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Florida Association of Aging Services Providers

Guest Editors:

Andrea Marsh—Bay County Council on Aging
Josh Newby—Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc

Message from the President

By Darrell J. Drummond, Council on Aging of St. Lucie, Inc.



One of the great things about being President of FASP, is the opportunity to see and hear of the many programs our members are providing within their communities to assist the senior population. I was able to read about a new program being provided in Marion County by our own Jennifer Martinez, CEO of Marion County Senior Services, called the Elder Co-Responder Program. I am providing a link to the article from the Ocala Gazette outlining what are the benefits of this program for seniors. Too often, we don't do enough blowing of our own horn, relative to the major benefit of the efforts of our agencies to improve the life of seniors and strengthen the overall health of the communities we serve. Jenny, congratulations to you and your staff for the great work

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This Issue's Sponsors



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that you do in Marion County. [Read the Article by Clicking Here!](#)

Last month, we had an opportunity to discuss with Florida Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), Michelle Branham, the issues most important to our membership when we convened in Tallahassee on the 6th of February. I was tremendously impressed that the Secretary participated, along with her senior staff in a broad ranging discussion on some of the hits and misses regarding our ability to improve upon the services we provide to clients. What was most impressive was the fact that the Secretary was just completing a fourteen (14) month tour of all eleven (11) Planning Service Areas (PSA) to meet with all of Florida's providers and learn about their unique issues and challenges and discuss how DOEA can be of greater assistance in fulfilling our missions. The Secretary even invited members of our organization to participate in DOEA's weekly meetings with their staff to be sure we are a part of the discussions for future programs.



We are on the threshold of this year's State legislative session, scheduled to begin in March. The Governor's budget has suggested a \$2 million increase for Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) funding. As all of us are aware, the CCE program has gone a long way in providing the initial support to seniors around the State providing access to minimal services that allow them to remain independent in their communities and not be forced prematurely into long term care facilities. The value of this program is

enormous and is by far, the most cost effective manner to assist seniors and allow for all of us in the service provider network to identify what is the overall health of our senior population and what we may need to fund as this population continues to increase within the State. As it stands currently, there are more than seventy-eight thousand (78,000) seniors, statewide, on the waitlist for services through this program; \$2 million dollars is far too little to address the current need.

Too often, we have found ourselves asking for support from our state legislature, as though we are somehow, not carrying our own weight in the overall health of our State economy. We need to be more active in sharing the great news of how much seniors provide to the overall economy of Florida, while asking for very little in terms of assistance. Let me rattle off a few statistics: the senior population in Florida for individuals over sixty (60) is upward of six million (6.1 million). There are approximately one thousand (1,000) individuals moving to Florida every day with more than twenty-five (25%) percent of them being seniors. The spending power of Florida's elders is

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\$1.35 billion annually. Seniors contribute \$3 billion to charities and pay over \$1 billion in local school taxes. Each year, seniors expend \$9 billion in out-of-pocket expenses for medical care and pay \$1.4 billion more in state taxes than they receive in social services. Overall, after all services are rendered, Florida's senior community contributes a \$2.8 billion net tax benefit annually.

We need to make sure we are getting the message out of how important the senior population is to the long term economic health of Florida and that what our clients ask for in return is not only reasonable, but very helpful to all Floridians.

Going forward, I feel it is important that we share with all of our elected officials; federal, state and local the reality that "those who don't support seniors, don't deserve the support of seniors."

Darrell Drummond

The Arc Jacksonville Launches New Three-Year Pilot Program For Individuals with Intellectual Differences and their Caregivers

Originally Published by [The Florida Star](#)

December 10, 2022

Jacksonville, Fla. — The Arc Jacksonville today announced the launch of a three-year pilot program to aid individuals with intellectual differences who face the challenges of Alzheimer's disease and dementia on the First Coast, as well as their caregivers. Specialized Aging Support – Dementia Services for People with Intellectual and Developmental Differences has been made possible thanks to a \$996,000 federal grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The new program launches in the spring of 2023 and will provide occupational therapy-based support for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences with or at high risk of Alzheimer's disease-related dementia (ADRD) who live alone or with a caregiver. Program services aim to extend independence through sensory, occupational and other wellness therapies, and provide respite for family and caretakers.

Grant funding will support caregiver training, aid in developing specific intervention methods to help manage dementia symptoms, provide screening for risk factors and offer therapeutic programming and activities for clients. This focus on caregiver education will provide family members with the skills and tools necessary for improved well-being and understanding of care.

[Read Full Article Here](#)





United HomeCare's AVUS Connect Tech Pals™ Designated as a Generations United Program of Distinction

**Generations United Recognizes Twenty
Exemplary Programs Connecting Younger
and Older People**

Washington, DC, December 13, 2022 – Generations United has announced twenty intergenerational programs that have been selected to receive the prestigious Intergenerational Program Certification. These programs are all creatively and effectively engaging younger and older people in activities that strengthen relationships between the generations.

"We congratulate these programs for earning these distinctions and their dedication to high-quality intergenerational practices," **said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United**. "Achieving this recognition is a major accomplishment. The Intergenerational Program Certification is the only U.S. 'seal of approval' for intergenerational programs and the application and review process are rigorous."

Eleven of the selected programs received the **Program of Distinction designation**, which recognizes that the awarded program meets the highest standards of intergenerational effectiveness and provides great confidence in the program's sustainability and capacity to achieve targeted outcomes. These eleven designees join the prestigious ranks of twenty-three [previous Program of Distinction recipients](#) who successfully completed the process of renewal this year.

[AVUS Connect Tech Pals™, Miami, FL](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#)



Medicaid Ending for Millions of Florida Residents



Since March 2020 and the start of the COVID 19 Pandemic, the number of Medicaid recipients in the state of Florida has increased from 3.8 million to 5.5 million, an almost 50% increase.

The Federal government mandated that continuous coverage of Medicaid be offered through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) nationwide.

As of December 2022, new legislation - the Consolidated Appropriations Act, ended the requirement for continuous Medicaid, despite the fact that COVID 19 is still considered a

Public Health Emergency by many.

With this change, the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has found that almost 1.75 million Floridians will potentially lose their Medicaid coverage.

The Continuous Coverage provision will end After March 31st, 2023 and the DCF will follow a process to redetermine Medicaid eligibility for all who are currently enrolled.

State agencies will have up to 12 months to begin reviewing cases to determine who is still eligible after the continuous coverage ends.

First terminations of coverage will be as soon as April 30th, 2023 for those found to be ineligible or who do not complete the renewal process.

Over 900,000 cases of Medicaid recipients have already been identified as ineligible once this change takes effect, and another 850,000 are at risk of losing coverage and have yet to respond to requests for updated information.

DCF has stated that many people who are on Medicaid now have never had to go through the redetermination process for eligibility. The state is developing its communication strategy to notify all Medicaid enrollees about the process and will provide information on other assistance programs that may be available.

While a majority of those affected will be children and parents, this change will also greatly impact low-income aging and/or disabled adults who are receiving Medicaid.

For these vulnerable adults who may be at risk for losing their coverage it is important to take action now.

Individuals can visit the DCF website to update their ACCESS account with the most recent information about their household, income, and status.

[Link to ACCESS Florida](#)

DCF has released their plan for how this redetermination process will occur.

[Florida's Plan for Medicaid Redetermination](#)

AARP Florida Announces New State President

AARP Florida has named longtime volunteer, Ken Thomas, as State President. As the top volunteer position in the AARP Florida state office, the state president works in partnership with the state director and other staff and volunteers to lead AARP's advocacy and programmatic work in the state.

AARP Florida State Director Jeff Johnson said, "On behalf of 2.8 million members across Florida, we are delighted to welcome back Ken Thomas as our state president and a leading voice for Floridians 50+. Ken's experience and commitment to improving the lives of all Floridians will be important to our state. He has an incredibly strong track record of leadership and service, and I'm confident he will excel once again in this role."



[**READ FULL ARTICLE HERE**](#)

Rural Seniors Benefit From Pandemic-Driven Remote Fitness Boom

By [Christina Saint Louis](#)

January 17, 2023

MALMO, Minn. — Eight women, all 73 or older, paced the fellowship hall at Malmo Evangelical Free Church to a rendition of Daniel O'Donnell's "Rivers of Babylon" as they warmed up for an hourlong fitness class.

The women, who live near or on the eastern shore of Mille Lacs Lake, had a variety of reasons for showing up despite fresh snow and slippery roads. One came to reduce the effects of osteoporosis; another, to maintain mobility after a stroke.

Most brought hand and ankle weights, which they would use in a later portion of the program focused on preventing falls, known as Stay Active and Independent for Life, or SAIL. The class meets twice a week in Malmo, a township of about 300 residents. It is run by Juniper, a statewide network of providers of health promotion classes.



[**READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE**](#)

Visiting Someone with Dementia

By Andrea Marsh, Bay County Council on Aging

For caregivers and family members who have a loved one in their family that has Alzheimer's disease, dementia or some type of memory disorder, the daily challenges can be countless. Simple tasks can seem monumental and the constant 24 hours a day, 7 days a week care can be difficult on the best of days and, more likely, overwhelming most days.

Friends and family who visit are often not aware of the constant challenges a caregiver faces and how the behavior of someone with a memory disorder, as well as their routines, can be challenging. Working in conjunction with routines can prepare a caregiver for visits with family and friends so the visits are pleasant and enjoyable versus tense and stressful.

Caregivers should consider limiting the number of visitors to one or two visitors at a time which is less overwhelming than a large group of people. Plan for a calm environment without distractions such as loud music or the television continuously blaring in the background. Whenever possible, schedule the visits. Try not to have visits interrupt daily routines such as naps, meals, a frequently watched television show, or a favorite activity.



If your family or friends have not visited with your loved one for a period of time, let them know of changes prior to the visit. This allows them to be prepared for the visit and avoids any "surprises" from changes in behavior, physical appearance, and decline in your loved one's cognitive ability.

It is also helpful if visitors know to speak to your loved one directly, remind them who they are, and have them use touch to show that they care. Talk about things in the past. Long term memory can be recalled even if your loved one cannot remember a recent conversation. Remember that their memories are theirs. Don't correct them if they remember differently from you.

Silence can be okay. The presence of someone else can be comforting even if every minute is not filled with conversation. Open ended questions provide for no right or wrong answers. Visitors should speak directly to your loved one and have a conversation as they would with any other individual. Your loved one should be included in conversations and not ignored and treated as if they were not even in the room. Being patient is important, allowing your loved one to process questions and answer in their time, as they are comfortable.

Be patient with repetition. Your loved one cannot help it. They are not aware that they are repeating things. Don't be condescending or speak to them as if they were children. They are adults who are just in an unexpected and unplanned phase of their life. Let them answer questions when asked and don't make assumptions on what they may or may not want.

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Being a caregiver is the hardest job anyone could have. And, caring for someone with dementia, whether it be a spouse, parent, sibling, or any loved one is the hardest of all. Every minute of the day is a challenge. Planning can help alleviate some of the burden when family or friends want to visit. Be honest with them about the situation and if things have changed since their last visit. Putting things in place for the visit can help make it enjoyable for both your loved one and you.

Staying Hopeful

By Andrea Marsh, Bay County Council on Aging

Making New Year's resolutions...does this sound familiar? We often see the start of the year as an opportunity to make a fresh start of things - eat healthier, exercise more, get to some of the things on your "To Do" list, finish some of the projects that you've started. Again, sound familiar?

While choosing the first of the year to make a fresh start with things in your life certainly has merit, one should not overlook that any time can be the right time for change and a fresh start, as well as hope for accomplishments in the future.

Believe in fresh starts. Make this a reality for yourself by adopting a fresh-start mindset. Letting go of past resentments can be a path to a fresh start.

Choose a healthy lifestyle. This should be an ongoing choice and attitude toward life. Finding balance and making decisions that you just know are good for you can make a world of difference in not only your physical health but also your mental well-being. A healthy lifestyle does not mean spending hours at the gym or only eating certain foods. Find what is realistic and will work best for you.



Forgive yourself. No one is perfect. We all make mistakes, many of which are not even that profound. Let things go and move on. You can't change the past so forgive yourself in place of giving yourself grief over a mistake.

Apologize. Is there someone to whom you owe an apology? While admitting you were wrong can sometimes be difficult, living with the regret or guilt is harder. All it takes is a simple "I'm sorry."

Set goals. They can be short or long term. Is there something you would like to start doing on a daily or weekly basis? Maybe there is a place you would like to visit in the next year or two. Set goals to guide you. Ensure they are realistic and attainable, so you are not setting yourself up for disappointment. You can always break them into smaller goals so they are more manageable. Because they are *your* goals, there is nothing stopping you from reevaluating and resetting them at any point.

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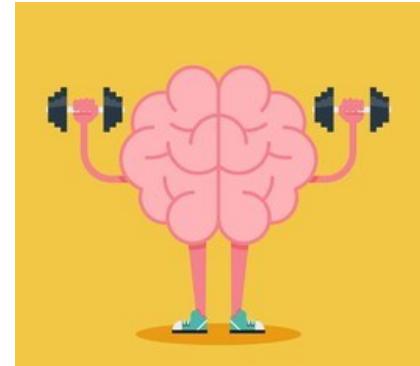
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Have a purpose. Everyone needs a reason to get up in the morning. What do raising a family, going to work, caring for a loved one, visiting friends, and volunteering have in common? They all provide a purpose for individuals. Doing good in this world and helping others provides intrinsic rewards which cannot be measured by any dollar amount. Find your purpose.

Keep your mind active. Engaging in challenging activities, whether it be playing a sport, reading, or completing word puzzles or games stimulates your mind and keeps your brain active.

Have a hobby. Activities such as sports, cooking, gardening, knitting, sewing, and traveling will keep you engaged, and will also keep your brain active. Pursue your passion and do things that you enjoy.

Try new things, no matter what your age. Learning new things is good for all ages. Who doesn't like to try something new? Take advantage of new opportunities and embrace the adventure!



Be social. Getting together with family, friends, coworkers, clubs, or groups provides an opportunity to socialize and enjoy fellowship, all of which are beneficial for your mental well-being.

Enjoy quiet time. Allowing time for regular reflection or meditation can reduce stress and increase self-awareness. Take a deep breath and just enjoy the moment!

There is no magic recipe for hopefulness or happiness. Your choices can guide you to happiness. They are your choices to make and to adjust and change as you choose. The only one stopping you is you.



Ain't Too Proud to Beg

By: Josh Newby, Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc.

As is probably well-known to you, on June 2, 2022, Gov. DeSantis signed the Freedom First budget for state fiscal year 22-23, which supposedly provided more than \$600 million to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to increase minimum wage for Medicaid providers to \$15. I along with many others celebrated the move as both a solution for the inflationary pressures we were under and an acknowledgement that these individuals were worth so much more than they were currently being paid.

As a result, all Medicaid providers were required to sign a supplemental wage agreement by Oct. 1, 2022, for increases to go into effect Jan. 1, 2023. The thought was that the \$600 million would trickle down from AHCA to the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and then finally down to us, the humble provider. Well, being the good Medicaid-providing rule-follower that we are, we increased our employees' minimum wages to \$15 under the assumption that we would see increased rates from those we were in contract with, as outlined in AHCA's Florida Medicaid Provider Minimum Wage Requirements:



“The Agency shall enter into a supplemental wage agreement with all managed care plans to ensure these funds are used to raise the wages of direct care employees under contract with the managed care plan. The managed care plan shall provide attestation to the Agency that they have amended each provider’s contract reimbursement rate to comply with this provision by January 1, 2023.”

Many other similar agencies and providers did the same. Many, like us, do not have generous bottom lines or ample revenue streams to be able to front such a cost. But we did the right thing.

I probably don't have to tell you this, but after nearly a full fiscal quarter, we have yet to receive increased rates and we have yet to receive any clarity from the MCOs or AHCA. Our local legislative delegation is aware and are doing what they can. We, like you, have been told that not enough money was appropriated to AHCA, or that the bottle-neck is occurring at the MCO level, or that some of the money is trickling down, but bureaucracy is causing a delay to full expansion.

It is understandable that delays happen. It's a big statewide network and \$600 million is a lot of money. But let me tell you what has not been delayed. Our compliance with the order was not delayed. Our employees' appreciation of the higher wages was not delayed. The deficit we are currently running—the bag we are left holding—was not delayed. And most important, the services those minimum wage employees provide to our frail elders has not skipped a beat.

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That these kinks weren't worked out ahead of time is disappointing, because I know the people in Tallahassee and at these statewide agencies are good, caring and competent. They want what's best for seniors just like we all do. They are not purposely delaying funds. Somewhere along the line, the byzantine system got in the way and is creating a kind of bureaucratic nightmare.

The state of Florida does a lot of good for seniors. They are prioritized in a lot of ways and in some cases, we are the envy of the nation when it comes to care delivery. Gov. DeSantis has in many regards put seniors first, as was his campaign promise, and the minimum wage hike was evidence of that. There are good, competent, caring people in these statewide agencies, and I know none of them are purposely delaying funds. And perhaps by time you read this, the information will be outdated, and we'll all be enjoying our increased rates and decreased budget deficits.

So, what is the solution? If your agency is also asking that question, I'm sorry, but I have no answer. The National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA) has even taken to starting a change.org petition. In a letter to Gov. DeSantis, NADSA supported rate increase efforts while the Florida Adult Day Services Association (FADSA) plans a visit to Tallahassee in the upcoming weeks.

Adult Day Services play a critical role in the home and community-based services offered by Medicaid to Floridians at risk of nursing home placement through the state. FADSA forecasts a widespread loss of day programs if state legislators and the Governor's office don't act quickly. The effects of the \$15 minimum (which by the way is more than a 70 percent increase over 2021 wages) wage for direct care workers, increased cost of living, and increased cost of goods and PPE because of the pandemic can lead to the perfect storm of state-wide closures because programs cannot sustain the cost of care on decade-old reimbursement rates.

The buck must stop somewhere, and I'll be damned if it stops at a vulnerable elder's front steps. I'd rather it stops with us. AHCA can figure out distribution of funds and the MCOs can work on updating their contracts, however long that may take. But we will still be out there with the people we all got into this business to serve. We'll take the hit, as long as they don't.

But please, Gov. DeSantis, AHCA, Humana, Sunshine, Florida Community Care, whomever—please do something or tell us what to do.



AARP Community Challenge Grant

By: *Emily Echevarria, Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc.*

In February 2022, northwest Florida was already experiencing the woes of a housing shortage. For Council on Aging of West Florida, that translated to calls and emails from seniors or caregivers of elderly relatives that were seeking resources or information regarding affordable housing for seniors. Housing is not directly under the purview of the agency, and staff could only direct callers to the local housing authority or other informational entities, knowing that public housing options for seniors are slim and have a continual and lengthy waitlist.

While providing housing or housing resources is not included in the mission of the agency – dedicating each day to serve, support, and advocate for seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties – advocacy is. Like many nonprofits, Council on Aging participates in grant proposals to achieve financial awards for projects that align with its mission and expand its reach into the community. In looking for an impactful project for a 2022 AARP Community Challenge Grant, housing jumped out as a pressing need. As rent and housing prices increase along with the cost of groceries and other consumer goods with rising inflation, many older adults live on an unchanged fixed income like Social Security benefits, usually averaging around \$900 to \$1,000 per month for a single person. The population of homeless seniors is growing, and there are projected to be 95,000 elders living in America without stable housing by 2050, according to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.

After submitting our proposal, Council on Aging was awarded an AARP Community Challenge grant for \$50,000 to fund a tiny home development project. The project was one of 260 awards out of 3,200 applications for quick action livability projects that align with community age-friendly efforts.

The collaborative project plan was to develop two 128-square-foot tiny home units with one to be given to a Council on Aging client and the second to serve as a demonstration home that could be toured by community leaders and residents interested in pioneering affordable housing options. The project's aim was to foster conversations about solutions to the challenges of housing instability and homelessness among elders in the Pensacola community.



The tiny homes are the customizable Incred-I-Box model, manufactured by Tennessee-based company Incredible Tiny Homes. At 8-feet wide and 16-feet long, the units definitely fit the descriptor of tiny, while also containing the basic needs of any home: bathroom with shower, an aesthetically pleasing woodblock kitchen counter and sink, and space for small appliances and a futon or daybed that would serve as both a bed and sitting area.

"We hope this investment spurs interest in tiny homes as a viable option for affordable housing for vulnerable seniors and others in our community," says Josh Newby, president/CEO of Council on Aging. "This could also be a great option for a tiny home park or village, or for caregivers who may be interested in units like these

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as an accessory dwelling unit where an elderly loved one can live with independence and support nearby.”

Coming in at \$20,000 each, the units are a blank slate and are on trailers. Because of the way they’re manufactured and the fact that they are on a trailer and can be moved, the Incred-I-Box units are categorized as RVs, which prohibits their use as an ADU by some local ordinances. With \$10,000 remaining, we set out to transport and furnish the two homes, as well as identify local seniors to live in them.

Finding appropriate candidates to live in the tiny homes proved to be a challenge—the first of many—with most case-managed clients being a poor fit due to having pets or mobility issues that would make the small space unsafe or limiting. Several senior volunteers visited the homes and while they loved the idea, they found the space just too small. When a congregate dining site participant mentioned to the site manager that she was living in her vehicle, the site manager took her information and passed it on. This participant was overjoyed at the prospect of a home of her own.

Pensacola Habitat offered to be a partner and house the units in their gated lot and assist with some of the many tasks that needed to be completed to get the homes ready. The Pensacola State College carpentry program instructor agreed to have students

build stairs for each unit as a class project. Press coverage for the project brought journalists to Habitat to tour the empty homes and see the progress as a volunteer painted the interior. Each article was an opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by seniors on fixed incomes in our community and throughout the state, and the need for changes to county land use codes that would mirror the more flexible ordinances in the city.

Behind the scenes, agency spokespeople participated in the newly-elected Mayor’s transition team for attainable housing focus area meetings and spoke at the City’s ad hoc affordable housing committee, making recommendations to the County’s planning and zoning board. Rick Dye, a partner on the project, towed an Incred-I-Box to City Hall after a last-minute invitation to a town hall with the City’s housing department, and attendees were able to see the home and ask questions about the project following the meeting.

In mid-December, a case manager at Council on Aging was working with a client, Beverly Monroe, living in terrible conditions in a trailer that was open to the elements and infested with roaches and rats.



Tiny home at City Hall—City of Pensacola

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She was being evicted and had nowhere to go. The plan for the grant project was altered and staff moved quickly to get the second unit ready and acquire appropriate appliances and furniture as a lot was identified in a mobile home and RV park just six miles from Pensacola Habitat.

After surmounting the challenges of hooking up water and sewage lines, installing appliances, assembling furniture, putting up shelves, and outfitting the space with small necessities like dish towels and a shower rod and curtain, Beverly received the title to her new home and moved into the unit. On a brisk Friday morning local news visited the home and later that day shared her story with the Gulf Coast community.

The next step was securing a lot for the other unit, which initially was planned to be in the same park as Beverly's, but the second lot was no longer available. Luckily, after several weeks of searching, a lot in a park just down the street was identified and the process to complete and move the second unit is currently in motion.

The immense effort required to prepare two new tiny home units and navigate the red tape of placing them to house these two seniors is but a microcosm of the wider struggle to provide adequate and affordable housing for a growing elder population. Council on Aging continues to advocate for a county land use ordinance that mirrors the more flexible City codes, which would allow for a greater variety of housing solutions in the county. Another ideal outcome would be an organization that deals directly with housing efforts taking this project idea to the next level, creating a village or park with Incred-I-Box units specifically for seniors at an affordable rental rate. While the housing of two seniors in need has been undoubtedly a success, the wider goal of the project is to produce a meaningful change to both local ordinances and to the mindset of civic leaders that will have an ongoing impact on the state of housing in this community.

Other communities interested in a similar project should get familiar with local ordinances regarding tiny homes and/or the specific type of unit and its category (in the case of the Incred-I-Box, laws regarding RVs). Seek out partners that are knowledgeable about the nuances of local housing laws and issues, either from local city or county leadership, housing nonprofits, or homeless assistance programs—preferably from each of these sectors. Create specific advocacy goals and use media attention to express those goals. With housing top of mind in so many communities across the state, similar projects are poised to generate significant interest and with successful execution, long term progress in stable housing options for older adults in Florida.



Beverly Monroe at home

Power Up Your Congregate Meal Program: A Welcoming Environment



ACL's Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Programs (ONHPP) and the National Council on Aging presented its third webinar in a series on Powering Up Congregate Meal Programs. This webinar was focused on ways to create a welcoming environment for senior centers so that more people, especially men, will be encouraged to attend. Research conducted by Meals on Wheels in Southwest OH & Northern KY shows that since 2013 men participating in

CMPs in Southwest OH fell from 48% to 27%. Research shows that males are not as likely to be aware of senior centers and that females are significantly more likely to attend a meal program than males. The idea of going out to a new place with people you may not know can be difficult for many, especially men. Men are much more likely to turn inwards when going through struggles or difficult times. If they do not have a spouse or friends to turn to with their concerns, they may not know who else to reach out to for help when they need it. Research shows that women are more likely to rely on friends or children when they have concerns or worries. For all the men and women who participated in this research, the most important attribute that they considered for any meal program is a welcoming environment.

Panelists for this webinar included Peaches Hall with Doris Griffin Senior Center in San Antonio, TX, Bob Gurecki, Food Service Coordinator at Sage Edie Windsor Center in New York, NY, and Michael Beck, Chief Production Officer with Meals on Wheels Southwest OH & Northern KY in Cincinnati, OH. Many wonderful ideas were shared that they are implementing and as a result having great success with all their meal programs. Staying open all day, creating bright, clean, open spaces, meeting people where they are—both physically and emotionally, are all some of the wonderful ideas shared. Overall the recommendation is to do a lot of outreach, and listening to men in the community and also those within their current programs. Take the time to speak to them and learn about what they want and then adapt programs to be more enticing and this will help create a more welcoming environment and encourage more men to attend.

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

(Will need to register with NCOA to view recording)

More Support for Caregivers Outlined in New National Strategy



2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

Home caregivers provide essential care for millions of older adults and people with disabilities in this country. Family caregivers are often not trained for medical care and must take on this role to assist a person they care about and prevent them from having to leave their homes to enter nursing homes or other facilities. At any given time more than one in five Americans are serving as a family caregiver and it is these caregivers that provide most long-term care in the United States. Home caregivers lose out on billions of dollars in wages each year because of the time they must commit to caregiving, inevitably paying for many caregiving related expenses on their own as well. Caregiving responsibilities cause enormous financial, physical, and mental strain on everyday Americans who are caring for their loved ones at home enabling them to live more independently and maintain a better quality of life.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) in a joint effort with the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act and the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) Act, developed a new caregiver strategy at the end of 2022 to help create a better roadmap towards more effective support for family caregivers. The strategy includes policy initiatives and new investments in making affordable, quality childcare more available to working families as well as expanding access to home and community-based services.

There are three main components to the ACL's new strategy.

- Federal Actions - The strategy includes 345 "Federal Actions" submitted by 15 federal agencies that are aimed at increasing awareness, support, outreach, and financial security for family caregivers.



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- Actions for States, Communities, and Others - The strategy will integrate ideas from local and state agencies and non-profit organizations with recommendations from the federal government in a combined initiative to support caregivers for the first time.
- Identification of 4 new considerations that must be addressed to achieve success in the support of family caregivers. Including: Person- and Family-Centered Approaches, Trauma and its Impact, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, and the Direct Care Workforce.

To read more about ACL's new caregiver strategy please click here:

[The 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.](#)



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