of supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across our 41-town region. Board members safeguard WCAAA's organizational integrity, financial stability, and long-term sustainability while ensuring compliance with all federal, state, and nonprofit regulations.

2024-2025 Board Members

Susan Coates, Chair	Susan Wager-White,	Peggy Sullivan, Member
Ellen Durstin, Vice Chair	Secretary	Terry Walker, Member
Michael Minutillo,	Jim Foley, Member	Michael Giordano,
Treasurer	John Monteleone, Member	Emeritus Member

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is a critical, community-based body established under the Older Americans Act (OAA). The Council provides insight, analysis, and recommendations to ensure WCAAA's programs remain responsive to the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. Council members elevate local needs, identify emerging trends, and guide planning efforts that strengthen WCAAA's impact across Western Connecticut.

2024-2025 Advisory Council Members

Jennifer Labrie	Marilia Jose	Sharon Massafra
Joe Pasquarella	Marjorie Ross	Susan Murphy
Kathy Kinane, Chair	Melissa Sloss	Ellen Durstin, Board Liaison
Linda Musco	Natalie Griffith	

Professional Assessment Committee (PAC)

The Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) is a federally required component of HUD's Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP). Its role is to ensure that residents receiving supportive services in CHSP-eligible congregate housing are appropriately assessed, monitored, and supported in maintaining independence. The PAC provides multidisciplinary

review, professional oversight, and evaluation of resident needs to ensure services align with CHSP guidelines.

2024–2025 PAC Members

- Susan Murphy, MSW
- Lorraine Brandolini, RN
- Rosemary Bonaguide
- Arlene Romasjas, LPN
- Emily Herget, LCSW, APHSW-C

Volunteers and In-Kind professionals

WCAAA extends its heartfelt thanks to the exceptional volunteers and in-kind professionals whose dedication, compassion, and expertise strengthen the CHOICES and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) programs. Their commitment ensures that older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities across Western Connecticut receive accurate information, trusted guidance, and the support they need to make informed decisions. We could not meet the community's needs without their unwavering service.

Our CHOICES volunteers generously give their time and expertise to help beneficiaries navigate Medicare and complex health coverage questions. We gratefully recognize:

CHOICES Volunteers

Eugene Brandon	Mary Rose McArdle
Gina Cushman	Stacey Phengavth
Lynn Chesinas	Liping Peng
Christofer Christiansen	Joseph Ternullo
James Foley	Terry Walker
Paul Hinckley	Patty Yaffa
Joyce Kun	Gerry Zimmerman

CHOICES In-kind

Lisa Butler, Torrington	Melissa Garthwait, Torrington
Sanley Castillo, Waterbury	Karen Guardian, Ridgefield
Monique Cataldo, Canaan	Sandra Gifford, Cheshire
Kristen Cherry Schechter, Cheshire	Lynne Gomes, Sherman
Margaret Cook, Southbury	Alexa Griffin, Newtown
Tamires Dasilva, Danbury	Kathy Hull, New Fairfield
Diane Dileo-Millas, Waterbury	Janette Ireland, New Milford
Ailyn Dilone, Waterbury	Marilia Jose, Bethlehem
Jasmin Marie Ducusin-Jara, New Milford	Susanna Marker, Sherman
Lori Finke, Watertown	Lisa McAuliffe, Salisbury
Benjamin Ferrie, Brookfield	Clarence Pacete, New Milford

Our **Senior Medicare Patrol partners** play a vital role in protecting older adults from fraud, scams, and financial exploitation by offering counseling, outreach, and invaluable education throughout the region. We thankfully acknowledge **Trevor Reeves, Sheri Burger, Mary Rose McArdle, Bill Searle, Margret Guerrera, Terry Walker, Will St. George, David Shapiro, and Kim Shelden** for their tireless work to protect our older adults.

The Connecticut Community Foundation and **The ION Bank Foundation** remain as our partner community organizations supporting outreach, health, and social service initiatives.

Staff Recognition

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) proudly recognizes the dedication, expertise, and daily commitment of our staff, whose efforts ensure that older adults, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and families across our 41-town region receive the highest quality of service and support.

Each team member contributes to our mission—strengthening independence, dignity, and well-being—with professionalism, compassion, and unwavering integrity.

We extend our sincere appreciation to WCAAA staff for their outstanding contributions throughout FFY 2025:

Leadership & Administration

Spring Raymond – President & CEO

Loretta Reed – Human Resources Director

Adel Mousa – Chief Financial Officer

Nehway Sahn – Executive Assistant

Anthony Sanchez – MIS & Data Manager

Judith A. Calca – Bookkeeper

Tricia Hadden – Finance/Grant Accountant

Toni Stoddard Dessereaux – CHCP Finance Assistant

Home and Community-Based Services

Carla Gilbode – Director of CT Homecare Program for Elders

Naquia Clark – Care Manager Supervisor, Strategic Unit

Melissa P. Carangelo – Care Manager Supervisor

Samantha J. Scott – Care Manager Supervisor

Jennifer Stewart – Care Manager Supervisor

Jeannette M. Sepulveda – Lead Care Manager Assistant

Karla Carrasquillo – Care Manager Assistant

Amanda Hernandez – Care Management Assistant

Rosemary Speaks – Care Management Assistant, NFC & Alzheimer's

Saray Chappell – Care Manager

Shellene Barnes-Guthrie – Care Manager

Andrea Barrett – Care Manager

Elizabeth E. Bismack – Care Manager

Emily Coffey – Care Manager

Jocelyn Duarte – Care Manager

Rocio Gautier – Care Manager

Patricia Hinrichs – Care Manager
Alicia Knox – Care Manager
Bianca Knox – Care Manager
Valerie J. Nold – Care Manager
Maura Quinn – Care Manager
Janee Turner – Care Manager
Hailey Colangelo – Care Manager

Ruth Auguste – Float Care Manager
Izabela McColligan – Dedicated Assessor
Shpenda F. Sabani – Dedicated Assessor
Kimberly Telford – Dedicated Assessor
Madison L. Gendron – SCM Specialized Care Manager

MFP, Veterans, Caregiver & Housing Services

Florinda Peaches Byrd – MFP Transition Coordinator
Gisela Medina – MFP Housing Coordinator

Steven Dwyer – Supervisor of NFC/CSRSP/Veterans Services
Malsiella Martinez – Service Navigator
Beatriz A. Torres – Lead Service Navigator / Home Care Billing Assistant

CHOICES, SMP, and Outreach

Kiara D. Carchi-Maposito – CHOICES Director
William Shugrue – CHOICES Outreach Worker
Chelcy Htoo – CHOICES Support Staff

Audrey A. Cole – SMP Coordinator
Diane Dileo-Millas – SMP Support Staff
Michele Vendetti – SMP Support Staff
Amanda Asch Halle – MIPPA Program Coordinator

CHSP – Congregate Housing Services Program

Lynn Aiksnoras – Resident Services Coordinator Supervisor
Robin Anthony – CHSP Resident Service Coordinator
Deborah Casson – CHSP Resident Service Coordinator

Rosalie Johnson – CHSP Resident Service Coordinator
Suzanne Nuzzo – CHSP Resident Service Coordinator
Andrew Spagnolo – CHSP Resident Service Coordinator

Resident Services, Eligibility, Wellness & Quality Assurance

Debbie E. Kaszas – Resident Services Coordinator

Elaine Marcucio – Resident Services Coordinator

Annette Snow – Registered Dietitian,
Meals on Wheels

Abbey Ellner – Wellness Services
Coordinator

Nancy Y. Gonzalez – Eligibility and QA
Specialist

Skye Medina – Eligibility and QA
Specialist

Stephanie D. Sills – Quality Assurance
Supervisor

Grants, Systems, and Operations

Jose L Carchi-Maposito – Grants
Manager

Maria B. Quiles – CHCP System
Administrator

Janneth B. Tapia – CHCP Education
and Outreach Coordinator

Every staff member plays an essential role in delivering high-quality services and ensuring that older adults and individuals with disabilities across Western Connecticut can live with dignity, safety, and independence. WCAAA extends its deepest appreciation to this exceptional team for their unwavering service and commitment.

Programs & Services

CHCPE, PCA Waiver, ABI Waiver, MFP and CFC

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging continued to play a critical role in administering the **Connecticut Homecare Program for Elders (CHCPE)**, **Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Waiver**, **Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Waiver**, **Money Follows the Person (MFP)**, and **Community First Choice (CFC)** programs throughout the year. These programs collectively support older adults and individuals with disabilities to remain safely in the community with the services, care coordination, and support they need.

Strengthening Care Management During Systemwide Transitions

FFY 2025 was marked by extensive statewide systems conversions. The Department of Social Services (DSS) implemented multiple major changes—from the introduction of the new Care Management System (CMS) to updates in MCC/ECCM, Universal Assessment migrations, and unbundling of CFC Prior Authorizations, and implementation of goal attainment scoring for participation with CONNIE (CT Health Information Exchange). WCAAA's Home Care team successfully navigated each transition while maintaining continuity of care for vulnerable clients.

The CMS migration required multi-month data clean-up efforts, including correction of service authorizations, closure of legacy records, identifying and reconciling duplicate files, and ensuring accurate billing capture—particularly within CFC, where the largest discrepancies were found statewide. Despite these challenges, the WCAAA team worked intensively with DSS and providers to stabilize data, assess consumers as needed, and ensure providers could continue billing with minimal interruption.

Staffing Resilience and Operational Realignment

The Home Care Department experienced significant staffing pressures throughout the year, with multiple Care Managers and CM Assistants on FMLA, resignations, and onboarding delays caused by system access issues. Nevertheless, WCAAA continued to meet program requirements through cross-coverage, temporary reassignment of Quality Assurance and Training staff to carry caseloads, and targeted hiring of Care Managers, Care Manager Assistants, a float CM, and Transition Coordinators.

Internal restructuring also advanced, including:

1. Building additional operational support aligned with CMS workflows
2. Updating job descriptions to incorporate training and QA functions
3. Introducing plans for a Scheduler and two Eligibility Specialists to enhance intake and reduce processing delays

4. Increasing overall CHC activations leading to the largest increase between any fiscal year to date and ending the year strongly with the highest number of active cases on record.

Despite obstacles, the team continued to meet federal, state, and contractual expectations.

Major Program Activities and Compliance Work

Throughout the year, the Home Care team led several high-stakes compliance initiatives:

1. Department of Social Services (DSS) Clinical Record Review: 52 charts were reviewed by DSS with only six requiring corrective action—an exceptionally strong outcome for a first-year audit cycle under new systems. – our first Audit using CMS will be spring 2026.
2. Provider Error Rate Measurement (PERM): WCAAA successfully completed federal audits requiring detailed verification of provider billing accuracy.
3. NCQA Goals & Connie Reporting: WCAAA participated in the statewide value-based payment initiative. Significant challenges emerged due to incomplete statewide data and system conversion timing, but WCAAA continued refining goals, improving documentation processes, and preparing for benchmarks once finalized by DSS.
4. CFC Cleanup and Unbundling: WCAAA complied fully with DSS's new statewide unbundling requirements effective October 1, 2025, ensuring that authorizations for dual-waiver participants were updated on time. Work continues on the next phase for standalone CFC clients.
5. Universal Assessment Revision Training: WCAAA also provided ongoing training supports to ensure staff can code the assessment according to the standards for the department. A department wide training also outlined the forthcoming revisions to the universal assessment anticipated in the next fiscal year to enhance efficiency and streamline data.

MFP Transitions and Community Impact

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) team supported individuals transitioning from institutional settings into community living. The sudden closure of Abbott Terrace and subsequent closures in the region required rapid response, extensive coordination with skilled nursing facilities, and additional advocacy to ensure safe placements for affected residents. Despite these challenges, WCAAA maintained strong transition capacity and met DSS expectations for regional transitions according to person centered choice to reside in the community and to reduce the number of available beds in institutionalized settings across Connecticut.

Care Management System Implementation

The launch of the new statewide Care Management System (CMS) was one of the largest operational efforts of the year. WCAAA staff participated in:

1. Weekly training
2. System testing
3. Data scrubbing and renaming projects
4. Manual entry of corrupt or missing data
5. Development of dashboards and reporting tools to improve tracking
6. Troubleshooting significant technical, authorization, and assessment issues
7. Process realignment, improvements and implementation

By the final migration wave, all active clients were successfully moved into CMS, marking a major milestone in WCAAA's multi-year modernization effort.

Commitment to Quality and Continuity of Care

Despite high call volumes in CFC, ongoing GTI authorization issues, and widespread system changes affecting every stage of care management, WCAAA's Home Care team remained focused on supporting consumers, assisting providers, meeting audit requirements, and stabilizing processes. Staff continued to respond to consumer concerns about delays, coordinate necessary assessments, and ensure timely handling of referrals and reassessments.

The year demonstrated the strength, adaptability, and professionalism of the WCAAA Home Care Department. Through constant change, staffing shortages, and statewide transitions, the team remained committed to ensuring that older adults and individuals with disabilities across Western Connecticut received the services and support needed to age with dignity in the community.

CHOICES and SHIP/MIPPA

Throughout the 2024–2025 program year, the CHOICES (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) and MIPPA Program at the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) continued to expand its reach, strengthen regional partnerships, and provide high-quality, unbiased Medicare counseling to older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities across all 41 towns of Western Connecticut. Under the leadership of CHOICES Regional Coordinator **Kiara Carchi**, and with the dedication of volunteers, in-kind professionals, and community partners, the program achieved major advancements in outreach, training, recruitment, and beneficiary support—surpassing every federal performance benchmark.

Building a Stronger CHOICES Team

The program experienced significant growth in counselor capacity, recruiting 15 new volunteers between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. Recruitment was supported by targeted outreach through radio, newspapers, social media, community events, and *The Western Compass*. Comprehensive training—including Medicare updates, STARS refreshers, shadowing opportunities, and continuous access to national SHIP resources—ensured new and seasoned counselors were well prepared. Monthly meetings, one-on-one coaching, and appreciation events fostered strong retention and kept counselors engaged, informed, and connected to program goals.



Expanding Partnerships Across Western Connecticut

CHOICES and MIPPA deepened and broadened partnerships with senior centers, libraries, health clinics, ESL providers, faith-based organizations, food pantries, municipalities, and hospitals. Notable new collaborations formed in 2025 include the Waterbury Lions Club, Central Baptist Church, UConn Health, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce, Apex Community Care, and several libraries in Litchfield County. These partnerships greatly expanded culturally responsive education, strengthened referral networks, and supported outreach to diverse and underserved communities.

Reaching Underserved & Hard-to-Reach Populations

The program conducted **over 100 outreach events**, including health fairs, group presentations, ESL-focused workshops, media appearances, and rural community engagements. Outreach prioritized communities with strong Spanish, Portuguese, Albanian, and Chinese-speaking communities, including those speaking Chinese, as well as small rural towns such as Canaan, Cornwall, Norfolk, Falls Village, Kent, and Woodbury. Recurring tables at Community Health & Wellness Centers in North Canaan and Torrington provided consistent access to screenings and application assistance. Bilingual materials, culturally tailored presentations, and trusted partnerships ensured meaningful engagement and equitable access.

Enhancing Counseling Quality & Program Performance

Throughout FFY 2025, the CHOICES program continued to strengthen its internal systems and service delivery, with a particular focus on reporting accuracy, counselor confidence, consistency of service, and overall program quality. Enhanced training, more robust supervision, and standardized procedures helped ensure that data are documented reliably, counselors feel well-supported and prepared, and beneficiaries receive clear, timely, and consistent information. Together, these improvements reinforce CHOICES as a trusted, high-performing resource for Medicare counseling across Western Connecticut.

This was achieved through targeted STARS training, quarterly reviews, structured reporting reminders, and expanded case support. These efforts contributed to a **perfect 100% score** on the statewide **Mystery Shopper evaluation**, reflecting exceptional customer service, accuracy, and professionalism. Beneficiary feedback collected through ACL surveys and WCAAA's Quality Assurance Survey guided continuous improvement and affirmed high satisfaction with services.

Individualized Application Assistance

The team provided **252 one-on-one application assistance contacts**—a substantial increase from previous years. Counselors assisted with Medicare enrollment, MSP and Medicaid applications, Extra Help/LIS, and complex transitional cases. The DSS Community Partner Portal and UniteUs platform enabled smoother processing, faster referrals, and better coordination across health and social service providers, improving outcomes for beneficiaries experiencing mobility, transportation, or language barriers.

Exceeding All Federal Performance Measures

The CHOICES/MIPPA Program exceeded every annual target:

MIPPA Contacts:

Goal 1,800 → **Achieved 2,837**

Hard-to-Reach Beneficiaries:

Goal 200 → **Achieved 1,217**

Group Outreach Contacts:

Goal 800 → **Achieved 4,991**

Application Assistance Contacts:

Goal 150 → **Achieved 261**

These results demonstrate strong program performance and WCAAA's commitment to equitable access for low-income, rural, minority, disability, and ESL populations.

Expansive Public Education & Resource Distribution

Throughout the year, the program produced and distributed multilingual MSP/LIS materials, recruitment flyers, newspaper ads, radio content, magazine articles, and social media

messaging. These efforts strengthened public awareness of cost-saving programs and reinforced WCAAA's role as a trusted, unbiased source for Medicare counseling.

Annual Impact

The CHOICES & MIPPA Program remains a critical resource for thousands of Western Connecticut residents navigating complex Medicare decisions. Through culturally responsive outreach, strengthened regional partnerships, individualized benefit assistance, and volunteer leadership, WCAAA ensures that older adults have access to the support they need to maintain health, stability, and independence.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program at the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) achieved substantial growth and impact over the past year, marked by expanded community engagement, increased volunteer capacity, and strong collaboration across Agency programs. SMP's performance is measured by four core indicators:

1. One-on-one counseling sessions
2. Complex interaction cases
3. Group presentations and the number of attendees
4. Community events and event participation

In FFY 2025, SMP strengthened its role as a regional leader in fraud prevention and Medicare education. The program deepened collaboration with CHOICES/SHIP, the National Family Caregiver Program, ADRC/Service Navigation, and Respite services through joint presentations, shared outreach events, and coordinated case referrals. These partnerships significantly increased public awareness of WCAAA's full range of services, especially in communities previously unaware of the Agency's presence. SMP's cross-program integration also elevated WCAAA's visibility at regional events and broadened access to fraud prevention education.

SMP also expanded its reach into the 11 new northern Connecticut towns reassigned to WCAAA by the State Unit on Aging. Three new volunteers from Suffield and Enfield completed full SMP certification, bringing the total to six trained SMP volunteers actively serving this expanded region. These volunteers now conduct group presentations, support community events, and assist with client interactions, substantially strengthening SMP's regional footprint.

Program Growth: FFY 2023–2024

The transition period beginning in 2022 expanded paid SMP staffing and added statewide case responsibilities, requiring significant operational adjustments. In Fall 2023, the program's service area increased to 52 towns, including 11 newly assigned communities along Connecticut's northern border. By early 2024, SMP initiated outreach, on-site visits, and volunteer recruitment in these new locations.

The Spring 2024 statewide SMP marketing campaign—featuring radio, print, and FOX61 television advertising—boosted public awareness dramatically. Of the 39 volunteers supporting SMP that year, 7 were fully trained to conduct group presentations, one-on-one counseling, and complex interactions, supported by 4 part-time paid SMP staff. This revitalized structure led to a marked increase in counseling sessions, presentations, and fraud prevention activity.

Program Growth: FFY 2024–2025

The 2024–2025 program year continued this momentum. Despite substantial reductions in the state marketing budget, WCAAA allocated limited funding to support a six-week statewide television campaign in Spring 2025, again increasing SMP visibility.

Volunteer capacity grew even stronger, with 15 volunteers now fully trained and authorized to lead group presentations, conduct one-on-one counseling, and manage complex fraud-related cases. Although the total number of volunteers decreased from 39 to 30 due to retirements and removal of inactive volunteers, the program's active and highly skilled volunteer cohort is significantly stronger than in previous years. SMP's core team includes two part-time paid staff members, both qualified to deliver presentations, counseling, and case support.

By June 2025, the SMP Program Coordinator completed in-person visits to all 41 towns in WCAAA's traditional region, as well as all 11 newly assigned northern towns, ensuring full regional coverage and community engagement.

Two-Year Performance Comparison (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025)

Across all performance categories, SMP demonstrated significant growth over the previous year:

- One-on-one Counseling: ↑ 41.3%
- Complex Interactions: ↑ 67.4%
- Group Presentations: ↑ 9.3%
- Community Events: ↑ 50.7%

Attendance also increased dramatically:

- Group Presentation Attendance: ↑ 84.7%
- Community Event Attendance: ↑ 64.7%

These results reflect the program's strengthened volunteer base, expanded territory, and strong cross-agency collaboration that continues to increase awareness and protect older adults from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III-E)

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) is a federal initiative under the Older Americans Act that provides essential services, resources, and support to family and informal caregivers who assist older adults, individuals with dementia, or grandparents raising grandchildren. Its purpose is to help caregivers maintain their own well-being while continuing their caregiving role by offering respite care, information and referral, counseling, training, support groups, and access to supplemental services that reduce stress and prevent burnout. Through these supports, the program strengthens caregivers' ability to provide safe, effective care at home and helps older adults remain independent in their communities for as long as possible.

FFY 2025 reflects a strong and impactful year for WCAAA's National Family Caregiver Support Program. With over 9,000 service units delivered, the program remains an essential lifeline for caregivers navigating the demands of supporting older adults and individuals with chronic conditions. WCAAA remains committed to strengthening family caregiving, expanding equitable access, and ensuring caregivers have the resources they need to maintain their own health and well-being while helping their loved one's age with dignity at home.

Veterans Directed Care Program (VDC)

The CT Veterans Directed Care Program is a consumer directed home and community-based services program designed to keep veterans in their communities. The program is for veterans who need assistance to live at home or in the community instead of a nursing home. It provides veterans with a budget to hire their own caregivers, including family members, and manage their own services with support from community providers. The goal is to give veterans more control over their long-term care and help them remain independent.

Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program (CSRCP)

The Connecticut Statewide Respite Program is a state-funded initiative that provides financial assistance to family caregivers who are supporting someone at home with Alzheimer's disease or another related dementia. Administered through Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging, the program helps cover a range of flexible respite options—including in-home care, adult day services, and short-term facility stays—and can also assist with care planning, information, and caregiver support. Eligibility requires a confirmed dementia diagnosis, and income or asset guidelines may apply depending on the regional agency. By offering both planned and emergency relief, the CT SRP reduces caregiver stress and burnout, enhances caregiver well-being, and helps individuals with dementia remain safely in their homes for as long as possible.

In FY2025, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) supported **124 unduplicated caregivers**, with **105 actively receiving services** including Adult Day Center, PCA, homemaker, companion, and other support. Caregivers supported primarily served individuals with cognitive impairments—**18 with Alzheimer's disease and 106 with other dementia diagnoses**. Due to staffing shortages and complex case management needs, a waitlist of **4-10 caregivers** were maintained throughout the year, with an average **2-week wait** for assessment. WCAAA conducted consistent outreach, averaging **two events or collaborations per month**, including community breakfasts, open houses, and senior center engagements. Approximately **30 referrals** came from caregivers, Agency on Aging colleagues, social workers, protective services, and local police departments.

ARPA funds provided additional support, helping meet urgent caregiver needs in a year where demand continued to outpace available funding. Caregivers reported overwhelmingly positive outcomes—using respite to attend health appointments, participate in therapy, volunteer, or

engage in family and community activities. Success stories included a spouse finally achieving relief from caregiver burnout and a daughter able to secure long-term care for her mother after using the program to fill critical service gaps.

Aging Answers

A no-wrong-door, person-centered entry point providing benefits counseling, resource navigation, and referrals for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.

Information, Referral, and Assistance (I&R/A)

The Information, Referral, and Assistance team is often the first point of contact for individuals seeking support, guidance, or answers to questions about aging, disability services, and community resources. Staff provide personalized assistance to help clients understand available programs, navigate complex systems, and connect with the right services to meet their needs. In the past year, the I&R/A team delivered 13,308 units of service and assisted 3,717 clients. These interactions ranged from brief information requests to in-depth problem-solving, benefits navigation, and follow-up support. The team's work ensures that older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals receive accurate, timely, and compassionate assistance, strengthening access to essential services across all 41 towns in our region.

Service Navigation/Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Service Navigation serves as a central access point for older adults, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals seeking information, guidance, and support. Through person-centered counseling, benefits screening, referrals, and assistance navigating complex service systems, the Service Navigator/ADRC helps individuals make informed decisions about their long-term care needs and maintain independence in the community.

This year, the team provided support to 767 clients, delivering 2,140 units of service. These interactions reflect comprehensive assistance that includes options counseling, applications for benefits, referrals to community resources, follow-up support, and coordination with healthcare and social service partners.

WCAA continued to strengthen its service delivery across the region through comprehensive nutrition, wellness, and supportive programs. Under the Title III-C Nutrition Program, the Agency provided **400,663 home-delivered meals** to 1,800 older adults, ensuring consistent access to nutritious food for those unable to shop or cook independently. An additional 2,561 individuals benefited from **80,846 congregate meals**, fostering both nourishment and valuable social engagement. WCAA's Health & Wellness initiatives expanded through evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain workshops, all integrated into the Agency's growing Holistic Health & Wellness Model. Through Title III-B Supportive Services, WCAA delivered critical assistance including **11,622 transportation units** for 476 clients—plus

5,140 additional ARPA-supported units—helping older adults remain connected to medical care and community resources. Legal assistance reached 99 clients with 1,018 units of service, while **Chore Services** supported 566 individuals with **13,734 units** to ensure safe, accessible living environments. Title III-D Health Promotion programs further advanced healthy aging through fitness and mobility workshops, mental wellness initiatives, and other proven preventive interventions that enhance overall quality of life.

Congregate Meal & Community Dining Sites by Region

Litchfield Hills (City of Torrington)

Falls Village	Sullivan Senior Center
Harwinton Senior Center	Winsted Senior Center
Lakeville	

Central Naugatuck Valley (New Opportunities)

Amalfi's	Nick's Country Kitchen
Annoula's	Paba's
Gayles Farm Shoppe	Seven Villages
Hispanic Coalition	Spirit Café
IHOP	Watertown Senior Center
Middlebury Senior Center	Woodbury Senior Center
Monteiro's	

Housatonic Valley (RW Solutions)

American Pie	New Fairfield Senior Center
Bethel Senior Center	New Milford Senior Center
Brookfield Senior Center	Newtown Senior Center
Danbury Senior Center	Sherman Senior Center

CHSP (RW Solutions)

Nunnawauk Meadows	Grace Meadows
George B. Lewis II	Torrington West

Title III Grantees & Contractors

Transportation Providers

ARPA – Chore Transportation	Wheels of Great New Milford
ARPA – Torrington Medical Transportation	Torrington Transportation
ARPA – RITS	Beacon Falls Minibus
ARPA – Go Geer On Demand	Naugatuck Senior Center Transportation
New Opp. Transport	Geer Transportation

Legal Services

Chore Services

ARPA – Helping Hands Chore	The Chore Service (Sharon)
Helping Hands – Winsted Chore	Torrington Chore
New Opp. Chore	Bethlehem Chore Assistance
New Milford Chore	

Adult Day Centers/ Dementia Support Organizations

Daybreak	NWCT Adult Day Care
Old Glory Days of Sandy Hook	Old Glory Days of Watertown

Nutrition Providers

ARPA – Elderly Nutrition	RW Solutions – Home Delivered
City of Torrington – Congregate	New Opportunities – Congregate
City of Torrington – Home Delivered	New Opportunities – Home Delivered
RW Solutions – Congregate	

Caregiver Services

New Opportunities – Money Management	CAAWC Energy Assistance
New Opportunities – Emergency Fuel	Naugatuck YMCA – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG)

Health & Wellness Contractors

Monitor My Health	Naugatuck YMCA (general wellness programs)
Healthy Steps & Cancer	
Ann's Place	

Municipal Agents Supported for CHOICES & Outreach

Harwinton Senior Center
Independence Northwest (Disability partner, also supports outreach)

Year-to-Year Service Comparison Summary (FFY 2023–2025)

This three-year comparison highlights trends in service utilization across Transportation, Chore, Legal, and Information & Referral/Assistance (I&R/A) programs. The data reflects changing community demand, shifts in service delivery, and the impact of ARPA funding tapering down.

Transportation Services

Year	Units Delivered	Clients Served
FFY 2023	17,620	674
FFY 2024	14,886	495
FFY 2025	11,622	476

Trend Summary

- Transportation units decreased by 34% from 2023 to 2025.
- Client count decreased by 29% over three years.
- The decline reflects reduced ARPA-funded transportation options and workforce shortages.

Chore Services

Year	Units Delivered	Clients Served
FFY 2023	15,962	497
FFY 2024	16,065	519
FFY 2025	13,734	566

Trend Summary

- Chore services remained steady from 2023 to 2024.
- Units decreased 14% in 2025 due to fewer contractors and service availability challenges.
- Client count increased each year, rising 14% overall, reflecting high demand despite reduced capacity.

Legal Services

Year	Units Delivered	Clients Served
FFY 2023	949	104
FFY 2024	803	91
FFY 2025	1,018	99

Trend Summary

- After a dip in 2024, units increased 27% in 2025, surpassing 2023 levels.
- Client count remains relatively stable.
- The increase reflects rising demand for elder law, eviction prevention, and housing crisis.

Information & Referral/Assistance (I&R/A)

Year	Units Delivered	Clients Served
FFY 2023	5,697	1,989
FFY 2024	7,442	2,635
FFY 2025	13,308	3,717

Trend Summary

I&R/A saw dramatic growth, with units more than doubling from 2023 to 2025. Clients increased by 87%, demonstrating growing community outreach, CHOICES engagement, and service navigation needs. Reflects increased public awareness, more complex aging issues, and stronger presence at community events.

ARPA Programs (2025 Only)

ARPA Transportation (2025): 5,140 units

(No comparison available for prior years; reflects final ARPA-funded activities.)

Overall Trends & Insights

- Transportation: Declining due to reduced ARPA funding and contractor availability.
- Chore: High and growing client demand despite workforce challenges.
- Legal: Rebounded strongly in 2025.
- I&R/A: Largest growth area, driven by CHOICES, outreach, and increased social needs post-pandemic.
- ARPA: Programs continued to fill critical gaps, especially transportation, but are winding down.

Focal Points

Designated Community Focal Points across the WCAAA region:

Barkhamsted Senior & Community Center
Bridgewater Hilltop Senior Center
Brookfield Senior Center
Cheshire Senior Center
Danbury Public Library
Danbury Senior Center
Edward E. Sullivan Senior Center
Fall Avenue Senior Center
Grace Meadows
Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury
Hotchkiss Library of Sharon
Independence Northwest
Kent Social Services
Litchfield Community Center

Middlebury Senior Center
Naugatuck Senior Center
New Fairfield Senior Center
New Milford Senior Center
New Opportunities, Inc.
Newtown Senior Center
Regional YMCA of Western Connecticut
Sherman Senior Center
Sherman Social Services
Southbury Senior Center
Waterbury Senior Center
Winsted Senior Center
Woodbury Senior Center



Highlights: 2024–2025

50th Anniversary Gala & Community Celebration

In 2025, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) reached a remarkable milestone—50 years of service to older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across Western Connecticut. To mark this historic occasion, WCAAA hosted its

50th Anniversary Gala & Community Celebration

an evening that brought together board members, elected officials, providers, community partners, donors, volunteers, and staff in a shared celebration of commitment and community impact.

The event captured both the legacy and the future of WCAAA. Master of Ceremonies **Attorney Michael A. Giardina**, a longtime volunteer, guided the evening with heartfelt reflection, honoring the people and partnerships that have shaped WCAAA's story over the past five decades. Guests also enjoyed a powerful keynote address by Joseph D. DeMayo, MD, MPH, a respected leader in geriatrics and Alzheimer's research, who highlighted the essential role Area Agencies on Aging play in improving health outcomes, supporting caregivers, and building stronger, more connected communities.

A highlight of the celebration was the recognition of staff whose dedication exemplifies WCAAA's mission and values:

Sandy Taylor, the steady force behind the Meals on Wheels program, was honored for her extraordinary service—including a weekly 350-mile commute—and her unwavering commitment over 21 years. Sandy's passion, reliability, and heart have touched thousands of lives across the region.

Loretta Reed, Director of Human Resources, was celebrated for 27 years of extraordinary service. Loretta has been a true cornerstone of WCAAA, shaping its culture with integrity, compassion, and steadfast leadership. Her impact on the agency is immeasurable.

Carla Gilbode, leader of the CHCP program, was recognized for her compassion, innovative thinking, and strong advocacy on behalf of the older adults WCAAA serves. Over her 16 years with



the agency, Carla has strengthened service delivery and elevated program quality across the region.

The Gala also marked the official debut of WCAAA's new **Mission, Vision, and Value Statements**, along with a new logo, which served as a modern identity that reflects the agency's commitment to growth, guidance, and unity. This refreshed direction aligns with statewide collaboration through AgingCT, where Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging work together to expand equity, access, and support for older adults.

More than a celebration of the past, the 50th Anniversary Gala served as a powerful launch into the future. It reaffirmed WCAAA's dedication to strengthening partnerships, diversifying resources, expanding evidence-based programs, and championing the rights and wellbeing of older adults and caregivers.

As WCAAA enters its next fifty years, the agency remains deeply committed to enriching lives, empowering independence, and meeting the evolving needs of Western Connecticut's aging population—with the same passion and purpose that have guided its work since 1975.

2025–2028 Area Plan

WCAAA's Area Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2026–2028 sets out a strategic roadmap grounded in its core values of dignity, compassion, inclusion, choice, trust, and collaboration, designed to serve older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across its 41-town service region. The Plan builds on the agency's evolving role as a convener and systems-integrator—moving beyond funding services to actively coordinating regional partnerships, fostering equity, and strengthening infrastructure. Needs assessment identifies key challenges: staffing shortages (especially in homemaker/personal care, respite for dementia, rural transportation drivers, bilingual staff), gaps in evidence-based programs, and increasing demand tied to demographic shifts.

To address these, WCAAA will focus on five major strategic areas: provider recruitment & development, flexible funding/contracting, data-driven service alignment, enhanced outreach in underserved towns, and advocacy for housing, transportation, and policy solutions. The agency also emphasizes improving service quality and equity, ensuring that choice and person-centered approaches prevail across all funded programs. The result: A forward-looking plan that aligns with the State Plan on Aging, seeks to strengthen the home and community-based services system, and supports older adults and persons with disabilities in remaining independent and engaged in their communities. [WCAAA+1](#)

The Western Compass

This year, WCAAA proudly launched *The Western Compass*, our official agency magazine. Under the direction of Executive Assistant, Nehway Sahn, the publication has quickly become a valuable resource for older adults, caregivers, professionals, and community

partners across our 41-town region. Her creativity and commitment to clarity shaped a magazine that informs, educates, and engages our community.

The magazine features articles on healthy aging, Medicare and caregiver supports, program highlights, community events, evidence-based health programs, fraud prevention, and advocacy issues—along with stories that showcase the important work of WCAA and its partners. Designed as a trusted regional guide, *The Western Compass* serves as a true “compass,” helping residents navigate services, resources, and opportunities that support aging well.

Implementation of Salesforce CMS for Homecare

In 2025, WCAA achieved a major milestone with the **implementation of the Salesforce Client Management System (CMS) for Homecare**, marking a significant step forward in modernizing service delivery and strengthening operational efficiency. This transformation was made possible through the exceptional leadership of **Carla Gilbode** and the dedication of the Homecare team, who guided the transition with professionalism, patience, and an unwavering commitment to improving client services. Their hard work ensured a smooth migration from legacy systems to a more streamlined, cloud-based platform that enhances case coordination, improves documentation accuracy, and supports real-time reporting. Thanks to their efforts, the Salesforce CMS is already elevating the quality-of-care management, strengthening communication across teams, and positioning WCAA for long-term innovation, integration, and continued excellence in supporting older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Implementation of Grantee Gateway for Elderly Nutrition Providers

This year, WCAA— together with the four other Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging through **AgingCT**—successfully implemented the Grantee Gateway system for all Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP) providers. This major modernization effort was made possible through a collaborative application to the **State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Nonprofit Grant Program (NGP)**, which resulted in statewide funding to support improved data systems and operational efficiency.

At WCAA, the successful rollout of Grantee Gateway was driven by the leadership and technical expertise of **Jose Carchi, Director of MIS & Grants Management**. Jose oversaw the full implementation process, including system planning, provider onboarding, workflow development, training, and ongoing technical support. His hands-on approach ensured that every nutrition provider felt prepared and confident in using the new platform.

The transition to Grantee Gateway has strengthened accuracy and transparency in budget submissions, invoicing, and program documentation, while reducing administrative burden for both WCAA and ENP providers. It also enhances compliance with federal and state requirements and improves WCAA’s ability to monitor service delivery, funding utilization, and program outcomes across all 41 towns.

Thanks to Jose's leadership and the statewide collaboration through AgingCT, WCAAA and its Elderly Nutrition Providers now benefit from a modern, efficient, and reliable system that supports the continued delivery of high-quality meal services to older adults throughout Western Connecticut.

Expanded Holistic Health & Wellness Initiatives with Sharon Hospital

WCAAA significantly expanded its Holistic Health & Wellness initiatives through strengthened collaboration with Sharon Hospital. Guided by the priorities outlined in the hospital's 2023–2025 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), WCAAA introduced the Integrated Wellness & Case Management (IW&CM) Coordinator position—a strategic role designed to bridge clinical care with community-based supports for older adults.

This position directly advances CHIP goals by addressing social determinants of health, enhancing access to care, and promoting health equity for seniors in the region. The IW&CM Coordinator connects patients to essential services such as transportation, nutrition programs, evidence-based wellness classes, and other supports that help them follow through on healthcare recommendations.

The role also strengthens community partnerships by serving as a liaison between Sharon Hospital, local providers, and WCAAA programs, creating a coordinated network dedicated to improving senior health outcomes. This collaboration demonstrates WCAAA's commitment to innovative, partnership-driven approaches to wellness that prioritize prevention, continuity of care, and equitable access for all older adults.

In-Home Safety Enhancements Grant

Through the In-Home Safety Enhancements Grant, WCAAA invested \$155,000 to strengthen staff and client safety across our service region. Grant funding supported the purchase of mobile phones, GPS trackers, safety applications, and specialized safety trainings—including de-escalation with Edgework and self-defense—as well as the engagement of a professional safety consultant to support our Human Resources Director in developing ongoing safety protocols. As part of this initiative, WCAAA also implemented Casebook, a secure, cloud-based case management system that centralizes documentation of contacts, assessments, referrals, care plans, and outcomes.

Strategic Plan

With the generous support of the Connecticut Community Foundation, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan for 2025–2028. This plan responds to shifting demographics, increasing demand for services, and the critical need to diversify funding to ensure long-term sustainability. Developed through an inclusive and collaborative process—engaging board members, staff, and community stakeholders through surveys, focus groups, and facilitated discussions, the Strategic Plan outlines a forward-looking roadmap that strengthens WCAAA’s capacity, expands service reach, and enhances organizational efficiency. Above all, it reaffirms WCAAA’s commitment to supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across the 41 towns of Western Connecticut

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Workforce

Cultivate a workplace culture that fosters personal growth, supports professional development, and positions WCAAA as an employer of choice.

Goal 2: Funding

Diversify revenue streams, reduce reliance on government funding, and build long-term financial sustainability.

Goal 3: Program Development

Design and deliver programs that meet the evolving needs of the region, with emphasis on underserved ZIP codes, housing-related support, and maximizing utilization of available resources.

Goal 4: Operations

Streamline processes, reduce redundancies, and strengthen operational efficiency to better serve the community.

New Mission, Vision, Value Statement, and Logo

This year, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) proudly introduced a refreshed **Mission, Vision, Value Statement**, and organizational logo as part of a broader effort to modernize the agency’s identity and strengthen its connection with the communities it serves. Developed collaboratively with staff, board members, and community partners, these updates more clearly articulate WCAAA’s role in supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across our 41-town region.

The foundation of our new logo was created by **Care Manager Alicia Knox**, whose design was selected during last year’s agency-wide logo contest. Her concept served as the

inspiration for the final design, which now aligns with the unified branding of AgingCT and represents the strong collaboration among Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging.

Together, these updates reinforce WCAAA's values, strengthen our statewide partnerships, and position the agency to lead with clarity and purpose in the years ahead.

Website Redesign & Rebuild

This year, WCAAA completed a comprehensive redesign and rebuilding of its website to improve accessibility, navigation, and user experience for older adults, caregivers, professionals, and community partners. Led by **Executive Assistant Nehway Sahn**, the project was developed in partnership with our long-standing CMS provider, SoSimple Website Solutions of Wolcott, CT, ensuring the work remained rooted within our regional community.

The new site features a modern, mobile-responsive layout; clearer pathways to programs and services; integrated translation tools; and streamlined access to CHOICES, caregiver resources, wellness programs, applications, and referral options. Enhanced search functions, updated content, and improved ADA-aligned design standards ensure visitors can more easily find information, connect with services, and stay engaged with Agency updates.

The rebuild also strengthened the site's backend functionality—improving security, performance, and content management—and positions WCAAA for long-term digital accessibility and communication success

Lifeline Fund

This year, WCAAA established the **Lifeline Fund**, a vital safety-net resource designed to provide small but impactful financial assistance to seniors and individuals with disabilities facing housing crises. The fund was created to address urgent needs—such as rental arrears, utility reconnection, emergency repairs, or other critical expenses—that, if left unmet, could lead to homelessness or unsafe living conditions.

Thanks to the generosity of **ION Bank** and several individual donors, WCAAA was able to open and sustain a dedicated Lifeline Fund account. These contributions made it possible to intervene quickly and compassionately, providing targeted support at pivotal moments.

Since its creation, the Lifeline Fund has **prevented homelessness for approximately ten older adults and individuals with disabilities**, helping them remain stable, safe, and housed within their communities. This initiative reflects WCAAA's commitment to addressing social determinants of health and ensuring that the most vulnerable residents of Western Connecticut are supported when they need it most.

The Lifeline Fund continues to grow, and WCAA remains committed to expanding its reach so more individuals can receive the essential assistance that keeps them secure and independent.

WCAA Health Fair

In 2025, WCAA proudly hosted its **Second Annual Community Health Fair**, an event that has quickly become one of the region's most anticipated community wellness gatherings. This year's fair brought together **over 300 community members** from across Western Connecticut, offering direct access to health information, preventive screenings, community resources, and aging-related services.



The event featured an impressive lineup of **more than 61 vendors**, including healthcare providers, oral health screenings, senior service agencies, wellness organizations, municipal partners, and local nonprofits. Walgreens served as a key participating partner, providing on-site vaccinations and valuable health education to attendees.

The fair created a vibrant, welcoming space where older adults, caregivers, and families could learn about programs, ask questions, and engage with community partners committed to supporting health, independence, and wellbeing. The continued success and growing attendance of the Community Health Fair reflect WCAA's ongoing commitment to promoting healthy aging and strengthening community connections.

Staff Development, Engagement, & Appreciation

WCAA is committed to fostering a workplace culture where staff feel valued, supported,



and connected. Throughout the year, the WCAA hosted a variety of wellness and appreciation events designed to strengthen morale, encourage camaraderie, and promote overall well-being. From our Thanksgiving Potluck and Holiday Luncheon to the Valentine's "Love & Luck" Bingo

Bash, these events offered opportunities for staff to relax, celebrate milestones, and experience a sense of belonging. The Wellness Wednesday Series in May provided weekly activities—such as meditation, yoga, Zumba, and a Spring Fling—that focused on stress relief and mental and physical wellness. Family-friendly traditions like the Back-to-School Bash and the Trick-or-Treat Trail brought staff and their children together, reinforcing WCAA's commitment to creating a warm, inclusive community.

Alongside these celebrations, WCAA continued to invest deeply in staff development, safety, and professional growth. First Aid and CPR/AED certification courses equipped 25 staff with essential emergency response skills, while the Edgework De-escalation Training provided practical tools for safely managing difficult situations in both office and field settings. Travel Training with the Kennedy Collective strengthened staff and partner agencies' understanding of mobility options, ensuring better support for client independence. Participation in statewide conferences—including the TEARSTM Elder Abuse Conference and the InformUSA Annual Member Meeting—expanded staff expertise in elder rights, abuse prevention, and information and referral best practices.

Together, these efforts demonstrate WCAA's ongoing dedication to cultivating a highly skilled, motivated, and connected workforce. By prioritizing wellness, appreciation, and continuous learning, the agency strengthens its organizational culture and reinforces its role as a leader in regional and statewide aging initiatives.

AgingCT: Statewide Advocacy, Leadership, & Impact

Hosted at the Aqua Turf, the AgingCT Summit convened over 400 professionals to address critical issues such as housing, transportation, economic security, and social isolation. WCAA staff and leadership actively participated in sessions dedicated to advocacy and community wellbeing.



As an active leader within **AgingCT**, the statewide coalition of Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAA) played a central role this year in advancing statewide advocacy, strengthening partnerships, and shaping policy affecting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers.

AgingCT played a pivotal role in securing two dedicated **Service Navigator** positions for each of Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging—a major statewide accomplishment that strengthened the front line of support for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. Through unified advocacy, coordinated testimony, and consistent engagement with legislative leaders, AgingCT demonstrated the critical impact Service Navigators have in preventing homelessness, reducing barriers to care, and helping residents access essential benefits such as SNAP, MSP, CHCPE, and in-home supports.

AgingCT's collective voice—grounded in data, real client stories, and decades of expertise—ensured lawmakers fully understood the increasing complexity of needs among Connecticut's aging population. This collaboration resulted in the Connecticut General Assembly approving recurring state funds for Service Navigator staffing in FY2025, affirming the value of community-based navigation and strengthening the statewide safety net. This achievement reflects AgingCT's effectiveness as a unified coalition and its unwavering commitment to ensuring that no older adult or caregiver in Connecticut is left without guidance, advocacy, or support.

Throughout the year, WCAAA worked closely with fellow AAA directors to coordinate strategy, align messaging, and ensure a unified statewide presence in legislative discussions. This included drafting AgingCT's **2025–2026 Legislative Priorities**, which focus on expanding community-based navigation, protecting Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, increasing Medicaid asset limits, strengthening the home care provider network, addressing housing insecurity, and improving access to transportation and nutrition.



WCAAA also spearheaded several key advocacy initiatives on behalf of AgingCT. In collaboration with AAA directors, WCAAA prepared and issued statewide letters urging Congress to extend **MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act)** funding—critical support that enables SHIP/CHOICES counselors and ADRCs to reach low-income Medicare beneficiaries not yet enrolled in savings programs. Another letter, drafted by WCAAA and signed by all AAAs, urged swift passage of the **Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S.4776)**, highlighting the essential role OAA programs play in supporting dignity, independence, and community living for millions of older adults and caregivers.

In December 2024, WCAAA organized a statewide strategy meeting with AgingCT leaders and the **Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH)** to address the rising number of older adults experiencing homelessness or unsafe housing. This meeting successfully launched a new cross-agency initiative focused on clarifying AAA roles, removing systemic barriers, and improving statewide coordination for older adults facing housing crises. All five AAA directors committed to participating in ongoing efforts to educate state agencies and strengthen the safety net for Connecticut's aging residents.

WCAAA also contributed to the successful AgingCT **Legislative Forum**, which drew hundreds of participants and elevated the voices of caregivers, service navigators, and community providers. This work helped ensure policymakers fully understood the risks posed by federal proposals to restructure the Administration for Community Living and fragment OAA programs.

Throughout the year, WCAAA remained an active partner in AgingCT's statewide programs, including **Aging Answers**, Connecticut's unified "No Wrong Door" entry point for aging and disability resources; statewide advocacy alerts; and preparations for the Aging & Disability Summit. These efforts demonstrate the power of the five AAAs working together as one network—expanding impact, safeguarding essential services, and delivering coordinated advocacy on behalf of Connecticut's older adults.

Together with AgingCT, WCAAA continues to amplify the statewide voice of aging services, ensuring Connecticut's residents can grow up and grow old with dignity, safety, and support.

Role of the AAA State Association President for Connecticut (USAging)

As the AAA State Association President for Connecticut, I serve as the primary representative and spokesperson for all five of Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) within USAging, our national association. USAging is the national voice for the Aging Network and works with federal agencies, Congress, and national partners to advance policies and programs that support older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers.

In this leadership role, I coordinate statewide efforts, unify messaging, and elevate Connecticut's priorities on the national stage. This includes:

- **Advocacy:** Ensuring Connecticut's needs and challenges are represented in national discussions around Older Americans Act funding, caregiver support, CHOICES/SHIP, nutrition programs, social determinants of health, and aging services infrastructure.
- **Policy Leadership:** Collaborating with national colleagues to shape federal policy recommendations and bringing those insights back to Connecticut's AAAs.
- **Strategic Coordination:** Facilitating communication and collaboration among Connecticut's five AAAs to advance shared legislative, funding, and programmatic goals.
- **National Representation:** Participating in USAging committees, policy briefings, and leadership meetings to highlight Connecticut's innovations and challenges, and to stay ahead of emerging national trends affecting aging services.
- **Statewide Impact:** Strengthening the visibility and influence of Connecticut's aging network, ensuring that our state receives the resources, attention, and support needed to meet the demands of a rapidly growing older population.

In essence, this role positions Connecticut as an active leader within the national aging network and ensures that our AAAs—and the older adults and caregivers we serve—have a strong, informed, and effective voice in both state and federal decision-making.

Regional Leadership Breakfast Series

In FFY 2025, the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) significantly expanded its regional engagement by hosting a series of Regional Leadership Breakfasts on-site at the Agency. These gatherings brought together municipal officials, state legislators, senior center directors, philanthropic partners, healthcare leaders, and a wide range of community organizations committed to improving the lives of older adults and individuals with disabilities across Western Connecticut. These sessions provided an invaluable forum to examine shared regional priorities and emerging challenges, with focused attention on two of the most pressing issues affecting the aging population: affordable housing and transportation barriers. Both topics continue to shape the everyday realities of older adults, particularly those in rural communities, and remain central to regional planning efforts.

To elevate these conversations, WCAAA convened specialized leadership panels featuring experts and system leaders in Housing and Transportation. These panels offered critical policy insights, community perspectives, and forward-looking strategies that helped illuminate gaps, opportunities, and the urgent need for coordinated solutions. Their

contributions helped anchor the Breakfast Series as a catalyst for meaningful cross-sector dialogue.

The Breakfast Series helped increase awareness of WCAAA's key initiatives, ensuring stakeholders had a clear understanding of regional needs and available resources.

In addition, WCAAA used the Breakfast Series as an opportunity to recognize local Focal Points, presenting awards to partners who demonstrated exceptional commitment to advancing access, equity, and support for older residents in their communities. Their leadership and collaboration continue to enhance the strength of the regional aging network.



Through consistent engagement, shared problem-solving, and open communication, the Regional Leadership Breakfast Series helped strengthen regional alignment, reduce fragmentation, and reinforce WCAAA's role as a trusted convener and advocate. These conversations contributed to a unified regional strategy focused on healthy aging, independence, and improved quality of life.

Reflecting on Our Shared Impact

The Breakfast Series offered a unique advantage to understand the collective impact of aging services across Western Connecticut. Key themes included:

- Regional service highlights and cross-agency accomplishments
- Increased awareness of resource gaps affecting older adults
- Stronger alignment across town, nonprofit, and healthcare sectors
- Enhanced feedback loops with community partners and frontline providers
- Shared commitment to innovation and equitable service delivery

Looking Ahead: FFY 2026 Priorities

The Regional Leadership Breakfast Series also provided an early framework to begin shaping the region's priorities for FFY 2026.

Discussions centered on:

- Identifying emerging needs related to housing and transportation

- Strengthening the safety net for isolated and rural older adults
- Expanding culturally responsive outreach and access for diverse communities
- Increasing collaboration among aging, disability, health, and municipal systems
- Exploring shared data approaches to support planning and transparency

Strengthening Collaboration & Reducing Duplication

The core objective of each session was to foster more efficient coordination across the region. Participants engaged in open dialogue about:

- Areas where services overlap or compete for resources
- Opportunities to streamline or jointly deliver programs
- Ways to create more unified referral pathways
- The potential for regional models, shared staffing, or co-located services
- Collaborative grant opportunities to expand capacity and address unmet needs

2025–2026 Priority Outlook

As WCAA enters FFY 2025–2026, the agency is positioned to advance several high-impact priorities that reflect both the **2025–2028 Area Plan** and WCAA’s internal **Strategic Plan**. These priorities center on strengthening the regional aging network, expanding equitable access to services, and enhancing WCAA’s organizational capacity to meet the growing and increasingly complex needs of older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities across 41 towns.

a. Strengthening Long-Term Services & Supports (LTSS)

WCAA will deepen its work to ensure older adults can age safely and independently in the community of their choice. Key focus areas include:

- Expanding access to supportive services such as transportation, homemaking, chore assistance, and personal emergency response systems.
- Increasing capacity in rural and underserved towns through targeted provider recruitment and flexible contracting strategies.
- Strengthening Service Navigation through the **Aging Answers / No Wrong Door** model, ensuring residents receive timely, coordinated care, regardless of entry point.

These efforts reflect statewide priorities to expand Home- and Community-Based Services and support aging in place.

b. Advancing Healthy Aging & Prevention

In alignment with the Area Plan’s Healthy Aging goals, WCAA will:

- Expand evidence-based wellness programs, including Chronic Disease Self-Management, diabetes and chronic pain workshops, and mental wellness initiatives.

- Integrate data tools and new training models into WCAAA's **Holistic Health & Wellness Model**, improving internal referrals and outcome tracking.
- Address social isolation and behavioral health needs through community engagement strategies, partnerships with local mental health providers, and expanded outreach to rural residents.

Digital inclusion remains a priority, with technology training and support continuing as core strategies for health access and self-management.

c. Strengthening Elder Rights Protection

WCAAA will continue to lead regional efforts to prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation by:

- Expanding legal assistance services, Senior Medicare Patrol outreach, and public education campaigns.
- Increasing staff training on elder justice and enhancing collaboration with protective services, law enforcement, and local MDTs.
- Prioritizing fraud prevention education targeted at isolated, low-income, and limited-English-proficient populations.

These initiatives directly support the Area Plan's Elder Rights goals.

d. Workforce Development & Organizational Culture

Consistent with the Strategic Plan's first internal goal—**promoting WCAAA as an employer of choice**—the agency will focus on:

- Building staff skills through targeted training, certifications, and professional development plans.
- Advancing succession planning for key roles and strengthening cross-departmental collaboration.
- Launching a structured workforce development matrix to evaluate training needs across programs.
- Reinforcing a culture of wellness, recognition, and staff engagement through internal wellness and professional development initiatives.

e. Funding Diversification & Sustainability

With federal and state dollars increasingly constrained, WCAAA will prioritize financial resilience by:

- Expanding philanthropic partnerships and private grants to support social determinants of health (housing, food security, transportation, emergency stabilization).
- Growing the **Lifeline Fund** to support crisis prevention and reduce homelessness among older adults and disabled individuals.

- Strengthening business acumen strategies, including potential partnerships with healthcare systems and insurers to support coordinated care and case management.

This aligns with the strategic goal of diversifying funding streams beyond government contracts.

f. Service Expansion & Community Responsiveness

Demand for services continues to increase, particularly in the following areas identified in the Area Plan:

- Housing insecurity
- Transportation gaps
- Caregiver stress
- Mental and behavioral health concerns
- Dementia-related support needs

WCAAA will respond by:

- Expanding caregiver support services, training, and respite options.
- Supporting regional transportation innovations, including volunteer driver models and town-level dial-a-ride expansion.
- Enhancing dementia-capable services and caregiver navigation.
- Increasing on-site presence in rural communities and at focal points.

g. Technology & Operational Modernization

To support efficiency, transparency, and client-centered services, WCAAA will focus on:

- Enhancing internal data systems to support real-time reporting, cross-program coordination, and program evaluation.
- Implementing the next phases of case management modernization, including Salesforce and other integrated software tools.
- Streamlining administrative processes, including contract monitoring, fiscal reporting, and program evaluation.

This priority directly supports the strategic goal of operational efficiency.

h. Policy Leadership, Advocacy & Regional Collaboration

Building on strong advocacy efforts with AgingCT, USAging, municipal leaders, and state partners, WCAAA will continue to:

- Elevate housing, transportation, caregiver support, digital equity, and elder rights as top legislative priorities.
- Convene regional leaders through events such as the **Regional Leadership Breakfast Series**, advisory groups, and collaborative task forces.

- Ensure local needs inform statewide planning and resource allocation.

Through this work, WCAAA strengthens its role as a trusted convener and regional leader.

Summary

The 2025–2026 priority outlook positions WCAAA to:

- Expand critical services
- Strengthen aging-in-place supports
- Build internal capacity and workforce development
- Modernize systems
- Drive regional collaboration and policy impact
- Respond to emerging needs in housing, transportation, caregiver support, and behavioral health

Together, these priorities ensure WCAAA continues to serve as a **compassionate, innovative, and community-centered leader** supporting the well-being, dignity, and independence of older adults across Western Connecticut.



A YEAR IN PICTURES



Acknowledgments

WCAAA extends its deepest appreciation to the members of the Board of Directors who have generously contributed their time, expertise, and leadership to advancing the Agency's mission. This year, we proudly recognize the following individuals for their dedicated service:

- **Paul Hinckley**, who joined the Board in 2015, is recognized for his many years of committed leadership, including his tenure as Vice President. His guidance and steady presence have been invaluable to the organization.
- **Judy Begley**, former Board President, joined the Board in 2013 and honorably served for 11 years. Her leadership, integrity, and advocacy have left a lasting impact on the Agency's direction and growth.
- **Anne Gioia**, who became a Board member in 2016, served nine years, most recently as Board Secretary. Her thoughtful governance and attention to detail strengthened Board operations and accountability.
- **Daniel Barrett**, who joined the Board in March 2024, quickly emerged as an active and engaged member, contributing energy, insight, and enthusiasm to the Board's work.
- **Tricia Stewart**, who served during 2024, generously shared her expertise during a pivotal year of organizational growth and transition.
- **John Wahlers**, who joined the Board in 2018 and served as Board Treasurer, is recognized for his fiscal leadership, stewardship, and steadfast support of WCAAA's financial integrity.

WCAAA is grateful for the dedication and service of each Board member. Their leadership strengthens our mission and ensures the continued delivery of high-quality programs and support to older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities throughout Western Connecticut.

Former Advisory Council Members

This year, we extend our sincere appreciation to our former Advisory Council members—**Anastasia Timpko, Cathy Conti, Danielle Jackson-Elliott, and Debra Horowitz**, who also served with dedication as the Council's staff liaison. Their insight, commitment, and generous contributions of time have strengthened our work and supported our mission in meaningful ways. We are grateful for their service and the impact they've made on behalf of the older adults and caregivers in our community.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the past year, we're reminded of the strength that comes from community, collaboration, and care. Every milestone we reached was made possible by the people who stand with us — our partners, supporters, staff, and the individuals we serve. Thank you for being part of our story. We look forward to building on this work together in the year ahead.