

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Branch County Commission on Aging
65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater, MI 49036
www.burnsidecenter.com
517-279-6565

BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

MISSION STATEMENT

The primary mission of the Branch County Commission on Aging is to establish and provide services for older adults by encouraging, promoting, and safeguarding the rights and abilities of our older adults so they may enjoy maximum health, well-being, and independence.

VISION

To become the primary focus (not the sole focus) for older adult activities in the county through the establishment of the senior center and by partnering with other agencies whose goals will complement the Commission on Aging's mission.

VALUES

The Commission believes the State's philosophy of "no wrong door" and to that end will provide access, information, and referral for any service to older adults that may be required throughout the county.

The Commission will partner with other agencies to maintain a presence throughout the county.

The Commission will solicit and promote volunteerism through the older adult community to expand its services and provide those older adults who volunteer with a sense of worth and accomplishment.

The Commission will strive to provide outreach and services to those older adults whose needs for services are the greatest.

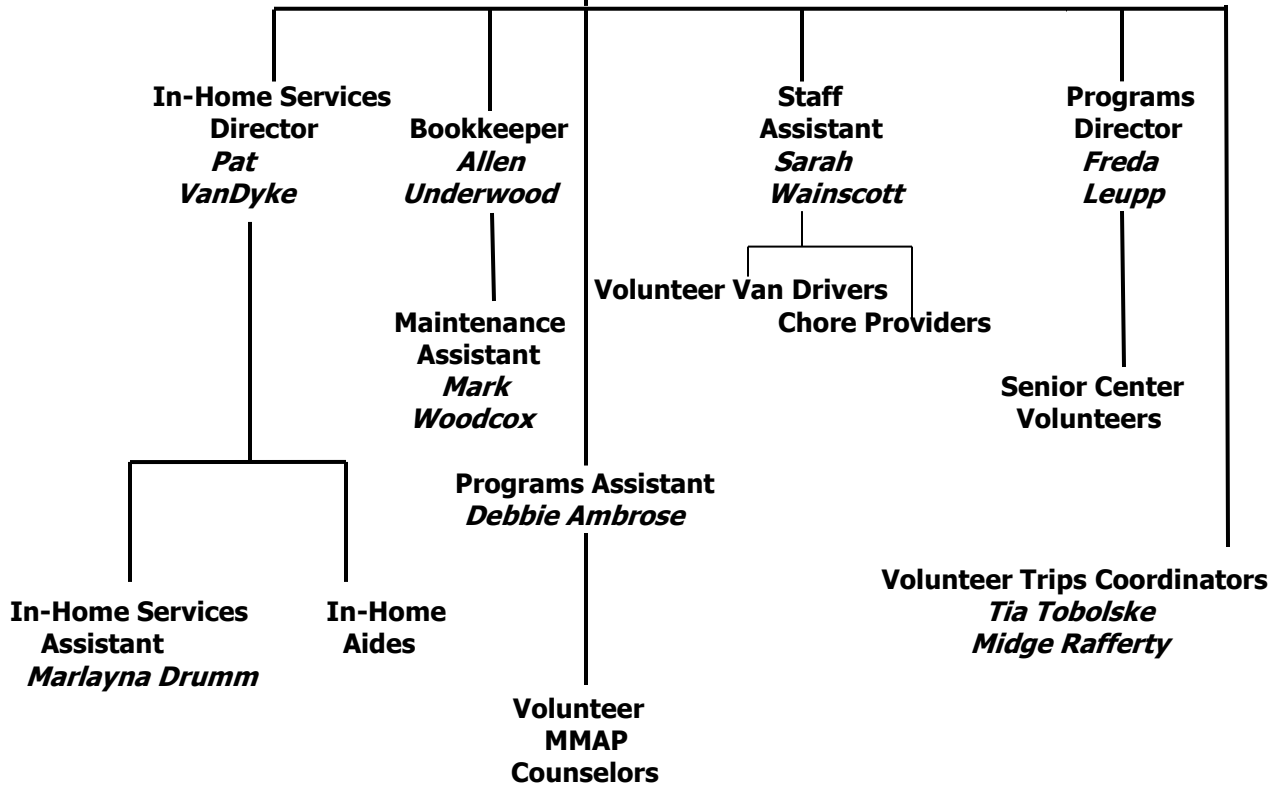
The Commission will seek and facilitate cooperation and consensus of action through our partnerships with community agencies and governmental bodies in all areas where our missions are convergent.

BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING 2021 STAFF

Branch County Board of Commissioners

Branch County Commission on Aging
Board of Directors

Executive Director
Amy Duff



BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Established by action of the Branch County Commissioners

Janis Olney – Chairman
Paul Meredith – Vice Chairman
Ginger Kesler – Secretary/Treasurer
Gordon Gentry
Dave Smoker
Don Thrasher
Julie Hurley

Commissioner Tim Stoll – Liaison from Branch County Board of Commissioners

The Board of Directors represents the older adult population of Branch County. Monthly meetings in 2021 were held at 65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater or on Zoom, on the third Tuesday at 3 p.m.

2021 STAFF

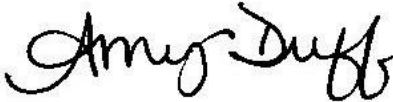
Amy Duff – Executive Director
Pat VanDyke – In-Home Services Director
Marlayna Drumm – Assistant In-Home Services Director
Freda Leupp – Programs Director
Allen Underwood – Bookkeeper
Sarah Wainscott – Staff Assistant
Debbie Ambrose – Programs Assistant
Tia Tobolske & Midge Rafferty – Volunteer Trips Coordinators
Mark Woodcox – Maintenance Assistant
A staff of sixteen in-home service aides

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2021 brought a slow return towards normalcy. We began the year with limited activities. Patrons could schedule ahead of time to participate in small group activities with temperature and symptom screening, social distancing, and masks. In the summer, the building was officially re-opened to the public with all doors unlocked again. This allowed many activities to resume such as the Exercise Room, the Billiards Room, the Computer Lab, and many small groups. Masks were still required for activities where distancing was not possible, such as card playing. As the fall arrived, we saw a big increase in participation as seniors were ready to re-engage with the community.

Throughout the pandemic and the pause on most activities, the services provided to seniors at home continued. The pandemic reminded us how important in-person contact is. We look forward to further growing our numbers in 2022.

Respectfully,



Branch County Commission on Aging
Executive Director





SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

The Burnside Center is well-known in the Branch County community for its many activities. In 2021, a limited amount of activities took place in the beginning of the year with strict COVID protocols. In the summer, restrictions loosened, and we were able to welcome many more seniors into the building. Craft classes such

as painting, stained glass, holiday décor, and others were popular. Card playing resumed at this time as well. Computer Club started meeting again, and we held some group presentations on topics including Alzheimer's, Scams, Podiatry, and Strength Training. We saw a big boost in participation in the fall as many seniors were ready to re-engage with community activities.

One group that was very active during 2021, was the Creative Quilters. They donated over 50 quilts to Family Promise, 90 handmade placemats to Community Action for their home-delivered meals clients, and numerous dog beds to Erin's Angels.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Information and referral services for older adults can be obtained by calling the Center. The information available is a directory of housing, food assistance, medical services, prescription assistance, and transportation, as well as various other services. This information source is kept current and includes local, state, and national resources. Information and referral at the Commission on Aging is provided by volunteers at the front desk and MMAP counselors, as well as by staff.

MEDICARE/MEDICAID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The MMAP (Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program) office continues to thrive. In 2021, the MMAP office was staffed by a part-time paid coordinator and four part-time volunteer counselors. The coordinator and counselors offer free appointments to Branch County residents to help them with any challenges or concerns they may have regarding Medicare and Medicaid eligibility and services. This includes help understanding, comparing, and enrolling in the Medicare Part D prescription plans available annually at open enrollment October 15th through December 7th.



In 2021, 515 client contacts were recorded. The number of clients accessing MMAP services varies from year to year—often influenced by what is going on in terms of state and/or federal changes to Medicare, Medicaid, and the insurance system in general. The number of MMAP appointments in 2021 increased substantially over 2020 as people were able to come into the building for appointments again. One of the silver linings from going through the pandemic is that the counselors now have the ability to do in-person, phone, and Zoom appointments, offering seniors greater flexibility.

MEDICAL VAN TRANSPORTATION

The medical van transportation program is a valuable service for Branch County seniors. This service is supported by grant funds as well as millage funds and donations. COA owns a 2016 Dodge Grand Caravan for use in this program. COA also has a cooperative agreement with the Branch County VA office for use of their wheelchair ramp van if that type of transportation is needed.

The vans are driven by volunteer drivers who pick up older adults at their homes, transport them to medical appointments, and return them to their homes. A donation to COA is suggested but is not required. The vans travel outside the local area as far away as Fort Wayne, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and other locations. Many seniors find it a great relief to have someone else navigate for them in larger cities they are unfamiliar with. In 2021, the vans traveled a total of 12,003 miles during 296 trips. The protocol for COVID safety was continued in this program, including riders must be in back of the van to give distance to the driver, everyone wears masks, ventilation was increased by cracking windows and/or turning on the fan, and the surfaces of the van were sanitized before rides, after rides, and also periodically using the Center's sanitation gun.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

One of the big draws to the Burnside Center is exercise programs. In 2021 we continued most of our exercise programs but with creative ways to stay safe from COVID. One method we used for this was a tent outside. Clemens Food Group graciously let us borrow their tent. Our Tai Chi group met indoors sometimes with small, socially distanced groups and other times outdoors under the tent. Our Stayin' Alive with Weights group and our Step in Motion group both used these methods as well as Zoom.

The Exercise Room re-opened in June on a limited basis, allowing some seniors to come in but maintain distancing. Then in the middle of July, the room re-opened fully.

In 2021, 260 people utilized our exercise options with a total of 3,380 sign-ins.



KINSHIP CARE

The kinship care program is for grandparents raising grandkids and for other adults who are raising related children. This is a joint venture with the Branch Intermediate School District Early Education program and the Branch County Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

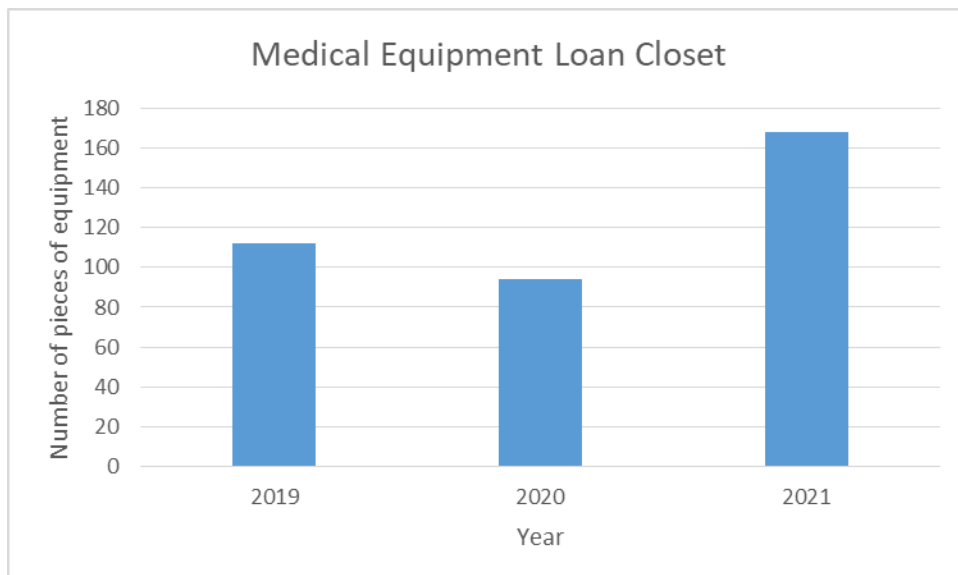
This educational support group typically meets monthly. Dinner and child care are always provided in order to make it easier for caregivers to attend. This program is supported by state grant funds. This program was on hold during the pandemic but resumed in June 2021. Attendance was lower than usual as we aimed to rebuild the program first with families who were participating before the pandemic. This program averaged approximately 6 adults and 3 children at each meeting in 2021.

CHORE PROGRAM

The chore program helps seniors with occasional heavy-duty or high-energy jobs in the home such as leaf raking, snow shoveling, window washing, cleaning of attic or garage, etc. The Commission on Aging pays independent contractors to complete this work for seniors. This service is supported by federal grant funds and millage. In 2021, 278.75 hours of service were performed.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN CLOSET

The Branch County Commission on Aging maintains an inventory of clean, gently-used durable medical equipment which is available on a long-term loan basis to Branch County residents who have a need for it. Types of items commonly available are walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, commodes, toilet risers, and canes. This service is supported by grant and millage funds, monetary donations, and donations of equipment. The Commission on Aging loaned out 168 pieces of equipment in 2021. We continued a contactless pickup and drop off procedure with extra emphasis on sanitizing of the equipment. This program is a great example of the "bounce back" we saw in 2021 as people began re-engaging with the Center.



IN-HOME SERVICES

In-home services is the Commission on Aging’s most well-known and far-reaching service. In-home services provides older adults the option of remaining in their own homes for a longer period of time. The housekeeping, personal care, and respite care received from one of the aides employed by the Commission assists not only the senior but the family caregivers as well. With the respite service, aides provide primary care for older adults which allows their caregivers an opportunity to take a break. There was an average of 149 clients per month in 2021 receiving in-home services. Assistance is provided to clients with a limited number of hours per week in order to assist a larger number of Branch County clients. In 2021, the Commission on Aging performed 8,451 hours of homemaking, 1,320 hours of personal care, and 1,087.5 hours of respite for Branch County seniors.





VOLUNTEERS

The Commission on Aging could not accomplish its many achievements each year without the help of our dedicated crew of volunteers. COA provides the Branch County area with a constructive way to utilize the vast array of talents and skills that our older adults possess. The Commission on Aging uses volunteers for answering the phones, instructing almost all of the classes, assisting other seniors with Medicare questions, taking seniors to medical appointments, and a number of other jobs.

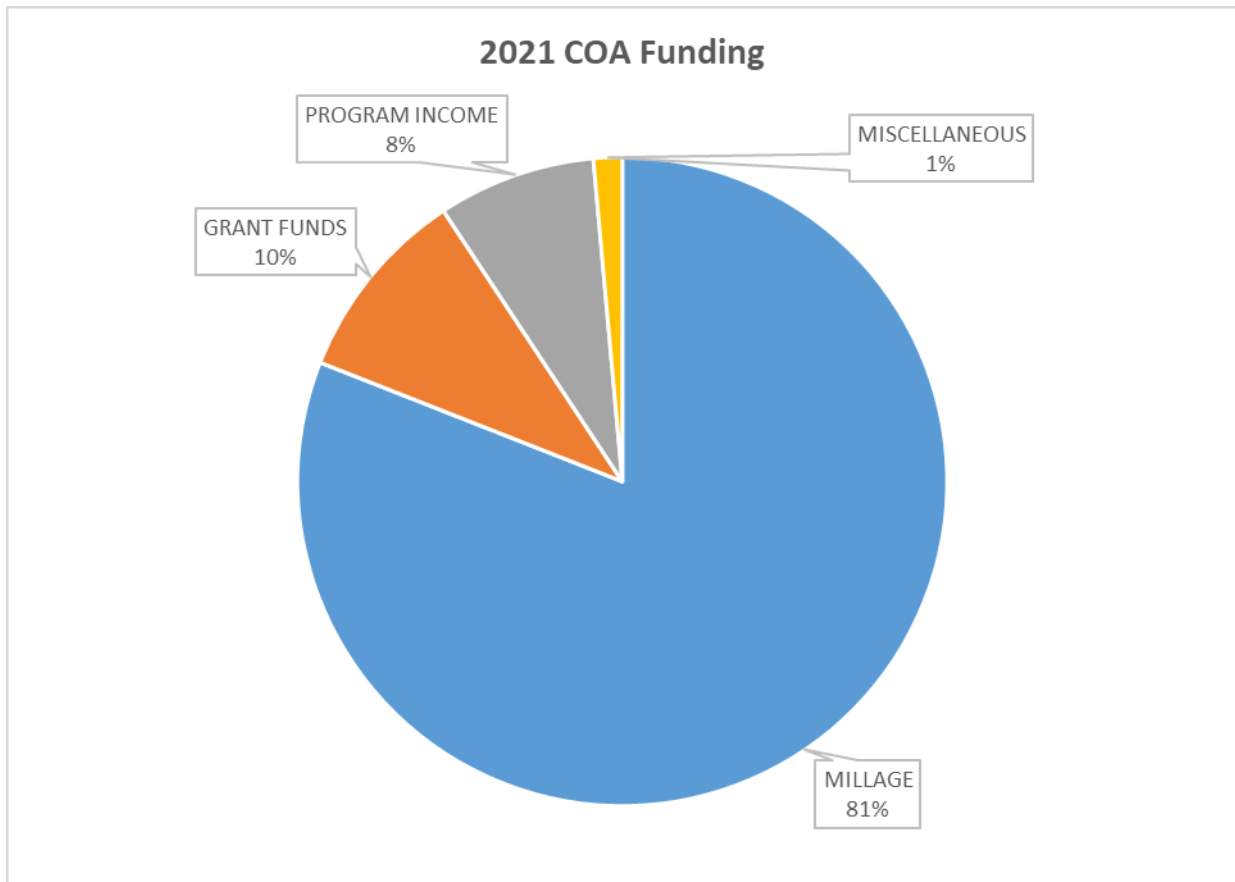
In 2021, our volunteers logged over 3,800 hours of service saving the Center \$46,288 in labor costs. 36 seniors volunteered their time at Burnside in 2021.



FUNDING

The Commission on Aging is funded by a variety of means.

The majority of funding, around 81%, is comprised of millage funds. The operational millage is in place from 2020-2024 at .4908 mills. The building millage is in place from 2021-2030 at .25 mills. The Commission on Aging receives several state and federal grants to support the services it offers to Branch County seniors which comprises about 10% of the funding. The COA is also graciously supported by individuals and businesses through donations.



BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Renovated in 2016/2017, the Burnside Center has over 14,000 square feet of activity and office space for the Branch County Commission on Aging. The Center is all one level with no stairs, includes wide hallways for ease of movement throughout the building, has ample handicap accessible parking, and utilizes many interior windows to highlight the activities going on throughout the building. The Center is conveniently located in Coldwater, off of N. Michigan Avenue.





