



MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

2026 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Senior Meals

One in two older adults is at risk for malnutrition. In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature provided a small amount of new base funding for home-delivered and congregate meal programs (\$250K in SFY 26), but nowhere near the \$11 million per biennium that is required to significantly address the needs of older Minnesotans from lower-income and rural communities. This was the first increase to the program's base funding since its establishment in the 1990s.

Senior meal programs are the foundation of any state's home and community-based system of services. They are essential to the health and well-being of older adults and support their ability to live at home. These programs provide nutritious food and human connection to older adults and serve as a vital solution to the escalating issues of senior hunger and isolation.

m4a supports:

- Increasing base biennial funding for the Minnesota Senior Nutrition Program by \$11M.
- Utilizing administrative funding at 10% to develop innovative models, increase program efficiencies and ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Transportation and Senior Support Services

According to AARP, older adults on average give up driving at age 75. This places them at risk of isolation and of not receiving needed health care. m4a advocates for establishment of a Supportive Services Program for older adults in greatest social and economic need to align with the targeting criteria of the federal Older Americans Act. Initial priorities for this new program are funding for transportation and homemaker services. These services, along with senior meals, are the foundational supports that are essential to older adults' ability to live in their home or apartment as they face the common physical and cognitive challenges of aging.

m4a supports:

- Creating a Senior Support Services Program of the Minnesota Board on Aging and providing a \$4M biennial appropriation with 50% of funds dedicated to assisted transportation.
- Allocating new funds to local service provider organizations via AAAs using the MBA's established Intrastate Funding Formula and administrative infrastructure.

- Utilizing administrative funding at 10% to develop efficient models, coordinate with other state funded programs, and ensure accurate and timely reporting of utilization and program expenditures.

Minnesota Aging Pathways

The Minnesota Board on Aging partners with the regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to deliver the Minnesota Aging Pathways service. AAAs provide information and assistance, resource coordination and education to older adults to help them make informed choices about services, housing options, Medicare and related health insurance products. Area Agencies on Aging deliver MAP services through local call centers, teams of social workers who make home visits and outreach workers and volunteers who deliver educational sessions in the community.

Older adults and their family caregivers across the country struggle to navigate the complex array of public and private programs that help older adults live healthy and secure lives at home. Medicare is a complex health benefit, and enrollees face critical choices every year during the Annual Enrollment Period about coverage options for medical care and prescription drugs.

In 2024 and 2025, Area Agencies on Aging were unable to meet the information needs of older adults who tried to reach the MAP program. Thousands of calls and requests for assistance went unanswered.

m4a supports:

- Expanding the staffing capacity of Minnesota Aging Pathways through legislative appropriation to meet the needs of older adults and family caregivers for information, Medicare guidance and resource coordination.

Support for Other Proposals

Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging also support:

1. Revisions to Sec 10.65 - Tribal consultations: Adding the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) to the list of state agencies authorized to conduct govt-to-govt consultations with Tribal Nations. This is essential due to the MBA's responsibility for administering the Older Americans Act (OAA) funding in partnership with the MN Indian Area Agency on Aging (MIAAA).
2. Proposals to develop and sustain services that family caregivers desire and will use to help them remain in their caregiving roles by reducing stress and burden.
3. Proposals that expand access and availability of affordable services and housing options to enable older adults to live healthy and secure lives at home
4. Proposals that prevent frequent emergency department visits and hospitalization of older adults.
5. Proposals that protect the rights of older adults support their decision-making and reduce the likelihood that they will fall victim to fraud and scams.