

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2022



*Branch County Commission on Aging*  
*65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater, MI 49036*  
*[www.burnsidecenter.com](http://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.**

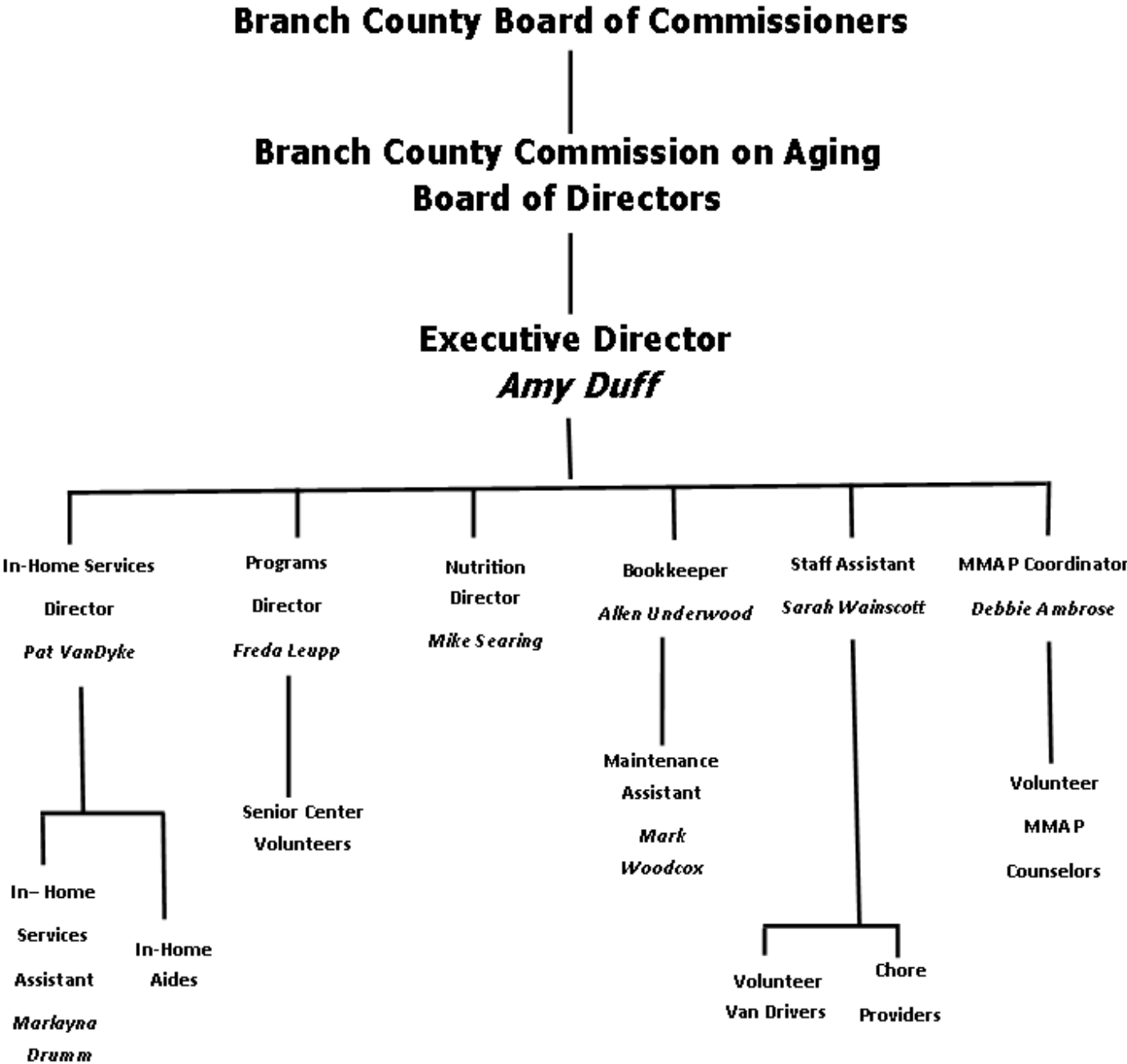
**The Commission will partner with other agencies to maintain a presence throughout the county.**

**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  
2022 STAFF**



# **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**  
**Don Thrasher**  
**Julie Hurley**  
**John Petzko**

**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 2022 were held at 65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater or on Zoom, on the third Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.**

## **2022 STAFF**

**Amy Duff – Executive Director**  
**Pat VanDyke – In-Home Services Director**  
**Marlayna Drumm – Assistant In-Home Services Director**  
**Freda Leupp – Programs Director**  
**Mike Searing – Nutrition Director**  
**Allen Underwood – Bookkeeper**  
**Sarah Wainscott – Staff Assistant**  
**Debbie Ambrose – Programs Assistant**  
**Mark Woodcox – Maintenance Assistant**  
**A staff of fourteen in-home service aides**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022 was an excellent year for the COA. We continued to rebuild our programming as the pandemic receded. In 2022, we were able to add back in some of our larger programs. Monthly luncheons resumed in the summer to the delight of many seniors. These programs brought in crowds of 30-60 people. And then by fall, we were ready to bring back our annual Veterans Program. The Wall of Heroes was back on display and the crowd of 100 enjoyed a terrific speaker and delicious meal.

In 2022, we were also able to reinstitute and rebuild some of our programs. Our VITA tax preparation program returned to the Burnside Center. This is the only free tax preparation service in Coldwater, so having it returned was an important thing. We also saw an increase in our medical van transportation program after being able to purchase a new van in the summer to add to our fleet.

We rounded out the year with the exciting announcement that we had been awarded the contracts for congregate and home-delivered meals. These will be new services for the Commission on Aging and will be a major increase in programming.

We are excited for the future and getting more and more seniors involved in programs, activities, and services through the COA.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Duff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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 2022, our large monthly luncheons resumed after being put on hold because of COVID. 485 meals were served in 2022 to participants at these events. Seniors at these events enjoyed entertainment from Patt Taylor and the Bel Canto Singers as well as educational sessions including information on hospice care, avoiding fraud, and updates from the Sheriff's Office and the Branch County Fair.

The library also had a fair amount of traffic in 2022 with 64 different people coming in to check out books or puzzles for their own use at home.



# **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 2022, 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 15 through December 7.

In 2022, 596 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. Counselors have the ability to do in-person, phone, and Zoom appointments.

## 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 averaged approximately nine adults and six children at each meeting in 2022.

## CHORE PROGRAM

The chore program helps seniors with occasional heavy-duty or high-energy jobs in the home such as leaf clean-up, snow removal, and window washing. The Commission on Aging pays independent contractors to complete this work for seniors. This service is supported by federal grant funds and millage. In 2022, 236 hours of service were performed.

## 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 2022, the vans traveled a total of 10,256 miles during 293 trips. Also in 2022, COA was able to take advantage of some special COVID-relief money to purchase a 2022 Chrysler Pacifica to add to our fleet.





## HEALTH AND FITNESS

One of the big draws to the Burnside Center is exercise programs. In 2022, we continued to see strong participation in our exercise classes. 48 different individuals attended our drop-in tai chi class along with 28 guests signing-in as well. Step in Motion had 41 different individuals attending throughout the year. Stayin' Alive with Weights continued to offer a Zoom option as well as an in-person class in 2022 for those that preferred that option.

In 2022, 290 different people utilized our exercise room.



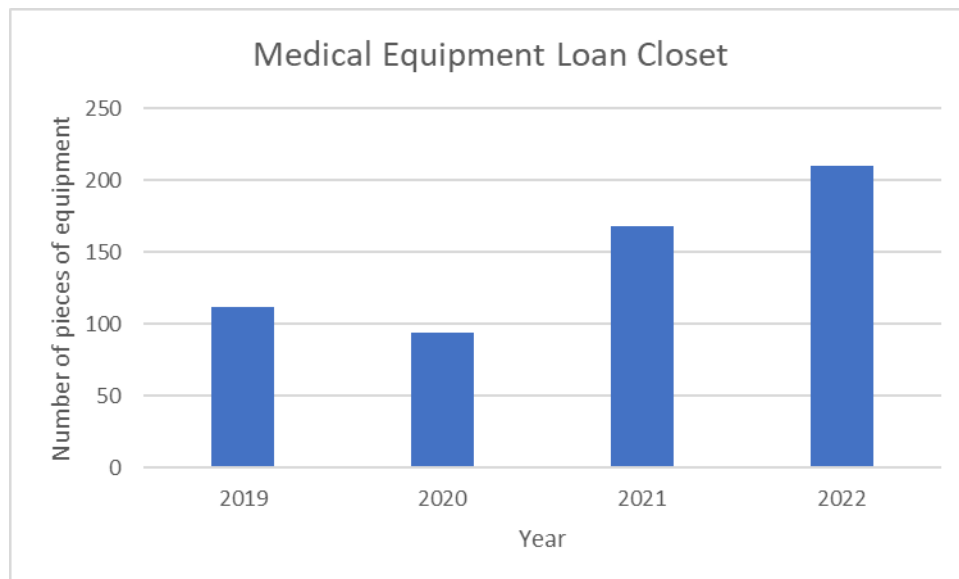
## TAX PREPARATION

COA partners with Goodwill Industries of South Central Michigan to provide free income tax preparation to low income Branch County residents through a program called VITA. Goodwill provides the staff and volunteers, and they hold the grant that funds this program. Burnside Center provides the office space, including computers, and schedules the appointments. This program is able to service all income eligible Branch County residents; however, most of the clients who are seen at Burnside for this service are seniors. In 2022, the VITA program had

three preparers and five greeters who worked with one staff member from Goodwill. 371 Branch County residents had their taxes prepared at Burnside in 2022.

### 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 millage funds, monetary donations, and donations of equipment. The Commission on Aging loaned out 210 pieces of equipment in 2022. As the chart below shows we have continued to see growth in the number of seniors accessing this program.



# 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 162 clients per month in 2022 receiving in-home services. Assistance is a limited number of hours per week in order to assist a larger number of Branch County clients.

In 2022, the Commission on Aging performed 7,537.5 hours of homemaking, 1,218 hours of personal care, and 1,449.25 hours of respite for Branch County seniors.



## NUTRITION

In 2022, the COA decided to bid on the home-delivered and congregate meal contracts for Branch County for the first time. In August, COA was awarded these contracts which began on October 1. With such a fast turnaround, COA chose to contract with the former provider, Community Action, to continue providing nutrition service to seniors through the end of 2022.

During this time, COA hired its first Nutrition Director and accepted bids for a food production contract for 2022. Mike Searing was hired, and started on November 1, 2022. Milestone Senior Services was the successful bidder for the food production contract to start in January 2023.

COA plans to offer congregate lunch service at the Burnside Center and will expand the existing home-delivered meals program to get more seniors on this important service.

COA is excited to start on this venture. Having a lunch program in the building again will be exciting and fill a real gap in programming. Look for information on this new service in the 2023 annual report!

## VOLUNTEERS



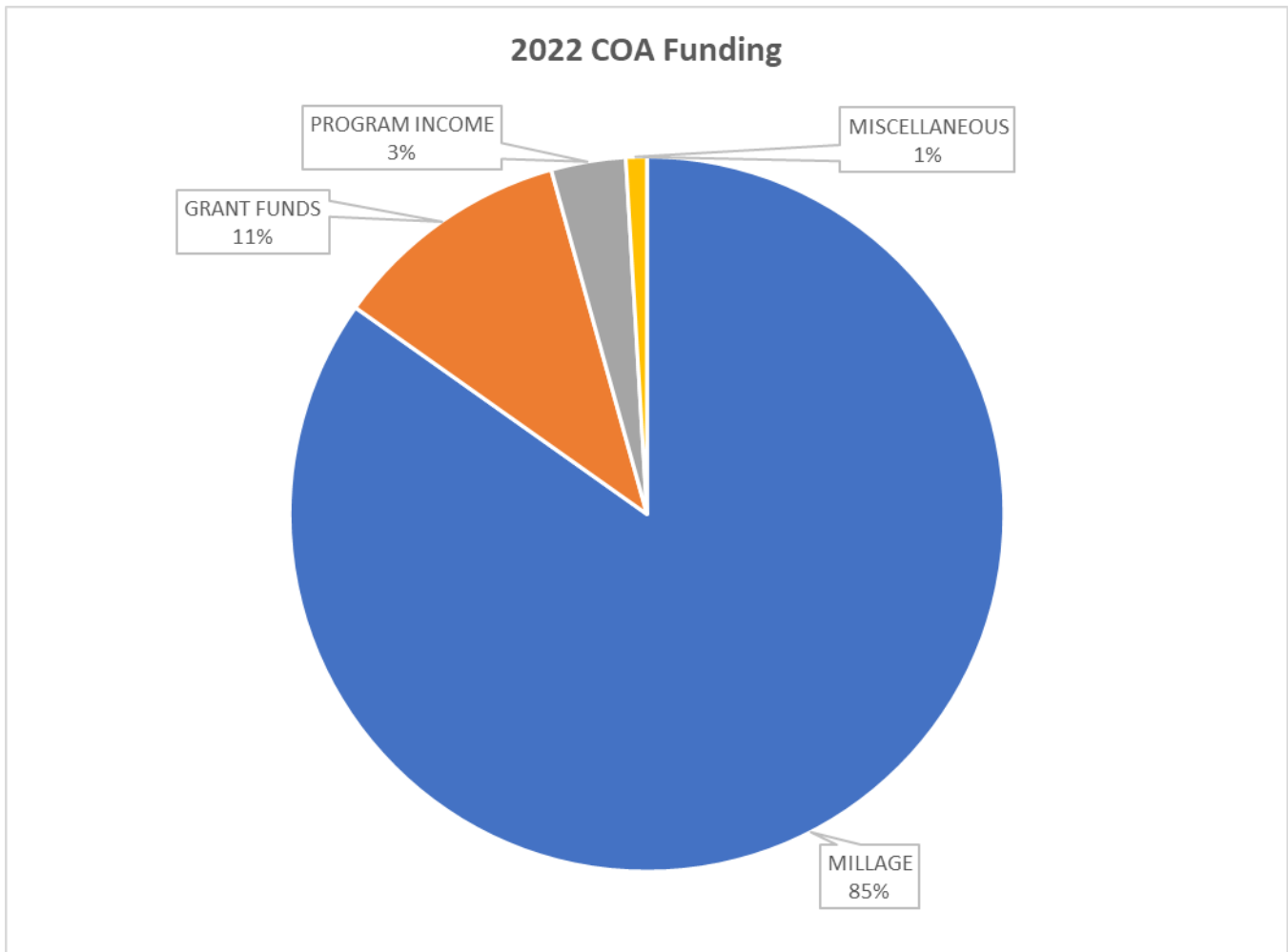
The Commission on Aging could not accomplish its many achievements each year without the help of our dedicated crew of volunteers. COA provides the Branch County area with a constructive way to utilize the vast array of talents and skills that our older adults possess. The Commission on Aging uses volunteers 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 2022, our volunteers logged over 5,300 hours of service saving the Center nearly \$63,000 in labor costs. 47 seniors volunteered their time at Burnside in 2022.

# FUNDING

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

The majority of funding, around 85%, 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 11% 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.





