



NORTHEAST IOWA
**Area Agency
on Aging**



2022



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Our Mission

NEIBA helps older persons respond to their evolving needs and choices.

Our Vision

Older persons have access to supports that empower them to live with choice and dignity in their communities.

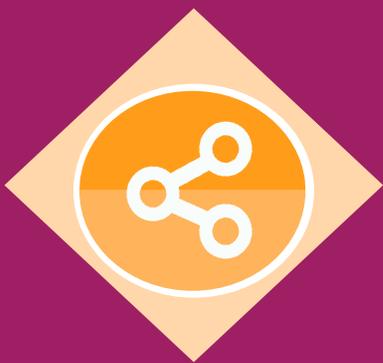


Responding to the evolving needs of older adults

America's population is maturing, causing a shift in the aging demographics of our state. By 2030, 73 million - or one in five - people in America will be 65 or older. Over the past decade, the overall population growth in Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging's (NEI3A) service area remained relatively flat while the 60+ population grew by almost 10%. In the 18 counties NEI3A serves, 50% of individuals 60 or older live in rural settings. In fiscal year 2022, NEI3A served 3,840 individuals living alone and 1,841 individuals in poverty.

This population growth and dynamics of the service area represent a tremendous opportunity to innovate and create new ways to address the needs of the expanding number of older adults. However, NEI3A has also faced challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the stakes putting older individuals in harm's way - not just from the virus but also from lack of proper nutrition, social isolation, elder abuse, scammers, and loss of independence.

That is why our mission is more critical than ever, driven, as always, by what older individuals need and providing innovative options to empower them to live with dignity in their communities and the setting of their choice.



Connecting
you to services
to remain
independent



Providing
caregiver
support



Promoting
active aging
with health
based programs



Enhancing
health with
nutrition
services

Reflections on 2021 - 2022



Mike Donohue
CEO



Pat Murray
Board President

2022 was an extraordinary year. Still in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, but now feeling hopeful with the roll-out of vaccines and boosters to help keep the most vulnerable population safe. The staff has shown incredible resilience throughout these uncertain and ever-changing times, and this year proved no different.

As the fiscal year began, we went from warning about staying socially distant to deepened concerns about social isolation and mental health. People were showing signs of pandemic fatigue and the adverse effects of social isolation. Many of our consumers expressed they were ready to be out socializing with their friends and in their communities. As we began the fiscal year, we started opening our centers and offering in-person Tai Chi classes and caregiver support groups thoughtfully and pragmatically. The success of the Iowa Café program is a testament to the desire of our consumers to socialize. The agency, partnering with local restaurants, has grown to 13 locations throughout our service area. While there were some bumps along the road with new COVID-19 variants emerging, we continued to work closely with state and local health departments to ensure we were following safety guidelines to ensure the safety of our seniors, staff, volunteers, and communities.

Along with resuming in-person programming, the staff also resumed vital home visits. While the team performed calls throughout the pandemic, visiting our consumers in person proved to reinforce the negative toll that the pandemic and being socially isolated has had on our most frail population and how essential our services are to help them remain independent.

The agency launched a statewide Dementia Friendly Iowa initiative, combining Dementia Friendly Communities and Dementia Friends under one umbrella program. This program was a combined effort supported by NEI3A, the Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the Iowa Geriatric Education Center. The program aims to promote change and educate communities across the state to create a more informed, safe, and respectful place for people living with dementia and their caregivers. The program has exceeded expectations within the first year. Champions have been trained across the state and have embraced their role of educating Dementia Friends across the state. The program gained quick recognition thanks to Kevin Dill, a strong advocate who has made it his mission to tell his story of living with Lewy Body Dementia. Through this first year, Maquoketa and Vinton have joined the Cedar Valley as Dementia Friendly Communities with others in the planning process.

Our two national resource centers – SHIP National Technical Resource Center (SHIP TA Center) and the Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center (SMP National Resource Center) - continue to provide their expertise to help projects across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As the pandemic continued, so did the opportunities for criminals to prey on older individuals. Both centers increased their outreach, launching commercials and public outreach efforts through social media and participating in multiple national presentations. The SMP National Resource Center developed and launched the inaugural Medicare Fraud Prevention Week, which ran from June 5 through June 11. The SHIP National TA Center launched a new video featuring how SHIPs navigate the maze of Medicare. Both centers collaborated on a two-day, six-hour National Check Your Blind Spot Symposium on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As the agency continued to navigate through the efforts of reopening, the strategic planning team was hard at work fine-tuning goals for the agency as a focus moving forward. The team set up a three-year plan launched at the beginning of the calendar year. The staff embraced the process and hit the ground running, with many priority initiatives showing considerable progress by the end of the fiscal year. One of the first priorities was the development of an employee newsletter, and the staff feedback has been incredibly positive.

Looking back over this past fiscal year, we cannot be prouder of the flexibility of our staff and volunteers for being able to adapt quickly to the constant changes that have occurred and are still occurring due to the pandemic and funding limitations. We are also thankful to the board of directors for the guidance and input they bring back from their communities throughout Northeast Iowa.

Looking forward, we will continue to serve your communities by offering older individuals the services they need to remain independent – adapting to the ever-changing needs of those we serve.

- Mike Donohue, CEO

- Pat Murray, Board President

2022 NEISA Board of Directors

- ◆ Les Askelson, *Winneshiek*
- ◆ Kathy Babcock, *Chickasaw*
- ◆ Jacob Bates, *Black Hawk*
- ◆ Dan Byrnes, *Allamakee*
- ◆ Sally Davies, *Jackson*
- ◆ Diana Dawley, *Poweshiek*
- ◆ Elaine Eshbaugh, *Black Hawk*
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- ◆ Jean Maddux, *Black Hawk*
- ◆ Patrick Murray, *Howard*
- ◆ Greg Orwoll, *Dubuque*
- ◆ Connie Perry, *Hardin*
- ◆ Chelsea Petersen, *Bremer*
- ◆ Valerie Schwager, *Black Hawk*
- ◆ Katie Thornton-Lang, *Grundy*
- ◆ Shannon Zoffka, *Tama*

◆ Answering the Call

-assisting with navigating available services.

Most of the aging population prefers to continue living in their homes for as long as possible. According to the AARP, nearly 90 percent of adults over 65 want to remain in their current homes as they grow older.

Older adults who choose to age in place may find that they need supports in place, but do not know where to go for this information. At NEI3A our Information and Assistance specialists and Options Counselors have the knowledge necessary to develop long-term care plans and improve the quality of life for older adults.

Lifelong Links, through Iowa's Aging and Disability Resource Center, provides a single point-of-entry resource for anyone seeking information regarding assistance for older persons, persons with disabilities, veterans, and caregivers. In fiscal year 2022, NEI3A assisted 3,967 individuals by connecting them to vital resources and community programs to help them remain independent. Call topics include needing home-delivered meals, transportation, legal assistance, and benefits screening to determine eligibility for programs that assist with medical costs. Often the I&A specialist may refer to a NEI3A Options Counselor to assist with more complex issues to provide additional advocacy and service coordination.

New this past year is an updated Lifelong Links website with a searchable database. Consumers can search by county and the services they seek to gain a list of available agencies and providers. Another improvement with this updated Lifelong Links site is a live chat feature available during regular business hours. The chat feature is another way to connect with a specialist at NEI3A to provide valuable and desired information.





Supporting Caregivers *through the caregiver journey*

2022 CAREGIVER UNITS

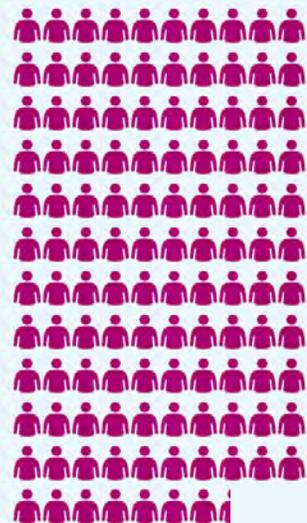
514 
Counseling

917 
Information & Assistance

725 
Case Management

357 
Options Counseling

11,740
Respite



◆ **Family Caregivers** *provide critical care for older adults*

Caregivers play a critical role and are the backbone of support in assisting older adults and people with disabilities to age well in their homes and communities. Caregivers face a multitude of challenges and NEI3A strives to build their support network to carry out their obligations of keeping adults safe and secure. Family Caregivers encompass more than 1 in 5 Americans. The value of unpaid caregiving exceeds 470 billion dollars each year. NEI3A recognizes family caregivers as invaluable.

NEI3A's caregiver program provides information, assistance, and referral services, informative options for care and programs, case management, counseling, support groups, education and training, and funding for respite and other supplemental supports.

Last year NEI3A's caregiver specialist provided 612 caregivers with 917 units of information, assistance, and referral assistance and provided counseling, options counseling, training, and support groups to 211 caregivers. Additionally, case management for ongoing advocacy and care planning was provided to family caregivers, which included funding for 11,740 hours of respite services to reduce stress and burnout.

As social isolation remains a top concern among the populations we serve, including caregivers, due to their demanding roles, we use innovative measures for intervention. Our continued partnership with GrandPads allows Caregivers and their loved ones without internet service to connect and remain engaged with family and friends. The easy-to-use and secure tablet does not require internet service while allowing the use of many features such as video calls, email, sharing photos, music, games, and current event articles. In addition, our caregivers can join a weekly virtual support group facilitated by NEI3A using their Grandpad.



”*When my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s dementia, I had no idea where to turn. I was scared I would not be able to care for him appropriately and was worried and fearful for what we would face in the future with this disease. Thankfully I was referred to call NEI3A and was connected to a caring case manager that provided helpful information and guided us in the appropriate paperwork to start planning for needed supports. NEI3A is a wonderful resource available in our small communities. I am grateful for the knowledge and patience provided to us and encourage others to reach out because you are not alone!”*

-NEI3A Family Caregiver Program recipient

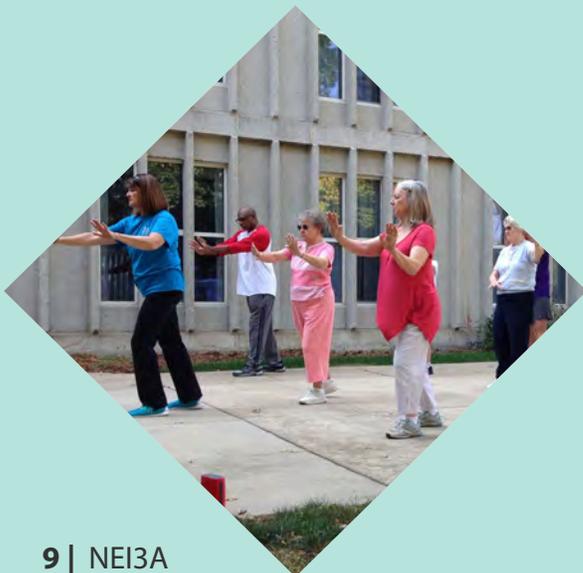


Promoting Active Aging *with health based programs.*

The COVID-19 pandemic created some challenges NEI3A hadn't faced before. Learning to navigate virtual programming to provide evidence based and non-evidence-based health programs took time, but our volunteers and staff remained determined. Even though our sites are now mostly "open", and we can gather again, the virtual programming we offer allows us to reach consumers who find transportation difficult or still feel more comfortable participating from their homes. It also allows us to reach more consumers in our geographically diverse service area.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention remains our most popular program and thanks to a two-day instructor training, we are happy to report that we have a dozen instructors, both staff and volunteers, trained and ready to help seniors move more. We look forward to providing this opportunity to many more consumers.

Our weekly exercise program Seniors in Motion has also resumed in many locations. This physical activity program encourages movement by using resistance bands, weights, chairs and small rubber balls to provide a 45-minute full body strength and cardiovascular workout.



Enhancing Health *with nutrition services*

The COVID-19 pandemic pressed NEI3A into changes that became opportunities to form new partnerships, offer more variety within our nutrition services, and become more responsive to the needs and wants of older adults. During the last fiscal year, our nutrition program expanded to partner with 16 different meal providers offering hot daily meals, prepared refrigerated meals, frozen meal boxes, and restaurant meals.

Consumers overwhelmingly responded to the opportunity to dine locally at Iowa Cafes. Choice and flexibility are primarily the reason why consumers first choose our Iowa Café program, but after participating, we heard that getting out and seeing others was the reason they continued to use it. We have partnerships with 13 Iowa Cafes in ten counties and have distributed more than 3,000 Iowa Café keycards.

One challenge with this innovative program is offering nutrition education in a group setting. Consumers choose to eat a variety of times and days, not gathering as a large group. Our staff took this opportunity to learn and use technology to get education and resources to consumers, offering virtual programs and making short videos to send via emails and text messages.

By contracting with a meal preparation provider that can deliver to virtually any address in our 18 counties, we can finally meet the food insecurity needs in rural areas. In the past, we could only offer these consumers limited assistance, and the consumer was left attempting to weave a complicated web of friends and family to help them with meals. This partnership allows us to provide home-delivered and nutritious meals at a reasonable cost.



3,000

Iowa Cafe keycards distributed

25,795

Iowa Cafe meals consumed



◆ Empowering individuals to live with choice and dignity

Person Centered Funding

NEI3A's Person Centered Funding is a comprehensive care management program where Aging Specialists work with individuals and their families to assess their specific needs, develop a care plan to address those needs, and identify resources and funding to implement their care plan. Services funded through this program include case management, chore, homemaker, home modifications and repairs, lifeline, personal care assistance, and transportation. NEI3A assisted 563 people last year with these services.

Iowa Return To Community (IRTC)

IRTC is a specialized program designed to help older individuals make a smooth transition home from a hospital or care facility and reduce readmissions. NEI3A currently has a partnership with Unity Point hospitals and clinics in Waterloo, Marshalltown, and Grundy Center, with plans to expand with other healthcare systems.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness (EAPA)

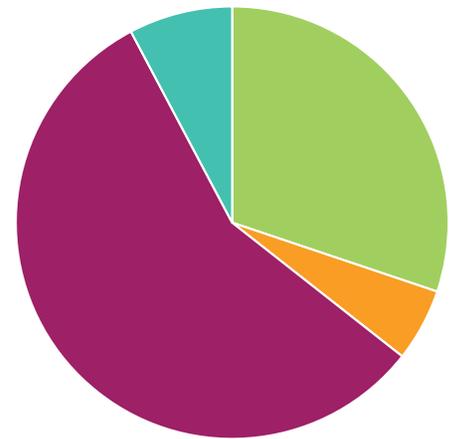
Elder abuse is one of the most significant, under-reported, and under-recognized social problems in our country. Every year 1 in 10 older Americans experience some form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Elder abuse can take many forms, such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and financial exploitation. Sadly, victims of abuse are at increased risk for health problems, hospitalizations, nursing home placements, and premature death.

The EAPA Program provides services to adults aged 60 and older who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Elder Rights Specialists meet with individuals to identify risks, or potential risks, develop intervention and safety plans, and coordinate services to reduce or eliminate those risks. Last fiscal year NEI3A provided EAPA services to 90 older adults, a 24% increase from the previous fiscal year.

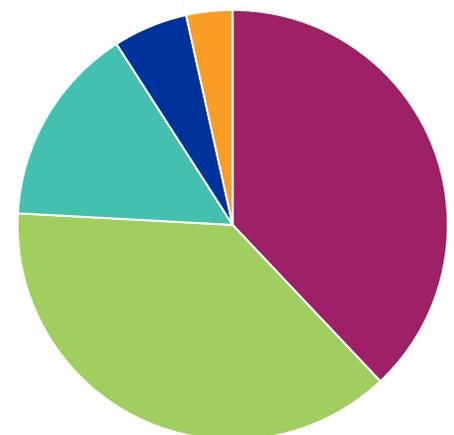
Raising awareness about elder abuse in our communities is one of the key goals of the EAPA program. Last year, the EAPA team reached over 9,000 individuals through training and education to law enforcement, healthcare providers, social workers, community groups, and health fairs.

Older Worker Employment Program (OWEP)

Older workers can be a valuable asset to area businesses. This program is overseen by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) through grants awarded to NEI3A. OWEP's work with referrals made by IVRS who are 55 and older, have a documented disability and are seeking employment in the community. Assistance is provided in creating resumes, interviewing skills, job applications, and support through the application process.



- ◆ Options Counseling
- ◆ Case Management
- ◆ Return to Community
- ◆ EAPA Assessment Intervention



- ◆ Assisted Transit
- ◆ Homemaker
- ◆ Emergency Response Services
- ◆ Personal Care
- ◆ Chore



Educating people and communities to help make Iowa a place where people with dementia can thrive.

The inaugural year for the Dementia Friendly Iowa statewide initiative has exceeded initial expectations. The program educated community members and organizations about dementia through Dementia Friends sessions and Dementia Friendly Organization/Business trainings.

Across the state, 2,126 people became Dementia Friends at the 204 sessions offered statewide. In addition, 88 Champion Volunteers, including professionals, past and current caregivers, students, and community members, were trained to present these educational programs.

Several businesses and organizations, including libraries, health care providers, retail stores, real estate agencies, and many others, hosted staff training and became recognized as a "Dementia Friendly Organization or Business."

On a community level, Cedar Valley, Maquoketa, and Vinton are all recognized Dementia Friendly Community initiatives through Dementia Friendly America, with several other communities to officially launch this process, including Dubuque and Johnson County.

Dementia Friendly Iowa launched a website for the statewide efforts as well. Check it out and learn more at www.dementiafriendlyiowa.org.

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Businesses and organizations recognized as Dementia Friendly



2,126

people became Dementia Friends





Special Projects



SMP

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud



SHIP

State Health Insurance
Assistance Program

Navigating Medicare

Providing Support across the country

NEI3A is proud to house two national resource centers: the Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center (SMP Center) and the SHIP National Technical Assistance Center (SHIP TA Center). The two national centers provide resources and services for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center (SMP Center)

The SMP Center, under the direction of the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), serves 54 SMP projects nationally and also promotes national visibility for the SMP program to assist the general public in locating their state SMP project. The SMP Center's primary goals are to provide professional expertise, training, and technical assistance to the SMP projects. In 2021, SMP had 5,346 active team members. Those SMP team members conducted 12,660 group outreach and education events and 239,625 individual sessions with, or on behalf of, Medicare beneficiaries.

The SMP Center developed fraud alert materials and resources for SMP project use. There are currently three SMP Consumer Fraud Alerts. They are related to COVID-19, genetic testing, and hospice. The SMP projects conducted 645 group education events covering COVID-19 fraud issues in 2021, reaching a total of 26,704 people. In addition, they conducted 454 instances of media outreach on this topic, reaching 21.4 million people.

The SMP Center had the opportunity to do national presentations within the last year (July 2021 – June 2022) with ADvancing States, the National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association (NHCAA), the National Council on Aging (NCOA), the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The SMP Center also partnered with the SHIP TA Center to provide the SHIP and SMP networks with the two-day symposium Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. For that, 411 responded to our event's survey out of 1,253 registrants and out of the 672 attendees. These presentations and educational event examples are not inclusive of all of the SMP Center's training and resources work. The SMP Center also supports training and resources for ACL's SMP national data system, casework, successful practices, Volunteer Risk and Program Management, Center platforms, SMP role-specifics, and "how-to" topics based on program needs.

The SMP Center maintained a national SMP website, www.smpresource.org, and a password protected SMP Resource Library containing 1,396 resource entries for 5,872 users. The Center's website houses several resources and videos it created to educate beneficiaries and their families about these pressing Medicare fraud trends.

Office of Inspector General's 2021 Senior Medicare Patrol Projects Performance Data

- ◆ \$2.5 million in expected Medicare recoveries that were attributable to the projects
- ◆ \$41,498 in cost avoidance on behalf of Medicare, Medicaid, beneficiaries, and others
- ◆ \$40,798 in total savings to beneficiaries and others.

The report also stated, "We note that the projects may not be receiving full credit for recoveries, savings, and cost avoidance attributable to their work."

The SMP Center has also had success with outreach using social media. Since July of 2021, the Center’s Facebook page had 412 posts and has seen a total of 372,569 impressions, with an average of 954 impressions per post. There have also been 446 new page likes and an average of 78 active daily users. The Center had 8,551 total shares and 18,750 total public engagements.

In the summer of 2022, the Center developed and implemented the inaugural Medicare Fraud Prevention Week (MFPW), which ran from 6/5 – 6/11. This resulted in growth on all of the Center’s social media platforms and an increase in SMP visibility across the nation. The Center’s Facebook page gained 53 followers, had 61,992 as the total reach, and had over 3,000 video views. Twitter had 6,205 impressions and 53 retweets, some including CMS, OIG, FBI, USAging, and other national partners.

The Center also released a national commercial with the ABC network on Hulu during MFPW. The ad produced 5,925,477 estimated impressions.

Lastly, we look forward to releasing a national SMP mobile application in 2023 in an effort to assist with preventing and educating on Medicare fraud.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program National Technical Assistance Center (SHIP TA Center)

State Health Insurance Assistance Program National Technical Assistance Center (SHIP TA Center) The SHIP TA Center helps NEI3A meet its mission by helping older persons respond to their evolving Medicare needs and choices – not just in Iowa, but nationally. This Center, through a competitive federal grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), serves two major audiences: The national Medicare public, and the 54 State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs).

SHIP is a national program, but some state SHIPs use a state-specific name. In Iowa, SHIP goes by “SHIIP” – Senior Health Insurance Information Program. Regardless of the name, the services offered by every SHIP are the same. It is important to realize that Medicare group education sessions and individualized Medicare counseling for Iowans is provided by the Iowa SHIP, not by the staff of NEI3A’s SHIP TA Center.

The SHIP TA Center’s website about SHIP, www.shiphelp.org, educates the public about SHIP and helps the public find their SHIP. This site was visited 1.67 million times this past year (up 11%).



The SHIP TA Center also provides a password-protected website for SHIP staff and volunteers. Over 13,600 SHIP personnel are registered to use the site (up 8%). There, they accessed the comprehensive SHIP Resource Library or other tools to help them do their work, such as becoming certified for SHIP counseling. In the past year, SHIP personnel logged in 80,000 times (up 29%) and accessed our Medicare courses and certification exams 53,768 times (up 25%).

The SHIP TA Center's other major responsibilities to SHIPs include providing the following:

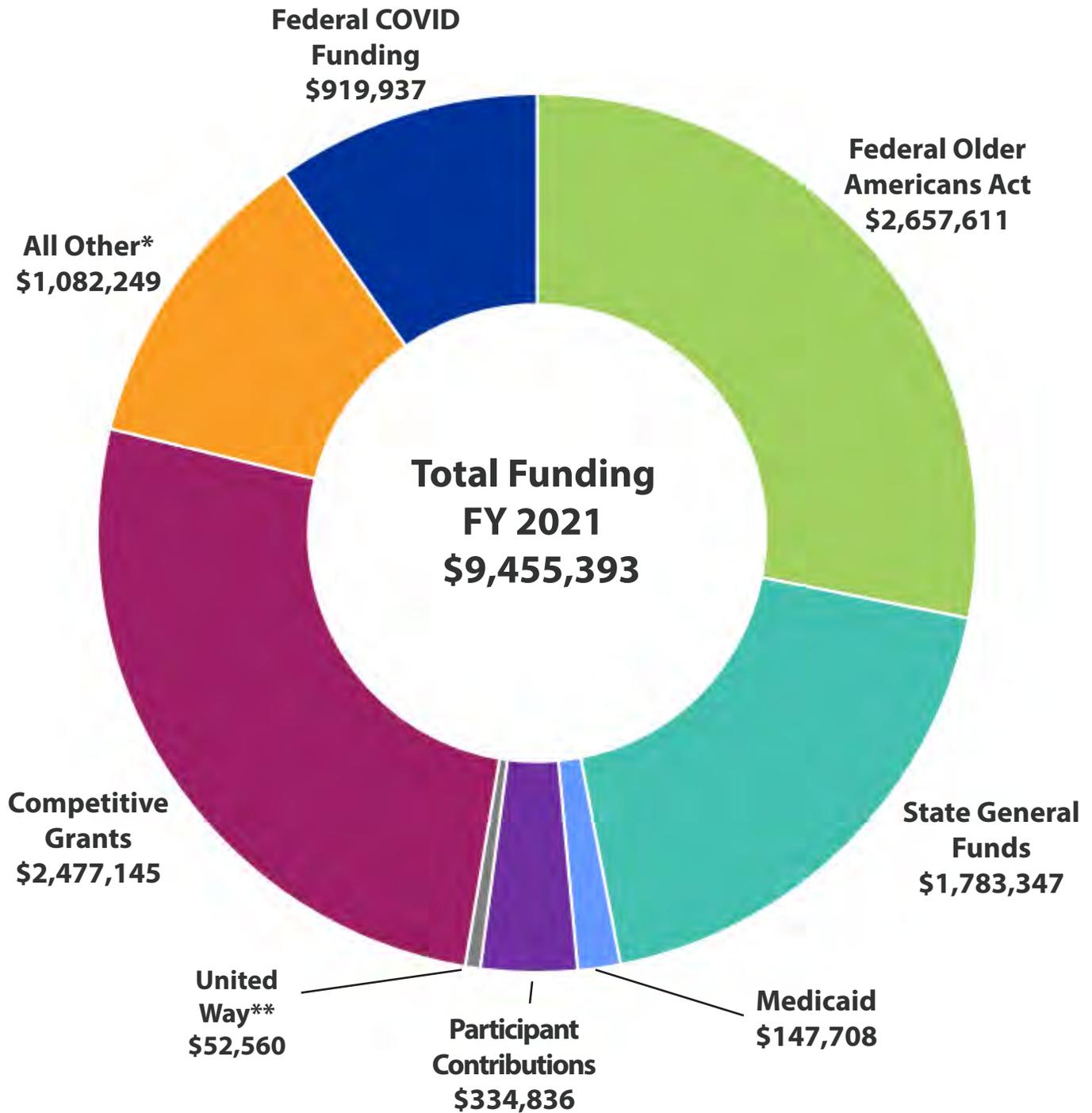
- 1. Medigap comparison tool.** This password protected Medigap Supplement plan comparison tool for SHIPs contains plan rates that are updated in real time. SHIPs visited the tool 26,500 times this year.
- 2. Data System.** We support users of the SHIP national data reporting system, called STARS. The data is used by ACL in their SHIP reports to Congress. We provide training and technical assistance to all STARS users (over 12,000 people).
- 3. Webinars.** We provide webinar training on all aspects of SHIP operations. In the past year, we offered 22 webinars that were attended by 6,000 people.
- 4. Written training.** We write and publish monthly newsletters, fact sheets, scripts, and manuals. 6,500 SHIP personnel subscribe to our newsletters and receive updates about our training materials (up 30%).
- 5. Technical Assistance.** We provide one-on-one technical assistance on all aspects of SHIP operations. 96% of the 54 SHIPs relied on us for one-on-one technical assistance in the past year.



SHIP TA Center highlights from the past year:

- ◆ New video featuring how SHIPs help navigate the maze of Medicare. This 40-second video demonstrates how SHIPs make Medicare easy.
- ◆ New video features volunteer satisfaction. This 70-second video demonstrates how much SHIP volunteers enjoy their work.
- ◆ Increased YouTube presence because of Medicare videos for the public. YouTube videos of our 2021 Welcome to Medicare presentations have been watched over 9,000 times and for over 1,000 hours.
- ◆ Check Your Blind Spot Symposium. This two-day, six-hour national symposium on diversity, equity, and inclusion, held in collaboration with the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) resource center at NEI3A, was attended by over 700 SHIP and SMP staff and volunteers.
- ◆ National collaboration with USAging to address COVID-19 vaccine awareness for the Medicare population. We produced a fact sheet about the COVID-19 vaccine, and we updated it as guidance changed. We also published a companion guide outlining the skills necessary for talking about sensitive and potentially volatile topics.
- ◆ Fact sheet on how to enroll in Medicare. This fact sheet evolved over the past year to address Social Security office closures and re-openings and the new online enrollment portal.
- ◆ Social Media campaign sends more people to SHIP. We conducted a paid Facebook and Google campaign to increase the visibility of our national SHIP locator tool. AARP also promoted the tool on their website. As a result, our national SHIP Locator usage increased 10.5%.

Sources of Funding



**In Kind Contributions: \$310,366
(includes only labor)**

**Includes fundraising, private contributions and other local cash
**Includes United Way of Cedar Valley, Winneshiek County, and Marshall County*



2022 Area Advisory Committee

- Carter Baldwin, Black Hawk
- Marcia Bauer, Black Hawk
- Bob Brown, Black Hawk
- Rosie Bruns, Black Hawk
- Sandy Chilson, Howard
- Lori Egan, Winneshiek
- Lamoyne Gaard, Poweshiek
- Jerry Gade, Grundy
- Sharon Harms, Grundy
- MacKenzie Jaeger, Dubuque
- Heather Levinson, Winneshiek
- Paul Loucks, Delaware
- Margaret Mjones, Dubuque
- Valerie Nehl, Black Hawk
- Mary Peters, Dubuque
- Linda Ridihalgh, Fayette
- Linda Von Holten, Marshall
- Kelsey Umthun, Black Hawk
- Ron Welper, Black Hawk
- Fran Zichal, Clayton



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www.nei3a.org

NEI3A serves older adults, caregivers, and persons with disabilities in Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Grundy, Hardin, Howard, Jackson, Marshall, Poweshiek, Tama, and Winneshiek Counties.